

# cescontexto

## **Rethinking Urban Inclusion**

Spaces, Mobilizations, Interventions

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# Debates

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## Introduction

The international conference, “Rethinking Urban Inclusion: Spaces, Mobilizations, Interventions,” was held 28-30 June 2012 in Coimbra, Portugal. The conference was the major event of the *Cities Are Us* series of events<sup>1</sup>, which constituted the last step of a two-year collaboration between the Centre for Social Studies (CES) at the University of Coimbra and the United Cities and Local Governments’ (UCLG) Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights (CISDP). The joint CES/UCLG project “Observatory of Inclusive Cities” (2010-2011)<sup>2</sup>, creating the second phase of the UCLG Observatory on Social Inclusion, had collected a series of innovative participatory and inclusionary practices from around the globe to inform and stimulate an international debate on the issues that emerged within the project’s cases. The 2012 events aimed to extend this work and create a dialogue among the academic community, social movements and political institutions to help rethink some pivotal concepts related to the emergence of inequalities in urban territories.

The conference featured 124 speakers in a series of panels, parallel sessions and roundtables. This issue of *Cescontexto: Debates* contains 57 papers that were presented and discussed at this conference and revised following the event. The papers examine and illuminate a wide array of urban circumstances, trajectories and issues, from 29 countries around the world: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Italy, Macedonia, Mozambique, Palestine, Peru, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, United States of America and Vietnam. Both the variety of situations examined and the commonalities of the issues and concerns articulated within the papers attest to the value of the international knowledge sharing, exchanges and dialogues that were facilitated through the conference.

With almost half the world’s population living in cities, questioning the urban dimension of social inclusion and exclusion is imperative. Urban inclusion is increasingly influenced – and often constrained – by intertwined processes of economic globalization, state re-articulation, polarization and diversification of (local) populations and the political practices they add to the city. Educational, health and environmental inequalities, segregation, unemployment, lack of political participation, discrimination and the inability to deal with different forms of participation are all phenomena of exclusion with a local dimension but also a multi-scalar nature. At the same time, actions towards social inclusion are developed around ideas, knowledge(s), experiences, resources and capacities which are (dis)located across an array of arenas and distributed among different actors. While traditional concepts

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<sup>1</sup> *Cities Are Us* Preparatory Seminars were: “Cidades Sem Muros – contributos da academia na área da deficiência” (Cities without walls – inputs from academia in relation to disability); “Alojamento Estudantil e a cidade inclusiva” (Students’ accommodation and the inclusive city); “Racismo na UniverCidade: debates e desafios” (Racism in the UniverCity: debates and challenges); and “Rumina(c)ções urbanas: contar a cidade numa ‘roda de histórias’” (Urban rumina(c)tions: tell your story at the table of voices). The international conference was followed by a Summer School, “Reinventing the City: Participation and Innovation,” which was co-organized in Lisbon by CES and Dinâmia’CET – ISCTE-IUL. For further information, see: <http://www.ces.uc.pt/eventos/citiesareus/pages/pt/all-the-events.php>.

<sup>2</sup> The Inclusive Cities Observatory, with 65 case studies available in English, French and Spanish, is available at <http://www.uclg-cisdp.org/observatory>.

and practices of urban inclusion centred on institutions and top-down decision-making seem inadequate to tackle this complexity, new ones are often in their infancy and may be in tension with more established policies. Contesting the centrality of the state and market pervasiveness, a new variety of counter-hegemonic positions and projects, and alternative visions of urban democracy and justice that inform bottom-up and participatory approaches to urban inclusion, have become popular in the Global South, while their transposition to cities in the Global North have met resistance or hardly gone beyond theorization.

The conference aimed to understand and ultimately rethink social inclusion at the urban scale, as the product of broader dynamics and the interaction of different actors and languages. How can we trace, define and challenge the new subtle forms of social and territorial exclusion, trying to reinvent urban inclusion as a meeting space between local governance efforts and bottom-up initiatives? Is it possible to think a novel approach to understanding these changing cities, using as a ‘lever’ images of ‘the power of powerlessness’ and the struggles against/within established systems? Within this perspective, the conference welcomed contributions balancing description, explanation and prescription, with the goal to contribute to an ‘ecology of knowledges’ which could give visibility to new forms of collective action and community experimentation in reshaping cities in different contexts, in order to set the preconditions for a more solid horizon of social and territorial justice at both urban and extra-urban scales. We invited participants to rethink urban inclusion along three intertwined axes – Space, Mobilisations, Interventions – and the contributions received reflected the interconnected nature of thinking and actions along these axes.

In order to help readers navigate the collection, we have organized the papers into five general thematic categories:

- Local Government, the Social and Evictions for the New City
- Urban Environmental Justices and Greening the City
- Practices of Urban Protest and the Right to the City
- Urban Histories, Architecture, Public Spaces and Participation Practices
- Spaces, Differences and Cultural Actors as Agents in Urban Change

## **Local Government, the Social and Evictions for the New City**

Planning for an inclusive and justice city has been a ‘slogan’ for many local governments with social convictions. Nevertheless, different definitions of *inclusion* and *justice*, as well as different planning scales (i.e., urban vs. regional) may challenge and ultimately invalidate policies of spatial justice. The papers in this section propose different concepts for an inclusive city, such as “Social Mix,” “Public Participation,” or different public programs such as “Public Spaces of Humanization” and “Vila Viva,” analyzing positive or negative effects through a range of case studies in both the North and South, namely, Lisbon, Maputo, Recife, Belo Horizonte, Rome, Paris, Istanbul, Béjaïa and Skopje. Two main ideas arise from these approaches. First, that formal (local governments) and informal actors can or should work together on the design of urban policies for an inclusive city, looking for “other ways of participating,” as Federica Gatta recommends. Second, that transformation of urban space as an instrument of social rehabilitation must understand “the mechanisms leading to exclusion,” as Camille Morel explains.

## Urban Environmental Justices and Greening the City

With the progressive urbanization of society, the urban environment is threatened by the growing privatization of public goods such as water or open space, promoting spatial injustice and exclusion in the city. Urban and peri-urban communities in different contexts, North and South, have been struggling, sometimes successfully, to defend their access to clean air, water and soil as well as their right to have a voice in decisions on how urban space should be used. We find this social environmental responsibility addressed in papers related to the complex society of the São Paulo metropole. Other papers in this thematic area demonstrate the strong presence of urban agriculture experiences as a strategy of rehabilitating urban voids and also integrating urban communities. From Lisbon to Maputo, Rome to Rio we understand that the city can combine rural with urban, and inclusively – some societies always did it as a productive and urban way of life. Human relationships with the urban environment, as we can see in the Hanoi case study, are not only a fight for a “Greener City” but also for a “Humanistic City” where citizens can have a healthy and inclusive society.

## Practices of Urban Protest and the Right to the City

Social actions make claims for redefining the public significance and scope of squares, streets and parks. One of the main functions of such urban public spaces has been as places for assembly and protest, namely, to protest for the right to the city as a place of inclusion within the complex neo-liberal society. Public space is by nature a democratic place where people meet to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings. This democratic condition is underlined by social movements that are ‘occupying’ public spaces with urban protests against policies, social exclusion or environmental threats. This theme is divided into two complementary groups of papers. The first group is related to the different perspectives of the *Occupy* movements, analyzing their discourses and their social communities, especially composed of the young generations. Other papers are related to case studies where communities such as migrants or the Roma fight for the right to the city, whether in Coimbra, Milan, Philadelphia, Delhi, São Paulo or Fortaleza.

## Urban Histories, Architecture, Public Spaces and Participation Practices

Governments at all levels have played and will arguably continue to play a major part in promoting social inclusion in its urban dimension. However, in the neo-liberal era, the notion of a light regulatory state is suppressing that of an interventionist authority, which is causing disinvestment in redistributive welfare and a ‘cheap’ commitment to formal equality. In this context, this thematic area reflects on the current nature, scope and effectiveness of public interventions of global and local governments. On one hand, the history of architecture and urbanism can teach us, today, some of the most relevant participation practices of past public interventions and the ideas, methodologies and impacts of significant urban projects to renovate the city and support communities, such as the significant case study of S. Victor in Porto, designed by Alvaro Siza, or the ZEIS in São Paulo. In parallel, another group of papers discusses concepts to rethink the ‘re-creation’ of city centers, for example, as ‘the night’, to look for the integration of *terrain vague* and to explore other participation methods through memory, psychosociology and public art, for instance.

## Spaces, Differences and Cultural Actors as Agents in Urban Change

Territory has both physical and symbolic relations with the social and cultural life of the city, and this thematic area highlights the cultural dimensions of these relations. Three intertwined themes emerge. One group of papers examines various ways in which territorial imageries are socially and culturally produced (by those living there as well as imposed from outside) and change over time, have tangible impacts on urban relations, and are tangled up in processes of creating “re-emerging territories” (Pilav) and re-appropriating a city’s spaces and places. Second, the urban sphere as a crucible of difference and socio-cultural relations is brought into focus through examinations of particular groups, realities, and relations to public space and wider society, with papers highlighting children as sub citizens, youth developing perspectives on their place in community, or non-Aboriginal citizens living in the context of (post)colonial reconciliation processes. Third, the roles of artistic activity and cultural actors are foregrounded as catalyzing change and fostering new spatial relations and social connections, but also shadowed by “creative class imposition” (Alton and Cudmore) urban transformation initiatives, which may catalyze acts of resistance. Overall, collective memories and identities, contemporary functions of cultural heritage, the “spirit of place” (Hong and Ferero), and the creation of new imageries, meanings and social relations through artistic and socio-cultural activities are shown to have transformative power in building and changing the meanings of the city, relations with the urban territory and connections with each other.

We are entering a ‘post-institutional period’. The events that shook the beginning of 2011 are changing the political panorama of many countries and have clearly showed how traditional institutions alone cannot cope anymore with the needs and dreams of citizens. They also revealed the insufficiency of traditional social bodies and aggregations, especially from the perspective of the younger generations, who are designing new and often informal ways to make their voices heard in the political space. The Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra wants to promote spaces of discussion and stimulate cultural interaction on these topics, in continuity with its scientific interdisciplinary activity and its tradition as an Associate Laboratory interested in developing new and innovative analytical, theoretical and methodological instruments and approaches for interpreting and better understanding the specificities and complexities of contemporary societies.

In a world that is everyday more urbanized, cities are undoubtedly the stage for these ongoing fluid and dynamic changes. They are in flames in the Global South as well as in the Global North, and claims and aspirations of their citizens constitute the main sparks. These convulsions are enrooted in a new idea of inclusion, one that must tightly link redistribution and recognition of these new rising voices and must contribute to scouting and discovering voices that are as yet undisclosed. Squares, streets and parks are regaining their meaningfulness as pivotal places of this new wave of claims, and their new centrality takes shape through creative alliances with virtual networks, which seek to materialize their fights in a new holistic conception of public space.

How can we cope with this new panorama, where the word *city* itself acquires multiple and conflicting meanings in different contexts? How can we trace, define and challenge the new subtle forms of social and territorial exclusion, trying to reinvent social inclusion as a meeting space between local institutional efforts and bottom-up movements? Could the emerging pre-planning strength of the new insurgent citizenships converge onto a shared horizon and represent a critical mass for reconceiving and reestablishing the way of managing

cities? Is the heterogeneity of the state being pushed forward and enriched through the subsidiarity principle, valorizing both the proposals coming from non-state actors and the institutional levels closest to citizens? Is it imaginable to start to recognize and conceptualize a new macro-paradigm for these changing cities, one which will rescue and dialogue with the paradigms defined during the last 20 years on the role of social movements in the city, using as a ‘lever’ images of ‘the power of powerlessness’ and the struggles against/within established systems?

The *Cities Are Us* concept, for us, meant recognizing that a plural set of solutions to ‘re-found’ and re-negotiate cities as a space where polarization, segregations and exclusions can be concretely challenged can only be built together with the citizens in each different context. We believe that social and territorial justice could represent the central axis of future transformations. In a world where mechanic references to the concept of participation diluted it into an easy ‘buzzword’ that has allowed for a perverse confluence of opposite and conflictive visions on the future of cities, we consider that reaffirming the relationships between the role of inhabitants and the meaning of and quality of their living spaces becomes necessary.

From this perspective, the conference wanted to broaden the discussions that CES has been promoting in recent years, through several events and studies which address the still-long path to be pursued for the research world to recognize and understand the complexity of movements that are shaking the planet, and how necessary it is to adopt, at a larger scale, a dialogue framed by the ‘epistemologies of the South’ approach, a perspective that aims to complement current mainstreaming tendencies and reach towards greater epistemic justice. In the *Cities Are Us* series of events, these reflections were combined with those elaborated by a CES team of researchers, a large network of collaborators in other countries, and the Committee on Social Inclusion and Participatory Democracy (CISDP) of United Cities and Local Governments during the 2010-2011 “Observatory of Inclusive Cities” project. Among a range of insights emerging from the case study analyses, researchers found that new approaches are being invented locally in diverse circumstances to address diversifying forms of social exclusion, situations in which ‘traditional’ forms of social policy are not working anymore and local governments, in all their diversity, are often not able to manage the issues and need to incorporate knowledge they do not have. The cases brought forward issues and insights relating both to the nature/concept of the city and to the understanding/concepts of local authorities, participation and tools for fostering empowerment. The papers in the current collection extend this knowledge, providing for our consideration, contemplation, and inspiration a wide array of situations, conditions, issues and options for action.

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## **Local Government, the Social and Evictions for the New City**

## Social Mix, Utopia or Reality: Portuguese Cases

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**Abstract:** In recent decades, technical and political discourses are devoting an increasing attention to social mix. However, the ambiguities regarding the operationalization of this principle as well as its effects are generating non-consensual debates, even if we find some agreement about an existing gap between theory and practice. Having this background into consideration, this article consists of three complementary parts. It commences by discussing the concept of social mix and its evolution, particularly in the context of European and Portuguese references, seeking to problematize and distinguish the differences between residential mix and social mix. In the second section, it is diachronically analysed the relevance of the concept ‘social mix’ in various political and institutional discourses, specially focusing on meaning and pragmatic implementation. Finally, based in the study of two paradigmatic cases of residential mix in Lisbon – Olivais and Alta de Lisboa, two urban expansion areas situated close to the North and Northeast boundaries of the city of Lisbon – a cross-comparative preliminary analysis of the operationalization and the expected effects of social mix is put forth. In this stage of the research, the aspects underlined comprehend the planning and the urban options, the differences in the residential mix strategies, the effects in the interaction between different social groups and some elements about the social trajectory of the neighbourhoods.

**Keywords:** housing policy, social mix, residential mix, Olivais Sul (Lisbon), Alta de Lisboa

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<sup>2</sup> Marina Carreiras is an Architect formed in the Instituto Superior Técnico (IST), Portugal. Master's degree student of Spatial Planning and Urbanism in Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning (IGOT-UL). Working as junior researcher in the project REHURB – Rehousing and Urban regeneration in the Urban Studies (NETURB), Centre for Geographical Studies, University of Lisbon (CEG-UL), Portugal. Main interests: social housing; architecture; urban geography; transformations in urban space.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Ferreira is a Geographer with a master's degree in urban studies. Her main research interests focus on the domains of housing, mainly social housing and social mix, and public space. For the last two years she has been working as a researcher in the Centre of Geographical Studies of the University of Lisbon, within the project REHURB - Rehousing and Urban Regeneration.

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## Introduction

Since the early 1800s, capitalist cities have developed high levels of socio-spatial segregation, corresponding to a clear separation between the residential neighbourhoods of the various social classes (Engels, 1844/1971). Although patterns of segregation and segregation levels present differences in the various metropolises of North American and Western European countries due to factors such as the specific historical evolution of each city or the contents of the housing and planning policies, socially segregated cities can be considered a hallmark of capitalism, a production mode that privileges spatial concentration. In the present stage of neoliberal capitalism, clearly associated to economic globalization, residualization of State intervention, privilege of financial – and speculative – capital and increasing precariousness of labour relations, new forms of poverty and social exclusion have developed, demonstrating a growing process of social polarization. This process, that could generate an increase in socio-spatial segregation leading to even higher levels of marginalization of the poorer, has been thwarted by the rehabilitation and regeneration operations of historical centres and old peripheries and also by the efforts to scatter public housing. In consequence, authors such as Salgueiro (1997) started to use the term fragmentation or micro-level segregation (segregation is evident at the block level and not at the neighbourhood level) to describe the changes observed in the socio-spatial urban patterns that started to develop since the 1980s. Although this evolution may correspond, in some metropolises, to an eventual reduction of socio-spatial segregation, it is not in itself sufficient to improve the living standards of the less privileged (worst housing conditions, lower accessibility, etc.) and may also contribute to a loss in neighbourhood propinquity, leading to situations of geographical contiguity but social rupture.

In this context, the assignment of a strong negative connotation to the spatial concentration of disadvantaged people, particularly in some public housing neighbourhoods, assuming explicitly that this is a disadvantage for them and implicitly a threat to the entire urban society, tends to legitimize and strengthen the importance of social mix strategies. However, it is worth asking whether the existence of social “problematic” enclaves legitimates in itself, the centrality that is often given in the current urban policies to social mix – in fact, *residential mix* – as the key factor for the promotion of inclusion.

Having this background into consideration, which is line with several discourses made by the Portuguese authorities about the merits of social mix or, more precisely, of residential dispersal and lower scale of public housing estates, this article aims to discuss the relevance of the concept ‘social mix’ in various political and institutional discourses, paying attention to both the meaning and the pragmatic implementation. In order to empirically sustain the latter goal, we specifically analyse the operationalization and the expected effects of social mix in two neighbourhoods of Lisbon (Olivais Sul and Alta de Lisboa), looking particularly into the promotion strategies and the organization of local space, the effects in the interaction between different social groups, the reduction of potential tension and conflict and the social trajectory of the residents.

## Social mix: the concept and its ambiguities

Social mix is often understood as a concept that refers to the coexistence in a given area (country, region, city, neighbourhood...) of residents from different social classes or socioeconomic status. In other words, it assumes the existence of socio-spatial diversity as opposed to the concentration of certain groups with homogeneous characteristics.<sup>5</sup> According to Arthurson (2012: 2), “social mix is frequently used to refer to the lack of variance in housing tenure or socioeconomic status. These terms refer respectively to the balance between social housing renters, homeowners and private renters, and middle-income and low income residents within a particular spatially defined area.”

According to Cole *et al.* (2001: 351) “the term ‘social mix’ ... cover[s] numerous overlapping characteristics of a population – age, tenure, class, income, ethnicity and so on. ‘Social mix’ suggests that the neighbourhood in question varies (to an indeterminate extent) on some or all of these factors. All neighbourhoods are, of course, ‘mixed’ to a degree – but some are more ‘mixed’ than others.”

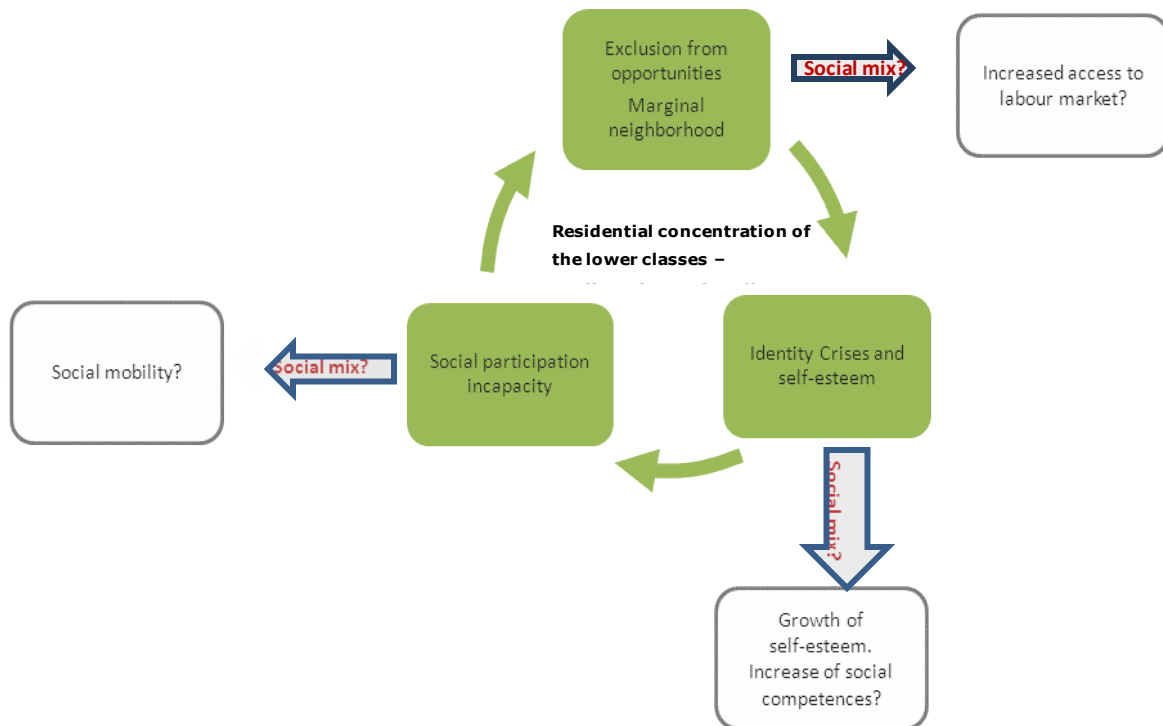
If the above-mentioned concepts of social mix seem to point to a relatively clear and cohesive definition, this is not true. In fact, there is a general consensus about the ambiguity of the term social mix, due to the quantity of indicators associated to the concept and its variation in terms of level and type of mix (social, economic, etc.). Another issue that has sparked criticism lies in the inaccuracies and uncertainties regarding its evocation. According to Arthurson (2012), although housing tenure mix and social mix are used as synonymous, they report to different realities. For example, changing the housing tenure mix in a neighbourhood may not lead to changes in socioeconomic mix. Referring to social housing estates, the fact of selling homes to tenants may not result necessarily in changes on the socioeconomic mix, but rather in a mix of tenures (private owners, private tenants and social tenants). Following this criticism, the debate around the concept of social mix has also pointed to issues of effectiveness. Take, for instance, the critiques made to insufficient empirical studies that confirm the effectiveness of social mix (Musterd and Anderssen, 2005a; Cole *et al.*, 2001), the vague way it is often presented and its practical implications in political speeches (Goodchild and Cole, 2001). Some scholars have actually questioned the desirable result caused by the development of this process (Figure 1), which would result in a social mix, with an increase in supposedly relevant social opportunities for all members of the society, particularly the less privileged (Musterd and Andersson, 2005).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that the term social mix is applied in cases of spatial concentration of disadvantaged social classes. The situations of socio-spatial concentration of individuals with strong economic power (for instance in situations of luxury gated communities) are not perceived as problematic by the politicians – and some academics – seem to exempt the social mix in these cases.

<sup>6</sup> In respect to this argument, “Will housing mix create social mix, and will social mix create social opportunity?” (Musterd *et al.*, 2005).

**Figure 1. Residential segregation and social mix – a game of controversial effects**



## Social mix in Europe: Notes on the evolution and application of the concept

Despite the strength that social mix is having in the most recent decades, the concept is not recent. The principles of social mix were born in the U.K. in the nineteenth century, implicit in the discourses of “utopian visionaries and paternalist industry tycoons” as a reaction to spatial segregation resulting from the industrial capitalism. The huge concentration of needy population in precarious conditions led to fear among the wealthier classes. The concentrations of “poor” communities were seen as potential generators of risk for the public health, source of conflicts and loss of social harmony. In that context, the emerging bourgeoisie understood as beneficial the de-concentration of the working classes and also the inter-class spatial proximity because they believed that being close to the values and behaviours of the middle class would make the working classes good citizens. Thus, it was understood that the origin of the social and urban decline was based on individual behaviour and not on issues associated to the social organization.

In the period between the two World Wars, the importance given to social mix started to decline, according to Sarkissian (1975) referred by Arthurson (2012), due to the war effort and in part also due to the Great Depression. However, in this period there were still some defenders of the social mix ideals, being particularly worth to mention Mumford. He kept a critical position towards the negative effects of spatial segregation, the concentration of vulnerable people and the formation of ghettos. According to the author, the social and economic heterogeneity led, on the one hand, to the exposure of more vulnerable people to different social and economic environments, and on the other hand, promoted an easier way of maintaining the financial balance of the neighbourhoods.

In the period after WWII, the huge housing needs were solved through an urban functionalist model with the main principles of large scale intervention and functional zoning. This type of solution solved the major housing needs at the time with homogeneous neighbourhoods that guaranteed a minimum of built and housing standards. However, in many cases they contributed, if not to increase, at least to keep the spatial segregation levels, establishing a social distinction in the access to housing typologies, to services and even to some facilities.

Nevertheless, by this time, the idea of the social mix started to materialise in the reformist and universalist principles of the Welfare State, contributing to a fair social breakdown of the benefits and expenses in the various social pillars, including housing, even if this one has been considered the “wobbly pillar of welfare state” (Torgersen, 1987). Also worth mentioning is that in a second phase the criticism to the massification of residential offer, materialized in large, similar and homogeneous social neighbourhoods, led to a progressive generalization of the principles of social mix, which contributed to the promotion of public housing estates, quite large in some cases, that normatively incorporated a mixture of residential typologies and social groups. Thus, at the same time that the disadvantages of spatial concentration of deprived groups were limited, a principle of spatial justice was incorporated, enlarging the initial notion of equity in the access to housing.

Presently, the idea of the social mix seems to recover some of the principles present in the criticism that came up during the Victorian England, “specifically arguments about social mix as a tool to support propinquity between rich and poor or different classes and as a means for providing middle class role models to educate the poor about the proper way to live in society” (Arthurson, 2012: 26). The renovated interest in the social mix is due to several factors that, according to some authors, tend to converge in the large “problematic” housing estates. The prosperity that was felt in many of these areas in the period after the II World War changed as a consequence of the major economic, social and political changes occurred in Europe after mid-1970s, leading to a new reality guided by uncertainty and the emergence of urban fragmentation processes and also of growing social polarization (Salgueiro, 1998; Hall and Rowlands, 2005; Marcuse and Kempen, 2000). If some of the large scale housing estates showed problems from the very beginning, the new economic conjuncture contributed to their degradation (inability of regular maintenance, deterioration of the public space and also of the infrastructures; low demand and abandoning of the dwellings) and consequently to the depreciation of many of these estates in the hierarchy of the real estate market. Therefore, there was a trend for the concentration of the more vulnerable strata of the population and an increase of social problems (unemployment, decreasing social cohesion, increasing anti-social and criminal behaviours, racial tensions – Kempen *et al.*, 2005) and the positive image they had before, changed, in many cases, to a negative one.

The contemporary retrieval of the social mix principles in Europe occurs in a context of paradigmatic change operated in the models of planning (strategic planning with public-private partnerships or place making planning and the ‘communicative’ planning theory’, as mentioned by Hall and Rowlands, 2005) and as a reaction aiming to mitigating the negative effects associated to the concentration of population of lower social and economic strata whose process of disadvantage would supposedly continue in time and even over generations due to the so-called “neighbourhood effects”. However, the promotion of the mix and the current model of planning also show a greater compatibility with the present form of neoliberal capitalism that, according to Harvey (2011), finds in the process of urbanization and city restructuring, key strategies for a successful reinvestment of capitalist surplus. Actually, speculative investments have found, until the 2008 crisis, big opportunities in the

alliance between financial capital (mainly through the expansion of credit in the 1980s and 1990s) and real estate capital, through the expansion of home ownership that has fed urban sprawl and the spreading of urban regeneration operations. And all these processes are developed within a “double mix motto”: *i) spatially*, meaning that functional and residential mix in different parts of the city should be promoted, at least temporarily, until the poorer can be expelled to other places and redevelopment implemented in order to increase surplus extraction and *ii) institutionally*, leading to public–private partnerships or to the alienation of the public housing patrimony, involving all these operations the use of credit, therefore contributing to increase the power position of financial agents and their gains.

### **Social mix: Non-consensual debates and critical perspectives**

As shown, the complexity of social mix – its conceptual nature and effects – result into a significant lack of consensus and intense discussions. If some consensus has been achieved among most of the authors about the negative effects of the socio-spatial concentration in the industrial cities of the late nineteenth century or in several large social housing estates of the Post World War II period, in recent decades the claimed beneficial effects of social mix have met several critiques.

In 1961, Gans was among the first to question the relevance of heterogeneous communities and the effectiveness of their implementation. According to Gans, the heterogeneity is desirable since revenue taxes are the main source of funding of community local services. However, he alerts that social mix should be regarded as strictly complementary to the welfare state, thus not replacing its support, education or community development programs. According to the sociologist, if the social and economic inequalities that underpin the different classes were effectively taken into account, opportunities should arise and be socially distributed, thus turning communities more heterogeneous. Gans still warns us about the danger of forcing heterogeneity by mixing different classes in the same neighborhood, which may generate conflicts between community members. Several studies developed by the author showed that homogeneity could sometimes be over heterogeneity. The main reasoning behind this perspective is that the sharing of common values and interests is more likely to promote deeper social ties than superficial social interaction (Gans, 1961, cited in Arthurson, 2012: 34)<sup>7</sup>. In addition, one might add the emotional distress identified in working class residents when moving from homogenous communities to neighborhoods with greater income disparity (*cf.* Young and Willmott, 1957, cited in Arthurson, 2012: 34).

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<sup>7</sup> This should be the case, for instance, when strong relations of solidarity are forged between residents, often compensating for the strong socio-economic divides of weak welfare states, such as Portugal. This is in line with the rationale that underlines the existence of a strong ‘welfare society’ in such a country, as mentioned by Santos (1994).

**Table 1. Synthesis of the evolution of the concept of social mix**

	2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century	After WWII	End of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century / Beginning of the 21 <sup>st</sup> century
Context and strategies (public housing)	<p><i>a) Macro framework</i></p> <p>Industrialization;</p> <p>Huge concentration of needy population in poor conditions in the urban areas.</p> <p><i>b) Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of the first types of housing for “workers” sponsored by the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie;</li> <li>- First experiences of public housing for deprived groups started at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.</li> </ul>	<p><i>a) Macro framework</i></p> <p>Reconstruction of the European cities;</p> <p>Keynesian Welfare State with variants that incorporated housing as one of the pillars of social policies;</p> <p><i>b) Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1<sup>st</sup> phase: promotion of large scale homogeneous neighbourhoods far away from the city centre (urban expansion model based on the principles of zoning and functionalism);</li> <li>- 2<sup>nd</sup> phase (as a reaction to the problems originated by the massification of housing offer): Promotion of neighbourhoods of different housing typologies and different kinds of occupation</li> </ul>	<p><i>a) Macro framework</i></p> <p>Neoliberalism and economic Globalization;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Greater value to homeownership comparatively to renting, in the majority of the countries;</li> <li>- Expansion of financial capitalism that found in the real estate business a central area of valuing (until the 2008 crisis);</li> <li>- Progressive retraction of the public intervention in the domain of housing supply.</li> </ul> <p><i>b) Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need of physical and social regeneration of the large social housing estates;</li> <li>- Alienation of public housing;</li> <li>- Residualization of the social housing (targeting deprived social groups).</li> </ul>
Objectives (resource to the social mix)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dilution of the concentration of the working classes reducing risks for public health and the possibilities for conflict.</li> <li>- Propinquity of the labour classes to people of other classes seen as beneficial (effect of the <i>promotion by contagion</i>)</li> </ul> <p><i>Note:</i> Principles of social mix present in the discourse of utopian urban thinkers, but mostly absent of the “philanthropic” or public housing promotion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guarantee of equity and social justice, because this spatial segregation established the distinction in the access to the services but generalised it (services and facilities are not homogeneously distributed)</li> <li>- Interaction between different classes was pointed out as an added value in both directions and with special effect on children and youth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Growing opportunities in a context of concentrated poverty through the presence of models of better-off classes;</li> <li>- To stop the development of a “culture” of poverty and dependence;</li> <li>- Social and financial difficulties in managing the social housing estates (situations characterized by complexity and needs).</li> </ul>

Source: based in Arthurson (2008), Cole and Goodchild (2001), Harman (2009), and Harvey (2011).

In recent years, the number of authors to point out critical aspects of the social mix and its effects has multiplied. In reference to various studies and analyzes about mixed communities, Darcy remarks that they “consistently conclude that physical mixing of the residences of household with different incomes does not, of itself, lead to social mixing and thus to the role-modeling or networking which is thought to help ameliorate poverty and disadvantage” (Darcy, 2010: 5). Moreover, in the view of several authors, the desires and aspirations of low-income households are not usually taken into account. Their preference over living in either a homogeneous or mixed community is often simply replaced by the discretionary judgment of academics, planners and politicians.

Although there is a generalized consensus regarding the existence of neighborhood effects, their scope and intensity remain largely unknown. According to Mantley *et al.* (2011:



3), “there is surprisingly little convincing evidence that living in deprived neighbourhoods really makes people poor(er)” and concludes that “policies designed to tackle poverty should target individuals rather than the areas within which they live.” Instead of focusing on neighbourhood effects, Mantley underlines specific economic and political structures which enable the context for the rising of poverty, such as: competitiveness over equity and redistribution, salary reduction and precarious work relations as common corporate strategy, absolutization of the principles of representative democracy over participatory processes at the national level, stigmatization of the economically disadvantaged, and so on.

Lupton and Tunstall (2008), cited by Darcy (2010: 6), argue that “public housing redevelopment projects which claim to use mixed income as a means of addressing poverty are explicitly ideological, and form part of the neoliberal agenda for economic transformation of cities.” Seen in this light, the ideal of a *posteriori* social mix may probably reinforce the gentrification drives of late capitalism, providing a discursive excuse for the further out casting of certain households and residents, while at the same time conveying market forces and the electorate the illusion of a contingent solution (dispersion, often demolition) to deeper structural problems of the city and the society.

## Social mix in Portugal

Although the first social housing experiences go back to the 1910s (Teixeira, 1992) and the development of a more consistent and highly ideological public housing policy has to attributed to the beginnings of Estado Novo in the 1930s, only after the late 1950s/early 1960s we can speak about a promotion of public housing targeting explicitly the low privileged social groups and making a clear use of mass production materialized in large public housing estates.

From the second half of the 1960s, when rural-urban migration intensified and the housing shortages increased, we assisted to a growth in public promotion that seek to partially satisfy the quantitative demand of the lower classes, based in pragmatic and functionalist actions that in metropolitan areas were embodied in so-called Integrated Plans, consisting of large housing estates (more than 1000 dwellings) (Amilcar *et al.*, 2011). It should be noted that if some concerns with the promotion of residential mix appear in the late 1940s and 1950s discourses related to *Bairro de Alvalade* and especially *Bairro dos Olivais*, in the following decades the public housing policy has incorporated principles of higher social homogeneity, being the process of slums’ relocation the starting point for the promotion of social housing in the metropolises of Lisbon and Porto, which points to its essentially reactive and residual character (Serra, 2002). Even after the democratization of the regime in 1974, paradigmatic projects of state intervention in social housing (excluding *SAAL – Serviço de Apoio Ambulatório Local*, which provided a more integrated approach and aimed the participation of population), including the *Integrated Plans* (1970s) and the *PER – Special Rehousing Plan* (after 1993) were based on functionalist principles, involving predominantly peripheral locations and socio-economic homogeneous compositions.

This reality prompted the emergence of problems similar to those that have previously been detected in other countries, repeating old mistakes (spatial concentration and peripheralization of disadvantaged social groups, construction delays in the conclusion of public spaces, construction of gigantic buildings, deficit of facilities), although it was already known that the solutions should point to a more integrated and inclusive approach (Coelho, 2009), which, albeit implicitly, (since it is never mentioned explicitly in the main documents), comprehended the principles of social mix.

In Portugal the term social mix is not “an operational concept for action nor a political or legislative principle for spatial intervention” (Menezes and Almeida 2006: 4). This is a trend that may partly be explained by low levels of social segregation and more recently ethnic segregation in Portuguese metropolises, when compared with other European contexts (Malheiros, 2002). In addition, some political options, such as the “unrevealed” objective of concentrating and isolating the population considered “problematic” – to exercise a better control – and also the need to reduce construction costs by increasing the size of the housing estates to achieve economies of scale, also seem to contribute to the limited and late incorporation of the housing mix principle. However, the desired social diversity is nonetheless evoked in various policies and intervention measures, particularly in recent years, as described by Menezes and Almeida (2006), which mention that several objectives – cohesion, integration, inclusion and social integration – have implied the idea of social mix, even if this did not effectively materialize.

Considering that these positions refer to the idea of social mix as an implicit option, this paper assumes a cross-comparative perspective and intends to understand how principles of social heterogeneity were pursued at the time of implementation of two large-scale urban operations developed in Lisbon in different socio-temporal and political contexts: Olivais Sul and Alta de Lisboa.

### *Olivais Sul*

The plan of Olivais Sul was part of an operation of large-scale public initiative (covering Olivais Norte, Olivais Sul and Chelas), developed from the late 1950s onward, aiming to respond to increasing housing needs. These needs were regulated in Decree-Law n. 42454 of the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 1959, which expresses concerns about the uncontrolled growth of Lisbon, the fast increase in population and the inability of the existing facilities to support that development. The above mentioned Decree-Law, ensured three essential conditions for implementing the Olivais plan: i) “obtain land through the criterion of expropriation due to public utility emergency”; ii) prediction of “the financial costs of urbanization and works”; iii) “assumption of planning and analysis as the agency means to activate real estate, financial and technical resources for the construction of housing” (Nunes, 2007: 45).

The public initiative was preponderant, as we can see in the acquisition of land by expropriation, in the conception of urban design by the *Technical Office for Housing of the Lisbon Town Hall* (GTH), in the planning of facilities and in the design of buildings, carried out by “the entities best able to promote the construction of homes with marked social interest” (Decree-law N. 42454).

The Decree-law set guidelines for the urban planning options. In addition to the idea of including the new housing estates in the overall city planning, the document advocates a socio-spatial balance based on the idea “that the new units must include people from all economic strata in order to avoid the inconveniences of social segregation that are not part of the Lisbon's neighbourhoods tradition.” The legislation concretized social diversity through a minimum rate of 70% social housing units “of all housing constructed per year” (Article 3 of Decree-Law N. 42454). Social housing was classified according with four different types of rent. This corresponded to a stratified social hierarchy that reflected differences in costs of land and houses but also in the sizes of the construction areas and type of materials used, considering “the general and local costs of urbanization and current costs of land.” This hierarchical logic resulted in proportionality of costs. In this sense, the constructive and typological diversity assumed economic and financial reasons and more costly housing

supposedly generated funds for the construction of houses and facilities to people with lower incomes. Thus the “general composition of categories, rents and housing costs causes made the new 'urban units', regardless of its size, representative of the image of the non-segregated city, despite its pyramidal organization” (Nunes, 2007: 50). This question is evidenced by the rules of house allocation, subject to criteria that include subjective questions as “good moral, civic and professional conduct” (Nunes, 2007: 54). These criteria based on moral issues translate the importance of adhering to the political and social conceptions of *Estado Novo* and not to a universal scheme (Nunes, 2007).

The plan's design defines a “hierarchical cell structure and a functional zoning” (Hector, 2001) in which the various cells, composed of several groups of dwellings of different types (neighbourhood units) were organized around a civic and commercial centre. Given the categorization of the social dwellings, the planners took “a compromise between the concentration of houses by category (to avoid problems of segregation and social exclusion) and the indiscriminate mixing of different categories” (Hector, 2001), which resulted in the association of the nuclear cores of similar categories.

Today, more than 50 years after the drafting of the plan, Olivais Sul is often singled out as an innovative experiment due to the promotion and construction of social housing on a large scale and also the implementation of new constructive, architectural and urban planning solutions. The evaluation the plan's long after the settlement of first residents, points to a success regarding the relationship established between housing and local services and facilities. However this success, coupled with the reduced presence of jobs, conferred to that territory the status of dormitory. Given the initial features of the plan, the most common criticisms focus on how the central cell – the civic and commercial centre – was developed. The initial idea of joining different social and economic functions in a more traditional urban layout, with streets and squares, was changed into a closed dense urban *ensemble* geared towards economic business. Additionally, the wishful levels of interaction of the various social groups were never significant, except for children and young people who grew up in the neighbourhood and shared facilities and public spaces. In fact, the social careers of these people seem to have been, in most cases, more marked by the economic and cultural capital of their families than by the condition of sharing the same neighbourhood.

### *Alta de Lisboa*

The intention of intervening in Alta de Lisboa occurs in the 1980s due to the marginality of the place, constrained physically and socially. Despite its degradation “with poor access, limited by the proximity of the airport, with a strong presence of poor and/or illegal construction and informal economic activities” (Pinho, 2011: 301), the neighbourhood also shared a high potential due to the proximity to the Lisbon centre and to more consolidated urban spaces.

In 1982 the first plan for the Alta de Lisboa was prepared aiming at the rehabilitation of degraded areas. However the scale of the housing problem was such<sup>8</sup> that made the use of traditional social housing programs economically impossible. The municipality of Lisbon

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<sup>8</sup> According to the 1980 Musgueira register of D.S.COPRAD, 14,755 residents had to be rehoused.

assumed that the intervention had to be feasible and effective, and developed the idea of “integrated programmes of rehousing construction and free market home ownership in urban areas of great social diversity” (Lisbon Municipality, 2009). This was based “on the assumption that proper management of land assets by public authorities would attract and enable the private action necessary to implement it” (Pinho, 2011: 301). In 1984, these intentions lead to the signature of an agreement (a public–private partnership) between the city of Lisbon and a consortium/group of firms with the objective of implementing the plan of Alta de Lisboa.

The public–private partnership model attributed to the municipality of Lisbon the following tasks: the provision of land, the creation of the legal and administrative framework required to implement and facilitate the operation and the mediation between the various actors. For its part, the private consortium SGAL<sup>9</sup> would be responsible for the design of the plan and its implementation (social housing construction, facilities, public spaces and facilities) (Pinho, 2011).

The first plan, designed with the main purposes of regenerating the run down areas and rehouse the resident population, has undergone several revisions and, in light of the 1984 partnership, it became an opportunity to expand the “Central City supported by the extension of the Historical Axis” (Lisbon Municipality, 2009). The new plan was finally ratified in 1998, now within the logic of urban expansion and as an expression of a new contract negotiation resulting from the “opportunity to use state funding for the construction of social housing” within the PER.<sup>10</sup> The plan conceived by Eduardo Leira consecrated rules to prevent that the housing areas become mono functional, imposing a minimum and a maximum percentage of social housing dwellings in the various sectors of the plan. Also the diversity of functions is ruled by limiting the residential use in the multiple units of Planning and Management.

The implementation of the plan started with the buildings for rehousing under the PER. In 2009, year of the monitoring report of the Urban Plan of the Alto do Lumiar, it is mentioned that the relocations were in general implemented; however, this development was not accompanied by the consolidation of most of the remaining territory, namely in what concerns the homeownership promotion, the public spaces, the social facilities and the streets network. The attempt to fasten the process through the location of social housing on land that was more easily expropriated is mentioned as a reason for this slow pace at an early stage of the project. This resulted in a spatial relocation of land uses and “many of the building sites for which complicated expropriation processes were foreseen are now being allocated to other uses, such as free market housing for sale, which excluded the possibility of resorting to expropriation” (Pinho, 2011: 305). This fact enhanced the difficulty of integrating the social housing buildings and questioned the financial viability of the model due to the slower selling of the free market flats.

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<sup>9</sup> Management Society of Alta de Lisboa.

<sup>10</sup> Special Rehousing Programme aiming the eradication of the illegal dwellings in the municipalities of Lisbon and Oporto metropolitan areas, through the resettlement of the families.

**Table 2. Olivais and Alta de Lisboa, comparative features**

	<b>Olivais Sul</b>	<b>Alta de Lisboa</b>
Plan Authors	GTH - Rafael Botelho / Carlos Duarte	Arq. Eduardo Leira (revisão plano)
Size	186 ha	300 ha
Number of dwellings	7 996	17 500
Expected Population	38 250 hab	65 000 hab
Plan Date	1960/1961	1998 (year of the plan revision)
Beginning of plan implementation	After plan elaboration	After plan elaboration
Plan conclusion	Finished in 1971 by GTH. The shopping centre in the central unit was concluded in 1995. The whole central unit is nearing completion (differently from planned).	In progress; the rehousing estates were built in the beginnings of the plan implementation, but the road system, the facilities, the public spaces, shops and services are not completed as well as the buildings for private promotion.
Local pre-existing infrastructures	Rural land near industrial areas	Former presence of precarious dwellings
Legal framework	<b>DL n° 42 454 of the 18th August 1959</b> Establishes the plan for the construction of affordable dwellings to low income families in Lisbon.	<b>Ministers Council Resolution° 126/98.</b> Ratifies the Urban Plan for Alto do Lumiar.
Urban principles	Space organization in neighborhood units – hierarchical cells structure. Residential function dominant; cells of proximity services and retail.	The goal is to “produce city”. The key principles involve urban density, functional (housing, commerce and services supposedly of various hierarchical levels) and social diversity, and the extension of the existing urban axis.
Promotion	Public actors dominant – central administration, Lisbon municipality, corporative social agents connected to public sectors (Ministries, polices, etc.)	Public (Lisbon municipality)-private partnership. Corporate management and reduction of public intervention.
Residential mix norms	70% social housing and 30% free market	3,500 flats for social housing (20%) 14,000 flats for private promotion (ownership)
Common interaction spaces	Public spaces and facilities facilitate social interaction especially among the youth	Today, the absence of common facilities and the fragmentation of public spaces inhibit social interaction (exception – <i>Quinta das Conchas e dos Lilases</i> ).

The implementation process is still not finished and the situation of fragmentation and no conclusion is evident. The consolidated urban fabric, the urban density, the concept of street and public space and the variety of uses advertised<sup>11</sup> are only identified as a whole in some parts of Alta de Lisboa. Given the sustained “no conclusion situation” there is a coexistence of the degradation of existing infrastructures with the non-implementation of other infrastructures. The estates built for the social housing are completed but not the ones for free housing. In this sense there is a debate which refers to the non-integration of the rehoused, not only due to the physical isolation of the dwellings and the lack of candidates for the free market home ownership apartment but also due to the lack of community counseling and absence of social facilities at the time of relocation. On the issue of isolation of the rehousing estates we must add the closing of the spaces around the private promotion buildings.

Various aspects stand out from the two urban projects comparison. The genesis of the neighbourhoods is different although both interventions aimed urban expansion. In Olivais Sul, the urbanization of an rural area was promoted, though surrounded by industrial areas; however in Alta de Lisboa urban expansion assumes the character of re-urbanization based on the redevelopment of a degraded urban area. The political and economic contexts of the two interventions are clearly distinct. In the 1950s/60s, in the case study of Olivais was possible to build social housing with a high prominence of public initiative making use of mechanisms of expropriation in a process that was almost completed in 10 years, despite the delays in the conclusion of public spaces and some social facilities. In the context of the Alta de Lisboa, the intervention model, with a view to economic viability, was guided by a rational of business management through a public-private partnership that, over a 10-year timespan, was unable to complete several structural elements of the project.

The Olivais Sul urban plan options correspond to an urban area mostly residential in character, though endowed with various social facilities, shops and services, originally all targeting the local population. In Alta de Lisboa it is proclaimed the variety of urban functions, seeking a level of urban livelihood similar to the one of main areas of the consolidated city. The different housing categories in Alta de Lisboa and Olivais Sul are perceived by the distinctive quality of construction materials, corresponding to distinct occupation by the various classes. In the case of Olivais Sul, the scattering of the buildings and the quasi-total absence of private exterior spaces, leads to a perception of the outer space as a continuum rather than as a set of spaces associated with a given social category. In Alta de Lisboa, the existence of a more rigid urban design, the presence of closed and semi-closed gated communities, public spaces with distinct types of construction and levels of maintenance make almost inevitable a labeling of the “various public spaces” as more or less affluent. It should be noted that architectural and urban features of Olivais are evoked in different contexts by its quality. In the case of Alta de Lisboa, recognition achievement is based, at least at this stage, in hiring famous architects.

In view of the people who benefit from social housing, the approach is different in both interventions. In Alta de Lisboa the population living in social housing comes from precarious housing, i.e., social housing is restricted to excluded populations (social groups and economically insolvent and/or poor). In Olivais, the typology of social housing was more

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.altadelisboa.com>.

diverse and targeted various social groups – with an over-representation of public employees – resulting, at least conceptually, in a greater social mix.

As far as social mix strategies are concerned, we found that both interventions promoted measures to ensure a residential mix, essentially based on the proximity and contiguity between different housing categories. In both projects, the desired interaction between populations with different social backgrounds somehow appears as a consequence of the residential mix, not being object of specific urban strategies and ending up almost exclusively in the idea of organically sharing public spaces, facilities, shops and services.

## Concluding remarks

This paper has shown that the principles of social mix are not new and have stood a long way since the second half of the nineteenth century, both in the European discourse *about* and in the practice *of* housing policies. Despite this persistence, social mix has revealed a noteworthy diversity of applications and interpretations in various European contexts. In Portugal, experiences that explicitly assume those principles are relatively scarce, though a few housing estates built in the 1950s and 1960s during the Salazar dictatorship, alluded to the concept of social mix through the implementation of residential mix. That is the case of Olivais Sul, which has been chosen due to its longevity and historical significance. After a relative decline in the explicit adoption of social mix principles between 1970 and 1990 (with an implicit exception in the post-revolutionary period between 1975 and 1980), this trend has reemerged in the last 15-20 years, but now associated to a new urban planning and housing policy rational, as in the case of Alta de Lisboa.

Although we have analyzed two different urban units in terms of programming, socio-economic composition of residents, maturity of the projects and socio-political contexts, it is clear in both plans that residential mix has somehow been implemented. That does not mean, however, that a social mix automatically takes place. Nevertheless, there are factors which may promote inter-class interactions, but the differences between the two areas in this domain are meaningful.

In Olivais Sul, a plan which may be associated with the second phase of post-World War II modernist urban planning in Europe, there is not a dual social class composition of residents, as there is in Alta de Lisboa (exclusively private owners, from the upper-middle class and social housing tenants). The variety of tenures and socio-economic strata of the first neighbourhood blurs the micro-scale social polarization, as opposed to Alta de Lisboa. Moreover, although in Olivais Sul the design of the buildings illustrates (to a certain extent) the socio-economic origin of its residents, this visual effect of class differentiation is mitigated by the diversity of typologies and by the appealing framing offered by the public space scenario. In the contemporary urban plan of Alta de Lisboa, on the other hand, flexibility, privatization of spaces and urban “business setting” is overtly assumed. Here, the combination of these features with the organization of space (fragmented, organized in a regular pattern structured along the road-axis) and the building design leads to a striking difference between the privately owned buildings and those of social housing. It should be underlined the difference of contexts, especially since the project of Alta de Lisboa is not yet concluded, thus limiting the comparative analysis of the two territories, which seem at the moment to follow distinct urban evolution paths.

In conclusion, it should also be reminded that the physical proximity between different housing tenures does not ensure, by itself, the fulfillment of the principles of social mix. In order to achieve that deeper level of social interaction, the need for quality public spaces and

facilities must necessarily be addressed, but other immaterial measures that on the one hand promote the empowerment of the socially unprivileged and on the other hand contribute to effective inter-class interaction are absolutely necessary. Without those elements, capable of releasing the potential of socialization, there can be neither promotion of (shared) living nor of social mix.

All things considered, in spite of the positive character associated to contemporary social mix, “the production of more mixed areas within cities, situation that can be interpreted as a more democratic access to urban space, is in fact largely the product of the present stage of development of the neoliberal model that has extensively used real estate investment as a key instrument to intensify its accumulation strategies. In fact, area mix is often not followed by a strengthening of social mix and social interaction levels, therefore challenging and not promoting urban cohesion” (Malheiros, forthcoming). This means that social mix should not be the one and only structuring pillar of socio-spatial public policies, enabling the fading out or the residualization of the other social policies (in education, job promotion, encouragement of positive social interaction, etc.), which are crucial for equity and socio-spatial justice.

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## Public Participation in the Urban Planning of Maputo and Lisbon Suburban Neighborhoods: Virtues and Ambiguities

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**Abstract:** This paper brings us reflections about South and North territories, in which we were involved: Maxaquene or Polana Caniço in Maputo and Cova da Moura or Vertente Sul de Odivelas in Greater Lisbon, what is the underlying theme? Despite their differences, in the dominant context of rapid urbanization and neoliberal globalization these are four situations of self-build suburban areas located outside the urbanized city that saw their land value increased and were recently exposed to public intervention with participatory planning processes. The four cases are seen as social arenas and laboratories of a daily struggle for the right to place and the city. Focusing these empirical cases, this paper reflects on the ambiguities of participation in planning, claimed as well as by those who advocate an emancipatory perspective and by those who see it as a reproduction of the dominant system.

**Keywords:** suburban neighborhoods, urban renovation, qualification, public participation, social arena

### Introduction

This article reflects about current practices of more or less participatory planning in peri-central (sub)urbanized neighborhoods of two Lusophone capitals, Lisbon and Maputo, in countries marked by high levels of inequality: Portugal, on the South, a semi-peripheral country and one of the most unequal of Europe (Santos, 2011: 32); and Mozambique, on the South, with one of the lowest human development indexes, and one of the most unequal countries in the world (PNUD, 2010: 160-163).

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Today, we can see a growing fragmentation and dualization of the city – which, in Harvey’s words (2007: 12), “is being dissolved into micro-states of rich and poor” – as well as the extension of its semi-urbanized suburbs, especially expressive in countries of the South. At the same time, voices are multiplying in the defense of participatory processes in the planning of suburban territories. Both, the increase of socio-spatial inequalities and the defense of participatory planning, are shaped by the same global contemporary society, dominated by a market economy, liberal and competitive, which accentuates inequalities, whose shapes result of its articulation with local particularities and of the confrontation with the voices and practices of resistance, of fight against dominant thought, and construction of alternatives.

On the one hand, the forceful logic of capital valorization dominates the production of the urban space, investing in renovation and profitability of the areas, which occupy a strategic location from the viewpoint of capital valorization, generally of greater centrality. The phenomenon of gentrification of (sub)urbanized peri-central areas (Domingues, 1994), usually inhabited by populations with small resources, are repeated today. These areas are targets of processes of market valorization for their strategic position, which we include in what Harvey (2008: 9) designates as “creative destruction”, interpreted as the demolition of existing constructions and dislocation of their residents, with the aim to renovate and recapitalize these areas.

On the other hand, the problems and socio-territorial conflicts that are created in this process of accelerated urban transformation characterized by privatization and socio-spatial exclusion, have called for mechanisms of market regulation and redistribution of raised values. The logics of the system’s reproduction and of the social tensions muffle interconnect with the logics of resistance/resilience and transformation/emancipation. From a Weberian perspective, understanding the state as a concrete entity and part of the relation between the forces in presence, the representatives of the state assume a contradictory role, defending at the same time the market’s valorization of capital and the common good (Santos, 1984).

Regarding urban planning, the functionalist and rationalist perspective introduced by the Modern Movement, which favored technical knowledge and top-down processes, served since the mid of the twentieth century, in the old Europe destroyed by war as well as in the American continent, as justification for many operations of urban renovation, consisting in massive demolition of older urban areas, deemed as unhealthy, and in the dislocation of its inhabitants. The impact of these interventions have been the object of many socio-urban studies (for example, Coing, 1966) and of strong critiques concerning the principles and practices of the modernist planning, as was the case of Jacobs (1961), who reacted against the segregation and expulsion of the most disadvantaged from the central areas.

As a result from these critiques, different approaches emerge around an interactionist paradigm (Raposo, 2012), in opposition to the dominant rationalist paradigm, which valorize the spatial and social pre-existing conditions and its qualification, the Right to the Place and to the City, as well as the importance of the process, which start to be seen as a part of the solution, defending bottom-up or mixed practices. This new paradigm, called communicative by some (Khakee, 2008), looks at how to obtain compromises and is based in a concept of reflexivity (Asher, 2001), in an iterative process between theory and practice, between research and project, and has as one of its premises the public participation and the involvement of those interested in the process of the project’s conception and implementation. In this line, inspired by the action sociology of Giddens and the communicative action of Habermas, Healey (1997) defends the practices of collaborative planning, as a way to the “co-existence in shared places”, arguing that every decision has to be taken in social arenas of

discussion. In answer to critiques, in later texts, the author revisits the concept (Healey, 2006) and emphasizes the attention to the complexities and diversities of the contexts, the situation and the practical action of urban governance.

The interactionist paradigm gains defenders, believers and practitioners, but also detractors that defend themselves with speeches and approaches more rationalist, functionalist, technocratic and top-down perspectives. They came from the logic of public institutions, held by election, power webs and administrative and bureaucratic procedures, or they serve directly neoliberal logics and practices, focused on demand of urban competitiveness (Raposo, 2012). As we refer above, and in line with other writers such as Maricato (2002), these two logics are not dissociated.

The planning itself and the inclusion of participation in plans came late in Portugal and Mozambique. Until 1974, a system of planning defined by the Decree-Law from 1934 dominated in both countries. It was centralized, following a top-down logic, where participation was limited to consultation (in form of a public inquiry). The plans had a normative and prohibitive character and aimed to hold back urban growth, based, in the ex-colony, on a segregating division between colonial city and suburbs of the “indigenous population”, the “cement city” and the “caniço”. With the 25<sup>th</sup> of April of 1974 in Portugal and the independence of Mozambique in 1975, the mid 1970s are in this revolutionaries contexts marked with projects of public intervention in the (sub)urbanized housing suburbs, marked by collaborative and bottom-up logics, based on a strict interaction between technical teams and inhabitants. This is the case of “Serviço de Apoio Ambulatório Local” (SAAL) at a national scale in Portugal, and of the replanning project in the neighborhoods of Maxaquene and Polana Caniço, in a local scale in Maputo. These two examples of rupture had no continuation as they were interrupted, in Portugal, by the restoration of the “democratic order”, in 1976, and in Mozambique by the bureaucratization and centralization of the socialist regime.

With the neoliberal turn which marks both countries from the mid 1980’s, participation in planning is marked by two concepts: reclamation of the political liberalization and participative democratization, aiming for transformation and Right to the City, in the perspective of Lefebvre (1968); and insertion into a logic of liberal economy, contention of the regulatory role of the state and entering of new actors in the urban scene, civil society and private actors. In this medley, the participatory ideology becomes a concept in the dominant discourse and is imposed by international agencies as a condition for obtaining financial resources. The political and technical actors of public institutions have different approaches of the concept and appropriate it according to their interests and societal perspectives: in a top-down approach, only for consultation or as a way to contend local claims – by creating a bureaucracy of participation (Raposo, 2012); or in a mixed perspective of collaboration and transformation of their own view of the world, capable of integrating the visions of the others.

We looked at this thematic from an interactionist and a synthesis perspective which considers structures (economical, socio-cultural and political) as conditioning action and directing cultural and technical models – the *habitus* and the practice theory of Bourdieu (1987) or the dualism of structure and the structuration theory of Giddens (1987/84); but which considers also the capability of the actors, the revolution of the “quotiden” that already Lefebvre spoke about. According to this heuristic perspective, we understand that institutional actors point of view are (re)constructed also in interaction with the local actors point of view an agency, which also are conditioned by the structures. The capacity to redirect a plan for the wishes of the residents in defense of their Right to the Place (to remain in the place of residence) and to the City (creating quality and promoting their participation in the

transformation of the place) – the urban inclusion – will depend at the same time on the market value attributed to this place and on the power of economic groups that are interested in it, as well as on the capacity of resistance and counter-action of the populations and the allies they can associate with.

The concept of social arena will be used, in line with the socio-anthropology (Long, 1992; Olivier de Sardan, 1995), as a tool for reading these dynamics, interactions and complex processes of urban intervention. For each case we present the various points of views, rationalities, interests, strategies and positions of the actors and their agency in planning process and/or in urban transformation.

The four cases presented here, all in process, primarily Maputo (Maxaquene and Polana Canico) and secondly Lisbon (Cova da Moura and Vertente Sul de Odivelas), show differences regarding the capital force and procedures (more or less violent) and their articulation with the political powers (using the normative framework serving the capital or the residents), the role of planning and the university, the level of participation and of the inhabitants leeway.

## **Public participation and alienation of peri-central neighborhoods in Maputo: Polana Canico and Maxaquene**

In the early years after the Independence, Maxaquene and Polana Caniço were subject to a pioneering plan of participatory redevelopment, designed and implemented between 1976 and 1978, promoted by the National Housing Office with the technical and financial support of the United Nations (Raposo, 2007: 224). In line with the national policy of changing suburbs into city, the adopted approach was based on the Right to the Place, improving and replanning existing conditions, redesigning street hierarchy and the limits of each plot or patch, as well as supplying necessary basic public equipment (namely fountains for water supply, school, health center, district town).

The land where those two neighborhoods are located, in the border of the urbanized city, in pericentral areas with good accessibility, is gaining today an increasing commercial value. In consequence, a progressive removal of these self-produced areas and their renewal for business development (Maxaquene) or residential development for middle and upper classes (Polana Caniço). Both are being subject to informal land transactions, in a gradual process of gentrification, and underwent planning actions in the last years: the upgrading of Maxaquene, a non-governmental organization (NGO) initiative, eventually perverted by the City Council; and the renewal of Polana Caniço, a City Municipal Council initiative. The plans, one already published (Maxaquene) and the other in progress (Polana Caniço), are conform to the Territorial Planning Law (Law 19/2007, July 18) that includes: the Right to full information regarding the contents and changes in the instrument of territorial planning during the whole drawing up process (article 21); the Right to ask for explanations and formulate suggestions (article 22); the Right to participate (article 22); as well as the collaboration of citizens in territorial planning actions, in drawing up, executing and changing all instruments, remaining the public bodies responsible for the public announcement of all phases (article 22).

### *Polana Caniço A*

Given the privileged location of the Polana Caniço A neighborhood – in front of the bay, contiguous to one of the richest neighborhoods in the city (Sommerschield II) and between

two important access roads into the urbanized center (Vladimir Lenine and Julius Neyerere Avenues) – its borders closest to the urbanized city are being sought after and progressively renewed by middle and upper classes. This process of gentrification grew after the major floods of 2000 that demolished large sections of Julius Nyerere Avenue and an entire block of the neighbourhood, opening big craters. These natural disasters justified the classification of the neighborhood as a “natural hazard area” to be urbanized and as an area of urgent “urban improvement”, for the ruling classes use. However it doesn’t translate into the immediate implementation of renewal plans, because of the few public resources and the fear of social and political consequences (Raposo, 2007: 232, 238-239). Existing popular and self-built houses are being demolished and replaced by large single-family houses and gated communities on private initiative, without any control by the public authorities (Vivet, 2010; Jorge and Melo, 2011).

As Raposo (2007: 239) claims, with the liberalization of the economy, “social and economic pressure, for middle and upper classes to occupy the more central and better located peri-urban areas, grows and is favored by a wide consensus among state officials”. Social differentiation, privatization, modernization and security characterize this new urbanized area expanding side by side with the colonial city and close to the Maputo bay. The residents of this elitized city that expands by annexing the precarious fringes of Polana Caniço are political and technical professionals, top state officials and domestic businessmen. They are joined by a new wave of foreigners that flock into the Mozambican capital, businessmen, NGO and international agencies’ staff, with their residential areas and business headquarters.

Though, pursuant to the actual legislation, “land, state property, cannot [...] be sold or, by any other means, alienated, mortgaged or seized” (article 3 of Law 19/97), the informal transaction of parcels is encouraged by their growing commercial value. Private investors lead the process, approaching residents individually or, in some cases, through local middlemen. After the completion of the deal, the transaction is communicated to local leaderships (neighbourhood secretary and block head) who validate it by delivering an identification document of the patch and its new user. Since there is no land registry or urban plan, the ensuing process of land regularization with the City Council is slow, which does not prevent the construction of single-family houses, in some cases with the connivance of city inspectors (Jorge and Melo, 2011). Though political authorities have no control over this renewal process, it only occurs thanks to the consent of city technicians, either at the moment of land regularization, by granting to an upper class the title deed that was denied to previous residents, by allowing the construction of new buildings without any applicable instrument of land management.

The growing number of deals translates into a rise in plot value. According to Jorge and Melo (2011: 5), a plot of about 160 m<sup>2</sup>, negotiated for 5,000 dollars in 2009, could be worth four times more two years later. Besides, the surplus value can amount after land regularization and the construction of the dwelling, considering the prices on property letting or selling in the adjacent neighborhood, one of the most expensive in the city.

The resident population of modest means is being increasingly forced to leave the neighborhood by a competitive market that either throws it out (Vivet, 2010) or offers it a deal opportunity (Jorge and Melo, 2011), and it tends to move into more peripheral areas, characteristically rural, away from access to transport and services. This unequal transaction does not take into account intangible assets, like vicinity to the center and all other benefits arising therefrom, or the view over or the closeness to the bay. The majority of the population is not always aware of their Rights and of the legitimacy of their occupation, and, without any title deed, she accepts the compensation offered, hoping to improve its precarious situation.

There are two recent municipal actions in connection with this real estate trend: the interventions on Julius Neyrere Avenue through the Municipal Development Program (PROMAPUTO), consisting in demolishing part of existing popular buildings around the avenue; and the request from the City Council to declare its interest in the revitalization of Polana Caniço, presented in September 2011 for private consultants and companies, “in order to enable the harmonious development of those parcels of municipal land” and to pave the way for the much-desired “urban revitalization” of the neighborhood. Both initiatives, though aiming at improving the living conditions, sanction the private practices underway and correspond to the interest of wealthier classes, contributing to deepen social-spatial inequalities.

### *Maxaquene (A)*<sup>3</sup>

The privileged location of the Maxaquene neighborhood, next to the urban center, the airport and the courses of two others main access roads to the city (Joaquim Chissano and Acordos de Lusaka Avenues) constitute an opportunity for its residents, through the easy access to public and private services, transport and creation of income, and through the attraction for NGOs and donors which have intervened in the neighborhood (Raposo, 2007). At the same time, this location placed the neighborhood in the sight of investor and property speculator interests, which led the City Council to redirect the urban detail plan of Maxaquene in defense of these interests, in a perspective of renovation, permitting demolition of the existing and dislocation of the present habitants.

The NGO Engineers without Borders of Catalonia (ESFC), based on a general survey of the neighborhood, decided to intervene in Maxaquene, associated for the purpose with a national NGO, the Associação Moçambicana para o Desenvolvimento Concertado (AMDC). The two NGOs started to work in 2007, in articulation with the secretary of the neighborhood, with construction of drainage valleys and improved latrines in some blocks.

From 2009, with the perspective of increased financing from ESFC, these two NGOs decided to propose the elaboration of a Plan of Reorganization to the City Council, later defined as Partial Urban Plan (PUP), with the objective to enlarge the improvement interventions, coming to include also accesses and the public space. For elaboration of the plan they took help from the following partners: the Centro de Estudos e Desenvolvimento do Habitat (CEDH) of the Faculty of Architecture and Physical Planning of the University Eduardo Mondlane; the State Government, through the Ministry of Environmental Coordination; and the NGO Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP).

Although the PUP was initiated in 2009, the memorandum of understanding between the City Council and the AMDC, the coordinator of the action, was signed only in September 2010. In this ceremony, the president of the City Council underlined the importance of giving quality to the neighborhood and living conditions of the dwellers, although mentioning the necessity to demolish some walls and constructions in order to permit opening and widening of roads.

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<sup>3</sup> The Maxaquene neighbourhood is divided in three zones: A, B and C. This section refers to Maxaquene zone A.



Besides a Technical Commission responsible for elaboration of the PPU, a Commission of Accompaniment was constituted and met approximately once a month, while the Accompaniment Commission only met every three months, depending on progress. When sketches for the plan were made, a period of public consultation opened with three meetings, one in every zone of the neighborhood. The coordinator of the Technical Commission presented the objectives of the plan, the areas, which were considered to have priority, stressed the importance of improving the quality of the existing area and answer to the dwellers questions.

The first official presentation of the PPU took place in February 2011 in the City Council. The president of the City Council, seconded by some municipal technicians, criticized the orientation of the plan. Claiming the strategic location of the neighborhood and the interests shown by various private investors in the area, who were already in informal negotiations with residents, he imposed a revision of the plan in direction of urban renovation. The President justified this new posture, claiming that dwellers after receiving severance pay, benefitted because they could build a house in another place or return to their homeland.

The Technical Commission decided to maintain the initial strategy for improvement of the existing neighborhood, but incorporating, as a compromise, the fringes along the avenues, as areas for urban renovation and construction of activity areas (small scale industry/office/commerce). Nevertheless, the Technical Commission is thus conducted to obey the municipal decision, reorienting the PPU to *tabua rasa* of the existing with renewal and construction of multifamily houses, offices, commercial spaces and some collective equipment. The regulation of this new version of the plan, maintain some measures in order to minimize the impact of forced dislocation of the actual residents. This last proposal was accepted, unanimously, by the City Council, with the plan approved a short time after. The secretary of the neighborhood was present and considered the decision unavoidable, considering the ongoing informal negotiations between promoters and dwellers, which he considered as an opportunity for the last, as long as he considered the severance payments as “just”.

In this scenery, the private investors become responsible for the dislocation and rehousing of the affected population, which becomes limited to two options: receive a financial compensation, in function of the plot area, characteristics and dimension of the house; or receive a plot in a more peripheral neighborhood. The high urbanization costs involved and the own volatility of the property market will tend to delay implementation of the plan and the precarious conditions in which the actual residents live will tend to prolong and aggravate (Jorge and Melo, 2011). These were not informed of the inflexion of the president of the City Council, neither did they have the opportunity to manifest themselves against the new version of the PUP which provides the *tabua rasa* of their neighborhood. In his process, dwellers are penalized in three ways: they don't get to use the Right to public discussion of the plan; they don't enjoy the Right to use of the land provided in the Law on Land; and the compensation dictated by the economic interests of property promoters, without a framework of public power will tend not to reflect the real losses as suggested in the same Law, which the dislocation provokes.

## Public participation in the urban planning and the right to place in Lisbon: Vertente Sul de Odivelas and Cova da Moura

Vertente Sul de Odivelas (VSO) and Cova da Moura are two different situations of suburban neighbourhood in Lisbon, which result of the lack of a National Housing Policy. In the first case, the owners residents has bought a non urbanizing land parcel and in the second its formers residents has occupied a public and private land.

### *Vertente Sul de Odivelas*

Following a long period characterized by a centralized and hierarchical planning system, the political and social changes brought about with the 25<sup>th</sup> of April of 1974 translated at first and intensely into a strong mobilization of residents towards the Right to a home and place. In the VSO, belonging at the time to the municipality of Loures, residents (owners and tenants) organize themselves in associations and carry out, supported by the City Council, infrastructures and small improvements in the context of the so-called “weekend works”. This trend contributed to the publication of new legislation – Decree-Law 804/76 – that for the first time allows the reconversion of these territories. This Law, however, had no impact on the territory of the VSO.

Two decades later, most of this territory was labeled by the Municipal Master Plan (MMP) of Loures – wherein it fitted then – published in 1994 and still in force, as “Urban Space subject to the granting of Temporary Maintenance status” (article 54), due to the risk of flooding and the geotechnical risk. This instrument set “an order of priorities for rehousing populations” affected (*ibid.*). However, this precept had no impact on this territory due to, on the one hand, the condition of owners (of a portion of the land) of most residents and their resistance to this type of intervention and, on the other hand, the lack of public funds to invest in rehousing this population.

Only in 2002, pursuant to Law 91/95, with the purpose of furthering the reconversion process, did the City Council of Odivelas (CCO), on the initiative of owners led by the old associations and with the support of private technicians, demarcate each of the five neighborhoods as UAIO – Urban Area of Illegal Origin. Each of them forms a Joint Administration of owners – that does not include the tenants – that elects its Commission, which hires the technical team to advise it through this process of reconversion.

In order to get round the constraints of the MMP and given the complexity of the territory and the process itself, the Joint Administration Commissions (JAC), with the support of their technical team and the CCO, decide to launch in 2008 the drawing up of an Urban Plan (UP) for the whole VSO. The dynamics of this process and its political relevance prompted the CCO to submit an application to European Union funds through the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) (Action Program for Lisbon, Partnerships to the Urban Regeneration of the VSO) with the purpose of regenerating the VSO, accepted in 2009. It is based on a strong interaction between the CCO and the JACs (co-financial backers of the Program) and a wide network of partners, including Gestual, as responsible for implementing actions to reinforce the participation of all actors involved in designing the urban instruments for the regeneration of the territory. The application, to be concluded in September 2012, includes alongside the UP a Territorial Action Program (TAP), that should be capable of speeding up the “creation of public equipment and spaces essential to improve their inhabitants’ quality of life”.

The different viewpoints of the several actors – including various groups, JACs, owners, tenants, local economic and sociocultural agents, technicians and politicians – on planning instruments spring from different perceptions of the existing territory, the quality of life it offers or may offer, and different conceptions of the city model that arise from distinct positions, rationalities, interests, knowledge and capacity for action, as well as implications in the process.

Some technicians of the CCO, mainly those with a closer contact with the team in charge of reviewing the MMP, champion the UP as a strategic instrument to “define the urban structure and the land use and transformation regime”, which should precede any intervention on the territory and lead, according to the terms of reference, to the design of the TAP, as an instrument of execution. With the application to the NSRF, and the delay in the drawing up of the UP, the drawing up of the TAP becomes concurrent therewith, and in the process the UP is relegated to a secondary position, which some consider a sad diversion from the path initially drawn, though others view it in a positive way. Regardless of the technical differences within the CCO, the application to the NSRF becomes a political cause of the municipality, representing a chance to have access to European funds and carry out regenerating works in the VSO, without underestimating the electoral weight of its population. This political bet was put at stake when the current government decided, on a neoliberal perspective, to limit the NSRF funding, which forced the CCO to suspend the implementation of some projects already drawn up and despite some of them were funded by the JACs.

The external team that was hired to draw up the UP started the plan according to the terms of reference, but, given the complexity of the territory and the conditions imposed by the MMP, considered the possibility of placing the process under the new Legal Regime of Urban Rehabilitation (LRUR). It was considered an opportunity to change the intervention strategy, for it would allow TAP to sign contracts concerning detailed plans of urban rehabilitation and urban plots, regardless of the publication of the UP. The late submission of this alternative proposal, much criticized by some technicians of the CCO, prevented it from being enabled by the CCO and must have led to a change in the coordination of this plan technical team.

Both the JACs and their technical team, acting very intimately, criticize the application, especially for giving less importance to the drawing up of the UP, where the expectation for reconversion lies, but they ended up collaborating in its drawing up and co-financing its implementation. The TAP was predefined after a diagnosis that was not consensual between the several actors, nor sufficiently discussed with the JACs. On the one hand, the JACs are hoping that the planned interventions might appreciate the value of the area and, on the other hand, after the arrival of co-financial backers they expect compensation from the CCO regarding the payment of urban fees to be applied.

The design of technical and administrative strategies for the reconversion, agreed between technicians and politicians and, partly, with the JACs, was transmitted to the owners and subject to voting at the owners’ meetings. The drawing up of the UP and the actions inscribed in the application are presented as a requirement for the legalization and reconversion of the SSO. However, most owners, pure bystanders during the process, do not prioritize the actions planned in the application, whose projects were presented at the annual meetings this year, and consider that the money involved in their implementation strays from the initial goal: the reconversion of their neighborhood and their parcels. Regarding the perception of the conditions inscribed in the UP, most owners consider that the houses present no risk of collapsing or flooding and that most of them offers minimum housing conditions.

Technical knowledge prevails on the definition of guiding lines in the UP and the TAP, as well as the meaning of territorial regeneration and reconversion. There is a gap between the knowledge of the technical teams (from the CCO, Percurso and JACs) and the unspecialized interests of the remaining actors, with the exception of the leaders of the JACs who are in close and continued contact with the technical teams. The technical speech, obscure and not always easy for many of these actors, hampers the participation of owners and tenants, who cannot take part in the Joint Administrations of owners, as well as that of economic and sociocultural agents (Thompson, 1995: 36; Schremmer, 1995: 173).

### *Cova da Moura*

Located at the doorstep of the capital, the Cova da Moura neighborhood results from progressive occupation, since the late 1950s, of public and private grounds, abandoned farms at the heart of a rural landscape. Surrounded by a growing urbanization, given the increasing centrality of the location, these grounds gain more commercial value, preyed upon by speculators interested in their recapitalization.

The real estate pressure on the political power of the municipality combines with the yet dominant rationalist and hygienist vision that rejects models of self-produced city, not conform to functionalist rules in force and the precariousness from the illegal occupation of the land. Commissioned by the municipality, with the purpose of renewing and improving the area, a first study towards a Detailed Plan (DP) is conducted in 2002 by a private architecture firm that safeguarded the north side of the neighborhood, with a typical mesh of emigrant single-family houses or with “clandestine parceling out”, suggesting the demolition of about 80% of the neighborhood that corresponded to the occupation model typical of expansions in Cape Verdean cities where most residents come from. The proposal causes a reaction among residents, through their associations organized in a Neighborhood Commission in order to define a joint strategy against the renewal project. The plan is discarded.

In 2004, students from a final-year class of the Faculty of Architecture of the Technical University of Lisbon begin working in a redevelopment project for the neighborhood, interacting with local associations, while a French trainee from the same faculty starts to cooperate with one of the neighborhood’s associations, Moinho da Juventude, and produces academic work (Latapie). At the end of the year, this association puts together a seminar, as part of the annual Kola San Jon festivities, to discuss the neighborhood’s redevelopment, where that trainee and the final-year students, assisted by their professor, one of the authors of these lines, present a summary of works and methodological steps towards the neighborhood’s redevelopment. The seminar catches the attention of the media, since the President is invited to participate, along with his entourage. Deputy Secretary João Ferrão was present and, months later, launches the Critical Districts Initiative (Resolution of the Council of Ministers 143/2005, of September 7) and selects Cova da Moura as one of the three trial neighborhoods.

A new period of participatory intervention begins then, engaging different actors, public (central and local) and from the civil society, in which the central government (National Housing Institute, now Urban Rehabilitation and Housing Institute) plays the coordinating role on a set of teams brought together following an ambitious effort of participation, conceived at three levels: ministerial (including six ministries), local (including the City Council of Amadora [CCA], the neighborhood commission [NC] and a group of other partners) and technical (one team for the participatory drawing up of the diagnosis and the

action plan, another to follow the process on site, and the team in charge of drawing up the detailed plan) that intervene at different times and capacities.

We identified three main periods. The first, brief (between January and November, 2006), very productive and interactive, was to serve a less controversial purpose – the participatory drawing up of the diagnosis and plan of action – and to be characterized by great expectations among all those concerned and a great commitment from the central government. Its success is not foreign to the good performance of the technical team hired by the NHI, that mobilized a set of tools of active public participation to reach all necessary agreements between the two main organizations at stake and their different interests: the CCA that suggests the elaboration of a detailed plan as a basic instrument towards the district's improvement within the normative framework in force; and the NC that accepts the rules of the participatory game that was put forward, appearing as a very alert and proactive partner, that pushes for the neighborhood's improvement and the residents' Right to the City and a place, with the technical assistance of the Faculty of Architecture team.

This highly dynamic period is followed by an interruption and slow action, in which the CCA becomes the process-leader, though still under the supervision of the NHI/URHI, in the two main actions towards the neighborhood's improvement: land legalization (through purchase or expropriation) and the drawing up of a detailed plan. In five and a half years, the CCA could not find a solution for the grounds and the tendering process faced successive delays.

Only in April 2010, three and a half years after the approval of the plan of action, the tendering process begins in order to choose a team for the DP. The jury, including one minority representative of the NC, and a majority of the CCA, who choose a team that had drawn up the renewal plan in 2002. The elaboration of the DP starts in October, 2010, and was to suffer further delays, severely criticized by the NC. The first documents put forward by the plan team follow the CCA guidelines, pushing for the neighborhood's renewal. This third period was therefore characterized by an intensification of conflicts between the CCA and the DC: the CCA assumes an increasingly leading role in the process and hampers the communication between the DC and the plan team apart from meetings controlled by the CCA; the DC, despite some internal differences and some external dividing strategies, holds its ground against the neighborhood renewal perspective, though within the participatory structure created through the CDI and coordinated by the URHI, to which it had committed itself. The DC does not appeal to popular claims, and asks for a general meeting with the population, which the URHI keeps postponing. This phase ends abruptly in February 2012 after a troika-induced decision by the ideologically neoliberal central government to terminate the coordinating role of the URHI and the funding of the CDI. Since then, the DP of Cova da Moura is suspended, remaining the effective control on this process in the hands of the CCA.

Thus, a new post-CDI period starts, between estranged central authorities and a silent municipality, where the ghost of renewal might remain postponed due to the economic crisis in the country. With the end of the participation bureaucracy that characterized this initiative and in which the DC got involved, this organization is now entering a new phase, seeking new allies towards the common goal of upgrading the neighborhood, thwarting a tendency to deterioration that aggravated during the last years, since all orders to stop works, even those of maintenance, were complied with.

Apart from the close relationship between local associations and residents, only in the first period of the CDI were the latter called to participate in debates to draw up both the diagnosis and the plan of action. This participatory and onward dynamism of the CDI had no follow-up, though, and despite the DC's reserve in bringing residents to debates on the

neighborhood's future, a group of young people from local associations is becoming increasingly aware of the issue that affects their neighborhood and is developing some cultural initiatives against numbness that results from population trends (the demise of former residents and the increasing number of tenants).

## Conclusion

The four suburban and self-produced neighborhoods were hereby presented as an example of (peri)central areas in Maputo and Lisbon that have been subject to a growing process of rising commercial value, given their increasingly central and strategic location, and that are at the same time undergoing spatial planning, at different stages of conception, including practices of participation at different levels also. Using the idea of arena, we stripped the interactions among different actors in these contradictory processes between an increase in commercial value and the residents' struggle for the Right to remain where they live in and to participate in improving it; but also between the normative and technocratic order, and the integration of other city and cultural models.

### *Precariousness of the four cases*

In this essay we set off from the hypothesis that the ability to direct a plan according to the aims of residents depends simultaneously on the weight of the economic structure (the value assigned to places and the strength of economic groups), but also on the capacity to resist and counteract shown by residents and any allies they manage to enlist. At the end of this presentation we can conclude that two other factors should be considered: the precariousness of land occupation and the weight of technical regulation.

As to the precariousness of the cases, we could consider the two cases of Maputo and Cova da Moura more precarious in terms of land, increase in commercial value and ground characteristics: the lack of title deeds in Maputo has been instrumental in the process of gentrification pushed for by the private sector, by way of unequal negotiations; in Cova da Moura, the lack of land ownership limits residents and their associations and is used as an excuse to real estate pressure and a municipal decision to renew and recapitalize the area. Precariousness is greater in Polana Caniço where these factors are joined by the massive erosion after the floods of 2000, which, because of the investment needed in the recovery, shall be used as an excuse by the ruling class to plead its renewal. Such is not the case in Maxaquene or Cova da Moura.

In the VSO, urban occupation is not legal but land ownership is, which provides owners of parcels, inscribed in the UAIO Law, to legalize and reconvert their neighborhoods. On the other hand, the VSO territory is a forgotten fringe wedged between Lisbon and the Odivelas municipality, separated by a speedway and devalued by conditions defined in the MMP, which pose a restraint to construction. In this case, hopes for its increase in value come mainly from its owners who for that purpose are investing in the slow process of reconversion, with the assistance of their technical team. The investment on equipment and improvement to public spaces through the TAP and the NSRF also contributes to this goal, the reason why the JACs must have agreed to finance it, though that equipment did not proceed from any local decision.

### *The weight of the normative technical*

Technical regulation is stronger in Portugal than in Maputo, where urban legislation is more recent and the institutional specialized body is emerging and facing resistance from the political and economic power. Therefore, renewal in Maputo is being championed by way of a laudatory speech on the market logic, while in Portugal the normative speech remains dominant: in Cova da Moura, with criticism on dense occupation and pushing for renewal in the whole neighborhood and, in the VSO, by backing critical lines that determine areas to be demolished in favor of conservation of nature.

### *Urban actors – launching planning*

Since plan is our arena, we can see that: in Maxaquene, it was a NGO assisted by a team from the Faculty of Architecture that decided to draw up a participatory plan to improve the neighborhood, which was then adulterated into a renewal plan, after an imposition of the City Council, facing little resistance from the technical team and the resignation of local leaders and without informing residents; in Polana Caniço, the City Council decided to launch a renewal plan, based on the terms of reference drawn up by the Faculty of Architecture, without talking to local officials; in Cova da Moura, the plan was decided by way of an active partnership between central authorities, municipal authorities and the neighborhood commission, besides other partners, with the purpose of improving the neighborhood, a goal that is being progressively adulterated by the municipality and the plan team that joins it, facing much criticism from the district commission, a process that ends abruptly at a political turn made by the central government; in the VSO, the plan was decided by the municipal authorities together with the JACs and their technical team, but in this case the debate is between a faster or slower reconversion and regeneration and what are the best technical instruments to achieve them.

### *The variation of municipal roles*

The observation of these cases shows a variation on municipal positions: in Maxaquene, in 2010, the municipality accepts the improvement plan at a first stage and then some months afterwards, pressured by the private sector, redirects it to renewal; in Polana Caniço too, in 2002, the municipality invests on improvement and, in 2012, launches a renewal plan; in Cova da Moura, in 2002, the municipality launches a renewal plan and, in 2010, through the Critical Neighborhoods Initiative, launches an improvement plan that then seeks to turn into a renewal plan; in the VSO, the municipality decides to support its reconversion trying different legal instruments and debating about more normative or more operational approaches.

### *The diversifying university roles*

The University plays a role in these processes, apart from training the intervening technicians, whether by drawing up the terms of reference (Polana Caniço) or by drawing up the plans (Maxaquene), whether with technical assistance to residents (Cova da Moura) or the enhancement of participatory techniques (VSO). These different cases show that the university can play a role by reproducing the dominant order or supporting its transformation towards the Right to the City.

### *Local organizations and resistance capacity*

With regard to the residents' representatives, their organizational skills and ability to claim fundamental Rights for residents is different in the four cases. In the two Maputo cases, the growing power of the market, the alignment of the communitarian organization with Frelimo, a strong increase in value in (peri)central areas, a great social inequality, determine a weak capacity of resistance in these organizations, a resilience or even an acceptance of market rules, and sometimes their exploitation in favor of private interests. This alignment of public authorities with the market trend is new. The process of gentrification is being led by the private sector without any violence being exerted by public authorities, as in other contexts in neighboring Luanda. This might be an explanation to the non-existence of national organizations to fight for the Rights to the City and a place as we can see in that city, or of local associations with a history of resistance. In Portugal, the the 25<sup>th</sup> of April of 1974 brought a lesson on the spirit of association, the struggle for the Right to a home and improvement that remain inscribed in present associations in the two neighborhoods. As to Cova da Moura, that spirit of association has been particularly active, without any interruption, since the 1980s, replacing the State in providing basic services to residents, cultural stimulation and ethnical integration. Prior to the Critical Neighborhoods Initiative's arrival on the scene, local associations were already participating actively in everyday actions and the formation of the neighborhood's future. Somehow, the NHI/URHI, as coordinator of the CDI, restrained its capacity of initiative and was not able to enhance and stimulate its initiatives, controlling them in the context of the participatory structure in place. As to the VSO, the spirit of association was reconfigured pursuant to Law 91/95 and due to the demarcation of those territories as UAIOs, turning former associations of residents into joint administration commissions to represent all the owners yet excluding tenants. These JACs are also very active, but their intervention occurs within a normative framework in force.

### *The forgotten residents*

Lastly, residents, the main concerned or interested parties in these processes, continue to be given little or none consideration in Mozambique and their voice is not being much heard in Portugal.

The understanding of the social arena's concept allows us to understand the actors' strategies, since it shows the power of economical and political structures, which are expressed in public actors' practices, political and technical, and also in the residents' habitus. It also reveals the local associations' organization, which results from a persistent presence in the field and is a necessary condition to implement the Right to the Place and to the City.

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## Brasília Teimosa and the Intervention of the Ministry of the Cities, or the Amazing Quest of the Human Crabs and the Mangrove Boys against the Real Estate Sharks

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**Abstract:** Since Josué de Castro's description of the beginning of Aldeia Teimosa in *Homens e Caranguejos* in the 1950s, the slum of Brasilia Teimosa has been growing and occupying a unique space in the landscape of Recife's downtown and in the history of public housing policies, celebrating and contrasting with the modernity of the new capital. During the Military Government, several speculative projects were made counting on its removal. In periods of popular administrations, the neighborhood has been consolidated through the resistance and popular request, in a process that created the first Special Zone of Social Interest (ZEIS) in Brazil. Not by accident, one of the first interventions of the Ministry of the Cities, created at the beginning of Lula's government, was the removal of the precarious constructions in the shore, relocating its habitants to a distant housing project. This intervention opened space for the new Brasilia Formosa Avenue, connecting the ancient slum to the beaches of Pina and Boa Viagem, areas of intense real estate development. Here we propose a brief historical examination of the Brasilia Teimosa occupation, focusing on the episodes that occurred in the last decade and formulating questions from this experience towards new inclusive policies in marginal housing territories.

**Keywords:** social housing, urban policies, slums, ZEIS

### Introduction: Chapter VIII 'On how dwellers of Aldeia Teimosa built their own city by force'

When Zé Luiz and his family moved to Recife, there was no such thing as the Aldeia Teimosa. All one could find in there was a huge sludge area never topped by the river, not even when flooded; a place where four or five dwellers had put up their mocambos in the middle of a profusion of branches on the mangrove. They were placed at a given distance, isolated, lost in that land property of mud. Sharing the space were the mocambos of Idalina the Negress, Cos me, Mateus the Red, and Chico the Leprous, the latter being the first one to inhabit those unfrequented lands. Chico had moved there and escaped men society in order to hide

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<sup>1</sup> Architect and urban planner from Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade de São Paulo (FAU-USP / 2003), master in History of Architecture (FAU-USP / 2009), PhD Student at the same institution developing his thesis in cooperation with Centre d'Histoire Sociale du XXème siècle da Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne about recent projects in social housing in Brazil and in France.

himself and defend his freedom, which has been threatened by organized public benevolence. (Castro, 2001: 105)

Years after the Ministry of Cities under the Lula government first intervened in the shore of the Brasília Teimosa popular neighborhood and the first interactions with the matter of stilt houses built there, I return to this territory in an attempt to contribute to the social history of the ancient slum, turned into the first Brazilian ZEIS (Special Zone of Social Interest), a land conquered by the mangrove and disputed by the real estate market. To understand the transformations and strains mobilized over the past decade, one needs to go to the roots of such settlement, ones that go against the creation of a new capital city to the country, whose name it borrows at the same time it counterbalances its meaning; modernness versus backwardness.

Josué de Castro will be an important guide in this plunge on the mangrove and Recife's human geography, a witness to the onset of Aldeia Teimosa. After several political and social overturns, dwellers of Brasília Teimosa enforced their right to the town, thus opening the mechanism of the Special Areas of Social Interest that originated the ZEIS. Currently, the landscape of Brasília Teimosa has gone through a radical transformation due to the emblematic commitment of the Lula government, the Mayor João Paulo's term, and the rearmost removal wave of stilt houses from the shore, which gave room to the construction of Brasília Formosa Avenue. A motif of documentaries and privileged locus of (sub)urban cultural diversity, Brasília Teimosa became the informal capital to a quite real Brazil, starred by the people, marking its presence in the most distinct cultural expressions – from culinary to photography, from music to cinema. The pressure from real estate spectators remains restless, dividing inhabitants and the public opinion; following the recent background, it is expected that an outbreak of another episode comprising the old contradictions of new Brazilian cities will take place there, in this year of mayoral elections.

### **The mucambopolis and the rise of Aldeia Teimosa (1930-1960)**

In order to better understand the articulations mobilized over the past decade by means of the interventions of the Ministry of Cities in the popular neighborhood of Brasília Teimosa, we will plunge on the history of the former slum, boxed up between the 'city' and the Southern Zone, between the port and the city's new urbanization and verticalization frontiers, highly explored over the past 50 years. Physician and geographer from Pernambuco, Josué de Castro, describes in detail the emergence of Aldeia Teimosa in his single novel *Of Men and Crabs* (1967). In the book we are able to follow the onset of this agglomeration of mocambos in the triangle-shaped sands between Boa Viagem beach, connected to Recife's historical center by the Pina bridge and the dam built over the natural reefs, an embankment originally constituted to serve as a flammable materials deposit in the port.

Gilberto Freyre had already approached the mocambo issue as an isolated hovel in *Mocambos do Nordeste*, thus elevating it to a status of exemplary culturally and ecologically adapted dweller. Those years, some would see it as the utmost backwardness inherited from the colonial era. The increasing agglomerations of mocambos gathered population contingents attracted by the metropolis and were drawing both the society and the public opinion in Pernambuco. Some used to treat the mocambos as an obstacle to the organized growth that would correct the demographic explosion experienced in the American Venice those days. In the column 'The city and the facts', the conservative newspaper *Diário de Pernambuco* depicts the misery scenario that was starting to take up the estuary:

The plague continues and there is no evidence that our capital city will soon get rid of such a negative aspect, direct consequence of an increasingly exasperated poverty; the mocambos bring within the tragedy of a population that dawns their daily bread. For this reason, it is very hard to fight it, unless this shall be done by means of the construction of new housings, as well as the creation of better economic terms to a whole stratum of humble people, to whom life is a journey of unrighteousness. Thereof takes place a rapid proliferation of the mocambos, making the city an uglier place (...), a clear challenge to the city's progress. (DP, 1963, *apud* Inglez de Souza, 2010)

Josué de Castro collates to the *mocambo* the sense of resistance, a material evidence of Recife's working class lowering life conditions. The author of *Geography of Hunger* focuses on the social and land-related conditions, which originated the rural flight and the swelling of the Brazilian northeastern metropolis, as well as the appearance of the first public-oriented actions dedicated to the promotion of public housing initiatives and the eradication of mocambos, criticizing its methods and premises:

The sugar growing lands used to secrete its human surplus, which, on its turn, were absorbed by the mud lands like a blotting paper. Recife was bulging, soaked in this thick misery, forming a huge mocambo crust. The metropolis of Pernambuco was turning into a mocambopolis. That is why the state governor, defending this threatened aesthetics, started a wide campaign against the mocambos. Against this urban leprosy that was menacing to recover the entire manorial beauty of this capital city of the Northeastern region, the whole breed and the posh aristocracy of its ancient manors, with such seamy misery stains. Although, during this campaign against the mocambos, the governor did not seek to analyze where the actual evil roots had grown. He thought these roots were nailed right there on the mangrove mud, and that it would be enough to snap them to vanish the mocambos' angry vegetation. (Castro, 2001: 105-106)

In *Mocambo e Cidade* (1996), José Tavares Correia de Lira recaptures the argumentation surrounding the mocambos' cultural relevance raised on speeches of important figures among the intense urbanization of Recife, serving as a reference to interpret the debate around this particular housing solution, moments before the emergence of Aldeia Teimosa:

Let us head back to Gilberto Freyre. The mocambos then allowed a study on the region's popular art, precisely because they were thought for an adjustment to the physical space and the social space. At Gilberto Freyre's work, there is an undoubtedly traditional ecological perspective of these geographically adapted houses, although encompassing very particular features, both formal and cultural: the simplicity of lines, the parsimony in ornaments, the almost exclusive support on the material's qualities, a plastic honesty. The mocambo was not only valuable in this sense, it also gets precedence for accomplishing sociological virtues of adaptation and mobility perfectly consistent with the contemporary requirements of social housing. It goes from the primitivism to coherent features, with a modern aesthetics; from the traditional ecologism to its sociological virtues as one could read them in the modern age. (Lira, 1997: 96)

Another source of information regarding the beginnings of the settlement is the PhD thesis of North American Charles Fortin, dedicated to the management of Recife's public properties in agricultural lands such as the case of Brasília Teimosa. In this work, the former volunteer of Peace Corps that served in the Northeastern region of Brazil during the 1980s reestablishes the dynamics and the decisions that led to the establishment of mocambeiros in that territory, using primary sources to contextualize it according to the local political scenario.

The mocambos already dominated the landscape at Pina, part of the Boa Viagem beach connected to the city centre by means of streetcars and new bridges, opening the way for a new urbanization front on the shore. According to the schematic division shown by Fortin, in the first phase of consolidation and apportionment of the sands, a corporate and interventionist perspective was adopted by the plans and the site's occupation (1930-45), followed by a populist approach during the democratic interlude (1946-1964), notably from

the rising of Frente do Recife on the city's elections in 1955, a coalition of left-wing political parties<sup>2</sup> (Fortin, 1987). The novel of Josué de Castro describes precisely the mechanisms and players that will step in to “create a city by means of force”, the so-called ‘Aldeia’ Teimosa (Portuguese for ‘Defiant Village’), bringing elements of historical, anthropological and sociological weight to the study of housing conditions of the popular classes in Recife until the 1960s, thus helping to explain the symbolic meaning that the neighborhood ends up acquiring. It was then the Getúlio Vargas dictatorship known as Estado Novo, of the intervener Agamenon Magalhães, and the Social Service Against the Mocambo (SSCM), a pioneering institution of social housing in Brazil. The institution's action is pictured as ineffective and questioned by people, who envisaged it as an instrument of political patronage measures, distant from the perspective of the mocambo dwellers. Through Cosme, the first dweller of Aldeia Teimosa, Josué de Castro presents the winners and losers of the mocambo removal campaigns and the new constructions held then, as well as the slavish role of such a ‘patrimonial state’, that was bringing rural inequalities to the city:

The campaign against the mocambos would only last until the elections; after that, everything would remain like before, like it has always been – poor ones forgotten in their mocambos, and the new government helping its friends to enrich every time more. There was no time left for something else to happen. (Castro, 2001: 110-111)

The relationship between the dwellers of Aldeia Teimosa and the authorities towards the law is another aspect explored by Castro in his novel, identifying the onset of popular practices to the enlargement of legal limits, a typical strategy of privileged classes appropriated by leprous and handicapped Cosme, who “conducted the entire battle of the Aldeia Teimosa” against “the government and the police forces”:

Then came the legal inspectors and stopped the construction of new mocambos. These inspectors nailed wood milestones on the floor and warned that, from that point on, no one else could construct. They threatened the people hardly. If they insisted on bringing up new mocambos, everything would be demolished. The entire neighborhood would burn down. But the mocambos kept on thriving and, for this particular reason, it was named Aldeia Teimosa (Defiant Village). Because its existence and growth was a defiance against the government's will and orders. On their chest and by force, as they would say in their slang. (Castro, 2001: 109)

It is the rising of a notable memory of popular resistance, some sort of founding myth of a certain collective consciousness to be evoked in several moments on the struggle for their right to town and the ownership of their lands. Castro describes the onset of the first hovels, with the jugglery of the invaders to conquer the land and contour the State control, going through a moment of lively attentiveness then:

On the construction day, the tension would uprise all over the neighborhood. Everyone would be alert, attentive, impatient for the nightfall so they could start working. And the tasks were attributed. Those destined to work in construction and those meant to take part on the spectacle to detour the authorities attention. (Castro, 2001: 111)

If the occupation of the triangular settlement grouped little more than 300 mocambos counted in 1957 did not mean much to the average inhabitant of Recife, the situation would worsen from the next

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<sup>2</sup> The Brazilian socialist, labor and communist parties, known for the acronyms PSB, PTB, and PCB.

summer on: with the drought affecting the back country and the forest area (the Sertão and the Zona da Mata, in Portuguese) thousands of migrants headed to Recife, establishing their roots at Brasília Teimosa. The carnival plays an important part on the appearance of new constructions overnight, as observed by both Fortin and Castro:

The distraction provided by this national festival facilitated occupation of the landfill site. (...) By the end of March, 80 new houses had been built erected; in April, 1000; by May, 2000 houses had been built and another 1000 lots had been occupied by the wooden frames of houses under construction. In three months time, therefore, an average of 30 houses were built per day and night situated on approximately 3000 subdivided lots destined to accommodate some 20,000 people. (Fortin, 1987: 152)

At that time, a quite particular political situation was in place at Pernambuco, which Fortin mentions in order to explain the conflicts and the resolutions that allowed this precarious settlement to experience a constructive and demographic explosion in such a small timeframe; those were the days of Frente do Recife that had led engineer Pelópidas Silveira to the city hall in 1955, the first of a succession of electoral victories that would lead Miguel Arraes to the state government on 1963. The understanding of the popular demands, plus the confusion between the so-called owners of those grounds, would have led to a certain tacit agreement between the public authorities, thus favoring the landfill's rapid occupation:

For its part, Colony Z-1 resisted all those who sought to undermine their fishing base proposal. With respect to poor settlers, however, the fishermen did demonstrate ambivalence about their removal and even sympathy with their plight. While politically opposed to complementary actions which facilitated occupation of the site, the former by active promotion, the latter by tacit permissiveness. Overall, there was relatively weak resistance to appropriation of the landfill. (Fortin, 1987: 143)

However, not only the public authorities and locals interests converged to the development of Aldeia Teimosa; speculators and middlemen came into play, as well as different housing uses of the local and dynamic economies:

As early as 1955 a Russian, Lubomir Benguedoff, teamed up with a local businessman, Wilson Carneiro da Cunha and built up Brasília Teimosa's first cabaret, O Netuno. They used profits to acquire materials from demolished buildings on the city and wooden crates which encased imported automobiles to construct 165 rental shanties. At night this material was smuggled into the landfill site and by daybreak a house would be ready for tenants. (Fortin, 1987: 146)

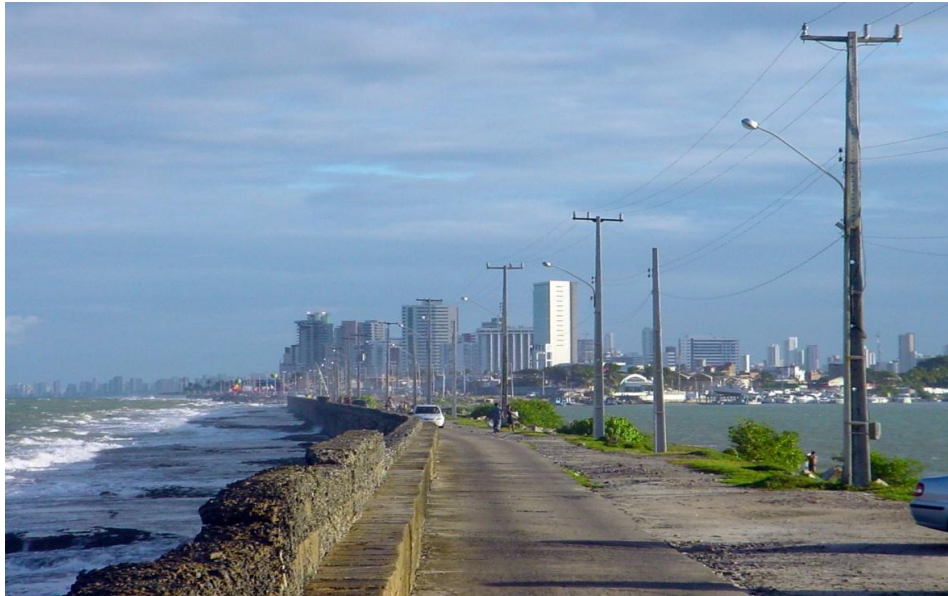
Overnight construction is a constant on the reports concerning the neighborhood's origin, a current part of the affective and recital memory of the inhabitants, their representatives, and chroniclers, as well as in the description made by Josué de Castro of these dynamics that relativized the legal limits and allowed the neighborhood to grow:

They started removing the milestones nailed by the inspectors and placing them further, creating a legal space for the constructions. After that, they started to put stakes on the mud, to place pins on their sticks, and to fill the stick grids with mud. (...) And the construction kept advancing till dawn. When the daybreak arrived, the construction teams had already finished their work, filling the space between the houses and the new milestones nailed on the floor. (Castro, 2001: 114-115)

Castro describes the complex social landscape of Aldeia Teimosa, comprised by two kinds of marginalized people of the Recife underworld. Idaline the Negress moved there after her daughter became a dishonored prostitute in their former neighborhood; Mateus the Red was a redhead that ended up being chased by the police for being communist because he was from Jaboatão, a town known at that time as Little Moscow, since it was first one to elect a mayor from the Brazilian communist party (PCB); Cosme, an active agent on the occupation

despite of his impossibility of helping on the construction, is the antihero on Castro's story about a radically real situation:

Along with the light of day, new legal representatives arrived. There was always one of them a little more suspicious that noticed something – that the front mocambos had a different façade, that the mud was still fresh – but there were the milestones, nailed on the ground, an unquestionable symbol that they were following the orders and respecting the authorities. ‘The law is respected, but not obeyed’ was Cosme's motto, showing some satisfaction. And the Aldeia Teimosa would not stop growing. (Castro, 2001: 116)



**Approaching to Brasilia Teimosa  
from the wall that divides the sea and the river. Photo by Diego BIS.**

## **The capital route and the future of the past (1960-1979)**

From the social history perspective, other agents and forces were involved in the promotion, tolerance or resistance of the mocambos agglomerate that was simmering at that time of “50 years in 5”<sup>3</sup> – contemporaneity shown in the establishment of the new capital city of the country, which also names the new slum of Recife, associating the city of Brasilia to the defiance in a combination of fine irony that demonstrates the contradictions of new cities as well as the accomplishment of an utopia with the construction of the federal capital:

When politicians were not being accused of private land dealings and of promoting trespassing and colonization of federal property, the local press reported that “They campaign against the Port Administration of Recife in favor of residents of the new popular ‘vila’, with the intention of enticing votes. They make their appearance there almost every day providing by their very presence greater comfort to the inhabitants and promising a thousand and one good things. When elected (because in this current

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<sup>3</sup> Slogan of Juscelino Kubitschek's campaign and presidential term (1955-1960), during whose time the construction of the new capital took place.



administration there is nothing more they can do), they will certainly manage to obtain the land from the Port Administration and give lots to the humble residents of Brasília Teimosa.” (DN, 21/Mar/1958 in Fortin, 1987: 155)

Dated as early as 1958, that might have been one of the first mentions to the settlement bearing the name for which it would be known, two years before the inauguration of the country’s capital, a time when Brasília was only an abstract idea of new city without past, built like a miracle in the Brazilian plateau and attracting thousands of people from the northeast affected by the drought, the backcountry, and the agricultural lands. The next year, the capital’s name was evoked to mobilize the opinion of communists by the newspaper *Folha do Povo*: “It will not be a fair solution to put down the mocambos at the New Brasília Teimosa” (*Folha do Povo*, August 9-15, 1959). Using its pages, the Frente do Recife pursues support to the popular causes, acknowledging this one particularly due to “its character that stands for the braveness and the heroism of some unsheltered in building a new Brasília, drawing upon their tenaciousness and own arms, without any money, emerging in very little time at the Pina beach a ‘new city’, proletarian, but bearing such boldness that deserved the same title as the other one, the Novacap” (*Folha do Povo*, September 19, 1959).

The newspaper highlights the emergency of this issue, placing itself on the side of popular claims, and extolling the neighborhood’s symbolic potential: “The crisis that threatens the dwellers of Brasília Teimosa is that of mass eviction (...) what the Brasília Teimosa deserves is support, better assistance, because there you have the seeds to a clear demonstration of Recife’s tenaciousness” (*Folha do Povo*, September 19, 1959). Even though it accepted the demands of Frente do Recife and opened itself to the popular participation, the newspaper did not close its eyes to the problem represented by this ‘new Brasília’: “The fact is that Brasília Teimosa bears all the socioeconomic illnesses and implications of this marginalized population comprised by 15 thousand people that live in complete promiscuity, left aside of everything and by everyone” (*A Hora*, February 16-23, 1963).

Those years, Brasília seemed more like a reference to an ideal and a way to build cities from zero, appealing people from the entire country, than a specific place or an accomplished city, especially after the coming of the military coup d’état in 1964. News brought to light the onset of new agglomerations of mocambos as being new Brasília Teimosas (“A new Brasília Teimosa rises at Rua Real da Torre”, published in newspaper *A Hora*, September 14-20, 1963).

Those can be considered as expressions of the *Contradictions of a New City*, the provocative title of a documentary directed by Joaquim Pedro de Andrade in 1967 regarding the new federal capital. In it we can perceive the powerful image of the national developmental utopia versus the reality of those who built it; a bus carries a few more of them from Recife to Brasília, sort of living metaphors of this enterprise to the country’s imaginary. To talk about Brasília from the late 1950s to the beginning of the 1960s is to approach a utopia under construction more than an objective situation. Brasília Teimosa takes its name from this Brasília that represents the possibility of a better living somewhere else, taking for itself the dream projected by the Brazilian intellectual elite.

If it seems right to say that this emergence of people as a historical category, followed by the rise of governor Miguel Arraes (1962-64), helped Brasília Teimosa in its resistance through such trying times, the possibility of being evicted was once again hovering the emblematic mucambopolis that Recife had become. Those were the days of the North American intervention in Brazil by means of parastatal agencies like the Brazilian Institute of Democratic Action (IBAD – Instituto Brasileiro de Ação Democrática), aligned with the anticommunist measures undertaken by the party Aliança para o Progresso, which tried by all

means to interfere in electoral campaigns, above all, in the Northeast of Brazil. It is crucial to take into account the several meanings of this toponymy that opposes the ‘homage’ to the new capital city, symbol of the modernity envisaged by this project of a future nation, to the backwardness, the defiance, and the precarious conditions observed on the slum housings.

According to Fortin, Brasília Teimosa was, a few moments before the military coup d’état, the confrontation spot of two incompatible political forces: the traditional rural oligarchy and the left-wing coalition that took control of the city and the state administrations when Miguel Arraes and Pelópidas Silveira were elected. The Catholic action also concentrated its attention there, as well as a series of Pentecostal and Protestant churches. Dom Hélder Câmara would be responsible, in 1966, for the institution of several associations destined to represent the inhabitants, highly controlled by the military (Fortin, 1987).

After 1964, authoritarian control of popular territories intensifies, provoking a strong reaction of the inhabitants, supported by some sectors of the press and local technicians. At the same time that went forward, a project to turn the area into a touristic pole, between 1967 and 1977, “suddenly Brasília Teimosa became center of attention and the local press provided ample support by demonstrating the existence of a stable and animated urban community equipped with several bakeries, markets, variety stores, bars and regular bus service” (Fortin, 1987: 216). The construction of public schools at the neighborhood, undertaken mainly by the city governments, in accordance with the popular claims and both demographic and statistical evidences, would be another sign of the possibility of the neighborhood’s permanence against the eviction perspectives. Until the late 1970s, the state government would insist on implementing the touristic pole project there in an attempt to attract federal investments, despite its local political infeasibility. From that date, the conflicts related to the setup of the Yacht Club on the tip of the triangle-shaped sands, which even ‘privatized’ for years a section of the beach separated from the slum by a wall (the “wall of shame”), which has been demolished (Fortin, 1987).

At a second moment of the military dictatorship, the so-called distension period between 1975 and 1979, new perspectives were opened to the regulation that would turn the slum into a neighborhood in the 1980s, above all from the last wave of COHAB [public housing] programs by means of the BNH [the Brazilian Bank of Housing] and social incentive programs, to personal constructions like Promorar.

In 1977, an urbanization project was solicited to Jaime Leirner, urbanist and former mayor of the city of Curitiba, by the Urbanization Company of Recife (URB). Based on the premise of a progressive transformation of the population into a low-middle class housed in residential towers, Leirner’s plan was rejected by local specialists since it was not legally feasible nor a socially fair solution for the inhabitants, which were completely excluded of any consideration and had no right of participation. In response to it, the organized community formulates its own plan, prepared during their successive meetings and highlighting some priorities, including prompt assistance to the families that lived on the stilt houses and were subject to considerably worse sanitary and constructive conditions than the other families placed in more consolidated areas.



Brasília Teimosa during the work of 'requalification' of the beach. Photo by Diego BIS.

### **Brasília Teimosa as a laboratory of new public policies (1979-2001)**

The stilt houses that occupied the one-mile shore belt were evicted several times over the last decades; its progressive reoccupation was credited to the hopes of new residents that saw the former ones being reallocated on housing projects built within the neighborhood's limits, such as Vila da Prata and Vila Teimosinho, both accomplished on the 1980s.

The fact is that this progressive redemocratization caused the emergence of the popular powers over the municipality, consolidating the space to the popular claims of permanence and their right to the city at Brasília Teimosa. A long process including debates, mobilizations, and negotiations turned the former slum into the first Special Zone of Social Interest (ZEIS) in Brazil. Such term is employed since the mid-1980s, as result of the civil mobilization and anticipating the Federal Constitution of 1988.

The City's Statute, which included the concept of the property's social role and was approved in 2001, foresees the ZEIS borderlines to regulate the interaction between the popular housing areas and the real estate market, presaging new urban mechanisms that need to undergo constant assessment. At Brasília Teimosa, the most evident consequence of the legal devices that allow for arrangements between entrepreneurs and the community was the assignment of the right to build a huge business building at the neighborhood's entrance, having as counterpart the investment of a certain amount of money to be allocated to the requalification works over the shore.

It is possible to deduce that the Ministry of Cities' intervention started in 2003 to be a direct consequence of the political and symbolic commitments of the locally admitted social agenda under the Lula term (2003-2010). Such an intention was clear during the visit made by

the president's entourage to the neighborhood on January 2003, thus marking the remembrance of inhabitants, placing the stilt houses issue at Brasília Teimosa as a priority to the Ministry.

To understand the impact that such intervention had on the local imaginary, it is necessary to take into consideration not only the achievement of the national power by Lula, but also the campaign of João Paulo, a workman without formal education, that led him to the mayorship in 2000, aligning the municipal and federal governments, and creating both political and institutional conditions to accomplish an exemplary urban action at Recife, a symbol to the Workers' Party (PT – Partido dos Trabalhadores) will to govern. Fred Zero Quatro – musician, journalist, one of the ideologists of the mangue beat movement, and author of the 'Caranguejos com cérebro' manifest [Portuguese for 'Brainy Crabs'] – highlights the symbolic role of such an achievement during an interview concerning the Brasília Teimosa issue in 2003.

However, the first action taken was the removal of the stilt houses that occupied the neighborhood's shore, giving room to a new Avenue and a mile-long 'dry beach' composed of an arenaceous floor and a wall restraining the sea, opening a new contact front between the dwellers and the rest of the town. The architect Armando presented his project during an interview at URB Recife: focused on actions to regenerate the beach and the shore's urbanization, thus qualifying it to the collectivism, serving it with transport, public telephones and toilets, as well as kiosks to sell beverages and foodstuffs. It was the beginning of Brasília Formosa Avenue, a name that reflects the inhabitants will to connect to a new identity.

The inhabitants of the stilt houses would be removed to the Cordeiro housing project, five miles away from Brasília Teimosa; their manpower would be employed to build houses, enabling them to work at the civil construction industry, a quite superficial interpretation of what would be the popular participation on the urban requalification of this popular settlement. Reginaldo, coordinator of the Association of Community Action of Brasília Teimosa, considered it a positive project aligned with the municipal policies, "in an effort to generate income, qualify the spaces, and enrich the realty of Brasília Teimosa. Our one and only concern is that this project does not extinct our beach". The matter of participation rises as an unavoidable apparatus to mediate the government and the real estate market interests with those of the dwellers: "We have always known how to handle governments independently of the parties. We will charge them, we want to take part on it" (Inglez de Souza, 2004).

### **A matter of class? (2002 – ?)**

Meanwhile, the episode of Dona Maria do Socorro took place, emphasizing the importance of Brasília Teimosa in the political panorama of Recife: during the dispute for the city's mayorship in 2004, the former dweller of a stilt house appeared on the electoral propaganda of a candidate that intended to frustrate João Paulo's reelection plans, alleging to have been removed from Brasília Teimosa having no place to go. The opponent's marketing strategy, whose platform was based on touristic incentives and presented evidence of the contradictions of a government that promised to 'take care of people'. This maneuver proved to back-fire, once Maria do Socorro showed up a few days later on the mayor's electoral program belying the story, telling that it had been forged to liberate her son from jail, him who has been arrested under custody of the State Department of Penitentiary Management in Pernambuco, an entity then directed by the opponent's wife. João Paulo was reelected without runoff; such a fact, associated with the announcement of Lula's reelection campaign at Buraco da Velha in

2006, seems to be enough evidence to demonstrate Brasília Teimosa's importance in recent political history.



**The Avenue Brasília Formosa, the 'dry beach' and the wall. Photo by Diego BIS.**

Following the neighborhood's physical transformation, almost a decade after the federal government's first actions, artists and filmmakers have been devoting themselves to observe the recent changes occurred in the social landscape. Photographer Bárbara Wagner dedicated several of her weekends to shoot popular figures at the Brasília Teimosa beach, the venue of an outbreak of a very particular urban culture. Her portraits reveal the cultural diversity of the popular universe, capturing the echoes of all the metropolitan and peripheral cultural expressions downtown, by the shore.

According to the curator Cristiana Tejo, Wagner's "Stubborn Brasília" series, dated 2006, induced "the discomfort of seeing the spotlight fall on an underprivileged social group that was not visible or taken seriously 15 years ago and which has gained centrality and importance in political and economic discourse only recently. For the latter, it challenges the received wisdom that automatically identifies Brazil with promiscuity, violence and misery" (Tejo in Wagner, 2009: 7). It is the rise of a new middle class, formerly envisaged solely as poor people. The work mobilizes contemporary issues when approaching "self-representation, the periphery, cultural identity, social stigmatization, consumerism and otherness, topics that she perceived to be distorted by the Brazilian media" (Tejo in Wagner, 2009: 7).

There is an effort directed to restrain both themes and images mobilized by the neighborhood's borders, enrolling them between the peripheral and the global points of view, despite the fact it is still a central spot inscribed within a peripheral metropolis: "Whilst the

local context is fundamental for placing Brasília Teimosa, it is above all a work about urban life that deals with a tension between center and periphery experienced in cities worldwide” (Wagner, 2009: 15).

The ending of stilt houses and the neighborhood’s transformation works emerge from recent memories in the documentary *Avenida Brasília Formosa*. Directed by Gabriel Mascaro, the film uses fast-forwarding/backwarding techniques to show file footages of the metacharacter Fábio, a video documentarian from the neighborhood who registers the day-to-day activities of the inhabitants in the neighborhood – birthday parties, flood tides, religious celebrations, and the intentions of a manicure to participate in a reality show. According to the film’s abstract, “A poetic web of encounters, memories and desires is drawn, providing a sensorial insight into the contemporary reality of the residents of the ‘Defiant Brasília’ neighborhood and their relationship with a newly constructed avenue” (Mascaro, 2010).

Using the poetic images that depict the perspective of five characters, the film reconstructs some of the place’s urgent issues. A fisherman taken from the stilt houses to the Cordeiro housing unit crosses the city’s on a bike towards the sea, in a long take before dawn, to meet his fishing colleagues at Brasília Teimosa; then arises the unfeasibility of the commonality, boundaries between those marginalized that were removed to other borders of the urban sprawl. Symbols of the democratic consumption contrast with the precariousness of the constructions that shelters them. In turn, the image of his housing unit opposes to the natural landscape and the city perspective one can have from some strategic spots of Brasília Teimosa. It all becomes clear in the characters of Gabriel Mascaro, who also presents some evidence of both the economical and public infrastructure network of the neighborhood.

The character Fábio, an *ad hoc* video documentarian of the neighborhood, works as a waiter in one of the several seafood restaurants of the region. One of those restaurants is settled in a four-floored building at the heart of Brasília Teimosa, with elevator and balcony with panoramic view. The inhabitants’ relation with the fishing and the sea universe is reflected in the urbanization: most of the parallel routes are named after fishes, like the Espadarte, Capapeba, Anequim, Atum and Badejo streets, among others, which split the lots in long blocks crossed by a main street (Rua Arabaiana) with commercial activities and structural to the neighborhood – a typical and almost literal example of the urban setting known as ‘fishbone’, a characteristic frequently observed in several Brazilian slums.

The permanence of such culinary habits refers to Josué de Castro and his thorough description of the crab cycle, enrolling the mocambo and its dweller, a hybrid of man and crab, in this very peculiar construction of the city’s popular territories:

the inhabitants of the mocambos were not workmen. The vast majority of them were idle people that made their living with little jobs or chores, and ultimately, fishing crabs, since they could not find other types of work. Only the mangrove and the mocambos fitted their monetary situation. At the mangrove, the land belongs to no one, only to the tide. (Castro, 2001: 107)

Several times, Fábio is shown answering calls on his cell phone to perform little jobs, chores as cameraman that end up becoming repositories of popular culture and the neighborhood’s memory; he himself directs and edits his video reports with his own means, at his house, recording emblematic images of this coexistence of the recent past and the present. This way, Fábio can be perceived as the contemporary digital version of the casual worker Josué de Castro, unemployed but ready to take on any kind of work, transmuted by the coming of the economic growth and the democratization of mass consumption, including the means to produce video and digital culture – a mangrove boy with a camera, a computer and a cell phone in hand.

## The beginning of an end, or the end of a new beginning?

Brasília Teimosa seems to be the informal capital of a quite real Brazil, a place where the country's contradictions “are unveiled with unbearable clarity”, as intense as in the new federal capital portrayed by Joaquim Pedro de Andrade in 1965. Several information sources are invoked here in an effort to evidence the complexity of this popular territory with relatively recent history, concentrating a myriad of issues and trajectory. The controversies of Brasília Teimosa against the established authorities were highly distinguished by the emergence of ‘people as a historic category’ (Arraes, 1963, in Inglez de Souza, 2010: 139), during which actual and symbolic achievements happened not only for the neighborhood or the city, but also for the public policies history in the Brazilian democratic scenario.

It is quite surprising that the popular government ends up engendering an urban policy that chases the poorest out of their territory towards the periphery, a measure that several authoritarian governments wanted to undertake, but the opposition organized by the locals managed to hinder. It might seem exaggerated to assume that the seizure of power by the workers ended up weakening the base of mobilization, neutralizing several sectors of the social movement, and coopted by governmental policies not always tuned with the popular claims. What is sure is that during recent years, Recife has witnessed an explosion in the civil construction industry, which surrounds the territory of Brasília Teimosa. It is impossible not to mention the rise of twin towers in the city center, a recent accomplishment of the capital’s biggest constructing company directed to the millionaire luxury market.

It seems to be a symptom of the generalized urban chaos, the speculative real estate capital’s supremacy, and the urban issue ‘raffled’ by the Lula government, as highlighted by Professor Ermínia Maricato, former secretary to the Ministry of Cities: “There are some evident situations that took everything over and seem to be stronger than long ago: the interests of vehicles, huge construction companies, real estate capital, electoral campaigns...”. Such a phenomenon appears to be particularly felt at the capital of Pernambuco. Antônio Vasconcelos, civil engineer and marketing specialist at one of the biggest real estate developers operating in Recife, reaffirms the company’s position to refurbish the city center in an interview to Gabriela Alcântara and Marcelo Pedrosa (2011), presenting its strategies, obstacles and vision of future for this territory and the city center:

Brasília Teimosa would be an excellent place, if it weren’t for its occupation, surrounded by water on the three sides (sic). Nowadays, this occupation does not allow to start a real estate initiative there, it is fated to maintain its current status, unless there is a severe intervention from the public government to actually rearrange the place and provide room for a new initiative to the city, in order for that venue to serve the town with hotels, docks, and other infrastructures to encourage the tourism. (Vasconcelos in Alcântara and Pedrosa, 2011)

Spoken with such clarity, there is no manner to reconsider the issue: the penetration of the real estate capital is on its way to the Brasília Teimosa; its effects are to be felt in different fields. Part of the public opinion and the inhabitants claim the neighborhood should no longer be classified as a ZEIS, and relinquish mechanisms to stop the regrouping of lots and allow for ancient dwellers of the area who achieved the right to property to transform their social capital into revenues, into cash, selling their right to this city. Finance professor at UFPe, Pierre Lucena, is one to affirm that “the ZEIS damages the poorest population of Recife”, feeding a long discussion in his blog that reflects the numerous opinions concerning the future of Brasília Teimosa:

Deep inside, the regulation of ZEIS only excludes poor people from the main ‘party’ of the Brazilian economy: the appreciation of their realities. While the real estate patrimony of wealthy families went triple over the past five years, those of poor people remained the same. (Lucena, 2012: no page)

This argumentation could even lead to a pertinent question regarding the real estate or personal subvention, if we were able to ignore the movements of constructing companies’ players acting towards the inflation of the real estate market at Brasilia Teimosa, funding associations and campaigns engaged in solving the ‘obstacles’ in order to ease the demotion of the neighborhood’s historical ability, giving room to a gentrification process.

Analyzing this episode merely from the urbanistic perspective, there would be no doubts left: the battle held at Aldeia Teimosa between human crabs and the sharks of real estate speculation, is lost. However if we resort to the social science, it is possible to envisage some indications of a local revenge from the inhabitants of Brasilia Teimosa from an ethnographic perspective. These people appear on the forefront of cultural products and contemporary art, occupying a symbolic place of the city representation on several instances. It is possible to say that this would configure a specific ‘counter-usage’ of public spaces, a reaction to the gentrification processes that operates in the revitalization of the Ancient Recife, as analyzed by Rogério Proença Leite (2002).

The aim here is neither to realize the future beforehand nor to recommend a solution, but rather to bring back the recent past of the historical and symbolic conflicts held around the issue of the occupation of land conquered at the mangrove. Such disputes reflect the contemporary contradictions in building cities, going way beyond the urbanism field of action and current dynamics that tend to propagate and stress the inequalities instead of promoting the right to the city and a dignified housing for everyone, but whose reactions are still a little difficult to glimpse.

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## When Urban Exclusion Enters Planning Policies: The Issue of the ‘Public Spaces Humanization’ Program of the Buenos Aires Government – Two Cases of Manipulated Public Spaces

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**Abstract:** This paper analyzes two cases of urban planning influence on social inclusion. Indeed, public spaces may represent an instrument of spatial exclusion and the way they are designed can produce social distinctions. They can be used to select welcomed practices and to prevent undesirable uses in certain perimeters. We will see how the Humanization of Public Space Program created by the City Government of Buenos Aires is increasing urban fragmentation. By making differences in treatment between users according to their origin, this program uses public spaces to develop its own vision of the ideal city. To be more explicit, I focus on the elitist Puerto Madero parks and on the Defensa Street, both affected by a deep change in their uses. There, the ‘public space for all’ construction may result in social exclusion processes.

**Keywords:** public space, selection, uses, policies, urban planning

Urban inclusion and spatial justice are very obvious questions in countries of the South, and most particularly in Buenos Aires, known for its very opposite extremes as one of the biggest Latin American cities. In the Argentinean capital, the economy is slowly getting better since the 2001 crisis, but fragmentation and social gaps are becoming more and more evident. Globalization and the growing economy are not redistributed in each social class: *villas miserias* (or slums) are more and more densely populated, even in the downtown area near the high buildings of Puerto Madero. Conditions of access to environmental or economic resources are not equal, and the quality of living environment and mobility are far from being similar in each neighborhood. The Mauricio Macri Government of the Autonomous Capital has been leading liberal urban policies for five years, which does not seem to stop the increasing poverty of popular social classes. Nevertheless, I have to admit that the Urban

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<sup>1</sup> Camille Morel is a PhD student from the Paris-Est University. She studied political sciences before specializing her interest in urban planning and urban sociology. Her investigation project concerns the expression and regulation of conflicts in public spaces of Buenos Aires (Argentina) and more specifically their “invisible” part: actors, arguments, actions,.... Inscribed in a urban planning discipline, this research also uses sociological theories and analytical tools of public action to encourage an interdisciplinary approach.

Development Ministry tries to act on these urban issues, with programs for public spaces to be more specific. But if we can doubt its real intentions, we can surely regret its lack of efficiency to fix social and spatial injustices.

The Urban Development Ministry policies, led by Daniel Chain, are separated into two kinds of complementary programs. The first one, called Urban Acupuncture<sup>2</sup> consists, as its name suggests, in punctual and very local operations, in general in areas with economic and social problems, to boost old dynamics and spread them to a larger perimeter. The second one, called Pedestrian Priority, consists in transforming touristic or very commercial avenues into pedestrian streets in all parts of the city. All of this falls within the general framework of the Humanization of Public Spaces program,<sup>3</sup> a major principle of action of the Urban Development Minister. It concerns all kind of living spaces in public areas: parks, squares, and streets. This process is the focus of the analysis here, based on two examples extracted from field investigations made in 2011 and 2012.

Daniel Chain explains in *La Humanización del Espacio Público* (City Government of Buenos Aires, 2008)<sup>4</sup> that humanizing public space does not mean that it is not human, but that it can become “more human”. According to him, a public space that does not belong to anyone belongs to everybody, and most of all to everyone. Daniel Chain explains his aim of action must be “to stop public space being a no man’s land, to become an appropriate place” (*ibid*, p. 5) where the habitants can feel more comfortable, as he insists all along the catalogue. But “an appropriate place” may also mean a place where uses and practices better match with the expectations of urban planners and politics – a place where users would act the way they are expected to behave, with an “appropriate behavior”. As well, we begin to understand how with urban planning it is possible to influence users’ conscience.

He adds that he expects “to encourage adequate uses of public space, urging habitants to feel a belonging feeling, and make them wanting to collaborate to its preservation” (*ibid*, p. 5)<sup>5</sup>. He refers to the City Government idea that puts citizens in charge of their neighborhood preservation. It is not a wrong idea, but it introduces a scale of property or responsibility for public space with certain individuals more legitimate than others to ‘protect’ their territory. Besides, it means that they will accept uses they considerate ‘adequate’ and prevent or forbid those they are not, even if the Government does not communicate much about what it means. We will see with two examples how the City Government discourages practices it does not appreciate.

This paper is based on my PhD project at the Urban Planning Institute of Paris-East University. My doctoral thesis is about the role of public spaces in the expression of troubles and more specifically about urban conflicts in the parks and squares of South Buenos Aires. In order to investigate these problematics, during the last few years I made several visits in my field of investigation so I could realize various non-participant observation sequences and a few interviews. The first part of this paper talking about Puerto Madero parks results from

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<sup>2</sup> “Acupuntura urbana” (“urban acupuncture”), from the urban policies of Jaime Lerner, Curitiba Governor, in 1971.

<sup>3</sup> “*Humanización del Espacio Público*”, certainly a reference to the urban policies of Antanas Mockus, Bogota Governor, in 1995.

<sup>4</sup> *La Humanización del Espacio Público* is the catalogue presentation of the program where the Minister and all his work team explain their vision of the program.

<sup>5</sup> Public Spaces Area of Urban Development Department of Buenos Aires website: [http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/espacio\\_publico/espacio\\_publico.php?menu\\_id=31442](http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/espacio_publico/espacio_publico.php?menu_id=31442), accessed on 30.05.2012.

my last study field in Buenos Aires. And the presentation of Defensa Street is an extract of my Master 2 thesis, based on an analysis of political challenges about its pedestrianisation in 2009 by the City Government.

## Space as a mirror of social exclusion, the example of Puerto Madero Parks

In various areas, exclusion has become physically visible due to an obvious social distinction constitutive of the urban planning of the city. For example, we can see in Puerto Madero a sort of segregation in spite of its open appearance. This urban project, led by Corporación Antiguo Puerto Madero S.A., has been the most important renewal project of the 1990s. Located on the old harbor of the Argentinean capital, its reconversion turned it into a sector for upper-class residents<sup>6</sup>, called “Porteña Island” by *La Nación* (2 June 2005). The old docks have been transformed into hotels, restaurants, and luxurious shops. And this rentable real estate operation has been completed by the construction of residential towers with the most expensive square meter cost in Buenos Aires. These skyscrapers are a kind of vertical equivalent of gated communities, the number of which is increasing in the suburbs. The towers are fully equipped with the same services as in these closed areas: pool, gym club, private parking, doorman, etc. This is the neighborhood where the control camera density is the highest in Buenos Aires, and numerous policeman and security guardians complete this sophisticated security system.

But even if they are quite far from the downtown nuisances (noise problems, pollution, etc.), they still do not have private open spaces, with most of the shared spaces reserved for community facilities. That is why all of these buildings were built in relation to an important network of public parks and green spaces. In accordance with the high quality of the rest of the neighborhood, the parks and green spaces are very well maintained by numerous gardeners and municipal employees. Without the noise, traffic, and pollution of the downtown area, they have a very high environmental quality. Well-groomed gardens, modern urban furniture, sports and relaxation facilities, fountains, and drinking water make these big parks very warm and pleasant places.

## Open parks with invisible barriers

Contrary to the towers, these parks are open day and night in theory (as no fence has been set until now), so they look more than accessible. But we can observe that they are paradoxically unfrequented, and quite deserted during the week. Some elements could explain this weird situation. First of all, it should be specified that access points to Puerto Madero are limited: they are only four bridges to cross the docks, making a kind of natural frontier. Also, a majority of Puerto Madero’s habitants are business executives or liberal professions with no kids,<sup>7</sup> and so do not use parks during the week. Otherwise, even if there are a lot of offices in the area, most of the employees stay in the dock area during lunchtime and even if crowded during the summer, they do not walk the few meters to the parks.

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<sup>6</sup> For more information, see Eleonora Elguezabal (2011).

<sup>7</sup> DINK: Double Income No Kids Yet.

This is even stranger given that the adjacent area, the Costanera, is quite crowded during weekends with walkers and visitors from the south of Buenos Aires. This large avenue running along the Ecological Reserve, and its surroundings, is one of the favorite outdoors walking space for people from la Boca and Barracas. Even if it seems pretty far and isolated from the rest of the city, the Costanera stays one of the most popular places for walking of these *porteños*. That is why one can wonder why they do not disperse themselves into the Mujer and Micaela Bastidas parks, which are much more esthetic and comfortable than the Costanera, which is in a neglected state.

Looking deeper, one can see that the way these parks are planned, voluntarily or not, can be an obstacle to this type of population venue. Indeed, first of all, Micaela Bastida Parks is totally enclosed by a high and dense hedge, which makes it invisible from the Rosario V. Peñaloza Avenue. Then, if the walker insists to enter, s/he will find two openings serving as gates. But it remains pretty difficult to know that the park exists and is open at all times to everybody, given the fact that there is no information sign to indicate how to enter. Like the Mujer Park, which is generally unknown by ‘foreigner’ visitors because it is hidden between buildings, inside the residential area. But beyond access and the lack of information, the way the parks have been planned produces this feeling of exclusion.

Micaela Bastidas parks (10 hectares) and Mujer Park (5.7 hectares) are both designed by the same architect team,<sup>8</sup> with a similar plan of an inclined semi-circle, a sort of amphitheatre in open air. Turned facing the buildings, they turn their back to the Costanera and we can think it is a way to limit the number of visitors from the popular Costanera. Officially in tribute to “the characteristic of the principal squares near the Plata River they reproduce” (Corporación Antiguo Puerto Madero S.A., 2009: 113), this wall called *barranca*<sup>9</sup> by the architects gives them an occasion to color their project with an antique touch.<sup>10</sup> There are other simple reasons to build it: made with the rubble from the towers’ foundations, it is a huge economy of transport wastes. Besides, it is an excellent way to stop the polluted air from the river and the barbecue odors from the food stands of the Costanera. It is also useful to park the cleaning services’ vehicles and materials. A path goes all around this concrete wall, as a feudal covered way in a castle. Like that, guards can make security patrols easily and quickly with an overall view on the entire park. This enclosure surrounds the entire park, leaving those who do not dare to enter this closed part outside. The split made with the rest of the area provides a protective feeling. To finalize this sensation of security in the garden, the designers have placed numerous giant street lamps, which also obviously serve to prevent illegal activities by night.

Flowerbeds and luxuriant vegetation compose some private places where couples and families can relax almost privately, sunbathing or having a picnic. Twisting paths crossing the park between flowers and trees could give an impression of a walk in wild nature. But as it is specified in the presentation catalogue of the renovation project, these spaces are “built like architectural spaces, defined by a composition of other elements” (Corporación Antiguo

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<sup>8</sup> René Joselevich, Graciela Novoa, Alfredo Garay, and Nestor Magariños.

<sup>9</sup> From its origin, the *barranca* divided the city from the north to the south crossing several old parks and squares: Parque Lezama, Barrancas de Belgrano, Plaza San Martín, Plaza Francia. It was delimiting ‘high’ and ‘down’ Buenos Aires, so we can think that making a new one in Puerto Madero is a way to emphasize this separation between these parks and the Costanera.

<sup>10</sup> Like the old docks and their original buildings of Puerto Madero, and more generally with the tendency to reproduce supposed historic elements from national architecture heritage during the last few years. Cf. Laccariéu Monica (2006).

Puerto Madero S.A., 2008: 123) and are so very unnatural. Indeed, we can say that they are separated in two distinct areas: “one wooded and one open, one flat and one sloping, with three squares proposing different programs. The first one is dedicated to children games, the second one to a rose garden, contemplation spaces and lecture, and the last one is a huge green yard to enjoy the sun” (p. 123), which make it finally a very artificial zone. We understand very well that all uses are anticipated and thought of before, at the original conception moment. This way, flowerbeds, benches, and paths smartly put in the middle of the flat area prevent the soccer practices and stop improvisation or other imaginative uses. Furniture and vegetation are useful to decorate, but most of all to indicate which uses are expected and which are not tolerated.

### Public spaces divided by practices or by social classes?

This way, the “design of Micaela Bastidas answers the needs of the habitants of the gated community”, affirms a member of the Ecologic Reserve protection organization.<sup>11</sup> It corresponds to the practices of a certain population and prevents undesired uses, and so unwanted users. Thus, the graded paths are easy to jog or ride on in rollerskates or skateboards. The well-kept lawn encourages users to pick-up dog dirt and waste, and discourages those who make barbecues on it. We do not see as many street vendors as on the Costanera in this space free of commercial activities. Like the rest of the neighborhood, everything is done to avoid undesirables (few benches to sit or sleep on, no trash containers who could attract *cartoneros*)<sup>12</sup> and it seems to work due to the small number of indigents observed in this area.

We can easily see that the practices of these two kinds of population are very different, and that they are spatially divided according to their uses. But, as previously explained, the spaces are designed in different ways, and we should now wonder if this was made on purpose. Differently said, we know that social origin contributes to *entre-soi*, or that urban practices are determined by social frontiers. But now we should wonder if the way public spaces are designed influences that spatial division? Can urban planning manipulate the use of spaces by preventing sport and cultural practices of lower-class users for example? Looking these parks deeper, we understand that each space is organized in function of the public expected. So we can say there is a selection of the users admitted by the practice of the space they have. It explains why people from the south area of Buenos Aires who should be attracted by these two parks, prefer the Costanera. Puerto Madero parks, in spite of their apparent openness and qualities, stay the territory of Puerto Madero habitants, even if physical frontiers are invisible.

The Humanization of Public Space Program pretends to “foster adequate uses by boosting habitants property feeling making them participate in their preservation and conservation” (City Government of Buenos Aires, 2008: 5). If this idea seems justifiable, it confirms that habitants’ uses are more legitimate than that of visitors and, in this case, upper-class practices. By authorizing and valuing just one type, social mix is in danger, and spatial and social injustice is bigger. Even if according to Freddy Garay, one of the parks’ architects,

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.porlareserva.org.ar/ParqueMicaelaBastidas2.htm>, accessed on 06.02.2012.

<sup>12</sup> Individuals looking for recyclable waste products in the garbage to resell them.

the intention of the project was to “attract as many people as possible, and especially people from the south areas of Buenos Aires” (Garay, 2007: 9).

### Some public spaces, exceeded by political and economic stakes

The urban project was launched by the Corporation Antiguo Puerto S.A. Madero, created by the Federal Ministry of Interior and the City Government of Buenos Aires, and led by a public call for the project. But, actually, the project was majority financed by private investors who have more and more power in the decisions on the area’s future. Jimena R. Casas (2009) notes that the presentation of Puerto Madero Corporation insists on its wish to switch “to a *privatized* management of these revitalized new spaces” (p. 4). That is why Juan Carlos Etulain (2008) wonders if the urban planning of Puerto Madero is not turning into promotional management or even privatization? When the project had been published, a lot of people reproached its private sources of funding, which became a symbol of Menem’s policies and liberalism. They were also afraid of its turning into an elite enclave or a rich ghetto construction. But we should now wonder why there are so many public spaces, and what role are they playing in this game of interest?

The Puerto Madero Urban Project is famous for the highest surface of public and green spaces (41% of the total surface), among which 21% are streets and public walks, 11% parks, and 9% ‘dry’ public spaces (Etulain, 2008). “More than a half<sup>13</sup> of the Master Plan surface has been designed for public, free and open to everyone relaxation and divertimento, bringing more than 50 hectares of new green spaces in the center of the city”, says the presentation catalogue (Corporación Antiguo Puerto Madero S.A., 2009: 109). We can note that they insist a lot on the free and unrestricted access. Maybe this is today a kind of moral guarantee to the accessibility of the place. The Government claims that it is acting in favor of the social mix, and makes these parks a symbol of its metropolitan and social policies.

If the City Government and real estate promoters care so much about Puerto Madero, it is also because it is supposed to be the visiting card of the city. All the skyscrapers built by famous architects, make a skyline that deserves to be on postcards. There is an issue of image taking place in these parks, and a debate between what should be exposed on touristic guides and what should be kept in obscurity. For example, the Ecological Reserve represents an important stake since it is a member of the International Wetland Network.<sup>14</sup> This international recognition of the environmental quality complements the picture contractors and developers intend to paint in order to sell their lofts in Puerto Madero. We have to know that at the beginning of the urban renovation project, the Reserve was not in its actual conservation state. But its protection by an international organization justified the evacuation of Rodrigo Bueno slum’s habitants. That is one of the example of why Jimena R. Casas (2009b) says that they did not *renovate* the district, but they *transformed* it entirely, with the clear ambition of better public spaces than in the rest of the city, creating totally new artificial spaces and practices.

This way, the Puerto Madero project pretends to “fix the public spaces’ deficit equipping the city with public spaces with a higher quality and a wider offer of green spaces” (no

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<sup>13</sup> 41% actually.

<sup>14</sup> <http://ramsar.wetlands.org/Database/Searchforsites/tabid/765/Default.aspx>, accessed on 06.02.2012.

page).<sup>15</sup> This reminds us of the nostalgic speech, very common in the North and the South, on the necessity to recover public spaces, a pretext to make them more secure and to privatize them. Sadly, it is more an excuse to hide the social division and spatial segregation it actually tries to preserve.

## The pedestrianisation of Defensa Street in San Telmo, another case of public space manipulation

Defensa Street crosses San Telmo, a neighborhood recently affected by a gentrification process modifying its social and commercial structure (Morel, 2011). The upper socioeconomic class arrival has increased the rents and a part of the local population has had to leave for cheaper areas. New economic activities like clothes and furniture design or trendy bars have replaced the old antique shops. Touristic development has provoked a progressive disappearance of traditional activities. To summarize, the appearance and uses of this street have changed a lot these last few years, causing new conflicts between every actor. But we are interested in the second part in the transformation of its public spaces and renewal project. Indeed, on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the Urban Planning Ministry of the City Government launched its Pedestrian Priority Program, and transformed Defensa Street into a pedestrian street in San Telmo. Thus, they have invested specifically in a few blocks between Belgrano Avenue and Dorrego Square. Stone pavements have been changed and potholes have been fixed, pavements in pink noble material have been laid on the sidewalks, crosswalks have been raised as well as the sidewalk level, and more luxurious street furniture has been installed. Even if this process did not end up with its full pedestrianisation because of the habitants' mobilization, these works give Defensa Street a new face, one that is very different from the rest of the area.

Daniel Chain, Urban Development Minister, talks about “integration” in the project presentation, but actually we note some arrangements serving to move away from uses considered as undesirable. Private initiatives, but public one too, have multiplied prevention measures in the area. We note the rise in the presence of police services<sup>16</sup> officially programmed to control the license of the *feria* craftsmen, but actually producing a dissuasive effect on ambulant vendors and pickpockets. Sometimes the tolerance level with illegal practices can be a good indicator of political ambitions and of the image the politicians want to promote. Indeed, the police are much stricter with the individuals who smoke marijuana or drink alcohol in public space, than with restaurants whose terraces overtake the sidewalk. We can see in this difference in treatment a way to select practices and users in this perimeter.

## New public spaces for a new image

Today, even if Defensa Street is not pedestrian, it corresponds more and more to the Government's objectives in the presentation of a Pedestrian Priority project, an application of

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.corporacionpuertomadero.com/proyecto>, accessed on 06.02.2012. Jimena R. Casas (2009) notes that the Corporacion Puerto Madero presentation insists not only on the *creation* of green spaces but on their *transformation*, and with the envisioned project to switch to a private (privatized) management of these *revitalized* new spaces.

<sup>16</sup> Today, they are more than 70 inspectors in San Telmo on the *feria* days (“Afirmar...”, 2010).



the Humanization of Public Space program. In these few blocks, with modern shop windows, cafés, and bars' terraces and its new design, the street seems to be a part of an old European capital centre, while the south part is still broken, obscure, and very popular. Besides the physical transformations, there are other ways, more subtle, to prevent or discourage a certain part of the population to come into that space.

The initial project planned to put streets and sidewalks at the same level, to replace the antique paving stone by a new one in granite, to decorate the board of the sidewalk with faience mosaic, and finally to add vegetation with some exotic plants, according to *La Nación* newspaper ("Freno...", 2008). In this article, members of the *¡Basta de Demoler!* organization answered that "by changing the urban network and modifying traditional elements, protected by local and international institutions, this project would change completely the historical nature of the neighborhood".<sup>17</sup>

Facing the habitants' protests, the City Government gave up the pedestrian part of its project, but it still installed the new crosswalks and all the new elements previously mentioned. More recently, it added new urban furniture specifically designed for this area: manholes, benches, and garbage cans copying an antique style. New streetlamps and an illumination system make the final touch of European street pastiche appear a little bit *cliché*, or "Made in China" according to Sergio Kiernan ("Una obra...", 2008).

Concerning these changes, the Shopkeepers of San Telmo Association is afraid it is destined "to create a television set, transforming this block into an island out of the area morphology..." A member adds:

the transformation of this zone by movie and television productions, and their traffic blocking habitants' accesses, should be restricted by an adapted law. [We] would appreciate a law which protects local economy, to oblige those companies to be financially responsible for the damage they cause..., to develop a sustainable local economy and a normal life for people affected in the area.<sup>18</sup>

They employ the word 'set', which confirms that this project is perceived as *decor* by the inhabitants, which confirms the gap between Defensa street, seen as outside of the reality, and the rest of the neighborhood. This is a good example to understand that even if the government affirms to work thinking first about the habitants' interests, it actually seems to care more about its plans depending more attractive interests. With this program, it has found a way to attract practices it would like to increase in this area: movie and TV show shootings.

It becomes obvious that by using foreign references for urban planning (we saw that Defensa Street now looks like a Parisian avenue), they take the risk that local habitants do not understand and reject their propositions. So by building or modifying a public space to make it much more different, urban planners are responsible for the misunderstanding of these references by a part of the habitants. By choosing some codes to conceive those common spaces, knowing that everybody does not share the same keys of comprehension, they select an expected public and make a hierarchy of uses to the detriment of others. This scale of values can be imposed from the authority's power without a participative process, so even if

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<sup>17</sup> In a communiqué of this non-governmental organization published by *La Nación* ("Freno...", 2008).

<sup>18</sup> On the blog of the Shopkeepers of San Telmo Association, article of 23.06.2009. Accessed on 13.05.2011, at <http://asociaciondecomerciantesdesantelmo.blogspot.com/>.

habitants do not entirely reject the project, they find the legitimacy of the way it has been executed contestable.

### *Toward gentrified and tourists' public spaces?*

To understand this pedestrianisation operation, we have to know it is inscribed in a more general context of economic growth of Defensa Street. About this, Jorge Sabato, a member of the Urban Development Ministry, lists the conditions of a successful public space planning. The Urban Architecture and Infrastructure Ministry's Project talks about the urban form and recommends to "give the city a different profile and a singular way of life, which would be a powerful tool to create added value, leading to a complementary qualitative dynamic in economy, social or environment fields" (City Government of Buenos Aires, 2008: 6) This confirms that the city and its public spaces will be designed to attract upper categories able to 'create this added value'.

With these explanations, we can say that the gentrification phenomenon is modifying the social and economic structure of the neighborhood, and is affecting public spaces. Generally this process is led by private actions, but we can now observe it is entering public policies. If public space responds to the expectations of new social categories, we have to take into account the arrival of foreigners and tourists who represent a big source of income too. Restaurant terraces shows that installations settled for tourists take more and more space in the street. Those elements lead us to wonder if tourists are a part of the Urban Development Ministry plan.

If until today Defensa Street does not exactly match with the initial project because it has not ended up being pedestrianized, we can surely wonder if it will one day. But, resuming the Priority Pedestrian Project to a simple urban plan, we risk missing the essential point of the government's policies. In the contrary, isn't it the beginning of a larger movement of social selection for the highest authorities, to use space and town planning as an instrument to redistribute urban activities and habitants? And more generally, is the Humanization of Public Space program a way to do the contrary of what its title says, in order to make it more smooth and neutral and upset the natural uses of public space?

## **Conclusion**

Before we can rethink social inclusion, it is important to precisely understand the mechanisms leading to exclusion. This is why the focus here was on spatial ways to produce social segregation by selection and manipulation of public space practices and uses.

I have been interested exclusively in policies of the Urban Development Ministry, and most of all in the Humanization of Public Space Program, in principle/theory it apparently brings the members of the Government together, but actually hides obscure applications. I have not had time to analyze the rest of the actors' system such as real estate promoters acting as powerful lobbies on the city government, or by transforming public spaces in a more direct style, for example, by privatizing the Nestor Kirchner Plazoleta. I also have not spoken about the civil society actors directly concerned. Far from being uniform, civil society is becoming more and more mobilized to defend common spaces, and inhabitants are becoming very involved in the conquest of their living environment. Those movements produce the apparition of new actors: neighborhood organizations and local groups fighting for urban rights. Indeed, old actors like neighborhood assemblies and neighborhood organizations regain the place they had in the 1950s, beating political parties or syndicate adhesion (Merkel, 2001). So

we can see the return of the inhabitants in the political stage in a more territorialized organization. They seem to think that social and economic inequalities produce spatial disparities, so they have to act at a more local scale and return to their neighborhood. More than individualist behaviors of territory protection (called NIMBY mobilizations), it is a way for them to get involved in their neighborhood life, to be listened to and to express their preoccupations, and so to enter the democratic game. In the public square of each neighborhood, they take direct actions such as occupying the street or with *piquete* or *cacerolazos*, two very particular ways to protest in Argentina. Fighting against the construction of towers, architectural heritage destruction, or privatization of public space, they prove that public space is an instrument but an objective too, and most of all an element of construction to build a neighborhood identity.

Besides, if there are some local and micro-local troubles, as we saw in my investigation fields, we should not forget to observe them at a larger scale. The metropolisation of Buenos Aires due to the amelioration of mobility systems, the organization of big cultural and sports events, and increasing tourism makes the extent of the urban challenges more important. If they can be barriers against exclusion, at first sight the conflicts they can produce should not be neglected. Spatial inclusion does not consist only on forced social mix and big meetings because *spatial* inclusion does not mean *social* inclusion. It can help, but it is not enough. By the way, the city government tendency to treat local problems by general policies with a top-down way to apply them does not help habitants to appropriate this kind of project. Besides, we can wonder if it is not a strategy to mislead them by inventing global programs and applying them everywhere the same way.

We should finally wonder how those two movements, metropolisation and withdrawal of local affiliation, can be simultaneous and how they respond to each other. How do they reveal the contradiction of some projects when we know that urban planning must take care of local contexts? If it can be an efficient instrument to stop the actual fragmentation of Buenos Aires, it is not enough and must be thought through in the context of a global urban policy.

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# Reframing Social Inclusion in a Context of Neo-liberal Hegemony: The Agenda of the Right-wing Government in Rome<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Policy labels like ‘social inclusion’, ‘social cohesion’ and ‘subsidiarity’ are used in discourses concerning policies carried out by local governments with different political orientations. This paper analyses the way in which the meaning of such labels is constructed with regard to the case of Rome. The mix of continuity and change in the cognitive and normative dimensions of policy discourses of both left- and right-wing local governments show an emerging primacy of economic factors and of privatisation and a dynamic of mimetic isomorphism concerning general principles and organisational issues. Interpretative hypotheses are proposed, based on variables of an endogenous (a local ‘construction’ of the global crisis and its consequences on urban society, relationships between political actors and the civil society involved in service provision, and the political culture) and exogenous (a changing orientation in national social policy, and pressures of a ‘mainstream’ neo-liberal discourse) kind.

**Keywords:** social inclusion, social policy, policy discourse, cognitive/normative categories, neo-liberalisation

## Introduction

*Social inclusion, social cohesion, subsidiarity* and other similarly generic keywords are frequently found in policy discourses currently used in producing public policies at a local scale. These expressions can be considered ‘policy labels’, that is, condensation symbols (Edelman, 1964) transmitting both information and values. These are easily spread among local, national and transnational scales of government because “a loosely bundled or

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ambiguous concept may be applied to a variety of purposes”, and this characteristic makes them compatible with multiple goals (Mossberger, 2000: 117, 121). Thus, the more the ambiguity, the more the potential for the diffusion of a policy label and for a multi-scalar transfer process to convey labels along with (or instead of) policy content, concepts or instruments. In contemporary European cities, the making of social policy and, more generally, of policies in which the aforementioned labels are present, are embedded in wider and transcalar processes of a neoliberalisation of public policies and governance. This means that both exogenous and place-specific factors lead to variegated forms (varieties, hybridisations) of urban neoliberalism which, in turn, may end up with different translations of the same policy label into actions that have dissimilar impacts on urban society.

This paper aims to contribute to a disambiguation of some widely used labels concerning social policy through a study focussing on the way in which actual ‘local’ meanings of expressions like social ‘inclusion’, ‘cohesion’, and ‘integration’ are socially and politically constructed as regards Rome. Does such a construction change over time, and how? How is it affected by the aforementioned transcalar processes? How important are the characteristics of and the processes affecting the local political system? In particular, does a right-wing government orientation make a difference?

The Rome case may shed light on this latter aspect in particular because of an important political change that occurred in 2008. After a long period in which a centre-left coalition (1994-2001: Mayor F. Rutelli; 2001-2008: Mayor W. Veltroni) had governed the municipality, a right-wing government (Mayor G. Alemanno) came to power in 2008. This has made it possible to make a diachronic comparison (2001-2012) of the discourses on which social interventions and economic development policies were based by the differently oriented governments within the same city. Such a ‘discursive analysis’ (see the following section) makes it easier to reconstruct the processes through which policy labels get their meaning in the interactions between scales of government and within the local structure of urban governance. Furthermore, the comparison regards two periods when the making of urban policy was exposed to partly similar and partly different environmental pressures, opportunities and constraints. They consist of European social policy and its ‘mainstream’ neo-liberal policy discourse, national policies which are also affected by the aforementioned transnational factors, and the global economic crisis and its consequences for cities.

The following section presents the theoretical background and the methodological approach of the empirical analysis, particularly focussing on an analytical use of differentiation between the normative and cognitive dimensions of policy discourse. Then, continuity and change in policy discourses concerning social inclusion in Rome, as well as other relevant labels and aspects, are regarded as dependent variables, with the aim of ascertaining whether convergences or differences prevail between the two governments analysed and ‘mainstream’ neoliberal policy. The results of this analysis are discussed in the next section, using concepts from our theoretical background, and some interpretative hypotheses are proposed based on possible independent variables of an exogenous and endogenous kind. The latter may be useful for further research aimed at considering not only policy discourses but also actions constructed through the use of the policy labels analysed, as well as their outputs and outcomes.

## **Theoretical and methodological approach**

In the last thirty years, neoliberalism has dominated economic and political thought, social behaviour, the “public’s thinking” (Palley, 2005: 21) and public actions. But, although we are

living in a neoliberal era (Saad-Philo and Johnston, 2005: 1), neoliberalism has been defined as a “rascal concept” (Brenner *et al.*, 2010) or a “buzzword” (Peck, 2004) sometimes used as a generic label to describe different issues (Lee Mudge, 2008). Neoliberalism has been handed down in different forms and analysed from various disciplinary viewpoints as a policy framework, an ideology and form of government (Larner, 2000), a complex of formal institutions, cognitive and normative principles (Campbell and Pedersen, 2001), a mode of governance and policy package (Stenger and Roy, 2010), an ideological discourse, a strategic concept and a political, social and economic model of organisation (Jessop, 2002a, 2002b), a model of public policy, of institutional transformation and an emerging form of subjectivity (Brenner *et al.*, 2010).

Since the primacy of market regulation and commodification as processes in which economic value and efficiency are produced is also taken for granted in public action and affects policy beliefs, it can be said that neoliberalism is politically managed. In order to do that, the neoliberal paradigm had to be hybridised through operational differentiations and adaptations to various action contexts so that neoliberal forms of action are geographically differentiated. These differentiations are a result of neoliberalisation, that is, the process through which neoliberalism becomes institutionalised. While neoliberalism is consolidated and reproduced in space and time, its values and normative principles are typified and de-personalised. Neoliberalisation is not an “end state” (Peck and Tickell, 2002) of neoliberal regulatory regimes, but a process of progressive consolidation of these regimes. Analysing neoliberalisation in the context of the global crisis, N. Brenner, J. Peck and N. Theodore (2010: 330) describe the “commodification of social life as a differentiated process characterised by a variety of forms, uneven geographical development and path dependency. It is a historically specific, unevenly developed, hybrid, patterned tendency of market-disciplinary regulatory restructuring”.

In an initial phase of this process, local experiments are carried out in the de-structuring of public regulation, which is then replaced by market-oriented rules. These experiments are spread through transnational and transcalar networks so that they become a sort of policy template to be used locally. These regulations afterwards become transnational regulatory regimes that define the rules of the game within local systems. This does not imply either a linear causality between local and global dimensions, or a top-down imposition of supra-national rules. There is no mechanical sequence of phases of development of the neoliberalisation process (Peck *et al.*, 2009), but transcalar connections in which localised experiments of neoliberalisation are a sort of scalar representation, a miniature reconstruction of the value and operational parameters of global neoliberalism, which cannot be reproduced without such local ‘miniatures’. If, in urban contexts, hybridisations and contradictions in the implementation of neoliberal measures do emerge, these are often due to dependency on pre-existing welfare arrangements or negotiations with the ideas or interests of non-neoliberal actors (Hackworth and Moriah, 2006).

If cities are crucial sites for institutionalising the principles of the “actually existing neoliberalism” (Brenner and Theodore 2002), how are specific public concerns for social questions and the resulting urban policies affected by neoliberalisation? In the transition from a ‘roll-back’ to a ‘roll-out’ phase of neoliberalism, the building of a post-Keynesian social policy is more important than mere retrenchment of social expenditure and services (Peck and Tickell, 2007) typical of the first phase, and this tends to produce a “workfarist” impact on social policies (Leitner *et al.*, 2007). Neoliberal social policies are based on ‘social inclusion’. This principle, along with other often-used labels such as ‘social investment’, ‘developmental welfare state’, ‘enabling state’, or ‘inclusive liberalism’, is the basis of policies aimed at

adapting existing welfare systems to the knowledge economy and a flexible labour market. As such, it represents a paradigm shift if compared to former definitions of social issues in terms of ‘combating social exclusion’ typical of Keynesian policies. Measures are aimed at making welfare policies not only less expensive, but also able to contribute to economic growth through ‘active’ and market-based actions, the supply of human capital, employability, flex-security, and centered more on children and poverty prevention through lifelong learning (Esping-Andersen, 2002: 19-21).

This neoliberal discourse on social policy consequently emphasizes actions that are different from ‘tax and spend’ and more in the perspective of ‘value for money’ (Lister 2004). Poverty itself is to be tackled in relation to the labour market as a condition for competitiveness. Even if claiming that “this represents a fundamental break from the neoliberal view of social policy as a cost and a hindrance to economic development and employment growth”, the same authors affirm that “whereas neoliberalism is fundamentally at odds with Keynesianism, the social investment perspective adopted by the EU under the Lisbon agenda shows more continuity with neoliberalism” (Morel *et al.*, 2012: 2; 14). Thus, social inclusion represents a discontinuity only with reference to a roll-back version of neoliberalism, whereas the roll-out phase reconstitutes neoliberalism in “more socially interventionist and ameliorative forms, in order to regulate, discipline and contain those marginalized or dispossessed by the neoliberalisation of the 1980s” (Peck and Tickell, 2002: 388-389). In the field of social policies, there is a rhetoric tending to combine the use of market strategies and competitiveness with more innovative forms of solidarity and social cohesion, which has also been analysed in terms of scale construction and political rescaling (Kazepov, 2010). In particular, policy goals concerning issues such as deprivation “tend to be positioned within overall ‘market-friendly’ strategic perspectives, in which competitiveness and economic growth is the dominant force” (Geddes, 2010: 165-170). From this perspective, socially inclusive policies are part of the “consolidatory moments of neoliberal governance” and, furthermore, they show the “ongoing dynamic of discursive adjustment, policy learning, and institutional reflexivity” of neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell, 2002: 388-389). Social inclusion as a policy label can even go together with the material exclusion produced by coexisting practices of urban transformation (Candan and Kolluoglu, 2010).

Since the aforementioned discursive labels are to be considered part of ‘flanking mechanisms’ (Jessop, 2002a, 2002b) to neoliberalism, a neoliberal agenda of social policy produces hegemonic effects, that is to say, instruments for a wider consensus around neoliberal economic policies. From this point of view, social inclusion as a way to empower policy takers (especially the poor and deprived) and to open space for civil society action, typical of the rhetoric of the EU and other international organizations (Craig and Porter, 2006), is deeply questioned since the ultimate goal of inclusive neoliberalism appears to be “the combination of broadly macroeconomic neoliberal policies with micropolitical rationales and technologies of social inclusion” (Ruckert, 2006: 5).

The introduction of competitive regulation in the management of services addressing social exclusion is a specific facet of neoliberalisation. It may produce consequences for an administration’s non-profit contractual partners, involving them in the implementation of workfare programs and making it more difficult to use funds for the progressive goals of empowerment and solidarity. Also, for this reason, voluntarism and community work can be unintentionally mobilized for a neoliberal agenda, with effects on civil society organisations (non-profit, third sector) (Mayer, 2007) that can be understood as an element of neoliberal hegemony.



Neoliberalisation of social policy can be analyzed by considering not only the contents and means of public action, but also policy discourses that highlight the importance of a social construction of reality and action practices (Surel, 2000). Policy discourse is traditionally referred to as those relationships between individuals, interest groups, social movements and institutions that translate problematic situations into policy problems, shaping agenda setting and decision-making processes (Rein and Schön, 1993: 145). In other words, policy discourses are defined as communicative interactions between political actors that translate collective problems into policy issues (Fischer, 2003: 30). They represent what political actors communicate between themselves and to public opinion (Schmidt, 2002: 210) with reference to a specific action program. A partially different approach describes “advocacy coalitions” as the sharing of a beliefs system, that is, a set of basic values, causal assumptions and problem perceptions (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993: 25). The “discourse coalition” and “advocacy coalition” approaches describe similar phenomena, that is to say, policy frames (Ney, 2009).

The ideas and categories that structure policy discourses have both a cognitive and a normative dimension, which can be distinctively analysed. In the first case, they assume the form of a theoretical description and analysis through which actors give causal interpretations of the relationships between different events concerning policies; in the second case, ideas convey values, identities and attitudes. More precisely, “cognitive ideas are outcome oriented, but normative ideas are not” (Campbell, 2004: 93). This distinction can also be developed considering the cognitive and normative dimensions of policy discourse as corresponding to two different functions of policy ideas (Schmidt, 2002). While the first one is used to justify an action program, demonstrating that it has technical capacity to effectively resolve a policy problem, the second is used to legitimate an action program by recalling a set of values that constitute a shared ethical and normative frame of reference for a specific polity (Schmidt, 2002: 213). While normative functions are developed by demonstrating the appropriateness of a policy program in terms of shared values, cognitive functions are developed considering criteria of relevance, applicability and the problem solving capacity of public actions (Schmidt, 2002: 218-219). This distinction corresponds to the difference that exists, in the theory of *référentiel* (Jobert and Muller, 1987), between values and algorithms. Values are representations of what is either desirable or deplorable, while algorithms describe those causal relationships between events that legitimate the choice of a specific policy means.

The normative and cognitive aspects of neoliberalism pertinent to social policy are, above all, freedom and equality of opportunity for individuals and enterprises, and the consequent primacy of the market over the state and its actions. Here ‘responsibility’ is the opposite face of the individual as the normative centre of society. For example, some corollaries are evident in the current British version of neoliberalism – the so-called ‘Big Society’ – a “vision of a society where individuals and communities have more power and responsibility”.<sup>5</sup> This vision is becoming more and more capable of moulding the transnational orientation of social policy and is changing the policy environment the third sector is embedded within (Alcock, 2010). Its main aspects are: “marketisation and commodification” of delivery and choice of social services, shrinking budgets for public agencies, diffusion of power and empowering of

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<sup>5</sup> Website of the Department for Communities and Local Government, accessed on 01.06.2012, at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/big society/>.

citizens, enhancing the role of communities and families in providing the ingredients for well being, promoting a culture of volunteering, and enhancing social inclusion.

## The politics of social inclusion in Rome: Continuity and change in policy discourses

Our empirical analysis has focused on the last decade, in which a political transition occurred from Mayor Veltroni (centre-left) to Mayor Alemanno (right-wing). In theory, some degree of policy change due to such a political transition could be taken for granted. Nevertheless, even at first glance, the use of similar labels continues to be found in the policy discourses of both Rome's right-wing and centre-left governments as regards social concerns, along with differences with respect to other labels. For this reason the actual mix of change and continuity must be ascertained through appropriate analysis and methodology.

In particular, it is possible to identify continuity and change in policy discourses on social inclusion by separately considering their *cognitive* and *normative* dimensions. From an empirical perspective, the presence of continuity means that several aspects of the policy discourses are stable across time, while change occurs when new cognitive and normative frames for public action are introduced or, alternatively, old frames are re-framed. Moreover, continuity and change may affect either the cognitive or normative dimensions of policy discourses, both the two dimensions, or neither of them. Thus, there are four logical possibilities:

- cognitive and normative continuity;
- cognitive and normative change;
- cognitive continuity and normative change; and
- normative continuity and cognitive change.

In the first two cases, the presence of either continuity or change is evident, while in the other two cases change and continuity are more nuanced. Besides, in theory, changes in a cognitive dimension do not automatically imply changes in a normative dimension and vice versa, while change or continuity may prevail, the opposite modality is however present.

Using this distinction and considering the main policy artefacts available (Yanow, 2000) of urban policies in Rome, we have reconstructed how continuity and change characterise the policy discourses of the centre-left and the right-wing governments.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, in order to better articulate the normative dimension of policy discourse, the distinction between *general* and *specific* principles has been considered. The former describe “world views, abstract precepts circumscribing what is possible in a given society” (Surel, 2000: 497), while the latter are “hypothetical-deductive statements, which allow the operationalisation of values in one domain and/or particular policy” (*ibidem*). The main results of the analysis are summarised in Table 1.

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<sup>6</sup> For each government, we analysed the ‘Social Master Plans’ (*Piani Regolatori Sociali*), which are the most important and strategic instruments of social policy in Rome, the electoral programmes and the documents in which the strategic aims of development policies are stated.

**Table 1. Cognitive and normative dimensions in policy discourses on social issues for Rome’s Centre-left and Right-wing governments**

	<b>Centre-left (2001-2008)</b>	<b>Right-wing (2008-)</b>	
<b>Cognitive</b>	• <b>Source of social problems</b>	- Urban demographic growth	Urban consequences of the global crisis
	• <b>Relationships between social policy &amp; economic development</b>	- Social policy must steer economic development but social services are also useful for growth	Quality of life, social solidarity social capital and cohesion are factors of competitiveness
	• <b>Social services:</b> - Demand/supply	Demand driven	Supply driven. Municipality as manager & purchaser of services
	- <b>Organisation</b>	Policy integration, Social governance, Evaluation	Policy integration, Regulated competition, Managerial planning, Decentralisation, Evaluation
	- <b>funding</b>	Sharing costs between the state and the users through progressive fees	Sharing costs between the state and the users through progressive fees; Reducing costs through subsidiarity
<b>Normative</b>	• <b>General principles</b>	Solidarity as a shared responsibility of the local community	Shared Responsibility of families and intermediate bodies for social solidarity
		Avoid the dependence on assistance	Avoid the dependence on assistance
		Welfare community as an alternative to state assistance and commodification	Rome’s cultural (Catholic) tradition of solidarity
		Social equity	Competitiveness and cohesion/solidarity
	• <b>Specific principles</b>	Subsidiarity (from 2005); Community care	Subsidiarity; Free choice of services; Financial compatibility

(i) As concerns the cognitive dimension (causal theories for action), the aspects that make the impact of the neoliberalisation process more evident on Rome’s urban policies, as well as changes that occurred during the period under observation, are: the role of social policy and its relationship with economic development, and the organisation and funding of social services.

During the period of the centre-left government (2001-2008), no economic development was considered possible without social quality (Veltroni, Roma 2015). Therefore, social policy should steer economic development policy (PRS 2001). Even though the strengthening of social services was also expected to influence the development of the metropolitan system (Progetto di Roma, 2002), such an aim was above all important in terms of social equity. For this reason, social intervention should be based on an integration of policies and the governance of social policy should be based on an inclusion of social actors and a demand-driven management of services.

In order to carry out effective social policy, factors and resources were identified in social capital, identity background and in the sense of community existing in Rome (Veltroni, Roma 2015). Funding of services was not such a dramatic question as it turned out to be in the period that followed, even though importance was given to the sharing of costs between the state and the users of social services, based on policy instruments aimed at respecting social equity.

Under the right-wing government that followed, the relationships between social concerns, social policy and economic growth have become far more important, and this within a frame that is even more coherent with the neoliberal paradigm. From this perspective, quality of life, social cohesion and social solidarity are among the most important

factors of a city's competitive success, since good conditions of human development contribute to shaping an attractive context for every kind of human activity (PSS, 2010: 45). If investing in social services means investing in social capital (PRS, 2011) and economic development (PSS, 2010), consequences for social services are linear: for example, providing more crèches and schooling for infants has to be considered a help for working women, and in turn helps provide the city with a basic but durable level of competitiveness (PSS, 2010: 58).

Factors and resources for carrying out effective social policy are not only identified in administrative resources but also in the experience, solidarity and initiatives of families in Rome and in the existing fabric of firms and volunteer associations, as well as in Catholic charitable organisations engaged in activities aimed at social promotion and inclusion. Integration of policies is an omnipresent keyword, coherent with a transnational orientation of social policies. Social promotion and urban regeneration must be integrated (PSS, 2010: 54) since there are relationships between urban decay and social malaise and deviance, and between a sense of place ownership and social ties of solidarity and cohesion (PSS, 2010: 55). In order to make freedom of choice feasible for users, the organisation of social intervention must be based on market regulation more than on social governance. Service outsourcing can make it easier for administrative actors to steer the process by playing the role of main purchaser, coherently with the New Public Management model. Concretely implementing the subsidiarity principle and involving all the actors involved in urban welfare are presented as ways of reducing social expenditure (PSS, 2010: 58). More generally, in the right-wing government's discourse, compliance with pressure for cost reduction has been made stronger by the national and supra-national imperatives of public finance, and this lies behind the importance given to operational goals such those concerning economic and financial planning (objectives and actions) and the quality and efficiency of the service provision system.

As concerns the cognitive dimension, change clearly prevails over continuity. The latter is represented by the social policy structuring role played by a list of social categories that are the target of the right wing government's interventions, such as disabled people, the elderly, and socially excluded mothers, and the resulting typology of actions. These groups were also priority targets for the centre-left government, with young people at risk of social deviance, drug addicts, the unemployed, and poor families facing eviction added later. Change is firstly visible in the representation of social problems to be dealt with. The 2001-2008 period was characterised by confidence in the economic development of Rome. Demographic growth, especially due to immigration, was considered the major source of social problems and demand for social services, which needed to be tackled by local authorities. After 2008 the urban consequences of the global crisis and a shrinking of municipal budgets have become the major sources of social concern for Rome's political actors. Lack of economic growth and unemployment will worsen existing poverty and social malaise and the population needing assistance will grow (Commissione per il futuro di Roma capitale, 2010: 83) along with housing deprivation (PSS, 2010).

The second and most important change affecting the cognitive dimension regards the relationship between economic development and social concerns. The shift in discourses from the primacy of social equity to a framing of social issues as determinants of economic competitiveness, and from networked and social-oriented to market-oriented governance of social policy, has made the orientation of this policy more coherent with the causal theories that the roll-out phase of neoliberalisation (see previous section) is based on.

(ii) As concerns the normative dimension, the *general* principles which the centre-left government's (2001-2008) discourse was based on were coherent with the aforementioned and already spreading roll-out phase of neoliberalisation. Firstly, there was an idea according

to which social solidarity should not only be based on public and institutional responsibilities, but first and foremost on a wider, shared and diffused responsibility for the local community as a whole (PRS, 2001: 37). Secondly, a need to avoid dependence on public assistance (PRS 2001, 36) was emphasised, which was coherent with the contemporaneous rhetoric of active labour and welfare policy and “workfarism” (Peck and Theodore, 2001). These principles sustain the idea of a transition from the welfare state to a welfare community in which “citizens, families, civil society and the municipality are active protagonists and not only recipients of benefits” (PRS, 2001: 36). This was presented as an alternative to both public assistance and commodification of social services. The aforementioned principle of social equity was also interpreted as the ability to provide “essential levels of social benefits all over the urban space” and to “reduce inequality in access to services” (PRS, 2001: 40).

More *specific* principles concerned the primacy of community care and, later, that of subsidiarity. Social care was considered to be a duty of the community, that is, being able to take care of the deprivation of its weaker members, contributing to the production of social well being (PRS, 2001: 36). For example, the idea of networking civil society (volunteers, associations, families) resources in order to take care of the elderly is associated with the “welfare state of subsidiarity”, taken as the capacity of public and private actors to cooperate (Veltroni, 2015). Thus, the principle of subsidiarity opened the door to the public-private partnership, a typical neoliberal issue that has been further developed by the right-wing government.

The government that took office after the 2008 elections shares with the centre-left one *general* principles regarding welfare dependency rejection and the importance of a socially shared responsibility towards those needing local welfare assistance. With regard to the first principle, the “Social Master Plan” (*Piano Regolatore Sociale*) “aims to promote services for the empowerment of individuals, families and social groups, avoiding the risks of welfare dependency and passiveness” (PRS, 2011: 16). Consequently, shared responsibility is defined in the following terms: “there are different actors (the family, school, civil society associations, volunteers, religious associations), which are responsible for providing the weaker members of a local community with a right to/duty of social assistance” (PRS, 2011: 17). This principle is specified by referring to a “good historical tradition” of solidarity that is typical of the Catholic religion hegemonic in Rome. Family, identity and good Catholic traditions are the right-wing government’s keywords in their policy discourse on social inclusion.<sup>7</sup> A further typical aspect of the framing of social inclusion in this period is that “competitiveness, solidarity and sustainability” are considered key factors for the success of Rome (Commissione per il futuro di Roma capitale, 2009: 22), coherent with European mainstream discourses.

An emphasis on the value of subsidiarity, which from the cognitive point of view is considered as a means of reducing the cost of social services, and a free choice of social services are important *specific* principles stated in the Social Master Plan. The aim of the Rome Municipality is to introduce forms of managed competition in the provision of social services (PRS, 2008: 17). The last important principle in this political phase regards the

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<sup>7</sup> Mayor Alemanno called a “Etats généraux of the social and the family” for June 26-27, 2012, following a commitment made to the Pope on January 12, 2012 (<http://duepuntozero.alemanno.it/2012/01/12/udienza-del-santo-padre-benedetto-xvi.html>).

financial sustainability of social policy: the goal of making the social service system more durable can be achieved “compatibly with available funds in the medium and long term” (*ibidem*).

As concerns the normative dimension, continuity prevails over change although some principles are present under both governments. The policy discourses of centre-left and right-wing share both a rejection of the passiveness and welfare dependency deriving from traditional forms of social assistance and the *general* principle of a shared responsibility for local welfare. As concerns the last point, a partial difference is that in the policy discourse of the centre-left the local community had a central role, while in the right-wing discourse the family is the lynchpin in the process of sharing responsibility. Subsidiarity is present in the two policy discourses as well, even though it is given more emphasis in that of the right-wing. The specific points of the policy discourse of the right-wing government regard: the minor importance of social equity; the introduction of a strong and mutual relationship between solidarity, social cohesion and economic development; the principle of free choice; and the introduction of managed competition in the organisation of public services. However, some ideas coherent with the neoliberalisation of social policy were introduced into the policy discourse by the centre-left government (e.g., the rejection of welfare dependency and the idea of shared responsibility towards local welfare). Afterwards, the right-wing government made these principles more radical by introducing a free choice criterion, a reference to the financial compatibility of social services as a framework and constraint for the local welfare, and a strong mutual relationship between social cohesion, economic development and the city’s competitiveness.

## Discussion of the results and interpretive hypotheses

The evidence presented so far highlights the presence of a change in the local government’s discourse in Rome on social inclusion as regards both the normative and cognitive dimensions. Nevertheless, there is a difference in the extent into which policy discourse and the meaning of the related policy labels have changed in the two dimensions.

The cognitive dimension has seen a major change, represented by a growing dependence of social policy on economic concerns. Social problems are increasingly interpreted as a consequence of economic determinants (the crisis) more than of demographic ones. As stressed in the right-wing government’s Social Master Plan (PRS 2011), social services are provided to citizens according to the availability of resources, and solidarity is a resource for competitiveness and growth. This thematization influences the way social services are regulated and produced: whereas the centre-left government’s discourse was focused on social governance and citizen participation in the making of public decisions, that of the right-wing places emphasis on the managerial organization of social policy.

Even though most of the content in the cognitive dimension of the discourse has undergone a change, it is nevertheless possible to detect a continuity in some assumptions that are shared by the two different political coalitions, such as the importance attributed to an integration of policies and the evaluation of social services.

Although it is also possible to detect a change in the normative dimension of the policy discourse, this can be defined as a minor change, since it has only marginally affected the very “deep core” (Sabatier and Jenkins Smith, 1993) or “metaphysical principles” (Surel, 2000) of policy frames. By minor change we mean a mutation that does not involve a substitution of basic principles and values with new ones, but rather a redistribution of the emphasis among principles. Changes detected in the normative dimension concern a shift

from the ‘third way’ communitarian alternative to the state and the market towards an emphasis on families and intermediate bodies. It mirrors the emerging primacy of the private sphere that is typical of neoliberalism, characterized by the imperative of the “establishment of internal markets and consumer choice within publicly provided service” (Crouch, 2011: 84). In this context, while there is continuity in the presence of subsidiarity among the main principles of social policy, it is interpreted by the right-wing coalition as a means of reducing costs rather than a way to foster social governance. Nevertheless, the main normative elements are shared by the two local governments: they both place at the core of social policy the principles of solidarity, shared responsibility and a refusal of dependence on social services. The whole set of general principles shared by both the centre-left and right wing coalitions allows us to speak about the presence of “mimetic isomorphism” (Powell and Di Maggio, 1983) in the normative dimension of the policy discourse, which is easier to understand when considering the current mainstream cognitive and normative frame of neoliberalism.

**Table 2. Continuity and change in the normative and cognitive dimensions of policy discourse**

	<b>Continuity</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Cognitive</b>	<p><b>Mimetic isomorphism in organizational issues</b></p> <p>Integration between policies</p> <p>Evaluation of social services</p>	<p><b>The emerging primacy of economic factors</b></p> <p>From demographic to economic determinants of social problems</p> <p>From the primacy of social concerns to the primacy of economic concerns</p> <p>From «social» and participatory to competitive and managerial organization of public services</p> <p>From demand-oriented to supply-oriented social services</p> <p>Interpretation of subsidiarity as a costs reduction factor</p>
<b>Normative</b>	<p><b>Mimetic isomorphism in general principles</b></p> <p>Solidarity</p> <p>Subsidiarity</p> <p>Shared responsibility</p> <p>Refuse of welfare dependence</p>	<p><b>The emerging primacy of the private sphere</b></p> <p>Less importance of social equity</p> <p>From the «Third Way» communitarian alternative to the state and the market to the emphasis on families and intermediate bodies</p> <p>Free choice of social services</p>

In order to advance some hypotheses about the factors lying behind continuities and change between policy discourses, two kinds of factors are here taken into account: *endogenous* and *exogenous* ones (summarised in Table 3 below).

The endogenous factors have a role above all in determining change in the cognitive dimension of policy discourse, but can also play a role in explaining the minor change detected in the normative dimension. It is hypothesized here that change can be ascribed to:

- *The changing political culture of leaders and policy entrepreneurs.* The right-wing coalition in office is characterized by an explicit neoliberal political culture. For example, in the right-wing coalition's 2008 electoral program there was an explicit reference to "freedom of choice (...) among different public, private, and non-profit providers".<sup>8</sup>
- *The local 'political construction' of the global crisis and its consequences on urban society.* The right-wing discourse on social policy is concerned with the "outcomes of the financial crisis, with its consequences in terms of increased social needs and decreased public resources" (PRS, 2011: 12).
- *The relationships between political actors and that part of civil society involved in service provision.* The right-wing political coalition in office since 2008 is linked to social actors whose characteristics affect both the cultural and the organisational dimensions of social policy: volunteer associations and third sector organizations that previously were not included in sector policymaking on social inclusion play a new role in the new political context, progressively taking over from many of those who were engaged in the previous period. Moreover, it is possible to observe an increased role by Catholic Church-related actors. Under both the right-wing and centre-left governments, these actors are non-institutional members of the policy community as well as a part of the social constituency which political consent is based on.
- *The role of experts and consultants.* The political change of 2008 entailed a partial change in the epistemic community involved in the formulation of social policy.

The predominance of continuity over change as regards the normative dimension of policy discourse can be ascribed, above all, to exogenous determinants. These can be identified in the processes of Europeanization, contributing to the spreading of neoliberal principles (see the second section of this paper) and the role of the national state as an infrastructure for local governance and politics (Sellers, 2005).

By Europeanization we mean:

processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion (c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms *which* are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, (...) and public policies. (Radaelli, 2000: 4)

The policy domain of social inclusion is strongly influenced by this phenomenon, which has been made easier by the *Open Coordination Method*: values such as solidarity, subsidiarity, shared responsibility and refusal of dependence on social services are present in the EU discourse on social inclusion. The latter has been influenced by an emerging emphasis placed on the compatibility between social cohesion and economic growth: "policies must continue to promote social cohesion, equal opportunities and solidarity (...) while responding

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<sup>8</sup> "Roma cambia. Gianni Alemanno Candidato a Sindaco del Comune di Roma" (2008: 39).



better to economic and social change and promoting growth and employment”.<sup>9</sup> The European origin of the increasing tendency toward the inclusion of private partners in providing social services (horizontal subsidiarity) has been stressed by Graefe (2005) who highlights how the EU Commission’s approach

involves extending and adapting traditional small business development policies to the social realm. There is a hope that this will allow social entrepreneurs to mobilize otherwise untapped resources (such as voluntarism), and in the process meet social needs that are too expensive for public provision. (Graefe, 2005: 11-12)

The role of EU institutions in determining a shift from the Keynesian welfare approach in social policy to a post-Keynesian workfare one is evident in the change that influenced the main principles of the European Social Fund in the 1990s:

the ESF shifted its emphasis from unemployment to employment, in particular to people in work, to helping them stay and advance in their jobs. Training, job creation, employment guidance and counselling were at the core of the ESF”.<sup>10</sup>

Such a neoliberal orientation was initially brought into the policy discourse in Rome by the centre-left government, but the political culture of the subsequent right-wing government has made it easier for the key values of a more radical neoliberalism to meet with a coherent basis of values and attitudes.

If Europeanization plays a crucial role in determining the neoliberalisation of local policy discourse on social inclusion, another determinant is the nation state, whose actions “serve as sources of institution building, identities, values, and interests within localities” (Sellers, 2005: 426). Social policy in Italy is regulated by national law 328/2000, in which it is stated that local governments are committed to supply social services according to the principles of “subsidiarity, cooperation, effectiveness and efficiency (...), responsibility” (art.1, chapter 3). These principles emerged in the 1990s and are present in the policy discourses of both centre-left and right-wing governing coalitions in Rome. The rise of a workfarist approach at a national level was further strengthened in 2009 by the Ministry of Welfare’s ‘White Book on Social Policy’, stating that “the rigorous postulate on the centrality of the person in the new welfare inexorably entails a larger freedom of choice and the consequent creation (...) of regulated and competitive supply markets” (2009: 52).

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<sup>9</sup> COM(2005) 706 final: “Working together, working better: A new framework for the open coordination of social protection and inclusion policies in the European Union”.

<sup>10</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/esf>

**Table 3. Factors affecting change and continuity in the normative and cognitive dimensions of policy discourse**

Factors affecting policy discourses

		Exogenous	Endogenous
Dimensions of policy discourse	<b>Cognitive</b>	Transnationally circulating models and «algorithms»	Changing political cultures of leaders and policy entrepreneurs  Relationships in the policy community of social services  Interpretation of subsidiarity as a costs reduction factor
	<b>Normative</b>	Neoliberal pressures, in particular as responses to the global economic crisis: - Europeanization of social policy - national budget and social policy	Local «political construction» of the global economic crisis  Changing political cultures of leaders and policy entrepreneurs

Beyond the role of vectors such as the European and national institutions, however, there are principles and values that are taken-for-granted in ideas circulating in mainstream thought and transnationally about the making of local policies: among them it is possible to mention those of policy integration and evaluation, often specifically related to social policy or to the social aims of other policies.

Generally speaking, then, the labels present in policy discourses on social inclusion in Rome are affected by a neoliberalization process that provides local actors with a frame that makes it easier for convergence processes and isomorphism to occur. This was already under way with the Third Way neoliberal principles espoused by the centre-left government, but has been made more radical by the political change in 2008. This has had, as a consequence, a prevalent change in the cognitive dimension of policy discourse and a prevalent continuity, or minor change, in the normative dimension. The model proposed by Sabatier and Jenkins Smith (1993) helps to identify factors explaining change occurring at the deep core level. They argue that such a change (that we identify here with the change affecting the normative dimension of the policy discourse, that of principles stating ‘why to make a choice instead of another’) cannot occur simply because of endogenous factors such as a political change in the coalition in office. The minor amount of change that has affected the general and specific principles of social policy in Rome, which is rendered visible by the appearance of some new labels, is also the effect of a mutation in exogenous factors that usually bring about long-term change, such as the above mentioned structural and socio-economic factors and national or super-national institutional constraints. An important determinant identified here is the threat of the global crisis and its local consequences, which is both an exogenous condition and the result of a localized (endogenous) political and social construction. On the whole, this confirms the importance of what H. Savitch and P. Kantor (2002) called “market conditions” as a ‘driving’ factor in determining a city’s development strategy. Even in the case of social inclusion policy in Rome, the increasing primacy of economic concerns and of the private sphere over social ones can be explained by the current and expected effects of worsening

conditions within the economy. This is both an exogenous (because of economic and political transnational processes) and endogenous (because of the local construction) change factor.

The cognitive dimension, in turn, can be identified with what Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) call “policy cores” and Y. Surel (2000) “specific principles”. The major change detected in Rome is principally a consequence of endogenous factors, since “policy core beliefs are resistant to change but are more likely to adjust in response to verification and refutation from new experiences and information than deep core beliefs” (Sabatier *et al.*, 2009: 123). Besides, the cognitive dimension of policy discourse, which concerns ‘how to do things’ and to perform policy actions, has a closer relationship with allocational choices, so that the distributive or redistributive effects on actors from the interested policy community and social constituency are important.

In conclusion, the case of Rome shows that the hegemonic effects of neoliberalism are present in both the centre-left and right-wing governments’ policies dealing with (and constructing) social issues. ‘Local miniatures’ of mainstream (neoliberal) policy orientation may have different facets even in the same place, depending on specific combinations of endogenous and exogenous factors affecting the process of framing and reframing the social inclusion label and those related to it.

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## Temporality and Spaces of the Moving City: Informal Actors and Urban Transformations in the Era of the Greater Paris

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**Abstract:** This paper presents ongoing ethnographic research on the urban transformations of North-Eastern Paris in the context of the new projects of metropolisation of the city (Greater Paris). Starting from an investigation of the new emerging actors and power relations in a moment of historic turmoil, the research focuses on citizens' collective action taking part in the urban transformation. Participation will be understood here in a large sense, including not only participatory design, but also the informal transformations of the space. From urban walks to community gardens, those "micro-environments with global span" (Sassen, 2004) will be questioned through their possibility to actively contribute to the construction of a metropolitan identity and propose alternative solutions to the urban development. The text will follow the stream of an ongoing fieldwork where the theoretical framework is led by the presentation of a selection of ethnographic and geographic elements.

**Keywords:** urban temporality, the agency of residents, large urban projects, Greater Paris, informal practices

### Merry-go-round

January 2012 – I arrive in the Chapelle district in the North-Eastern limit of the inner Paris to meet the employees of an urban community garden called Ecobox. The meeting place is in a typical Haussmannien building in a state of decay not far from the garden. The two concrete low buildings at the bottom of the long and narrow courtyard have been squatted, for a couple of years, by an old and well known Parisian association of artists working on theatre and dance, which is often frequented and managed by a Latin American community. The office of the garden is hosted inside this structure.

The door is open, and I enter the small office without windows, full of smoke, where the two employees of the garden are working on their computers. Around the room some books

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about gardening and the history of the city, a couple of plans and aerial pictures of Paris and many boxes full of wires and DIY material.

This garden is one of the first places I encountered when I decided to work on the transformations of this part of Paris. It is not just a simple garden, but a complex political space which hosts events and debates proposing itself as a node of different networks (from ecologist to alternative political movements). Some weeks before, one of the contributors of the big exhibition that presented the projects and future transformations of the North-East in 2010<sup>2</sup> told me, “Ecobox, this is a nice history. Because architects lose in the end!”.

After some discussions about their implication and preoccupations in the process of gentrification of the district, J. the 39-year-old animator of the garden, accepts to talk about the “movements” of their garden since its creation in 2001:

Well, Ecobox. There have been three movements. (...) There is the Pajol project, lead by AAA, *Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée*.<sup>3</sup> Then a second movement on a second site, 33 rue Pajol, with the constitution of the association and the leaving of the AAA group in 2006. (...) At the end of 2007, beginning 2008, we leave the (second) site and we start the research (of a new field). We make an activity report and contact the SNCF,<sup>4</sup> we visit different fields in the district and we get refused one in *Chapelle Charbon* (...).<sup>5</sup> The day before the municipal elections of 2008, we visit – the 21<sup>st</sup> march 2008, at nine o'clock, half past eight, it was raining – we visit, with the SNCF, the City services, the “Parks and Gardens”<sup>6</sup>, a field which is at the *impasse de la Chapelle*, of 2000 square meters. Then the idea comes that the SNCF could make the field available to the City that, itself at its turn, could make it available for us. The events made in such a way that the whole 2008 has been complicated for negotiations, but we kept our interest for that site. The 21<sup>st</sup> march 2009, we called it “It’s Spring, we plant!”, we didn’t have the authorizations, we took over only a slab of 200 square meters which belongs to the subsidiary company of the SNCF. The other 1800 square meters belonging to SNCF are not registered but they are under negotiation by the municipality of Paris that, when we took this piece of land (illegally) in order to enter, found itself really interested particularly for the (project of a future) passage of a *green weave* between Porte de la Chapelle and rue Ordener which should extend the one planned in the *Chapelle Internationale* project. *Voilà!* This is how we landed.

J. speaks fast, his voice is boiling but his body is calm while he smokes the umpteenth cigarette. He rattles dates, address and names of projects in a kind of autistic way, like a broken record. Even if this is just one of the many interviews he did about his garden, he cannot hide the pride in his narration. What surprises me is that he seems to be underlining more their capacity of collaborating and attracting the interest of the institutions, than their acts of contestation.

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<sup>2</sup> “Le Fabuleux Destin du Nord-Est Parisien” was held by the museum of contemporary architecture, the Pavillon de l’Arsenal, in 2010: [http://www.pavillonarsenal.com/expositions/thema\\_modele.php?id\\_exposition=224](http://www.pavillonarsenal.com/expositions/thema_modele.php?id_exposition=224). The title makes explicit reference to the Jean-Pierre Jeunet movie “Le Fabuleux destin d’Amélie Poulain”.

<sup>3</sup> The architects collective AAA created the garden on the site of a former railroad industrial building which today is being renovated (*Pajol*). Their objective was “a re-stimulation of spaces and collective uses through urban micro-devices issued by spontaneous dynamics and everyday practices” (Petcou, 2005: no page). The collective assisted the creation of an association for the management of the garden but left in 2006 because of a conflict due to both personal and substantial divergences with the inhabitants and their wishes for the garden.

<sup>4</sup> National Railroads French Society (*Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Français*). This district is affected by the strong presence of train infrastructures. Most of the abandoned plots into which informal activities take place are under the SNCF property.

<sup>5</sup> The *Chapelle Charbon*, an abandoned industrial zone, is the perimeter of a future project which will be modified by the transit of the new fast connection with the Charles de Gaulle Airport, the *Charles de Gaulle Express* line.

<sup>6</sup> The Direction of Green Spaces and Environment of the municipality of Paris (*Direction des Espace Verts et de l’Environnement*).

This small focus gets a good example of the interweaving between city development projects and informal urban actions in periods of urban transformation in Paris. The employee explains not only how their collective informal garden has been forced to move by the start of new building sites (Figure 1), but also how his implantation precludes the arrival of new projects and how municipal negotiations for acquiring lands take advantage of their informal occupation as a vehicle to pressure towards property disposal. By providing a series of basic supplies to community gardens such as fences, water and soil, the municipality is in this sense promoting the illegal occupation of the field and creating an informal collaboration with the nomadic garden. Nevertheless the small narration also opens up some reflections on the typology of action of this kind of informal actor, which do not operate in pure contestation of the institutional power system, but rather create peculiar forms of contribution to the urban transformation.

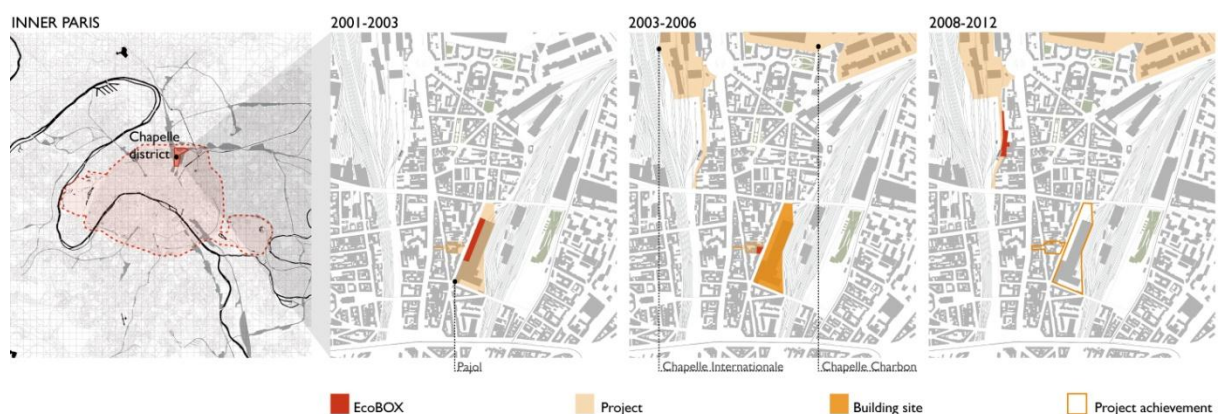


Figure 1. Itinerary of the garden, urban projects mentioned by J. and their evolution

The purpose of this paper is to depict a frame of different kind of associative initiatives on a territory between Paris and the contiguous municipalities. The analysis of symbolic and physical space occupation practices of those collective actions will be used as a base from which to question the role of citizens in the process of metropolisation of the city.

Starting from an explanation of the geographical context of the transformations of the North-Eastern limit of Paris in the latest ten years, the project's *meantime* (between the political decision of the intervention and the effective construction site's achievements) will be proposed as a fertile circumstance which reveals new possible relations between urban actors and opens a privileged point of view on the idea of society and citizenship implied in large urban renovations. The temporal and physical uncertainty of the transformation will be understood here both as a methodological and ontological tool of analysis. Citizen's participation will be analysed then through the need of a holistic approach which should bring to light the horizontal-non-hierarchical power relations between institutional political actions, architectural design, official process of participation and informal space transformation in order to question the contemporary city building process.

## Domesticating bigness

The North-East of Paris (Figure 2) has been one of the central sectors of urban development of the Île-de-France region over the last thirty years. It is a territory that has always been marked by heavy infrastructural urban interventions: the construction of the railways of North



and East and the canals of Saint Denis and Ourcq during the Napoleonic period, the implantation of industries during the Haussmannien renovations, the creation of the highways network in the 1950s. This industrial character made this territory a crossing point which has always hosted different migrations and social changes. A typical process of the deindustrialisation started in the 1980s, due to the global phenomenon of decentralisation of industries out of the cities and the increase of service sector, is reconfiguring the spatial and social geography of what used to be the industrial core of the region. Nowadays these areas host one of the highest percentages of migrants, between 30 and 35% in the official statistics, with populations coming mostly from Maghreb and increasingly from China and Sri Lanka (APUR, 2010), and also one of the highest rates of social housing, between 20 and 40% (APUR, IAU, 2011). A large part of this territory is touched by the projects of the city politics called *Quartier Politique de la Ville* (Figure 3). This *appellation*, meaning City Policy District, indicates a French legislative and operative device which defines a set of social and urban interventions on specific “sensible” perimeters based on a “positive territorial discrimination” (Houard, 2011). These national politics appear in the 1980s as a solution to the explosion of conflicts in social housing districts. Their approach is oriented towards a “spatial defectiveness” more than a social problem definition (Donzelot, 2001), in this sense the problems are framed not through the idea of equality between social groups, but through the target of equality among advantaged and disadvantaged territories.

The definition of the priority is based on a series of geographically based statistics concerning the rate of low income, difficult family situations, education problems and migrants’ presence. On the actual field, the realisation of this device involves a series of participatory practices and institutions such as local councils and groups which bring interesting results on the plan of the social animation and of the daily management but still bring few progresses on the actual empowerment of the citizens and rarely touch the issues of social justice and political choices (see Bacqué and Gauthier, 2011). The direct outcome of this politics is in general a set of devices which tend to lead to the definition of a urban renovation project co-financed by the state usually trough the creation of Zones of Concerted Development.<sup>7</sup> Since the approval of the SRU law<sup>8</sup> in 2000, participation has become a mandatory practice for these kinds of public urban projects but those are still reduced to information meetings or workshops which concern basically only the architectural form of the projects and rarely his functional program.

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<sup>7</sup> ZAC, Zone d’Aménagement Concerté. According to the French Code of Urbanism, the ZAC are those zones in which a public institution can decide to intervene in order to realize public equipments acquiring private lands with forms of equalization payment.

<sup>8</sup> *Loi relative à la Solidarité et au Renouvellement Urbains* (Law of urban solidarity and renewal). This law, approved under the Jospin government, introduced profound changes in French urbanism. Its principles are based on the concepts of “territorial solidarity”, sustainable development and decentralization.

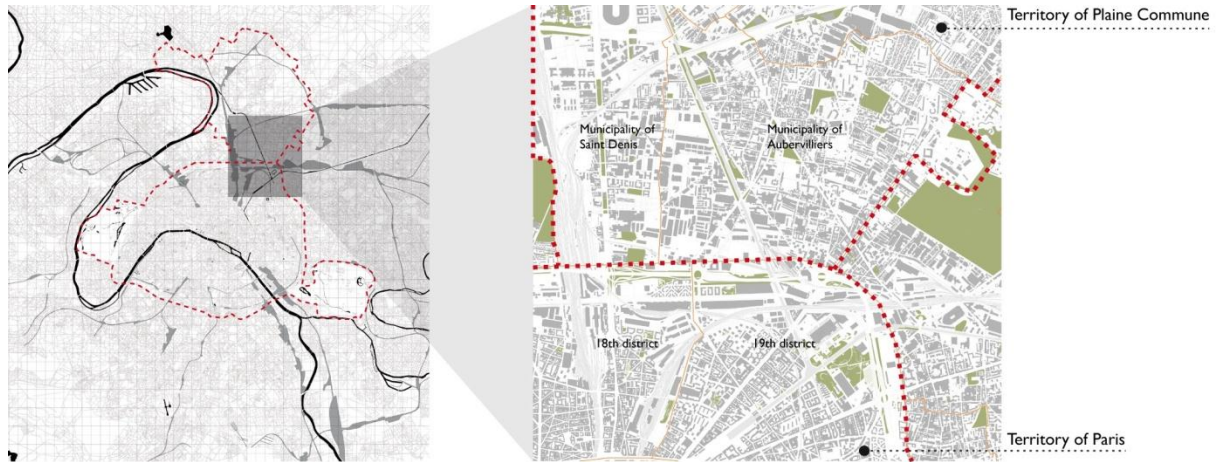


Figure 2. Plan of the north-eastern sector

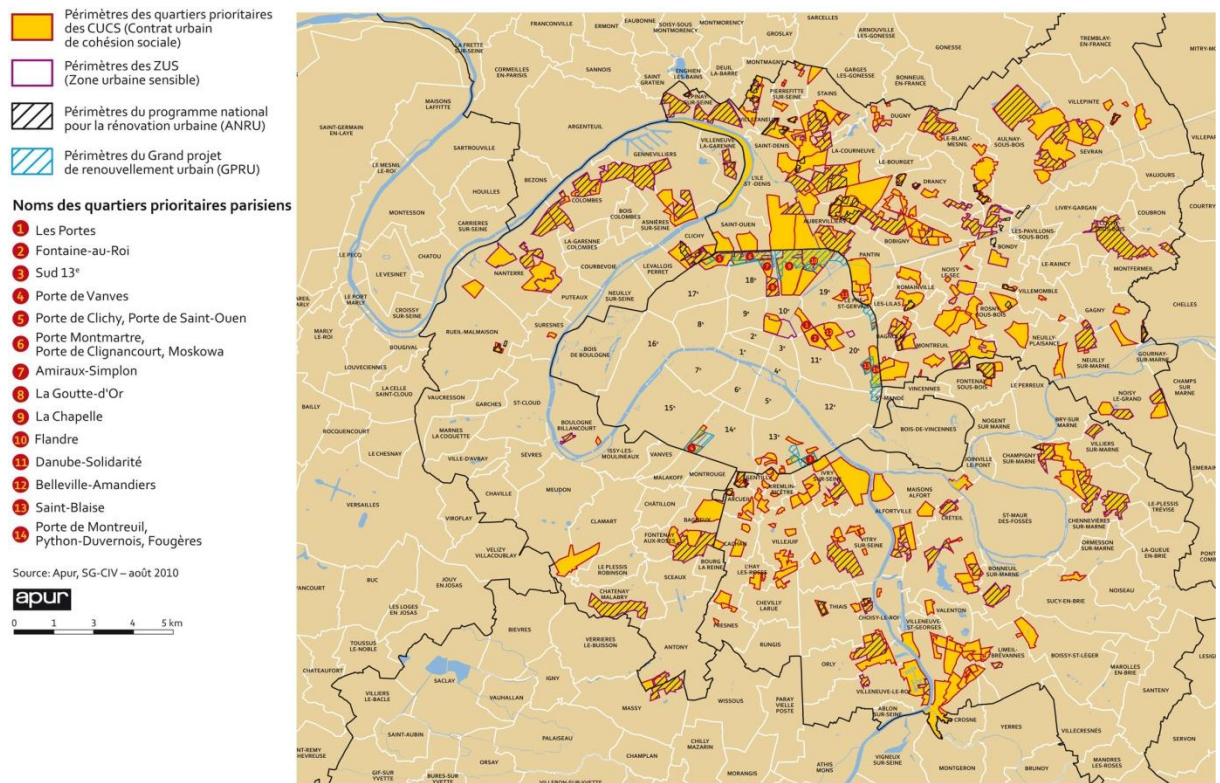


Figure3. Territory of the *Quartiers Politique de la Ville*. Paris and periphery © Atelier Parisien d’Urbanisme, 2011, used with permission.

At a local scale, the north-eastern sector of the municipality of Paris has a history which is strongly related to the evolution of the so called “green belt”, marking the administrative limit of the city. This circular belt corresponds to the last fortification of Paris, the *Thiers walls*, built in 1841 under the king Louis-Philippe (see Cohen, 1992). Between 1919 and 1939, after the demolition of the walls, a first set of social housing and sport fields created a new architectural structure of the belt. Between 1966 and 1973, a circular urban highway called the *boulevard périphérique* was built on the limit of the administrative line of the city.

This highway quickly became the symbol of the division between the centre and the periphery and blamed as an impediment for a more organic development of the metropolitan area. In 2001 the municipality of Paris started to produce a series of studies and exhibitions on the “urban integration” (TVK, 2008) of the *boulevard périphérique* with the ambition of a complete rehabilitation of the green belt. These operations mark the start of the recent reflections on the connection between Paris and its periphery and coincide with a new phase of metamorphosis of the historical popular industrial sector of the east. One of the operative results of this policy is the creation of eleven Great Projects of Urban Renewal.<sup>9</sup> *Paris Nord-Est* is one of the largest and most significant of the GPRU projects with its 200 hectares concerning two *arrondissements* and bordering two external municipalities.

On the other side of the *périphérique*, the Plaine Saint Denis territory is also undergoing a continuous and animated process of transformation since the late 1970s. 1985 marks the start of this process with the first strategic plan of development designed by the group Hippodamos 93 with the building of the French Stadium for the World Cup of 1998 (see Lecroart, 2009). In 2007 a new Scheme of Territorial Coherence of the *Plaine Commune* agglomeration community<sup>10</sup> fixes this new regional identity with the objective of polycentrism. The future projects of the Grand Paris find a translation here in the design of a cluster of “artistic creation”, based mostly on the implementation of the audiovisual industry with a strong wish of creating a new international business attraction.

All those projects are based on the rehabilitation of “unsanitary” buildings, creation of new public transports and building of new housing and activities. We’re not facing massive evictions and renovations, but more a slow process of gentrification in which sparse operations engendering population displacement are accompanied by massive rehabilitation of ex-industrial buildings. In this sense we have a new population arriving faster than the potential old population is departing.

Since the last ten years a new kind of urban transformation logic is intervening in this sector, as in most suburban metropolitan areas of Paris, linked to the new metropolitan development and governance of the region of Paris (so called Greater Paris) and the construction of a new circular subway connecting the peripheral municipalities: the *Grand Paris Express*. This process has been accelerated since the setting up of the international architectural competition “Le Grand Pari(s) de l’agglomération parisienne”<sup>11</sup> launched by the former president Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007 which ambition is a complete modernisation of the city structure explicitly comparable to the urban interventions under Napoleon III and Charles de Gaulle. Its existence is enabling the emergence of new institutional actors like: *Paris Métropole*, an informal syndicate counting 145 municipalities;<sup>12</sup> the *Atelier International du Grand Paris*, a public interest group of urban consultancy composed by the architects who participated to the international competition;<sup>13</sup> the *Société du Grand Paris*, a public/private

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<sup>9</sup> GPRU – Grands Projets de Renouveau Urbain : [http://www.paris.fr/politiques/vie-de-quartier/grand-projet-de-renouveau-urbain-g-p-r-u/rub\\_6144\\_stand\\_612\\_port\\_13817](http://www.paris.fr/politiques/vie-de-quartier/grand-projet-de-renouveau-urbain-g-p-r-u/rub_6144_stand_612_port_13817).

<sup>10</sup> The agglomeration community is a form of metropolitan government structure of intercommunal cooperation with an independent tax system. Plaine Commune reassembles today eight municipalities of the north-east.

<sup>11</sup> Literally: “The great bet of the Parisian agglomeration”. The title works on a pun between the word *pari* (bet) and the name of Paris. The competition led to an exhibition and a series of conferences in 2009 in which ten famous groups of international architects give their vision of the future of the metropolitan area of Paris (<http://www.legrandparis.net/>).

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.parismetropole.fr/index.php>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ateliergrandparis.com/>

company in charge of the construction of the new subway.<sup>14</sup> Those new actors are actually competing for the power of the metropolitan governance since the State intervention created an overlapping of competences with the local powers (region and municipalities) and reconfiguring the existing geography of urban development under the imperative of the “international competitiveness” of a “Post-Kyoto metropolis of the XXI century” (see Sotgia, 2011).

On the plan of the participation on this larger scale, the Parisian territory has recently tried to set up new forms of metropolitan *concertation* such as the public debate on the new subway comparing the project of the region with the one proposed by the state.<sup>15</sup> But those remain as isolated events “which don’t open a real debate articulating local and metropolitan issues” (Bacqué and Gauthier, 2011: 55).

So what we find here is a context whose transformation is more and more related to a larger scale than the local one with an over-planning and over-regulation structure conceived to build a global metropolitan strategy of action. The following examples are proposed not as a direct evaluation of the institutional participation mechanism and results on the ongoing projects, but a framework of the collective actions taking place in these areas in order to render some questions about the empowerment of the associative actors. The analysis of their scale relations is proposed here as a vehicle of understanding their capability of building up a larger political identity that would create an articulation between the micro-local interest and the development of a fairer and sustainable metropolis. In this sense this research is not based directly on the impact of social movements but more on the local actions produced by a wider range of collective organisations (from politically defined structures, to environmental movements, to citizens’ groups).

Of which “integration” are we talking about in this urban renovation processes? What and who should be included? Which are the power and the role of the non-state local actors in such dynamics? Is it possible to talk about grassroots participation to the building of a metropolitan identity?

The invasive presence of projects and construction sites covering most of the city fabric at different state of progress gives us the possibility to observe, in these areas, the temporality of the different projects (Figure 4) starting to understand their internal dynamics and comparing them with the collective citizens’ actions. The concentration of projects allows us to analyse how the urban transformation produces different levels of suspension and uncertainty. From the dream of a new urban life given by the declaration of a project, to the anger facing an unwelcome project, to the fear and the anxiety for the lack of information, to the exasperation of the construction site, to the excitation of the delivery... This slice of the metropolis contains all possible urban emotions and reactions. This augmented *state of uncertainty* is here understood here as a fertile moment of imaginary production for the inhabitants and an attractor for non-state local actor tactics and actions. In this sense uncertainty can be read here as a vehicle of empowerment for those collective actions.

Which are the different tactics of intervention of the inhabitants facing urban transformation in the North-Eastern Paris? What kind of interaction do they have with institutional politics? How are they facilitating or slowing down those politics?

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.mon-grandparis.fr/presentation-de-la-sgp-la-societe-du-grand-paris>.

<sup>15</sup> This public debate was held by the National Commission of Public Debate between October 2010 and January 2011.

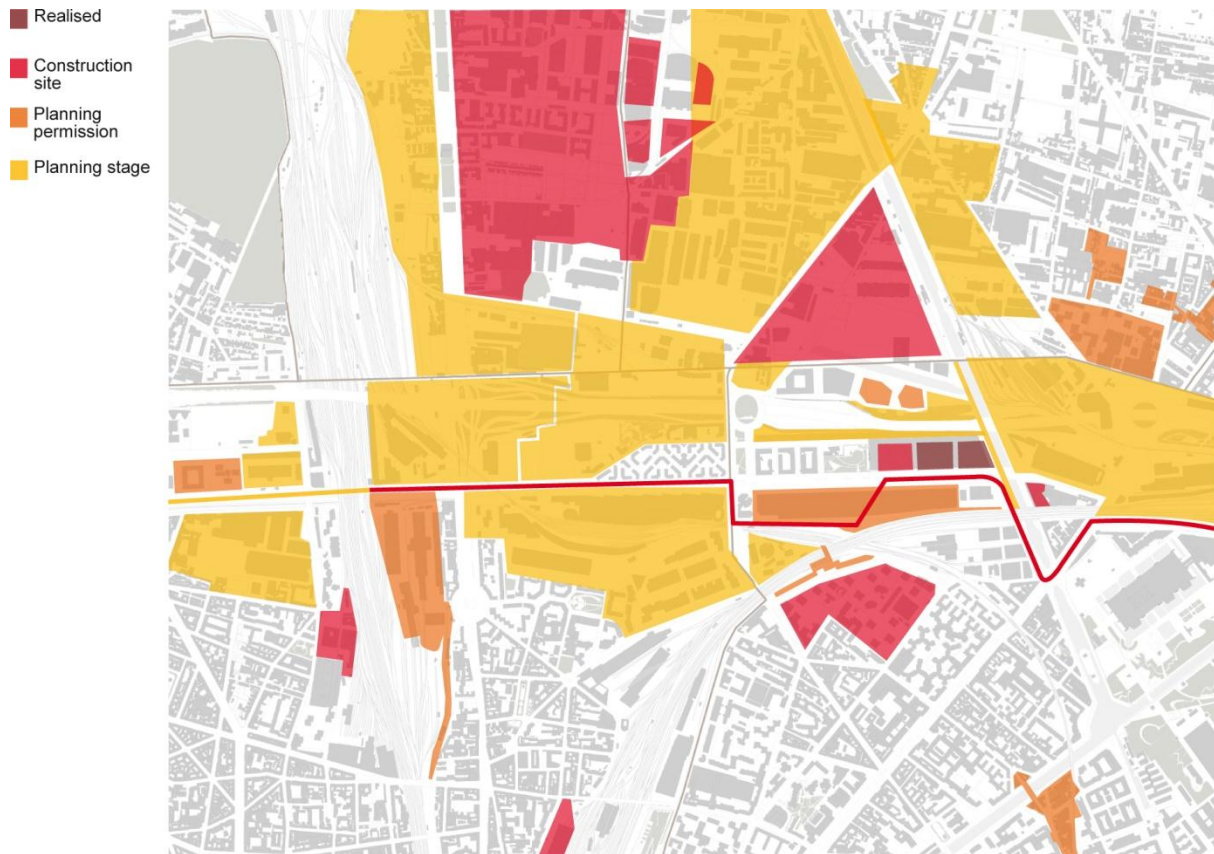


Figure 4. State of progress of the projects in the *Périphérique* highway section in the last year

## Methodological context

The fieldwork elements presented in this paper come from an approach based on a *situational analysis* applied to the context of an anthropology of the city (Agier, 2009), taking the space not only as the setting of social relations but as a product of a relational process. Several associations working in the North-Eastern Paris have been approached since November 2011 trying to see and follow their social network and analysing their discourses and repertoire of contention. This observation takes place basically in everyday and *ritual situation*, involving the internal organization, the building of consensual relations, the public performance and the collective action. The definition of *ritual situations* (Agier, 2009) is chosen in reference to the particular status of those actors which represents a sort of *political liminality* linked both to their ephemeral condition in terms of space and action and by their positioning regarding the institutions. In French culture associations represent the highest form of the civil society's right of expression. The French association system defined by the *1901 law*<sup>16</sup> defines a flexible frame and the forms of associationism are quite diversified. So even in a context

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<sup>16</sup> French law concerning the right to the association and the non-profit organization contracts.

where we rarely find informal or illegal forms of collective actions, we can nevertheless observe a wide range of possible relations with the institutional power, which implies a constant reconfiguration of the internal organization and external relations of collective action. An interesting argument to this liminality is given by the different biographical trajectories observed in the interviewed associative actors: from professionalisation (for instance subjects starting their political career in the voluntary work), to redefinition of identity (retirees investing in new kind of activities or rediscovering a political activism), to the expression of an alternative political point of view (anarchist, self-management, radical ecology). Associations can be understood as a kind of passage through different social position or a “limbo” which permits unconventional social organizations.

Two kind of associative actors have been approached (Figure 5): (1) associations dealing with the *patrimonialisation* and valorisation of the urban environment (as urban walks), and association promoting participatory democracy concerning urban projects; and (2) associations dealing with ecologic sustainability (as community gardens), and groups of artists implied in renovation projects. The interest of choosing a defined geographical context as fieldwork implies the possibility to go deep into the effects of those practices on the transformation of a territory. In consequence the attempt of building categories for the single actions reveals to be reductive when we approach the issue of the interconnection between actors and the recurrence of strategies. What becomes interesting then are not the single identities, but the synchronicity of the different actions and the common social and political vision which emerges from them.

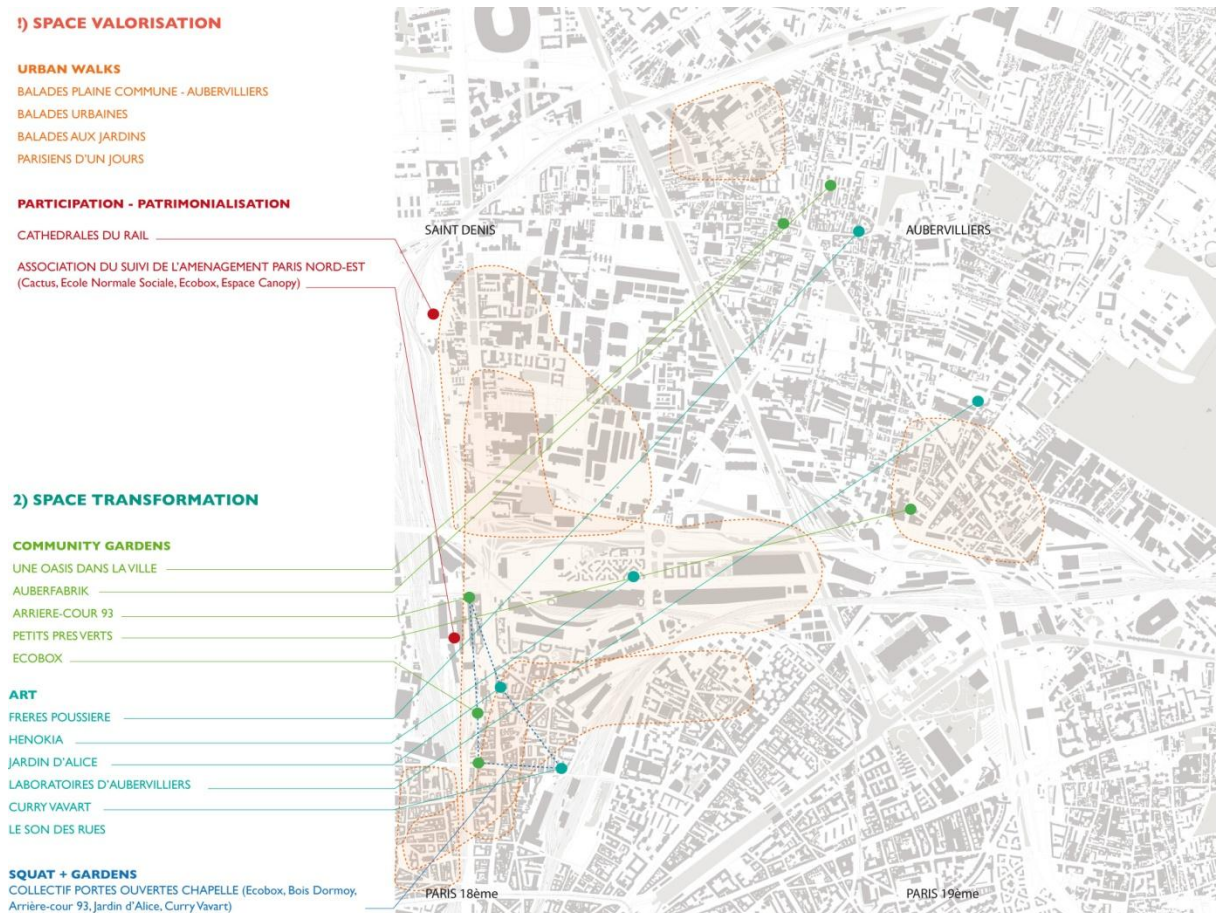
This paper presents a comparative analysis, through some examples, of the situations in which those associations recognise themselves as political actors in urban development. The situations are taken as the base for observing the symbolic and physical production and appropriation of the urban space and analysing its relation with a larger scale than the simple local one. In this sense three fundamental aspects will be proposed: the relations with institutions and official urban development, the relations with the transformation of the urban space and the temporal references of their discourses.

## Plastic boundaries – political scale

The Parisian context of official urban development is characterised by an institutional and bureaucratic complexity as a result of the multiplication of the democratic management levels, and also by an effort of integration of civil society initiatives. These efforts lead often to a co-optation of grassroots initiatives with a tendency to erase the history linked to the citizens’ claims. For instance promoting the transformation of a district taking advantage of the notoriety given by informal actions such as artistic squats, but driving out the old occupants. The associative actors observed in the north-east context are in an ambiguous relation with this “hijacking power”<sup>17</sup> of the institutions.

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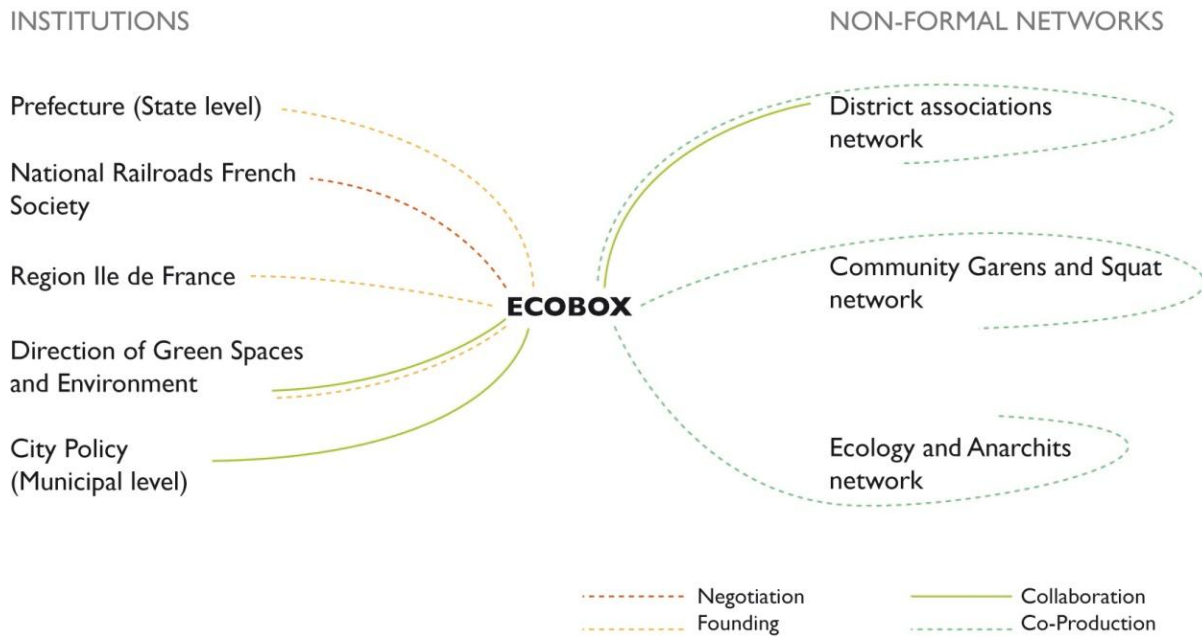
<sup>17</sup> *Récupération*, in French, is a recurring word between some associative actors to express in a negative way the tendency of local politician to promote civil society independent initiatives as a demagogic tool to improve their political actions.



**Figure 5. List of associations interviewed and their spatial configuration (in orange, areas explored through urban walks).**

We would like to highlight two forms of interconnection with the institutional power: one related to a basic need of existence and endowment, the second related to an actual collaboration.

1) The first one has been presented in the introductory section where we saw an example of how the negotiation for the existence of a collective activity can be interrelated to the creation of an urban project. This kind of integration can be perceived locally as an effect of a structural change of relation between politics and civil society organizations. At the same time it reveals all the ambiguities of politics that maintains informal and “low-profile” relations with the associative actors but do not valorise their capability of acting on larger decision-making scales. Nevertheless, as showed in the Figure 6 for the example of the community garden, those actors are in relation with multiple institutional and political scales.



**Figure 6. Ecobox: Relations with institutional and informal actors at the metropolitan scale**

2) An interesting example of collaboration with institution is given by the experience of the Association for the Monitoring of Paris Nord-East Urban Development (ASA PNE 18).<sup>18</sup> This association has a long history, which is in a way parallel to the one of the Ecobox community garden. The actions of this group of citizens started with the mobilization against the Pajol project in the 1990s (Figure 7), which was planning a strong residential densification. Under the idea of the defence of the need of public equipments for the district and the preservation of the industrial heritage, the group got involved in a second phase of project<sup>19</sup> for the revision of the urban program in which they presented themselves as active actors since the very beginning of the process. In particular their action was centred on the conservation of the old industrial hall of the site.

In the end of 2002 we succeeded to entering in the *concertation* process, thing that wasn't easy. (...) So in this meeting we got the preservation of the hall and making admit (its importance) to the deputy mayor. (...) In December 2002, public information meeting, we fix a day and we agree for continuing discussing (of the project). (...) At the beginning we had meetings to assist the urban project. At the end of 2002, at the end of the meeting, the structure of the hall was still not completely preserved. So during the spring 2003, we had a long discussion on how many sheds we had to preserve. They admitted the principle of the preservation but not entirely. So we had a "market negotiation" on how many shed we had to preserve. In the end we kept 11 on 14. (O., retiree, president of the ASA PNE 18)

<sup>18</sup> *Association du Suivi de l'Aménagement Paris Nord-Est 18e* (<http://asa-pne.over-blog.com/>). The objective of the association is the promotion of a participatory design process for the Paris Nord-Est project sector in the 18<sup>th</sup> arrondissement.

<sup>19</sup> Coinciding with the departure of the ephemeral activities present on the site like Ecobox and several artists' workshops.



O. describes the project with strong affection and concern, as an architect could do looking back to his realization. He explains to me why for him it was so important to get involved in the questions of urban development:

When I was young I was interested to, let's say, in more general causes. For example I did a lot of activism Amnesty International. (...) Then I said to myself that I found more interesting that this engagement had a more local character. I campaigned a lot, in the end of the '90s, on the problems of drug addiction. (...) The reflection I made to myself on all these questions was: anyway one of the solutions to reduce this drug problem, which is really aggressive for people, is to play also on the urban, on the projects and on the habitat also. (...) What interested me was, in relation to the district, what could have the power of changing things. And I put myself in the idea that what could make thing change are urban projects, because this district needs them. At that time we didn't have facilities for young people, and this is also a problem. (O., ASA PNE 18)

During this negotiation the group was acting as a coordination of different associations (*Coordination Espace Pajol, CEPA*). After this experience they decided to become involved institutionally also in the urban transformation of the Paris Nord-Est project and created the ASA PNE 18 association as well.

At the present they are involved in the consultation committees for one of the largest projects on the limit of the *périphérique* highway (the *Chapelle Internationale* project). Their contribution includes the organization of public information meetings in the district and the participation to specific reunions with the architects and the institutional actors.

In the ASA PNE 18 the presence of architects and city planners, and the organisation of self-trainings is fundamental in order to “push” the limits of the institutional participation defined by the law. Moreover the association still keeps the character of a coordination of different associations. What is important in their activities is not only the capacity of dealing with the most technical issues, but also their ability of being connected with both the political and the associative net of the district and of the city. In this sense it is evident how the role of this actors is not only of the defence of their own micro-local interest but it is a political action which goes beyond a NIMBY logic.

Those examples reveal how the issue of participatory democracy in urban transformation is not only a matter of architectural participatory design or public information, but it can be an issue of bilateral negotiations between different levels of political relations. For some of those associations the overcoming of the political local scale is linked to the wish of conceiving urban transformation as the starting point for the experimentation of new forms of political intervention.

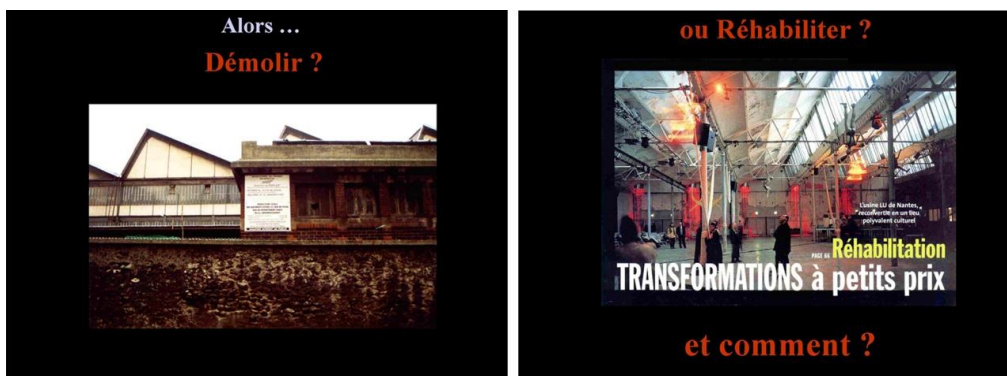


Figure 7. Extract of the presentation for the preservation of the industrial hall made by the group on December 2002. © CEPA/Cellule de Prévisualisation, used with permission.

## Space reinvention – spatial scale

How specific forms of collective action, which imply the intervention on abandoned urban spaces, can be related to the larger scale of the physical transformation of the territory? The first example represents generally a symbolic transformation of the space whose objective is to “make discover”, open up specific spaces or urban contexts which are commonly unknown or considered as peripheral “dangerous” places. The second is a physical transformation that opens up a temporary access to inaccessible abandoned plots and buildings within the city.

1) Urban walks are a typical example of this transformation, which engenders a symbolic valorisation of space through its physical crossing. This more and more frequent practice in big urban settlements,<sup>20</sup> is based on the principle of free visits in less known districts made by volunteer inhabitants. Since the last few years this practice has been mushrooming in the city of Paris and in its periphery. Today we find many associations or events based on the idea of the urban walk (*promenade urbaine*).<sup>21</sup> The walks are advertised on websites or organized privately. The tourists meet the guide and follow an itinerary which is punctuated by a series of stops in specific places in order to discover some activities and meet other inhabitants (Figure 8).

The performance of those “situational sequences” (Palumbo, 2009) proposed by the guides is meant to disclose the social life in relation with the space or to explain how the space used to be lived in a recent past. Unlike classical architectural sightseeing, which illustrates what is visible in urban space through a set of notions, urban walks want to reveal what the invisible reality of the city through the concrete experience of social interactions.

“Last time I passed here there was still a building” (B., retiree, Promenades Urbaines Plaine Commune). In the context of a territory in transformation those walks make a continuous reference to past and future times pointing out what the place used to be and what it will become in a short lapse of time. In order to show those temporal references the walk has to cross boundaries and marginal spaces pointing out the moving limits of a district or of the city itself. This makes possible unexpected spatial connections, which reveal extra-local relations between contiguous territories. Even in the purpose of showing the specific identity of a district, the fact that this identity is redefined by a process of change, leads the guide to “push” the limits of the urban space in order to define it in relation with the surroundings.

“Here you see this is a frontier that has no name, that doesn’t exist.” (J.M., retiree, Parisiens d’un jour, talking of an urban boulevard dividing two districts). Passing the threshold, both in the sense of urban limits and buildings doors, is one of the principal practices of those walks, the space otherness becomes a key to the reading of the role of those districts inside the larger metropolis. The action of showing the invisible boundaries between districts or between public and semi-public spaces becomes then the fundamental tactic used

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<sup>20</sup> One of the first and most known example of this practice is the one of the “Global Greeter Network” (<http://www.globalgreeternetwork.info/>) started in New York in 1998. The Parisian version of the movement is the “Parisien d’un Jour” (One day Parisian) association (<http://www.parisiendunjour.fr/>) promoted by the Municipality of Paris and the Parisian Tourist Office.

<sup>21</sup> In many cases the same appellation is used for indicate a different version of this informal practice which is issued by the tradition of walking as an architectural “aesthetic practice” (Careri, 2002) linked to the Situationists’ tradition. Those walks are often with fee and guided by students or experts (sociologist, architects, historian or urban planners).

to propose an evolutionary definition of their identity in opposition to their media and political stigmatization.

2) As previously mentioned, the French context is characterized by a strong institutionalisation of informal space transformation practices. Illegal squats in France have largely disappeared giving way to hybrid forms of occupation in which “sometimes squatters provide local and social services to face the inefficiencies of the public and legal system” (Aguilera, 2011). Urban community gardens and artistic squats in particular are evolving in this direction, but their occupation is more or less officially promoted by institutions asking in exchange a contribution to the handling of social problems of the districts. “We are here because it is a *City Policy District*, because here we have public founding, we could not exist in the 13<sup>th</sup> arrondissement”<sup>22</sup> (J., Ecobox).

Saint Denis



Aubervilliers



Paris



**Figure 8. Pictures of urban walks made in the north-east.**  
In the first two rows the pictures were taken following the guides' suggestions.

<sup>22</sup> The 13<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, in the south west of Paris, is one of the wealthiest sector of the city. It is taken here as a metonymy of the rich and bourgeois Paris.

If on one hand this process can be seen as a weakening of both informal and formal actors' effectiveness, at the same time institutionalisation is creating new forms of collective consciousness. In the Chapelle district a collective of three community gardens and three artistic squats has been created in the last year as a consequence of this process. The Collective of Chapelle Open Day (POC)<sup>23</sup> works as a federation for organising specific events. These associations organise festive weekends proposing a common programming of artistic performances and concerts, based on an increasingly common model of the artists' open days in the eastern districts of Paris. This public exposition is based on the will of "making lobby at the district scale" (S., artist, Jardin d'Alice squat).

The reasons that they give for the birth of this federation is because they realised that all the places were individually dealing with the same institutional process through negotiations and collaboration with public landowners and City Policy actors. As a reaction to this institutionalisation and social service demand<sup>24</sup> of the public institution, they claim for a recognition of their precarious existence opposing their gradual space transformation and renovation to the new development projects "which won't necessarily be integrated with the actual district life" (J., Ecobox).

The production of texts, graphic documents (Figure 9) and exhibition of pictures showing the close relationship between urban development and ephemeral initiatives and underlining the process of space transformation through recycling, becomes an information device which is exposed to inhabitants in order to draw the public attention to a larger spatial consciousness. "We are doomed to leave, now the inhabitants should fight for those spaces" (S., Jardin d'Alice). This call for the public interest is not presented then as direct support of the single initiatives, but as a reflection to an alternative way of intervening on the deindustrialisation process.

Both of these actions can be defined as forms of *public space appropriation* in the sense of a process of conquest of the urban space working on a different level than the juridical one of the private possession (see Ripoll and Veschambre, 2008). In this specific context of urban transformations, those appropriations can be on the level of the redefinition of an existing social identity or of the expression of a spatial identity and, in consequence, as a reconsideration of the limits of those spaces at different scales.

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<sup>23</sup> Portes Ouvertes la Chapelle. All the components of the collective are associations recently established in the district. "The Collectif Portes Ouvertes La Chapelle federates a group of associations concerned by urban transformation and renovation of the district. Their initiatives took root in inhabitants' life." (<http://portesouverteslachapelle.blogspot.fr/>).

<sup>24</sup> This demand is both defined by the informal negotiation for occupation and by the contractual definition of public founding given to the association which impose the declaration of a public interest of the structure in the context of a "sensible district".



of service sector buildings characterised by very low functional mix with residence. This association contributed to the classification of some of the surviving industrial workshops as historical monuments (Figure 10) and is now wishing to get involved in their process of renovation.

I interviewed J. and V., a couple of residents which have lived in the district for ten years and founded the association. They talk together, almost at the same time, in a really animated way, presenting the issue from the collective point of view of old and new inhabitants:

The first idea is that those buildings were under the threat of being demolished, there was no certainty that they would be classified (as historical site). So the first thing was to be in a position of protection and that things won't be done unless we could have the possibility, at a certain point, to give our advice. (...) (These buildings) are part of the history. And then, to see them demolished, as when we see tours demolished in those districts that are so called (popular)... it breaks people's heart! For them (the old inhabitants) it is this kind of affection, that is part of the landscape. But they take it with a bit more distance, what will happen and the transformation is not fundamental. For them the important is that this is here and it is going to stay.(...) But the new inhabitants have the interest of knowing the past, they're curious, *voilà*. (...) Those inhabitants are more in the real transformation project. (J., retired)

It is the will of not having an anonymous city. I think to the speed at which things were built here (...) These are all anonymous buildings, cubes, with all this fashion of the glass façade (...) You don't even know if those are houses or offices, their all similar. So it is true that those who want to live the city on foot, in an enjoyable way and not to be in an anonymous place... this (the cathedrals), this permits to signify the territory. (...) (V. economist)

The railroad is really ... There is the canal also. So those are circulation roads at the same time. Is the only emblematic thing of this territory! (...) And we, the old as the new inhabitants, for us this is the only character, you see, it is not a castle, but it is this two things, the canal and the railroad. (J.)

Heritage is then seen as a device to propose a different kind of urban development, based on the idea of a "human scale city". This wish is what can unite the nostalgic old inhabitants with the new people arrived during the renovations of the last ten years.



**Figure 10. Extract of the documents exposed at the city market by the Cathédrales du Rail Association in 2008. © Cathédrales du Rail, used with permission.**

2) But the past is not the only vehicle of mobilisation. In most of the ecologist associations working with urban agriculture and gardening, the act of modifying the land is often associated to debates or workshops talking about the future of the city. This rhetoric takes origin in all the literature talking about biodiversity and sustainability as a solution to

the climatic changes and also to the recent economic crisis. Often in those events we find a table with books that constitute a sort of bibliography of the action. One examples were found in the city of Aubervilliers, where a project called “The sower or how to become indigenous”<sup>26</sup> led by an artists’ residence (*Les Laboratoires d’Aubervilliers*), is working on the federation of the urban community gardens of the city with the “objective of exchanging seeds and plants between inhabitants and gardeners (...) in a particular moment of the city where its inhabitants express their will of establishing connections through gardening” (<http://semeuse.wordpress.com/le-projet/>). Some of those exchanges were recently dedicated to the collective writing of a charter of the project in which inhabitants talked about their wishes for the city and for the place that gardening and nature should have in urban space as a device of social exchange and of development of consciousness towards nature. Most of the community gardens insist on this idea of the quality of the social exchange linked to the act of constantly taking care of a natural space together. Another example is the series of workshops organized in the Ecobox garden by the movement of *permaculture*.<sup>27</sup> These meetings were dedicated to a workshop on agriculture and recycling in which participants produced also new projects for the garden. These practices reveal everyday actions<sup>28</sup> whose objective is the creation of a common utopia.

As we saw those practices are related to the construction of a temporal consciousness which is functional to the proposal of a city model. This reveals also an interesting process related to the construction of a common interest between different social groups. The idea of having a place to defend or having a place to build together diverts the question of the social mix underlining the importance of the process more than the statistical result.

## Conclusions: Uncertainty producing citizenship?

Coming back to the initial issues, the “integration” proposed by the urban projects can be the base for raising a classical question on the *right to the city* (Lefebvre, 1968). Who for this transformation is being made? Which kind of citizenship is being proposed by the grassroots collective actions? David Harvey recently highlighted how the right to the city “it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts’ desire. Is, moreover, a collective rather than an individual right, since reinventing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the process of urbanization” (Harvey, 2012: 4). It is precisely this right to *change* the city that seems to be interesting to explore in this context. The examples given by this paper do not present a claim of a specific group to their access to the city but more the need of a right to propose collective self-managed actions of transformation of the city. In this sense they seem to open up a question on a need of new models of citizen as a subject of the transformation and then, not as an existing category, but as the “result of a process” (Hatzfeld,

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<sup>26</sup> *La Semeuse ou le devenir indigène*. The project was conceived by the RoZo architects with the artist Marjetica Potrc in 2010. The name of the project comes from the idea of working on indigenous and foreign plants as a vehicle of talking of cultural integration in one of the city with the higher presence of immigrants of the Parisian region.

<sup>27</sup> The permaculture international movement (<http://www.permacultureglobal.com/>), based on traditional and extremely ecological forms of agriculture, insist on the federation of sustainable existing actions as the base that leads the global movement in a bottom-up logic.

<sup>28</sup> The rhetoric of the action is also underlined by the recurrence of the words linked to the act of *doing* (*laboratoire*, *fabrique*, *atelier*, *workshop*) in the names of most events or associations.

2006). What can be underlined is also that the empowerment here is tightly related to the fact that the city is in a process of mutation which provokes a long lapse of suspension where a new future is announced but not completely defined. As we saw, collective initiative does not aim at fixing itself in the physical and political space, on the contrary the action is based on a continuous repositioning. In this sense the capacity to deal with the “spatial indefiniteness” is revealed to be an asset that enables collective urban action to enlarge the debate to the scale of a larger metropolitan consciousness. In the urban political domain this could be also translated in an increasing “necessity of integrate uncertainty” in the urban project, conceiving it not for its result but for its capacity of “activating a process of opened action” (Pinson, 2005: 220-222).

However, this observation raises two different problems. The first one is linked to the particular form of *domestication* that those initiatives engender in the urban space. Occupying a wasteland to open up its public access, walking the city to show its “hidden secrets”, contributing to the renovation of a district, those are all practices that seem to exclude all those forms of illegal and unrecognized activities (illegal squatting, drug dealing, vagrancy) which take usually place in the “sensible” city. Critiques of gentrification as well as official policies “to sanitize the city” are based on this argument. In this sense, these urban actors can be easily exploited by a debate on urban security and speculation. In the reality the illegal uses are not automatically driven out by those actions but rather enter in a more complex form of negotiation with new dynamics. This capacity of managing the conflict is often hidden in the official discourses but it is only through its enlightenment that informal actions could reach a sharper role in the process of public space production.

The second question address collaboration with official institutions and the role in the issue of participatory democracy. A first argument would be that what seems to be important is not the result in terms of democratic representativeness that they have or the size of their “public”, but that their real impact is given by the continuous process of negotiation and on the production of new experiments enriching the debate on participatory democracy. As the pride of J. in showing his capacity of influencing institutions, we often find a desire for collaboration with the official policies and a consequent fear of being seen as an opposing element in the discourses of those urban actors. This seems to reveal a stigmatisation of the non-formal collective actions as an obstacle to the progress which is typical of the neoliberal attacks on social struggles and which can be easily translated in an accuse to the participatory local practices as a limit to the metropolitan urban development (as an example see Fleury, 2001). This “criminalisation” is also expressed by the will of the institutional participatory devices to engage the “ordinary citizens” without any intermediation between the politics and the civil society (Neveu, 2011) as if representing should mean “offer a trusty sample of a population” (Hatzfeld, 2006: 38). In order to atone for this “guilt” of not being enough “representatives”, as said, those practices are called to accomplish a social service that should belong to the municipality’s duties. What seems to emerge is a lack of political categorisation of these actions, as they should be either assimilated to the larger civil society or to the political institutions. In this sense the necessity of analysing “other ways of participating” outside the “instituted devices” (Neveu, 2011: 205) can be underlined as a need of opposing to the democratic need of pacification, a more conflictive and plural vision of the urban public space production.

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## *Vila Viva, a Project of Urban, Social and Political Organization of Aglomerado da Serra: Analysis of Effects*

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**Abstract:** The paper presents a critical analysis of public policies on the urban regeneration of slums in Belo Horizonte (Brazil) – the *Vila Viva* program – particularly in the *Aglomerado da Serra*. It examines effects on the slum dwellers, as well as to government officials and residents of neighboring areas. The study focus groups are: 1) families resettled in apartment buildings; 2) dwellers who were only indirectly affected by the program; 3) residents of surrounding neighborhoods; and 4) government representatives. The research aims to perceive the different perspectives on slum upgrading processes so as to compare them, considering the outcome of such policies to each defined group. The study intends to comprehend the impacts beyond the objective effects of those public interventions by analyzing dwellers' life histories.

**Keywords:** urbanization, villages and slums, right to the city, standardizing public policy

### Introduction

The city as a cluster of different lifestyles is constantly changing in order to adapt to the needs of its inhabitants. The city is also a spatial reflection of social relations, as people shape the space according to social patterns or living rules. Fragmentation of the urban space, subsequently, can reveal the reality of discriminations and lack of toleration to what is considered alternative to the adequate standard of urban living. Taking into consideration the eminent conflict which could emerge from different perceptions of how to live in the urban

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space, research<sup>9</sup> was undertaken to inquire about the existence of a standardized model promoted by the municipality of Belo Horizonte while implementing the Vila Viva program, which intends to urbanize slums, especially the interventions carried on in Aglomerado da Serra.

In some Brazilian cities, large-scale development projects have been undertaken to address the infrastructural deficit of squatter settlements and to tackle their informal nature. In this context, it is relevant to analyze the effects and impacts of the ongoing initiatives. It is relevant to assess both the government's and citizens' understanding of how such interventions should be carried out. In the present context, when a theoretical concept of right to the city is being built, one must inquire if it comprehends different lifestyles or adjustments to the dominant model. By comparing the stories of those directly involved in the process (slum dwellers) with those living outside the Aglomerado da Serra and the public power representatives, the research intended to capture possible existing distortions that could reflect on the conceptualization of public policies.

The research also inquired about the effectiveness of participation in democratically building the Vila Viva program, or if participation on this case was restricted to informing (if so) and to discipline people for a new way of life considered more 'desirable'.

In order to capture similarities and differences in the discourses and understandings of the different actors upon the interventions of the Vila Viva program in the communities of the Aglomerado da Serra, the research has focused on some key aspects of these interventions, often highlighted by residents as elements of great transformation in their lives. They are: housing, right to the city, the close ties between people, the existence of social and human capital, and the participation practices (or non-participation) that occurred during the implementation of the policy.

## **The process of urbanization and public interventions in Belo Horizonte**

The extent of informality in Brazilian large cities as a result of historical processes is more a rule than exception in the country. According to the Municipal Profile (IBGE, 2000) irregular settlements are present in almost 100% of Brazilian cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants, about 80% of towns between 100,000 and 500,000 inhabitants, and 30% of municipalities with less than 20,000 inhabitants.

These spaces are often characterized by an overcrowded population, often socially, politically and economically excluded due to inadequate access to clean water and proper sanitation, substandard and informal housing (often located in hazardous areas), insecurity of housing tenure and lack of other basic rights such as access to transportation, health and education. Alternatively, the informal settlements can also be understood as a form of resistance of the poorest to the systematic exclusion and represent spaces of production of lifestyles and ways of being which are beyond the hegemonic pattern of cities.

Since the country's democratization in the 1980s, a wide debate in civil society rose up, pointing to the need for an urban structural reform and for laws and public policies to

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<sup>9</sup> This research is within the scope of the project "Cidade e Alteridade: convivência multicultural e justiça urbana", held by the Federal University of Minas Gerais in partnership with the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Federal University of Viçosa and University of Itaúna, and this article contains some partial results of the goals developed there.

guarantee the right to the city, given the enormous challenges that the urban issue poses in order to build a more just and egalitarian nation. The adoption of the proposals of civil society in the Constitution of 1988 was somewhat restrictive, so only after 13 years of social movement struggle the Statute of the City was approved, incorporating the proposed popular amendment in the Brazilian legislation.

The approval of the Statute of the City was perhaps the greatest achievement of social movements and non-governmental organizations fighting for urban reform in Brazil. However, as indicated Maricato (2011), the problem resides in the application of the new legal instruments, which is frequently disjointed and arbitrary. Accordingly, Leonardo Avritzer (2010) argues that each municipality responded in their own way to this new legislative scope, what he relates to differences in civil society dynamics, political party in power and the local real estate interests.

In Belo Horizonte, the implementation of urban policies that responded to this new legislative paradigm was inaugurated with the elaboration of the first Master Plan in the mandate of Ananias (1992-1996), from PT (labor party). This plan was approved with significant civil society participation in several public meetings (Avritzer, 2010). The document is full of contradictions due to the conflictive circumstances of its elaboration; however, it still represents a milestone on the horizon of Belo Horizonte's public policies as it incorporated new, more participative management models, leaving behind the past of clientelist, authoritarian and homogenizing ones.

The public policy Vila Viva fits in the post-democratization context, and is currently the 'flagship' of the urban policies of the Belo Horizonte municipality in villages and slums. It intends to fit within this new participatory and inclusive paradigm of urban intervention policies.

Vila Viva is defined institutionally as a multidimensional and intersectoral public policy that aims to promote a sustainable land regularization of slums, encompassing legal interventions (land regularization), urban reform (sanitation, removal of hazardous areas, widening and paving of streets, etc.), social policies (towards education, health, transportation, security, leisure, culture, labor) and environmental interventions. Vila Viva claims for itself the status of a participatory policy and is based on the implementation of the Specific Global Plan (PGE).<sup>10</sup> Both the preparation of the PGE and the execution of the program are managed by the Campania Urbanizadora de Belo Horizonte (Urbel), a public company created in 1986 that is responsible for urban development and land regularization of slums in the capital city.

The PGE is defined by Belo Horizonte municipality as:

(...) a municipal planning tool that guides the restructuring interventions of urban, environmental and social development in villages, slums and in social housing projects. It consists of a detailed study of the reality of these areas, considering the urban and socio-economic aspects and the legal situation of the land. (PBH, 2012)<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Plano Global Específico*, the acronym in Portuguese – PGE – will be maintained throughout the article.

<sup>11</sup> Information available at the official website of Belo Horizonte Municipality: [http://portalpbh.pbh.gov.br/pbh/ecp/comunidade.do?evento=portal&IdPlc=ecpTaxonomiaMenuPortal&app=portaldoop&tax=17437&lang=pt\\_BR&pg=6983&taxp=0&](http://portalpbh.pbh.gov.br/pbh/ecp/comunidade.do?evento=portal&IdPlc=ecpTaxonomiaMenuPortal&app=portaldoop&tax=17437&lang=pt_BR&pg=6983&taxp=0&).

The PGE differs from past approaches to public policy because it considers that the actions of urbanization, land regularization and social policies must be integrated. Besides, it considers the role of the residents as essential in order to guarantee an inclusive outcome.

Since 2005, Vila Viva has been implemented in Aglomerado da Serra's six villages: Santana Cafezal, Marçola, Nossa Senhora Aparecida, Nossa Senhora de Fátima, Nossa Senhora da Conceição and Novo São Lucas. The project included three main lines of action for a sustainable settlement: land tenure, land development and setting up of infrastructure and socio-economic development with direct participation from the community.

Although such a policy represents a major transformation of the investment standard that the State has historically given to squatter settlements, it also presents a set of contradictions and deleterious effects. The intervention in Aglomerado da Serra, for example, has a high number of evictions: 2,269 families, according to Urbel. Even though a considerable portion of these families have been resettled in apartment buildings, often inappropriate to the sizes of families and their lifestyles, a large proportion of families have been compensated by Urbel, among which about 26% had to move to remote areas due to the low values of the compensations offered. Thus, several people were unable to remain in the Aglomerado da Serra, moving to other informal areas, continuing the cycle of illegality and deepening exclusion. These data put into question the effectiveness of such public policy, understanding effectiveness as “correlation between pre-set goals – political and legal – with the demands and needs of particular social groups or populations in situations of exclusion and risk” (Gustin, Miranda and Merladet, unpublished).

## Methodological choice

In order to achieve the research objectives, the focus groups were defined as: 1) relocated dwellers, residents who were resettled in public housing built by the Vila Viva program; 2) excluded dwellers, residents who were not directly affected by the intervention, i.e., remained in their homes; 3) Government: representatives of Urbel – Companhia Urbanizadora de Belo Horizonte; and 4) residents of surrounding neighborhoods (neighborhood associations).

The type of data used in the research was qualitative, since the study objectives would hardly be achieved quantitatively. To be able to capture the perceptions of respondents on the analyzed issues, it was necessary to have deeper and more direct contact, without the limitations of data collection through questionnaires, for example. Thus, the instrument of data collection used was in-depth interviews with semi-structured scripts, always performed by two interviewers in order to ensure intersubjectivity. Given the scope of the research, the methodological option was to work with a non-probabilistic sample, collecting testimonies of people who would be regarded as typical representatives of their sample group. Due to the qualitative approach to the research, the depth of information obtained from the interviewee was valued, while recognizing that the small sample cannot represent the heterogeneity of experiences and diversity of perceptions of each family group of the Aglomerado da Serra regarding the implementation of the Vila Viva program. Aware of the limitation of the sample, the results reflect more the life history of respondents and their relationship with the program, without attempting to make generalizations that this type of sampling would preclude.

The research also used document analysis, including the PGE and the results of the research conducted by the Programa Pólos de Cidadania (UFMG), entitled “The Effects of ‘Vila Viva’ Serra in the Socioeconomic Conditions of the Affected Residents” (2011). Other instruments of data collection included the use of field notes and participant observation.

The hypothesis that guided the development of the project was the idea that urban interventions in the city of Belo Horizonte disregard the existence of different lifestyles and, therefore, seek to fit the affected population within a homogeneous model. This model, adopted by the government in building public policies of slum upgrading, would not be considered legitimate only for these, but also for other city residents, including those who live closer to the areas of intervention. This hypothesis is based on the theoretical perception that radical logic of exclusion and segregation of human groups exists, where the total absence of rights for some coexists with the normality of the Democratic State to others, a situation defined by the sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos as ‘fascism of the social apartheid’ (Santos, 2003). Abyssal lines,<sup>12</sup> constitutive of modernity, exclude, erase and discredit alternative ways of life and thought of entire populations. These lines run through the Brazilian cities dividing the territory into civilian areas, where citizens live fully, and the uncivil areas, inhabited by non-citizens or sub-citizens (Santos, 2003).

Beyond the perspective of social exclusion within the city’s formal-informal dichotomy, it is questionable as well for whom the city is made. Much has already been achieved in terms of rights recognition, such as the principle of democratic city management, the social function of property and the right to the city. However, it is debatable whether these principles have overcome the privatizing logic of interpretation and management of urban property, and also the distorted progressive vision of development associated with the economic development of the international financial capitalism.

### **Between numbers and people: The Vila Viva and the Aglomerado da Serra residents**

The life story of Aglomerado da Serra’s inhabitants merges with the history of the slum itself. Despite existing statistics listing the improvements brought to the community by the Vila Viva implementation, the group of researchers from the “Cidade e Alteridade” project aimed to comprehend more deeply the reality of the residents and the effects of such an intervention in their lives.

#### *Hope and rumors about changes in the neighborhood: The project yet to come*

Jenuíno moved to Belo Horizonte five years ago and, as soon as he got a chance, he bought a house in Aglomerado da Serra, where he has lived with his family for four years. Meanwhile, he has been making small improvements to the property, which is hampered by lack of direct access to the site.

Jenuíno and his family represent a classic case of residents in the focus group identified as “excluded dwellers”. His house is in a hilly region that the Vila Viva interventions did not benefit directly. Living in an area not covered in the project, he and other residents joined

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<sup>12</sup> Boaventura de Sousa Santos identifies a dividing line between two radically different universes within the social reality. To understand the ‘absence’ from the perspective of this author helps to comprehend the government choices while intervening in ‘excluded’ communities.

together to build stairs, which was an urging need of the residents, considering the steepness of the terrain and mobility challenges during the rainy season.

Jenuíno knows little about the Vila Viva program and all he can say are rumors, spread by the residents themselves:

What they comment, the people here is saying is that they want to build some buildings here in the middle here. (...) They say there are different projects, that there will be a street (...). Nothing comes out of it.

Despite the rumors spread around the community, the uncertainty about the future of the region or of his own home is there. Often government employees go through the site, taking measurements and evaluations, but do not inform residents about plans or projects for the area, which only reinforces the feeling of insecurity about the future:

... they go up on top of this slab, wall, and measure everything, but they say nothing. Only once said it was a street. I think about 2 months ago they came on measuring it here but did not say if it was building, it would take down the shack, it was a street...

Jenuíno hopes that the street is done by the municipality or at least that they do the work to contain the slope, as he knows he lives in a risk area and danger is great in times of rain. After the sliding of the neighboring houses, he now thinks that the street will finally be made, which would benefit him. However, nothing has been communicated so far:

I myself did not get any communication, but I think my brother here... the president of the association came to invite him to a meeting to these buildings and stuff there. So I'm not sure if he was or not there, if there was that meeting I do not know. It is always on a weekday, right? We're working, right?

As the meetings and public hearings are held in the afternoon, Jenuíno will continue to ignore the destination of the area he lives in with his family, even though he hopes that the Vila Viva interventions are to bring improvements to the community.

A similar story to Jenuíno's is that of his brother, Pedro. He has lived in the Aglomerado da Serra for four years with his family. The hillside below his house went down, covering the house located just below his. With the eminent risk of new landslides, municipal workers took him and his family to a public shelter.

When asked if he knows what the future of the area where he lives is, he could not explain. There is a promise that a retaining wall will be done, when then he will be able to return home. On the other hand, there is a talk that everybody will be compensated, as the area will be turned into a street. Participation in meetings that could be informative, is compromised, as Peter explains: "There was a meeting here [...] it was at two p.m., but I was working and I could not go. (...) Then it is all for nothing, who is working cannot go."

Peter had no information about the Vila Viva program and earlier interventions in the Aglomerado da Serra before the landslide episode. The doubt about the future of their housing remains, with the promise of a street construction with no date to happen.

The interventions of the Vila Viva have benefited Pedro only indirectly. As with his brother, he also mentioned his and the residents' own efforts to build the stairs, and also to bring electricity and water to the area. Despite all this, his perception of the program is rather positive; he said "It took a lot of people out of a tight situation". He exemplifies advantages of the intervention, such as the bus stop near their home and the elimination of some "smoke dens". His perspective on the aesthetic aspect of the interventions is also clear: "...it took away a lot of the slum here, many alleys [...] this was too ugly".



The other two respondents are in a slightly different situation from the two brothers, as they have been long-time residents of the Aglomerado da Serra and therefore with more stable living conditions. Nevertheless, their experience with the program Vila Viva is not so different.

Dona Maria, for example, moved with her family to Belo Horizonte more than 20 years ago, settling since then in the Serra slum. Even having little knowledge about the urbanization interventions that would be undertaken and living in a shack with poor structural conditions, she attended several meetings organized by Urbel. However, she cannot explain: “They spoke nonsense there, that sometimes we could not pass on to those who had not gone, you know. We did not understand”.

Maria recalls the social changes that occurred after the implementation of Vila Viva, such as the removal of old neighbors. One of them was Dona Francisca, with whom she had great friendship but today little contact is left. When asked about Dona Francisca’s relocation, she shows nostalgia and grief: “She said if they built her another house here as she wanted, she would take it. She said it over and over again”. The resistance that Dona Maria expressed regarding the possibility of going to live in an apartment building is remarkable: “Oh no... living in an apartment, God forbid. I do not accept that”.

Even without knowing much of the program objectives, Maria points to some improvements such as transportation, pavement, the opening of roads and especially the removal of families from extremely precarious shacks. She says that at the time of Vila Viva her house was also in risk status, with cracks, yet it has not gone through improvements by Urbel. Contrasting to the more positive view of Dona Maria, one of her daughters speaks of the program quite negatively:

I think what these people did was low. They were not willing to help anyone, they were trying to open the avenue here and with an excuse so people would not complain, they said that they were at risk. Just to open the avenue.

The 70-year-old lady demonstrates satisfaction in living in a house with good conditions and in a quiet place; her daughter agrees:

Everybody likes [to live in Aglomerado da Serra]. Just like we were talking about the people who could not buy a home here ... because here is a very central area, right? It is near the center, it’s close to everything, sometimes we do not even need to go downtown to buy, everything is here. So then, most of those that had to leave here, I think, did not like it because of that.

Another interviewee, Dona Candida, has lived in Aglomerado da Serra for over 50 years. She has a good home where she lives with her family in a region only indirectly affected by the interventions of the Vila Viva, such as the removal of some houses and the construction of some streets nearby. When asked if she knew the program objectives, Dona Candida could not answer, but through her talk she reveals her perceptions on the changes in the area where she lives.

When the implementation of the Program in Aglomerado da Serra began, Dona Candida thought everyone would be removed: “We thought we would leave, like they did with the others, you know? We thought everybody was going to be taken out “. Although she said: “To the little apartment we would not go. None of us would want to go to the buildings”. When asked why the resistance to move in to the apartments, the interviewee shows her house and explains: “Because we have a large area, living at home (...) down here there are two bedrooms, (...) I have room, kitchen, back yard, I have everything. Upstairs is the terrace, got it?”

She also says that many of those who had to leave their homes out of the Aglomerado da Serra preferred to move into a house. With the amount of compensation, one of her neighbors was able to buy a house where she says is a “good neighborhood”. When asked about residents who were relocated to the apartment buildings, she does not know many of them. She said “very few people from here stayed at the apartment. This apartment thing, it was more people from outside who came in”. When asked if she knew of participatory processes or if she participated in any meeting, she said, “No, I participated in nothing”.

In her particular case, the woman points out many weaknesses of the intervention, especially the fact that there are still open sewers on her street, favoring the proliferation of rats. She also states that her street became “dead”:

They made the avenue here, the bus would pass near here, but they made the street so narrow that a bus could not fit in, then the street was lost. (...) This street became dead, right? And this sewage thing that was left there is just full of mice, rat gets into the house and eats our stuff, you see?

Dona Candida also indicates positive aspects of the intervention: “There’s something better, because we did not have a garbage collector, we have now. There was no one sweeping the street, now we have, you know? This also improved...” She then refers to changes in social relations due to the intervention of the “Vila Viva”:

We had very good friends, people who were very friendly, they are all gone, you know? Everything has changed, you know... some people came that no one even knows, people came from different places, you see? (...) Here we were left, left in the core, right? The core is left, we stood in the middle.

### *Resettlement and lives in a condominium*

The focus group defined as “relocated dwellers” consists of residents who were resettled in one of the 528<sup>13</sup> housing units built during the program implementation. Three interviews were conducted, two of them with condominium managers Mr. Fernando and D. Augusta and the third with Francisca, a friend of D. Maria.<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Fernando has been a resident of Aglomerado da Serra for 37 years; he was born and raised there. According to him, since childhood he has heard stories about the arrival of structural interventions in the community, but like other residents, he never gave it any credit. However, when the Vila Viva program began, the actions happened very quickly: “Then, about seven years ago, then it happened. (...) It was at once, understood? It was at once”.

During the Vila Viva interventions, Fernando’s house was identified with structural damages, so he and his family had to move. They benefited from the social rental program, with which they lived for six years. The amount covered by the social rent was insufficient, since he got R\$ 200.00 and the house he rented cost him R\$ 500.00. He had to complement the value from his own pocket.

It was only through a neighbor that Fernando knew it was necessary to make a cadastre to enter the list of beneficiaries for an apartment. For him, being enrolled as beneficiary of the

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<sup>13</sup> Available at Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte website, accessed 01.06.2012, at: [http://portalpbh.pbh.gov.br/pbh/ecp/comunidade.do?evento=portal&IdPlc=ecpTaxonomiaMenuPortal&app=urbel&tax=8178&lang=pt\\_BR&pg=5580&taxp=0&idConteudo=17321&chPlc=17321](http://portalpbh.pbh.gov.br/pbh/ecp/comunidade.do?evento=portal&IdPlc=ecpTaxonomiaMenuPortal&app=urbel&tax=8178&lang=pt_BR&pg=5580&taxp=0&idConteudo=17321&chPlc=17321).

<sup>14</sup> D. Maria was an interviewee from the group “excluded dwellers”.

social rent, he would automatically be a candidate for the housing built by the program. This lack of information, according to him, was a very negative aspect of the whole program and shows Urbel's inefficiency.

When asked about the Vila Viva objectives, Fernando is quick to say that the program brought important improvements to the community with positive impacts, such as the construction of streets that facilitated internal displacement. However, for him the main objective of the intervention was not to improve the quality of residents' lives, but rather to improve the accessibility and flow for high-class neighborhoods:

I guess, for the community, they were not really thinking about, I think they were thinking in their own good, right? Open avenue, you know? Taking the flow of vehicles across there, which was the Estevão Pinto Street with Ouro Street, which was too heavy and Contorno.

Another important point raised by Fernando is that due to the enormous amount of public funds used, the program should have been better planned, since the housing falls short in many aspects by not offering garages for all residents and recreational area for children. But in general he claims to have adapted to the new housing.

Another interviewee is D. Augusta, who has lived in Aglomerado da Serra for 55 years and now is resident and manager of one apartment building. She speaks fondly of her former home, which had twelve rooms and housed her sons, daughters and sons-in-law, grandchildren and ex-husband. The compensation received of only R\$ 26.000,00 was not sufficient for the purchase of a new residence that would fit the entire family. She then decided to accept the apartment and gave the compensation money to her daughter, so that she could add to the amount necessary to purchase a property. The rest of the family is spread throughout the Aglomerado, and her ex-husband left for the country, in Juatuba, Minas Gerais. The dispersion of the whole family, along with the distance to the old neighborhood, represents a great sorrow to D. Augusta.

Like other residents have reported, the process of moving to the new residence was traumatic. According to D. Augusta, officials from Urbel made a lot of pressure for the move to occur quickly, both for residents who received compensation and for those who were resettled in the apartment buildings: "If you arranged a place to buy they had to go there to approve, sometimes you liked the house but they did not allow you to buy that house, and would pressure us to buy another house".

In addition to this pressure to move, D. Augusta said that after settling in the apartment, often the Urbel officials were truculent, and did not respect the privacy of residents. Once it happened that they invaded her home to withdraw some towels that were hanging on the windows: "When they came here, they were already taking away the towel and putting the towel in my hand, 'you can not leave this here!' No, we were very humiliated here".

Concerning the objectives and improvements of the program, she said she did not know what would actually be done. Her main complaint is that even with the construction of the Avenue Cardoso, transportation is difficult. There is a bus stop near her home that goes from Fatima Village (where she currently resides) to the villages Santana Cafezal and Conceição, located on the other side of the Aglomerado where the greatest amount of commercial enterprises are located.

Unlike Fernando, D. Augusta is struggling to adapt to the new reality. Habituated to living in a spacious house, she said that living with the neighbors is complicated. In the apartment building there are problems with noise, also with the fact that in a building there are common areas for all residents and that the vacant garages are restricted, which requires greater understanding and dialogue between the dwellers. According to D. Augusta, this

difficulty in adapting to the new location is recurrent among older residents of the Aglomerado da Serra.

The third interviewee of the group is D. Francisca, 68, a resident of the cluster since 1994. Her moving to the apartment was also very traumatic. D. Francisca did not want to leave her old home because she lived in that place for many years and also because of the high affective value of her home which was built by her own effort. According to her, she left her old home because she was “deceived” by Urbel employees. She was informed that her house would not be demolished only remodeled:

Because when Dr. Marcelo [Urbel official] told me that it was not to let damage my shack because it was all good, it was just the floor that I would put, he said ‘no, we will take you out only to reform, to give you one more room, then strengthen the house, your shack.

As far as participation during the program implementation is concerned, she does not have much to inform. Many residents did not quite know what the program was or what work it would perform and D. Francisca is among them. However, she states that although there were improvements to the community, the way the resettlement occurred was traumatic for older residents. D. Francisca remembers with great lament the friends lost after the removals:

There are times when I thought so, my God ... many things were good, was great, but also killed many people, to tell the truth. I start depression as well. There’s a guy up there who died, they found him dead at home, it was also, he did not want to leave his home, no way.

### *Invisible neighbor: There is a neighborhood adjacent*

Initially, one of the research aims comprehended visits and conversations with the residents of surrounding neighborhoods to the Aglomerado da Serra in order to compare these perceptions with those of the slum residents. The Aglomerado da Serra has borders with different medium-class neighborhoods (Serra, Mangabeiras, São Lucas, Santa Efigênia and Paraíso), but the relations with Serra is greatest due to larger geographic boundaries and employment relationships, or even access to public services such as health clinics and education (high school).

Thus, we attempted to make contact with the leaders of the Serra neighborhood association. However, the president of the association did not receive the researchers, saying the association has no connection whatsoever with the slum, no project, no dialogue, not even with other institutions working in the community. In addition, she said the slum residents do not see the association with good eyes, since they are located next to the police headquarters and are seen as snitches. Having said this, she sent the researchers to talk to police officers, as they were the ones who could give information when the subject was the Aglomerado da Serra.

It was clear therefore that the interventions of Vila Viva did not alter the interaction (or lack of it) between the favela and the neighborhood. Despite the goal to ‘urbanize’, there is still a long way before the slum ceases to be so (as a space of exclusion) in the urban culture of the city of Belo Horizonte. A deeper understanding about the perceptions of the Vila Viva from residents outside the Aglomerado da Serra was compromised, as it is known that the vision of the neighborhood association does not reflect the understanding of the entire population it claims to represent.

## The Vila Viva and Companhia Urbanizadora de Belo Horizonte

In order to understand the objectives of Vila Viva as well as the priorities for its implementation in the Aglomerado da Serra, interviews were held with representatives of Urbel: the president and social director of the project. According to the respondents, the Vila Viva program has the following main objectives: promotion of sanitation, widening of roads, drainage and removal of hazardous areas. It is interesting that none of them mentioned housing as one of the program purposes. As the social director explains, removal and resettlement of families are key to “open space” in the overcrowded slum areas, so that is possible to perform an intervention. Housing construction of apartment buildings is, therefore, a consequence of the structural intervention works, which are the object of the program.

The president of Urbel initially emphasizes how important it is that urbanization programs in slums strive to maintain the affected population in the city. In order to assure that, it has to be planned “in a way to ensure that low-income population can continue in the city since this population is the most in need of the city, so to speak. It is making use of public education, public health posts, so it must be inserted in the city”.

His testimony, however, contrasts with the experience of structuring intervention in Aglomerado da Serra. As demonstrated in the research, “The Effects of ‘Vila Viva’ Serra in the Socioeconomic Conditions of the Affected Residents”, 26% of the indemnified residents had to move to other cities in the metropolitan region, a significant number considering the discourse of Urbel’s president and the blatant worsening in those population’s living conditions.

The social director, while explaining the resettlement process, also said that the expelling factor is “inevitable”:

Out of the 2300 families removed and relocated, 816 are living in the apartments built in there [in the Aglomerado da Serra] right? The other (...) 1500 families were compensated and with the amount from the evaluation, then they acquired other properties, understand?

However, even assuming that only 40% of households were eligible for housing units in the apartment buildings, the social director of the program avoids answering questions about the evicted residents and whether the removal from their homes directly affected their access to housing. He claims that the compensation would be sufficient to buy another property and that in cases where the compensation was very low (when the property had improvements of small value) the residents were “oriented” to the apartments.

Regarding land speculation, identified as a problem by residents, the president makes the following remark:

There are sectors, real estate sectors that will put pressure. It is a dispute. This is not just political will. One must have the political will and strength too, to enforce ... The government must go further, you have to be less shy and engage yourself in the dispute and establish some instruments against land speculation in the city.

In saying that, the president of Urbel disclaims that the Vila Viva program is responsible to implement instruments from the Statute of the City, which for him is in a political sphere beyond his reach.

The president of Urbel identified the need to remove and displace people as the major problem of urbanization policies. According to him, it breaks the living structure already built by the resident. That is the reason why the Urbel guideline now is to avoid as financial compensation much as possible:

We think the best is the resettlement in the apartments. It is close to us, it is within the area where intervention took place, it does not break ties ... We prefer that people make the choice for housing units. Why? We, before they move, we accompany them for a year, which we call pre-live (*pré-morar*). After two years of the relocation we are watching them ... After two years 80% of them, and it is not a guessed number, it is there in our research, think it is good or great living in the apartment [...] We do everything so the families make the choice per housing unit. Now, it has to be vertical. I cannot afford, with the actual land worth 350, 450 reais per square meter ... a plot to have 200 square meters for each family. It is vertical.

In order to adjust the lifestyle of those resettled in vertical housing, the post-live (*pós-morar*) program was implemented to help residents for two years, during the adjustment period. The president's description of the process, though, contrasts with those of some respondents, who show dissatisfaction with this follow-up. Besides, residents were discontent with the housing style and with the loss of social ties with former neighbors, and showed a desire to return to houses with gardens, animals, etc. In this regard, the president is quite emphatic: "if one wants to raise pigs ... then he goes to the metropolitan area."

According to him, this posture is justified by the fact that Urbel appreciates the permanence of the community residents in the region. Adopting vertical construction increases the number of residents covered with houses in the Agglomerado, thus allowing the maintenance of population there and within the city.

Regarding to popular participation, the interviews with the residents made it clear that there is a miscommunication between them and Urbel, either because of the ignorance about the participatory process itself or lack of understanding of too technical speeches. The president, however, emphasizes that participation is essential to the urbanization programs. He says that co-optation of social actors is a negative aspect that may occur, but community resistance and debate are natural and healthy to the process. He emphasizes the efforts of the Municipality to create programs that are open and democratic:

In truth, there must be a management of the participatory system which is strong, healthy. Local councils should function as places not of co-optation of the popular movement, but as place of dispute. The diversity of opinion should be regarded as normal. That's what keeps the system alive, pulsating and sound. Because dispute must happen, should happen, when it does not something is wrong.

The president of Urbel remarks that the biggest challenge of urbanization policies is social mobilization, which according to him is of a great importance:

The main difficulty is to mobilize the PGE. Mobilizing is not our culture. '[Neighbor:] I want to know about the public work!' (...) Few people participate in the PGE conception: yeah, but we do not impose participation, we open to participation and the person goes if she or he wants to. I cannot compel.

The methodology used by Urbel to make participation feasible is to work with reference groups. According to the company's president, the groups are "recognized by them". Nonetheless, comments that revealed a gap in participation were recurrent in the residents' narrative. This may disclose the failure in the role of such groups, which might not be satisfactorily functioning as intermediaries in the relationship between the Agglomerado da Serra and the government.

The president of Urbel himself recognizes the excessive use of technicality in the PGE and by Urbel's staff in general. For him, the government must strive to be clear and simple: "simplicity is the key. Simple is simple, not easy. It's sophisticated".

They argue that popular participation in the Vila Viva program is part of a model implemented by the municipality, and is currently independent of the mandate:

But this principle and this conception of popular participation has been maintained over the years, yeah, disregarding government changes, that's right, then the first one, the Participatory Budget, is the bottom-line of that process, right? Why is it the bottom-line? Because each community to achieve the development of PGE (...), they have to approve funds to hire PGE there in the Participatory Budget...

When asked about the relation between Vila Viva and the Participatory Budget in the city, they say the community could use this one to approve financial resources to implement the actions already proposed in the PGE, or to finance the PGE's production itself. There is a symbiosis between the public policies set by the city government for the urbanization of slums, whose flagship is the Vila Viva program, and the internal demands of the community can be claimed within the Participatory Budget. These must go through the process of Urbel analysis and planning, and sometimes even PGE needs to be requested by the residents so that the intervention is effective. However, the definitions of areas to benefit from the "structural interventions" are often too technical and inaccessible for discussion in the assemblies and for reproduction by those present to those who could not attend.

Some unanswered questions remained about the participatory model of Vila Viva and the possibility of effectiveness in the communities: 1) As the difficulty is to engage participation, how is it supposed to work with large time gaps between meetings,<sup>15</sup> in addition to the meeting times and language inaccessible to the inhabitants? 2) How can popular participation be effective with arguments such as tight deadlines, technical impracticability and lack of financial resources? How to keep the dialogue in this context that obviously affects the participation of the residents?

On the other hand, it is also clear that during the new interventions, Urbel has already incorporated changes as a result of learning (trial and error) during the execution of the program in the Aglomerado da Serra. Some of these changes were mentioned by respondents, such as the adoption of mixed use in housing and the inclusion of tenants as beneficiaries of the program.

## Conclusion

It can be inferred that the Vila Viva program represented a significant change regarding public policies of urbanization in the state capital. Different from previous interventions in slums, marked by punctual works, the Vila Viva innovated by proposing big interventions, which incorporated joint changes in transport, health, education, leisure and housing.

Due to the size of the program, it is clear that the consequences of interventions raise different perceptions that sometimes may seem ambiguous or contradictory when analyzed only superficially. It is clear, for example, that there is a mismatch between the objectives of the Vila Viva program listed by the Belo Horizonte government and those perceived or experienced by its residents. On the other hand, there is some openness on the part of Urbel to incorporate constructive criticism into the program in their new interventions, considering that Serra was one of the earliest realizations.

However, there is a clear distortion in the perception of "living" (or its association to a decent life) from the residents of slum communities and experts from the government. There

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<sup>15</sup> From the PGE elaboration to its implementation there can be a gap of 10 years.

is still a misunderstanding about how interventions in poor neighborhoods actually affect the lives of thousands of people. The discourse of “elimination of risk areas” seems to justify all the decisions without considering alternatives beyond those that lead to the removal of families and their relocation to apartment buildings. Those buildings consist of a homogeneous typology, but make the interventions more aesthetically pleasing. However, this overlooks the fact that some of the houses removed represent a life investment and have, indeed, quality. Nothing said by the representatives of Urbel, for example, explained the need to build a broad avenue within the Aglomerado da Serra, which accounted for 60% of removals, which benefits traffic flow from adjacent neighborhoods. If this was not the goal, there were, of course, inaccuracies in the intervention planning.

The decision on the intervention priorities described in PGE is highly technical in nature, which itself draws from the entire community the opportunity to question the legitimacy of decisions taken. Through interviews with the president of Urbel, however, it seems that the debate in the communities where PGE is going to be implemented have been more participatory, at least in those places where the community is already articulated and strengthened.

The research also shows through life stories, the uncertainty of residents about the future of their homes (residents who have not yet been directly affected) or the dissatisfaction with treatment by the Urbel (of those relocated in apartments). Despite these reports of neglect or misunderstanding, the residents’ perception of the program is generally positive, a result of a great investment never made before in such proportions in the poor areas of the city. Certainly, the city is reaching the poor, making them noticeable for the first time. However, the expelling factor present in the program greatly minimizes the positive perception about it, added to the inexcusable failure of residents’ participation in all phases of Vila Viva implementation.

Even considering the different opinions about the program, we can conclude that regulating, developing and ensuring social rights are a precondition for effective citizenship for millions of Brazilians. In order to be effective, public policies need to be able to recognize the informal areas of the city beyond their status as illegal, or should realize that in addition to illegal or informal, these territories are universes of meaning and modes of life, universes that are obscured by the tension between ‘legal city’ and ‘illegal city’.

Each community should be understood as a constellation of meanings and values that must be examined by public policies; otherwise, they risk projecting on them the symbolic universe of cultural parameters of the local technical spheres. Therefore, for the urbanization to be effective, seeking to include these territories and their inhabitants as spaces in the city and citizenship, it should be able to recognize the differences, the specific lifestyles of residents, their bonds of friendship and sense of community, and the meaning of having a self-constructed home. Without recognition of the plurality of these life forms, public policy can deepen exclusion, reinforcing the concealment of others.

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## Displaced Women: Practices of Urban Transformation in Istanbul on the Isolated Effect on Women's Lives

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**Abstract:** Current housing policy in Turkey aims at transforming the historical city center and forcibly moving the squatter housing (gecekondu) populations to housing projects at the outskirts of the city. This article focuses on the effects of forced displacement policies on low-income women. More specifically, focusing on the experiences of the dis/replaced low-income women, the article discusses the ways in which these women are being excluded from income-generating activities and their former social solidarity networks after being forced to move to the project housings. After briefly discussing the former strategies that used to protect them from falling into absolute poverty, the paper discusses how these women try to sustain their lives in the absence of their former social solidarity networks.

**Keywords:** urban transformation, displaced persons, coping strategies of women's lives, Turkey

### Introduction

This article focuses on the effect of forced displacement policies, which started in 2000, on low-income women. It is based on data collected for the project “Urban Transformation and Socio-Spatial Change in Historic Urban Centers and Squatter Housing Neighborhoods” funded by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBİTAK). The research was conducted between the years 2008 and 2010, and the project was run by Asuman Türkün with a research team of nine people.

In this research, social housing policies in Turkey were examined with a focus on trying to understand how these projects affected low-income working class. As a basic feature of changing housing policies in recent years, an urban space is increasingly perceived as a means of capital accumulation. Due to urban renewal projects, the low-income working class has come up against the displacement. Field research has considered the framework where this kind of living exists in the city, and interview questions have been based on the

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transformation of relations between people and how this constraints them. Research on housing areas under the pressure of transformation have been important in terms of comprehending inhabitants' survival strategies, their relations within the city, how they are affected by these transformations, and whether they have other housing alternatives in the city.

Six different neighborhoods were chosen for the research by using quantitative and qualitative techniques. Three of those (Maltepe-Başbüyük, Sarıyer-Derbent, and Tuzla-Aydınlı) are squatter housing neighborhoods while the others represent other housing alternatives for the urban poor (Beyoğlu-Tarlabası, Güngören-Tozkoparan, and Küçükçekmece-Bezirganbahçe). The study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods: urban renewal, deindustrialization, and gentrification literatures were reviewed, housing policy was read, and newspapers were reviewed for articles about squatters. By considering the selected areas for field investigation of samples, it was seen that both spatial and social features must be implemented in residential areas in Istanbul.

During the research, interviews were conducted with institutions and associations in the selected districts, the founders of the neighborhood, and significant people in the field of Oral History. The interviews aimed to try understanding settlers' survival strategies; their social and economic lives. The interviews inquired about the transformational processes in the established residential areas and the changes that occur over time. During these interviews, information was collected on approaches to urban transformation. The scope of this research was a survey with a reach of 8-10% of the population in the six neighborhoods: 1362 families, and within these families 6101 people, were reached.

The social dimension of housing policies has always been inadequate and the production of housing units for the low-income population is very limited. The governments have never seriously considered the provision of "low-cost rental housing"; therefore, "squatter housing" (gecekondu) has become the only housing option for these people. In recent years, it has become almost impossible to open up new land to fulfill the demands for available plots in the inner city. Consequently, parallel to the rationale of new urban policies, which consider urban land as a means of capital accumulation, the high-rent potential areas adjacent to squatter housing areas and central historic areas inhabited by the urban poor are attempted to be transformed through "big urban projects." (Türkün *et al.*, 2010: 15)

The economic crisis in February 2001 and the process of increasing internationalization with increases in capital flows to the (built) construction environment in Turkey in recent years have been the main determinants of housing policy. Legal regulations necessary for urban transformation projects have been developed for the urban area of the capital, and urban transformation projects have been proposed in the squatter housing areas of urban centers and historic city centers. Such suggested projects do not contain any solutions for job security and have a devastating effect on neighborhoods' ability to facilitate survival strategies. The urban transformation, or urban regeneration, is especially devastating on the lives of women and is a more determining factor for women than for men.

Our research showed that women living in squatter housing areas and central historic areas had lower educational background, job opportunities and social guarantees of formal jobs than men living in the same areas. At the same time, women are more dependent than men in social relations in the neighborhood. They established this kind of relationship in the city because they need to cooperate with each other for care services, such as for children and elderly people. Women are also dependent in the neighborhood on the issue of finding a job (working in ateliers near the neighborhood or at home), shopping on credit in small markets, etc. When they lose these kinds of socially supporting relations due to being moved to public housing they also lose their interoperability because in Bezirganbahçe apartment towers the

communication between them is difficult. In addition, there is not any shopping credit, so their economic lives become more and more disrupted (lost jobs, service care, etc.).

This article discusses the effects of the urban transformation on the everyday life of women. By collecting research data in the field; housing policy framework in Turkey is analyzed in the first section and revisions are suggested for housing policies in Turkey. In the second section, the survival strategies of the women will be explained based on the results of research.

## **Periodic changes in housing and urbanization policies in Turkey and squatter**

Social housing policies in Turkey are always and at any period undeveloped, especially for the working class, and housing production is much limited. The governments have never seriously considered the provision of ‘low-cost rental housing’; therefore, ‘squatter housing’ (gecekondu) has become the only housing option for these people. In this section, social housing policies in Turkey are questioned, global and local relations with periodic changes are discussed, and the dynamics of the process of squatter housing are examined. Looking at Turkey's urbanization policy, the adopted approach is the framework of David Harvey's analysis of ‘class structures and the theory of residential differential’. Occurring as a result of the capitalist relations of spatial differentiation, it is defined “in processes that class relations and social differences are produced and continued, as a complementary effect” (Harvey, 2002: 170).

Urbanization policies in Turkey developed with the process of modernization and conflicts have arisen from capitalist relations to shape space. The urbanization process in the Ottoman Empire began with the articulation of capitalism and was shaped with the Republic and the project of creating a nation-state. With the process of mechanization in agriculture in the 1950s, rural-urban migration started and this led to squatter housing. New economic policies in the latter years of the 1970s, due to the crisis, have been shaped into urbanization policies in the 1990s and 2000s. The value of urban land rent increased with the impact of global politics such as ‘world city’, ‘competitor cities’, etc.

The Republic(an) Era, which began a ‘westernization despite the West’ discourse, was typified by a disengagement from the Ottoman State, on one hand, while continuing the changes that were started during the modernization process of the late Ottoman Period, on the other. The changes started in 1839 by an edict of Tanzimat, a market mechanism opened with capitalist relations, such as railways, harbors, docks, warehouses, a series of infrastructure investment carried out, and the first municipalities established. The first laws were adopted on urbanization (Tekeli, 2009). The industrialization movement, which could be dated back to the late Ottoman Period, was interrupted by the First World War and could not be fully implemented because of the economic crisis that struck (Türkün, 2007).

Traces of a nation-state strategy can be seen in a number of spatial and economic policies in the period beginning with the proclamation of the Republic. The new capital was established in Ankara instead of Istanbul, railways were completed into the remotest corners of the country, public enterprises were established, and the project of state-sponsored industrialization started (Şengül, 2009). The economic policy of the Republican era first aimed to ensure the integrity of the country's internal market. Industrial policies of the early years were continuations of the last Ottoman ones and carried on state support for private sector development (Keyder, 1995). The outbreak of the world crisis created a significant

obstacle for industrial policies, but between 1927 and 1932, although the expected level had not been observed, there had been some developments in the private sector (Bayülken and Kütükoğlu, 2010).

Due to the 1929 world crisis, exports came to a standstill, production fell, and unemployment increased. When this process occurred, private capital was not yet fully developed, but through the influence of internal and external developments, the statist industrialization process had been grown. Keynesian policies were implemented in the developed countries of the world and during this period the positive impetus to economic development of the Soviet Union led to the selection of a new economic model. The basic characteristics of the economic model were to protect private capital against foreign competition, economic policies that supported private sector were developed, and industrialization used public resources (Kepenek, 1995).

The objective of creating a nation-state failed in the early years of the republic. This, in particular, was affected by the use of limited resources in the hands of the state after the liberation war and the crisis of 1929. Urbanization policies were left unfinished because of difficulties in raising resources. The Construction law was changed in the 1930s and the obligation to plan for settlements with a population of more than 2000 was forgotten. After the 1930s, the limited resources in the hands of the state were transferred to industry and urbanization was neglected too. Until the 1950s, the process of industrialization had not started so population growth in urban areas was not intense (Şengül, 2009).

Marshall Aid from the United States was marked by the 1950s. With this aid, the economic policies of the U.S: glorifying private initiative were adopted, and this aid, with the direction of the United States, contributed to the development of capitalist agriculture. Transformation in agriculture and changing industrial policies led to a very large population movement. In this process, migration to cities and squatters began (Keyder, 1995).

In the 1960s, in order to accelerate the economic and social development of Turkey, the State Planning Organization (SPO) was established and the planned period started. These policies, aiming to make the desired breakthrough in industry, caused the regional inequalities of the 1950s (Bayülken and Kütükoğlu, 2010).

During the planned period, industry developed and the pace of urbanization increased but was not reflected in urbanization policies (Şengül, 2009). The squatter areas of cities increased rapidly. Squatter housing areas began in the 1950s, for squatters were important to hold onto the city's economic and persistence and success. In the 1960s, they formed the labor force needed for industry.

**Table 1. Growth of squatter and squatter population**

year	The total urban population (1)	Squatter population (thousands) (2)	% (2/1)	The total urban housing (thousand) (3)	The number of squatter (thousand) (4)	% (4/3)
1955	5,324,397	250	4.70%	1050	50	4.76%
1960	7,307,816	1200	16.42%	1440	240	16.67%
1965	9,395,159	2150	22.88%	1880	430	22.87%
1967	10,437,233	2250	21.56%	2100	450	21.43%
1970	12,734,761	3000	23.56%	2800	600	21.43%
1980	20,330,065	4750	23.36%	4500	950	21.11%

Source: Şengül, 2009

Table 1 shows the process of urbanization in Istanbul. Until the 1980s, squatter housing increased rapidly in all industrialized cities, and especially in Istanbul. The biggest reason for this is the increasing industrialization in the cities. But squatter areas of non-legal positions led to conflict between the state and squatters in each period. This tension changed with the economic periods of the state: the process of industrialization in the 1960s increased services to the urban squatter areas while the economic crisis in the mid-1970s began renewed conflict between government and squatters (Şengül, 2009).

The import substitution policies, which were implemented in Turkey in the 1970s, failed because of the oil crisis that hit the World at that time. On the other hand, with the effect of social policies in the 1960s, the left movement gained power (Kepenek, 1995). During this period, because the squatter inhabitants were mostly working class, the left movement developed in the squatter areas. Therefore, the foundation of conflict between government and squatters was in the form of a wider struggle for social rights.

Import substitution and the economic crisis led to economic decisions put into practice on 24 January 1980, which aimed to solve these issues through economic liberalization. But the strong trade union movement at that time responded to these policies with strikes, followed by a military coup on 12 September 1980. Liberal economic policies began to be implemented with the military coup (Şengül, 2009). On the other hand, democracy in Turkey was suspended for three years, the left movement and trade unions were destroyed, and the squatter areas saw serious pressure by the state.

Because of largely abandoned industrial investments, construction in large cities became the main target during this time. At this stage, the industry was moved out of the cities first, followed by the assignment of new functions to the cities, such as tourism centers or finance centers. In the 1980s, the state policies on squatters also changed (Türkün *et al.*, 2010). Due to Law No. 2981, squatters turned into multi-storey buildings. By then they developed through the use value, started change over the value and 'rent areas' have been aimed at by hand of the state. Thus, the economic rent value of the buildings, which were used so far for housing, was discovered.

## Spatial differentiation of the global city

After the 1980s, in the context of labor and production policies in the world with globalization rearrangements and geographical-spatial scales and hierarchies, cities began to be reshaped and restructured (Kurtuluş and Türkün, 2005). During this period, communication opportunities increased, the importance of national borders was reduced, there were hierarchy transformations between Turkish cities and global/world cities, and new urban areas and industrial cities/regions began to be developed.

By the early 1980s, discourses of the ‘global city’ were produced for Istanbul. On one hand, this discourse determined the urban structure and, on the other hand, a legitimate framework for spatial transformations was constituted (Öktem, 2005).

During the process of deindustrialization in Istanbul, the working-class living in squatter areas had to work in the informal sectors. The 2000s were shaped in accordance with international market conditions, legitimacy of urban policies supported by law, and rapid changes in construction legislation implemented just prior to new and large projects. Legal regulations related to urban transformation began in 2004 and in 2005, an amendment made to municipal law, which has the authority to declare urban transformation projects in the municipalities (Şen, 2007). In this way, transformations in squatter areas started and in the same year Law No. 5366, allowing renovation projects in historic areas, was approved, and urban transformation projects started, particularly in Istanbul, and throughout all of Turkey (Türkün and Yapıcı, 2008).

Urban transformation projects in Turkey are being shaped by property. TOKİ<sup>2</sup> produces only houses for sale. As stated previously, in the state housing policy there is no production of rental housing. Only when property owners in urban transformation or urban transformation project areas have been announced is the addressee considered. There is no suggestion of a solution to the projects for tenants. Tenants have won the right to an annual rent subsidy with very long and difficult struggles in Bezirganbahçe.

Three options are offered to home owners:; the cost of removing debris, paying the difference between the cost of a new luxury housing and the of debris remains, or paying the difference between the cost of public housing and the debris remains. In practice, there is no transparency in determining the cost of debris. As in the case of Sulukule<sup>3</sup>, from TL 40-50,000 or, following struggles in Başbüyük, it can rise as high as TL 100,000. Another problem facing those who will be displaced is bank borrowing after deducting the amount paid by the cost of debris. Also, the expense of a public housing apartment constitutes an additional cost for the family budgets. The ‘squatter housing’ option is financially programmable according to user and is scalable over time according to changing needs. Therefore, this is a proper solution for workers in low-income jobs, informal sectors, and temporary jobs. By submitting solutions to urban regeneration projects means, in a way, a dispossession of this option.

Given that those displaced far from the city center usually take a place in public housing areas, this also leads them to lose their jobs as a result, which the Bezirganbahçe working

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<sup>2</sup> TOKİ (TC. Başbakanlık Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı): Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Housing Development Administration of Turkey.

<sup>3</sup> Sulukule Projesi: An urban renewal project began in 2005. It was a place of settlement of a Gypsy.

condition data reveals. Before the transformation of urban living to Ayazma-Tepeüstü, the population was 1.4% of the unemployed. After Bezirganbahçe 54.4% of employees lost their jobs and 31.6% changed jobs (Türkün *et al.*, 2010).

The urban transformation project housing is smaller than squatter housing, which is an issue when the average family population in 6.1 in Bezirganbahçe. Encountered in the case of Bezirganbahçe, an arrangement that will replace the projects is not adequate for the people (Türkün *et al.*, 2010).

The unenforceability of urban transformation projects can be understood by studying the two following cases. Moving to the Taşoluk from Sulukule, there is right now (2012) only one family that continues to live there as others have sold the flats and move away. In Bezirganbahçe, 2010 households surveyed showed that of 1,400 families moved to live there, many of them have sold the flats, and only 600 families were left in the urban regeneration projects (Türkün *et al.*, 2010).

## Life areas under transformation

In this part, based on the results of our research, the settlement strategies in transformation areas will be discussed.

In this field study, work was conducted in six neighborhoods that may set models for various urban transformation practices in Turkey. The most notable common trait of the six neighborhoods studied is that they are populated by lower-income working classes. Among the six neighborhoods where the research was conducted, three had developed as *gecekondu* (squatter housing) neighborhoods in 1960s and 1970s. Maltepe-**Başbüyük**, Sarıyer-**Derbent** and Tuzla-**Aydınlı** districts are the three shanty areas located in different parts of Istanbul in terms of social, spatial and cultural aspects. The Başbüyük and Derbent neighborhoods, due to their position within the city, are being subject to urban transformation, with pressure from new investments and construction activities on the over-valued urban lands. As a result of the decentralization of industry, the organized industrial zone established in Tuzla and, afterwards, the rise in the construction of *gecekondu* areas and apartment buildings formed the development of the Aydınlı district. This district is surrounded by mass housing areas constructed for lower income groups by TOKI as well as luxurious residential sites (Türkün *et al.*, 2010).

The remaining three districts represent three different developments as the settling areas of lower-income working class. The first among these is Tarlabası (Beyoğlu), which is within an urban protection area. Its location in the doorstep of the most significant entertainment area of Istanbul and its proximity to gentrified areas constitute significant causes in its being declared a renewal area. During its preparation, the renewal project for Tarlabası was reasoned with the facts that the district is a collapsed area and that the buildings are in bad condition. However, according to this project, almost all buildings are being demolished and luxury houses with only slight impression of their old form and brand new functions are being built instead of these, and therefore, the “preservation” aspect of the project is being left in shadows.

The second area is the Güngören-Tozkoparan district. This area is a mass-housing zone constructed to prevent squatters from setting a model like the social housing policies developed during late 1960s. The existing physical structure of this area comprises apartment buildings of 4-5 floors positioned in large garden areas. Tozkoparan was right beside the industrial zone when it was first constructed and, today, it is generally amidst upper-middle class settling areas as a result of the decentralization of industry. The occupants of the district



became owners of their houses by being given loans as a result of the urban transformation practices in the 1960s and 1970s and now they are facing the same compulsory loans.

The third area, Küçükçekmece-Bezirganbahçe, is heavily occupied by the mass housing blocks built by TOKI. People from Ayazma and Tepeüstü, as one of the first recent examples of urban transformation practices, have moved here. This district gives significant clues for assessing the consequences of urban transformation and discussing new problems posed by this practice.

The subjects of the research are the qualifications of houses and their ownership status, demographic features of the people living in these districts, working life, income states, consumption habits, the forms of relationship within the district and living strategies, the level of knowledge about urban transformation practices, their opinions and demands, and the ways of organization and opposition in these settlements. Thus, the study reveals both the living strategies of the people living in these districts and the way they will be affected by this transformation (Türkün *et al.*, 2010).

Looking into the establishment dynamics of the three *gecekondu* districts, the bond between working and housing is clearly visible. It is also observed that in the peripheries of the areas of Istanbul where industrial or serving industry development takes place, squatter's houses are also formed.

Another result of the research project is as follows: the dynamics of urban adaptation of the people that live in *gecekondu* areas around industrial zones and that migrated to the city throughout 1960s and 1970s have been powerful from the beginning; however, the Kurdish population that arrived with forced migration after the 1980s could only be tenants and in working life, they could only find employment in informal sectors with very low wages. Thirty percent of those who settled in Tarlabası among the areas of research populated most generally by Kurds arrived in the 1990s, and 54% settled to the same district after 2000 and have not moved to any other area of the city.

The research concludes that almost all of the families living in the research area are from lower income groups; however, Tarlabası and Bezirganbahçe are the districts with the lowest levels of income: 50% of the households here live on or under TL 750, which is the minimum monthly wage; 19% of the houses in Tarlabası and 26.3% of those in Bezirganbahçe have income levels lower than TL 500 monthly. When the average household income is compared, Derbent is the district with the highest levels while Bezirganbahçe is the district with the lowest levels, followed by Tarlabası in that respect. What is interesting is that urban transformation practices began in districts that are the weakest in terms of income status.

In the areas of research, all members of the interviewed families are likely to be negatively affected from urban transformation. The research also revealed that women are likely to experience more poverty and hardship in relation to their relations within the districts in which they live.

## Displacement of women

As observed in the districts of research, the women living in these areas are more dependent on their neighborhoods than are men due to a variety of reasons, including the job descriptions and relations required by their gender and family values, their level of education (which is more restricted than that of men), the process of the building of *gecekondus*, the positioning of the houses and streets, etc.

As noted in the beginning, women conduct their social relations within the district and they may take care of their children more easily due to the structure of their neighborhood;

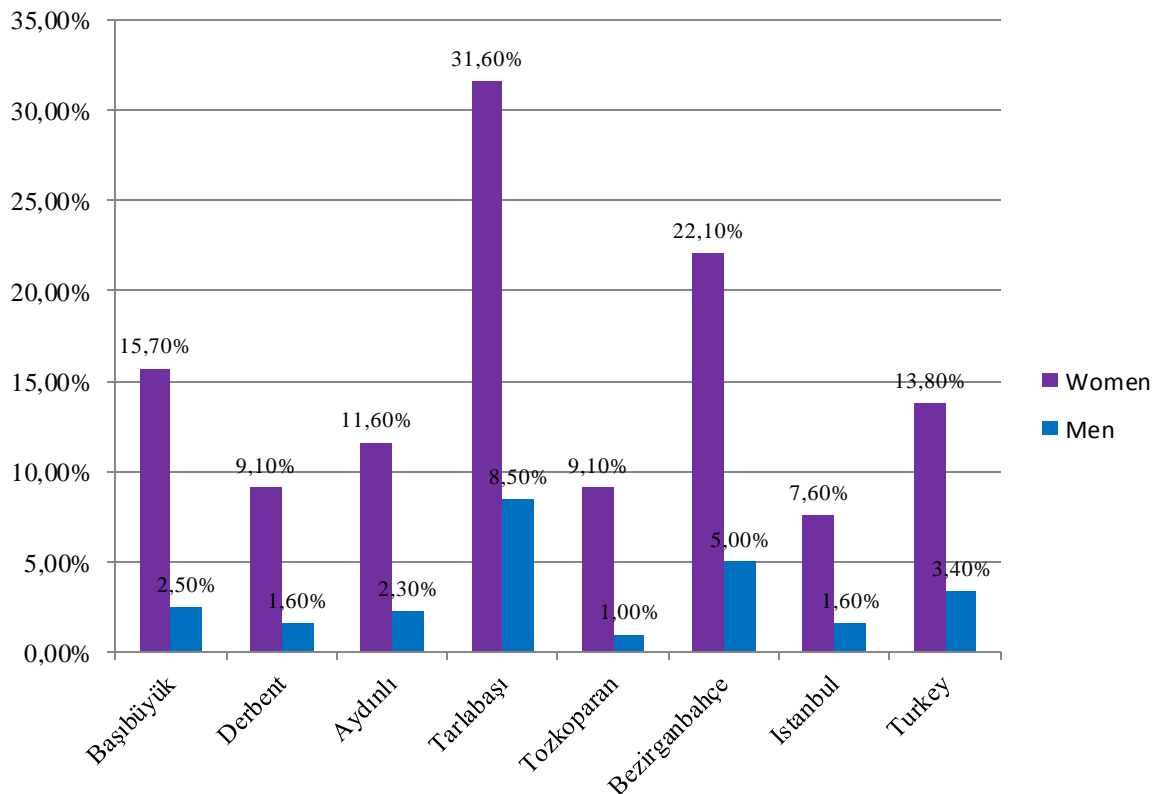
whereas in the relations of working life, since there is need for developed informal bonds and since their level of education is much lower than men, they almost lose all chances to find jobs. In this part of the paper, based on the data obtained by the research, the relations between the women and the space and their living strategies within that space will be examined and the potential deprivation they will be undergoing in the areas where they are located after the urban transformation projects will be discussed.

In the districts researched, it was seen that the most significant factor affecting the living standards of women is the period of migration. Notable differences are present between those who migrated before 1980 and those who migrated after the 1990s. Among the districts researched, Tarlabası and Bezirganbahçe are the areas under migration impact after the 1990s, while the other four districts are populated by those who arrived with migration before 1980. The period of migration is influential on many factors, starting with the level of education and also affecting the relations of the individual with the city and his/her position in working life.

### Educational background

In districts populated by former immigrants, the levels of education can be higher. One of the factors in this is that the majority of people migrating recently are the Kurdish population settling after forced migration.

**Figure 1. Not Illiterate, 2009**

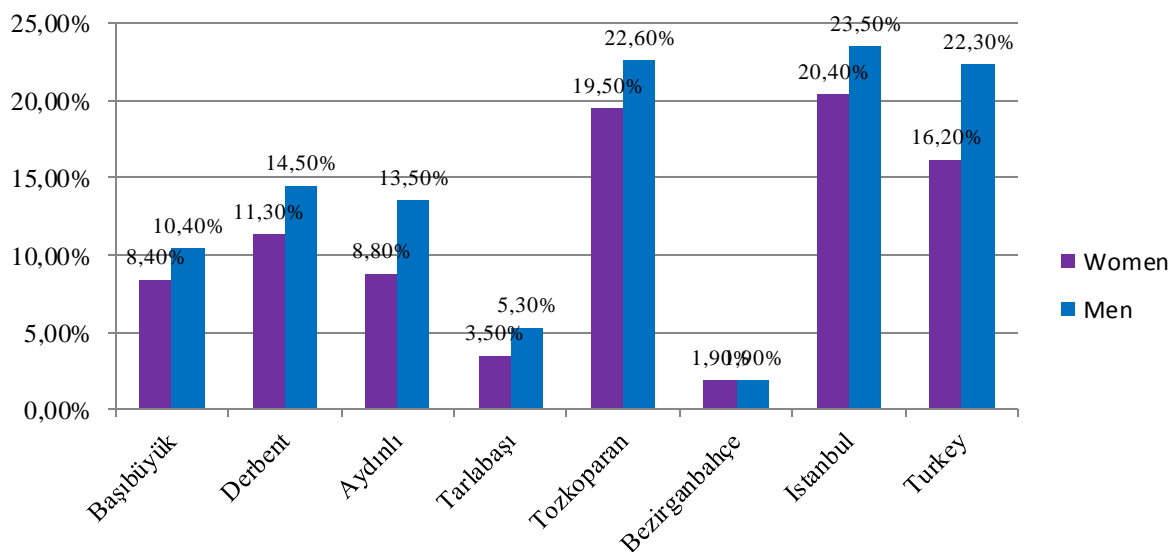


In all of the districts subject to research, the proportion of women who could not gain literacy is higher than that of men and is also above the average of İstanbul. A significant reason why the average of İstanbul in this respect is lower than the average in Turkey is that

the industrial and financial institutions in Turkey have their headquarters in this city. The districts that are subject to transformation have been occupied by working-class people since they were originally established. As observed in Tozkoparan and Derbent, the literacy level among the women among the people who migrated before 1980 has improved; however, the rates still are not above the average for Istanbul. The impact of the period of migration is clearly reflected in the rates of literacy. Most of the people living in Tozkoparan District came to Istanbul during the first industrialization period. Derbent was founded before 1980 and is better integrated to the city with its location near the center of the city as well as the industrial areas. However, in both of these districts, the level of literacy of women is below the average in Turkey.

What has caused the high rate of illiterate women in Tarlabası and Bezirganbahçe is the impact of forced migration. The women that came with forced migration after 1990s do not know how to read and write also because of the education policies in Turkey. The fact that the proportion of literacy among women is much lower than among the men in the same districts is a significant signal of the effect of gender upon women. Within the family, men are the mediators for women with the outside, that is, the Turkish-speaking, world. Interviews with the women in Tarlabası also provided evidence of this situation. Some of the women have never been to Beyoğlu, which is only 15 minutes away, although they have been living in the neighborhood for years.

**Figure 2. High school graduates, 2009**



Among the high school graduates, the difference in employment rates between illiterate men and women is less. A significant reason for this is the fact that in areas where the working class with lower income levels lives, people usually confine themselves to be graduates of primary school. However, considering the level of education, this makes it easier for women to participate in the working life – the difference of 5% between the women and men, which is visible almost in all of the districts, is significant. Among the women living in Tozkoparan, the proportion of women that are high school graduates is higher than the average in Turkey, is only a bit under the average for Istanbul, and it is the district where the level of education is the highest. The circumstances in Tozkoparan are directly related to the dates of migration to the city. Those who arrived during the first industrialization period

began their working lives at big factories and in better conditions than today. The second and third generations were also able to get access to education.

## The relation between the education level and employment of women

The levels of education affect the employment rates of women more than they affect those of men. In 2010, among the illiterate, the rate of employment of men is 6.2%, while it is 33% among women. The rate of employment among men with education levels lower than high school is 67.8% while this rate is 16.5% among women. The employment rate of high school graduate men is 66.2% while it is 29.7% among women. Among college graduates, the rates of employment of women and men are closer. Among men with this level of education, 83.8% are employed while 70.9% of women are employed (Turkish Statistics Institute, 2010, Household Employment Statistics).

**Table 2. 2009 Labor force participation**

2009 labor force participation	Total	Women	Men
Turkey	47,9	26,0	70,5
İstanbul	46,7	22,6	70,9
Başibüyük	44,9	17,5	70,7
Derbent	51,9	33,8	67,2
Aydınlı	44,6	19,3	68,6
Tarlabaşı	47,3	21,5	71,3
Tozkoparan	40,0	22,9	58,6

Source: Turkish Statistics Institutions household employment statistics and research data

The rates of employment of women in comparison to men are much lower than men in all districts, similar to the rates in Turkey and Istanbul. The main reason for this is that care services (for the house, elderly, and children) are undertaken by women. Also, the informal jobs that are not reflected in the statistics also affect this rate. A majority of the women living in shanties are involved in house cleaning. The conditions of women who do their jobs at home to accompany their services at home are also not reflected in these statistics.

The district with the lowest employment among women is Başibüyük. Here, the traditional family structure and the higher income levels in families have led the women to remain as housewives. Derbent has the highest rates of employment among other districts (33.8%). The rates of employment of women in Tozkoparan and Tarlabaşı are close to the average in Istanbul. However, in Tarlabaşı, generally, the members of families work in family businesses and their total income is quite low.

The majority of the working women in the research areas work full time on wages. Only in Tarlabaşı, the rate of those running their own business is 11.3%. In this district, the families sell stuffed mussels. Moreover, it is understood that ‘temporary/seasonal jobs’ are widespread among women. In Tarlabaşı, the rate of women doing these jobs reaches up to 28.2%. In

terms of running their own business, the difference between men and women is revealed with the rate of 90% among men.

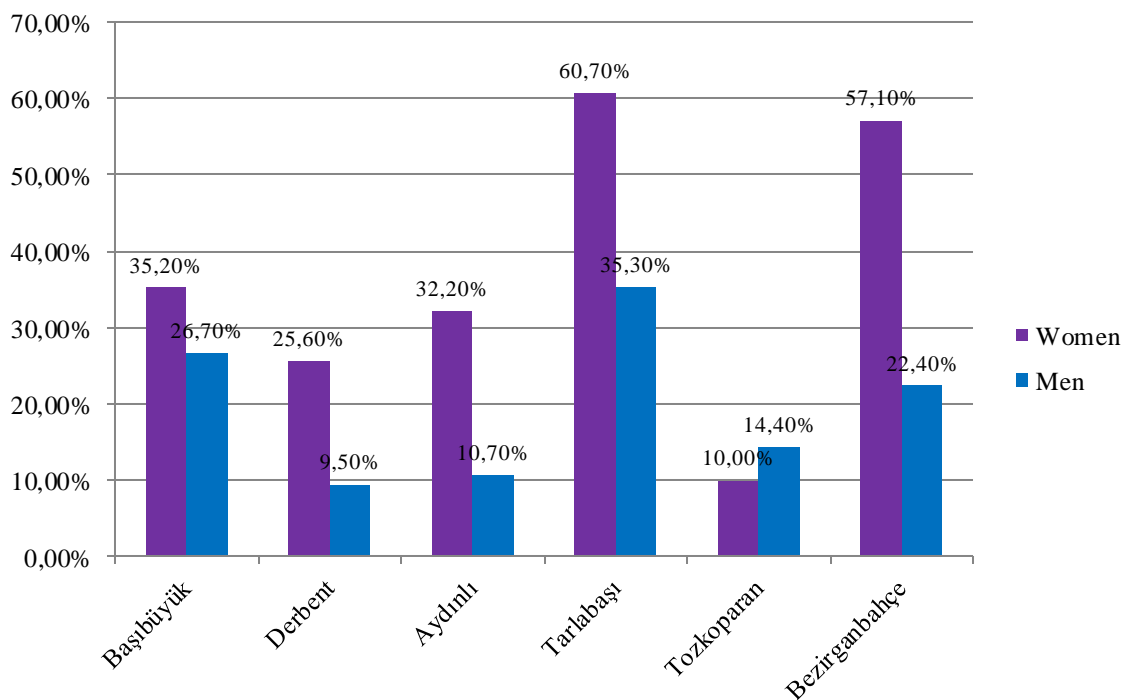
In all of the districts, working women have jobs as servants/attendants, which are generally described as the jobs of women. In Derbent, where the rate of women who are employed is the highest, 5.8% of women are servants/attendants and 16.3% work at offices. In Tarlabası and Bezirganbahçe, the number of women that work in jobs that require a certain level of education is very low. In Tozkoparan, where former migrants live and where women are also within the workforce, the situation is different than the other districts: here, 8.6% of women are ‘managers/administrators’ while 12.9% are civil servants, and 18.6% are white collar workers.

### Monthly income: The conditions of women

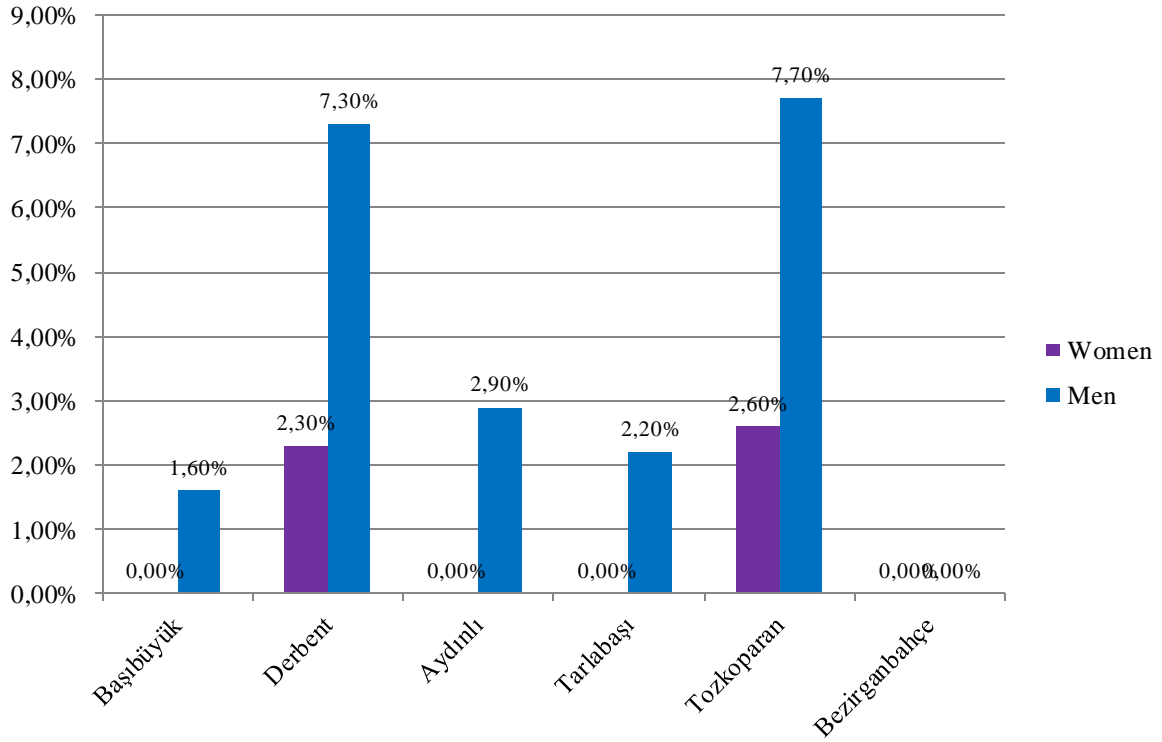
In the areas of research, very few women have incomes above the poverty level. The line of poverty in Turkey in 2009 is TL 2395, the hunger threshold is TL 735 monthly. The rate of those who earn more than TL 2000 in all of the districts is very little; however, considering the monthly income according to gender, it is observed that very few women earn more than TL 2000 monthly in any of the districts. In Tarlabası and Bezirganbahçe, there are no women with income over TL 1000. In Tozkoparan, the rate of women who earn such level of income is 28.6%, while in Başbüyük and Derbent, this rate is around 12%.

The minimum wage in Turkey was TL 497 in 2009 and TL 544 in 2010. Among the working women in the areas of research, the rate of those who earn less than the minimum wage is much higher than men. In particular, 60.7% of the women working in Tarlabası earn lower than the minimum wage and this rate is 57.1% in Bezirganbahçe. These rates are 25.6% in Derbent and 10% in Tozkoparan.

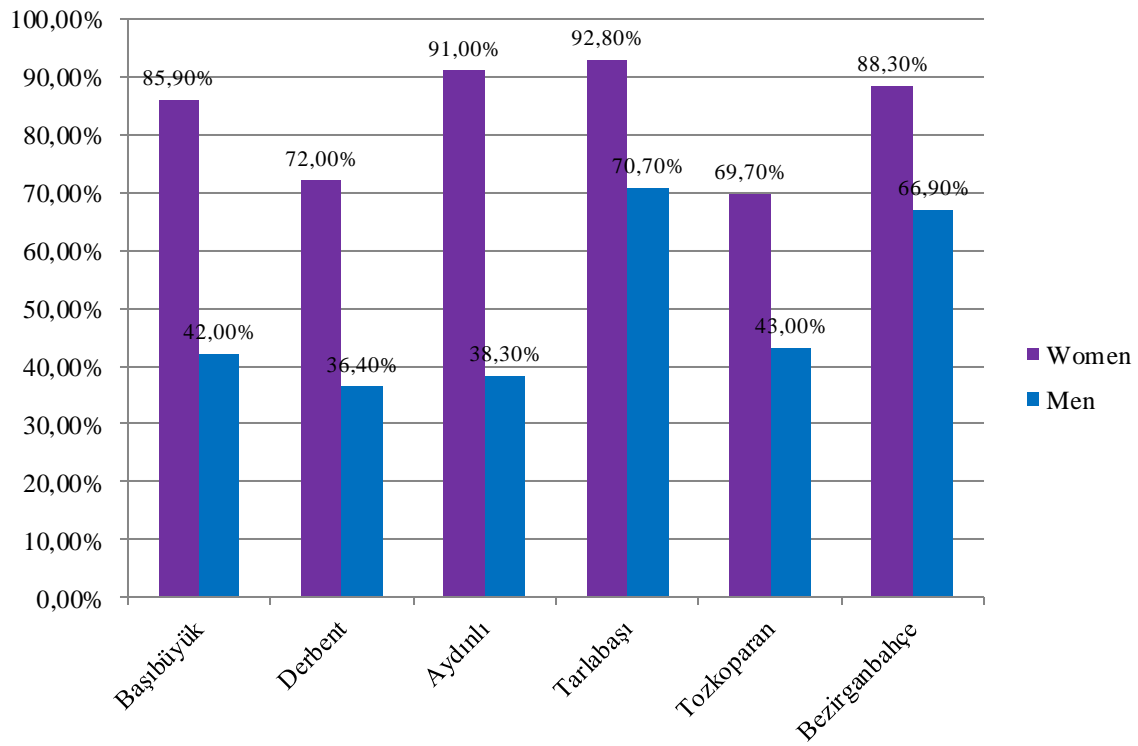
**Figure 3. Monthly income below TL 500**



**Figure 4. Monthly income on TL 2000**



**Figure 5. Non-social security**



Most of the women do not have personal social security. In Başibüyük, 82.5% of women (39.4% of men), in Aydınlı 89.9% of women (35.6% of men), and in Bezirganbahçe, 88.3% of the women (66.9% of men) are unsecured. Among the women in Tarlabası, the rate of unsecured is 92.8%. The lowest rates of unsecured women are seen in Derbent (71%) and Tozkoparan (70%).

Another significant point is the category of ‘pensioners and unemployed’. The data reveals the population that could work with a social security system and it is observed that in older districts, this proportion is higher. This value is very high in Tozkoparan and the women could be integrated into this system. This rate is 14.7% in Tozkoparan and in this group 43% are women. Similarly, in another *gecekondu* district, Derbent, 11.9% of the population in the age group above 15 is retired and 30% of these are female. These proportions are very low in the districts occupied by migrants that came after 1990. This rate among the women in Tarlabası is 1.4% and in Bezirganbahçe, the rate is 3.4%.

During the field research interviews it was understood that working women prefer to work in districts that are closer to their houses than men do and that especially in Tarlabası, they work selling water in the streets or temporarily open small-scale working places close to their districts and in informal industries.

Although facts may vary in line with periods of migration, in the districts of research, usually the education levels of women are lower than men. In line with this, their position in the jobs they work, their levels of income, and their social security are weak. Moreover, the number of housewives is high in all of the districts. Since the income levels of families are low and since separate budgets cannot be spared for housework and caring for children and elderly, all such works are performed with female labor.

In the polls, a majority of women expressed that they are content with the districts in which they live and, as a reason, they counted such reasons as being used to social relations and the environment, lack of any social problem, environmental attributes of the living area, being used to live in a house with garden, the convenience of the neighborhood for their children, etc. During the poll, the social relations that women and men have formed with the city were also examined: the social relations of women are continued with neighbors and relatives; the areas of socialization are the houses, the front doors of houses, streets, and gardens and although the houses are small, the use of gardens and streets increases the living quality; they generally do not go outside their neighborhoods; and there are almost no cultural activities in which these people are involved.

The women that were transferred to the mass housing blocks in Bezirganbahçe have told us that due to different languages and cultures, they could not develop relationships with neighbors and that they did not see their former neighbors anymore. (Those who were settled in Bezirganbahçe are not only the people from Ayazma. A portion of the houses was sold to other people too. Some of these began to be used as police residences.) For the Kurdish families settled here, the fact that the area is used for police lodgings became a significant source of disturbance. This situation causes clashes between the two groups. Especially for the women, such transfers mean the end of all social relations. As may be seen in the previous data, these people lost their jobs and are facing building contributions, bank loans, and other costs. The women have told us that since they cannot go downstairs with the children when they want, they have to keep the children at home. Therefore, due to the necessity of looking after the children, the possibility of being employed is out of question for these women.

In line with the fact that the selected areas set a model for potential urban transformation areas, factors of current urban transformation practices such as bank loans and contributions, natural gas, and other regular payments are causing impoverishment and the price of these

new expenses are paid by the younger generations who begin working by dropping out of school as well as the female members of the family. The loss of social relations affects the lives of women more than those of men. The rarity of kindergarten and caring houses and the highness of their prices cause women to solve such problems through social relations. In the shanties, streets, gardens, or the front doors of the houses are the points of meeting and socialization. However, in the houses of TOKI, multi-storey buildings, the non-functional green areas and the public areas without any identity weaken social relations and increase the confined state of people, and therefore condemn women to an isolated way of life.

## The urban transformation move in Turkey, 2012

In today's conditions, with the new law recently enacted, from the 20 million houses all around Turkey, six million houses are intended to be demolished. The required legal regulations for speeding up the transformation activities in *gecekondu* areas have been supplied with this law. The right of counter claim has been removed and the authorization for filing lawsuits against those who attempt to prevent the demolishing has also been introduced.

Istanbul will be the first city in which this law will be practiced. The Minister of Environment and Urbanization, Erdoğan Bayraktar gave an interview to the daily newspaper *Akşam* about this law and explained their big project as follows:

What will happen now, how is your roadmap?

Our policy will be a national one. The cities will be reconstructed. The priority is in Istanbul and Izmir... Initially, we are targeting 6 million houses. First of all, we will be telling the house owners to demolish their houses. If they do not, they will not be able to escape from it. The state will have the regulator and the prices will be brought down. Just like we did in the "halk ekmek" (cheaper bread supplied by authorities) model...

What kind of a model will be applied?

The buildings and cities are firstly X-rayed. Our scale is an earthquake risk with 6.5 of magnitude. The buildings that cannot resist this will be demolished. First of all, we will be telling the people that the building they live in is not resistant and we will be asking them to demolish it. We are ready to provide all kinds of support. The citizens are enabled to make the transformation themselves. We will be giving them time.

What if they do not demolish their houses?

Then we will interfere. When two thirds are for and one third are against, we will demolish. Here, the two thirds may purchase the remaining one third. Or we may also purchase the share too. There will be different models. The funding will be provided by the state, loans may be provided and such systems as revenue sharing or floor ownership based on lot ownership may also be offered.

There will be obstacles during demolishing...

We have a profound base at law. We take this risk for the sake of our citizens. We gave this authorization to governors in the cities. This is very important. When the municipalities are authorized during the demolishing, there may be hardships. The situation can also be considered as political and since the police and armed forces are bound to the governor, this practice will be more effective. (Küçükkaya, 2012, [www.habervitrini.com](http://www.habervitrini.com))



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## The Planning Aporia in Slum Upgrading: The Case of Old Topaana, Skopje

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**Abstract:** Worldwide experiences with slum settlements have provoked numerous slum-upgrading initiatives, which have eventually led the experts to unanimously agree on a set of strategies that had proven to be successful, mostly relying on implementing all-inclusive participative schemes. However, the Roma slum neighbourhood of Old Topaana in Skopje, due to a set of specific characteristics, seems to resiliently stagnate in its deprived state, even when efforts had been made. The rigid planning system is recognised as one of the key factors for this failure. Through this case study, the paper will examine the reasons behind the evident inability of the Macedonian planning system to effectively tackle informal settlements and urban problems of a socially complex nature. Furthermore, examining the extreme consequences of the pitfalls in the planning system, suggestions for possible improvements are made.

**Keywords:** slum, urban plan, urban planning systems, Roma people

### Introduction

After numerous diverse international experiences with slum upgrading, some strategic approaches evolving around participatory methods have been unanimously accepted as successful. However, the Roma slum neighbourhood of Old Topaana in Skopje, due to a set of specific context-characteristics and social circumstances has failed to achieve any progress, even when efforts were being made. The paper will argue that the main obstacle for urban improvement lies in the aporia of the planning system. Through the case of Old Topaana, the incapability of the planning system in Macedonia to handle informal settlements or urban problems of a socially complex nature will be illustrated, and possible directions for improvement discussed.

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## Discrepancy between social integration efforts and the physical urban reality

Present on the territory of Macedonia since the days of the Ottoman Empire, as far back as the beginning of the sixteenth century (Gjorgiev, 1997: 45), the Roma people were given significant rights within Yugoslavia. Getting equal treatment as all other nationalities, Yugoslavia was noted to be the most generous East European state towards the Roma (Barany, 2000). Since then, within the East European context Macedonia had officially become the most hospitable place for this ethnic minority (Barany, 2000). Even after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia clearly states that “Macedonia is established as a national state of the Macedonian people, in which full equality as citizens and permanent co-existence with the Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Romanies and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia” (Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, 1991: preamble).

Furthermore, in 2004, Macedonia became one of the 12 European participating countries in the Decade of Roma inclusion 2005-2015, an unprecedented political commitment by European governments to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma. The Decade is an international initiative that brings together governments, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, as well as Romani civil society, to accelerate progress towards improving the welfare of Roma and to review such progress in a transparent and quantifiable way (Decade of Roma Inclusion, 2005-2015).

The involvement of Macedonia in the Decade immediately led to the drafting of the “Roma Strategy for the Republic of Macedonia” in 2005, the first governmental policy to target the well-being of this ethnic minority, in which detailed strategies for their social integration and improvement of living conditions are carefully elaborated, divided in the following categories: dwelling, employment, education, healthcare, social help, human rights, culture, media and women rights (Roma Strategy for the Republic of Macedonia, 2005).

And it should come as no surprise that large-scale strategies are made specifically for the Roma, considering that they are the third largest minority in Macedonia, where according to the 2002 census, 53,879 people or 2.66% of the total population is of a Roma ethnic background (State Statistical Office, 2002). However, it is a commonly accepted fact that due to fear of antiziganism, many Roma people have not claimed their ethnic identity openly in the state survey, making the real statistical numbers up to 3 times higher (Open Society Institute, 2007). Skopje, the Macedonian capital, is a city with the largest percentage of Roma population in the world and the only city that has a municipality with a Roma majority and a Romani Mayor.

While on paper the attempts for social inclusion of the Roma might seem worthy of praise, the reality diverges evidently. This starts from one of the key concerns: many Roma that were citizens of former Yugoslavia, at the time of the succession, due to a number of reasons, including financial incapability and discrimination, did not manage to get their Macedonian citizenships in the one year period they were given, and have remained with unsolved citizenship status up to the present time (Shadow Report, 2004). Though there have been efforts for a number of social integration actions, the statistical indicators speak for themselves of the Roma minority status – 88.8% of the Romani population live below the poverty line (Shadow Report, 2004); the unemployment rate amongst them, largely due to ethnic discrimination, is 78.5% (State Statistical Office); the enrolment in elementary schools

of Roma children is 30% lower than of the non-Roma and the drop-out rate is twice as high as that of the non-Roma children (National Roma Strategy, 2004).

The most obvious indicator of the failure to integrate the Roma people into the society is their, for decades unchanged, place of dwelling – the excluded ethnic enclaves, the unrecognised slums where they live in self-built houses that they do not legally own.

## The Old Topaana neighbourhood

The chosen case study that could perfectly exemplify the mistreatment of the Roma settlements in Macedonia, and the oldest known predominantly Romani neighbourhood, is the picturesque Old Topaana, which has been known to be a Roma quarter since the beginning of the sixteenth century (Gjorgiev, 1997: 131) when the Roma people took over the dense neighbourhood of narrow stone-paved streets built by the Ottomans.

Carrying the name it gained after the gun-powder and artillery<sup>2</sup> that was located there in the sixteenth century (Gjorgiev, 1997: 71), today Old Topaana is still known to be the deprived home of the Roma ethnic community. Out of the 4000 people living on a 13.5 ha space, 30% live in improvised homes that are often shared by two or more families. The neighbourhood is densely built with exclusively residential family houses, on one or two levels. The majority of the houses are self-built with durable materials, on which improvised additions out of waste materials are built; the interiors are often incomplete and deteriorated, with half of the household functions pouring out into the yards, streets or “garages”. The under-maintained electricity network supplies most of the neighbourhood, though with frequent defects. Drinking water is accessible for a large part of the area; however, the sewage system is highly limited, leaving a big part of the inhabitants to improvise septic pits (Detailed Urban Plan for Old Topaana 2007-2012, 2007). Some parts of the narrow streets running through the neighbourhood are paved, but many remain unpaved, un-kept and difficult to access.

With its borders firmly defined with the surrounding streets and boulevards, the neighbourhood has been spontaneously growing within these imposed limits – first by occupying every free plot of land, be it a yard, or a small patch of ground practically glued to another house, and then by adding vertical layers onto the low-rise structures, wherever possible, leading to an extremely densely built tissue. As the average birth rate amongst the Roma people is significantly higher than the national average, the number of people that have been struggling to be accommodated within Old Topaana has been constantly rising, especially since moving into different areas of the city has been an unfeasible option for the majority of the Roma. Unfortunately, though the Roma people have put their own sweat and tears into building their houses, due to the long-lasting unsolved citizenship and consequentially unsolved property issues, they don't legally own any of it – the majority of the land in Old Topaana is recorded as state property (Agency for Real Estate Cadastre).

Despite the fact that it is equipped with some solid infrastructural amenities, which is making it closer to a poor urban neighbourhood than to a completely improvised slum, Old Topaana remains dominated by substandard living conditions. Though not officially classified

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<sup>2</sup> Topaana, or Tophaana, comes from the Turkish *top* (cannon) and *han* (a lodging place).

as a slum in Macedonia – as no such definition nor appropriate alternative terminology yet exists – with its morphology and substance Old Topaana resembles many slum settlements throughout the world, according to the definitions drafted by the UN-HABITAT that state that a “slum household is a group of individuals living under the same roof that lack one or more of the given conditions” (UN-HABITAT, 2006):

- Durable housing of a permanent nature that protects against extreme climate conditions.
- Sufficient living space which means not more than three people sharing the same room.
- Easy access to safe water in sufficient amounts at an affordable price.
- Access to adequate sanitation in the form of a private or public toilet shared by a reasonable number of people.
- Security of tenure that prevents forced evictions.



Houses in Old Topaana and a street in Old Topaana

## Learning from worldwide slum experiences

Urban slums have been a globally spread issue since the nineteenth century, and have become a major focus of urban researchers and practitioners in the past few decades. Drawing from experiences throughout the world, a number of strategies and possible approaches towards tackling this problem have been developed. From an urbanists’ point of view, the two main approaches could be divided into: on-site intervention, and complete demolition of the slums and relocation of its inhabitants (Garau *et al.*, 2005). Relocation has more often than not proven to be an unsuccessful strategy due to the slum-dwellers sense of community, attachment (ethnic or to the specific place) and so on. These massive projects have often resulted in failure, i.e., the new buildings and locations have been insufficient, unaffordable or just not acceptable for the slum dwellers. Such unfortunate experiences have pushed the public discourses on the slum issue towards developing strategies for slum-upgrading and on-site interventions for improvement.

Successful cases that have been documented in Africa, Asia and Latin America, for instance, have paved the way towards a more knowledgeable approach in dealing with this issue, casting light on the fact that it requires a pro-active involvement and mobilization of numerous concerned actors – starting from the Government and local administration, the

NGOs, the architects and urbanists, the local and the private sector, to the concerned community and the whole society. Practically, an action for slum improvement calls for an all-inclusive participative approach in strategy-making, which has become a unanimously accepted stance of the professional community (Garau *et al.*, 2005).

### **The planners' disregard of the existence of a problem**

Theoretically, applying successful formulas from analogous slum experiences should be preceded by a recognition of the problem. One of the main obstacles for developing Old Topaana is precisely the lack of such recognition, i.e., the complete ignoring of the slum's very existence.

A distinguishing characteristic of this neighbourhood – its location – has led to a very curious urbanistic situation. Positioned adjacent to the central core of the city of Skopje, Old Topaana has been included in the official city borders and given equal treatment within the planning documentation as the rest of the developed city. A part of three urban plans in the past few decades, Old Topaana has continued to spontaneously develop and decay, being in no way influenced by the plans nor by the official authorities. Decades later, the percentage of realization of any of the urban plans remains zero.

The reason for this extreme is not a complex one – namely, all of the urban plans so far have treated the actual built tissue in Topaana as non-existent, regarding the land as a *tabula rasa* on which new residential complexes were drawn in. This practice was inherited from the Yugoslav days<sup>3</sup> when the state had stronger capacities to manage the demolition of decayed buildings and compensate the owners with newly built properties. After the catastrophic earthquake of 1963, as part of the massive project for rebuilding Skopje, an entire new neighbourhood (Shuto Orizari) was built with the purpose to relocate the Roma from Old Topaana there (United Nations, 1970). However, even then, the project for relocation failed, and since Macedonia gained its independence and started going through a long and difficult process of transition, the severely weakened system has become completely incapable of handling such interventions. The planning authorities have nonetheless persisted basing their incentives on out-dated presumptions.

This disregard towards the ground reality of Old Topaana and its continuous development separate from the plans targeting it, as if they does not exist at all, has led to a situation in which zero percent of any urban plan for this area has been realized, while almost a hundred percent of the built structures today are informal and illegal. In this excessive example of the contradiction between planning legislative and reality, paradoxically it was the legal status of Old Topaana as a part of the city that had impelled its illegality.

### **The detailed urban plan for Old Topaana of 2007**

The same treatment, or rather lack thereof, of Old Topaana has persisted up until the latest Detailed Urban Plan (DUP) for the area that was passed in 2007. What gives even more weight to the gravity of this problem is the fact that in the focal document targeting the Roma

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<sup>3</sup> Macedonia was one of the six federal states of Yugoslavia, 1945-1991.

people, the National Roma Strategy of Republic of Macedonia, the making of Detailed Urban Plans is pointed out as a crucial initial activity that would kickstart the process of integration of the Roma and initiate the realization of the overall strategies for improving living conditions. This is distinctively highlighted in the document, which states: “with the legalization and inclusion of the Roma neighbourhoods in the DUPs, the process of realization of all the other infrastructural needs should commence...” (National Roma Strategy, 2005: 32). Thus, the essential role that the urban plans play in the overall process of combating the exclusion of the Roma minority is recognized within the strategy.

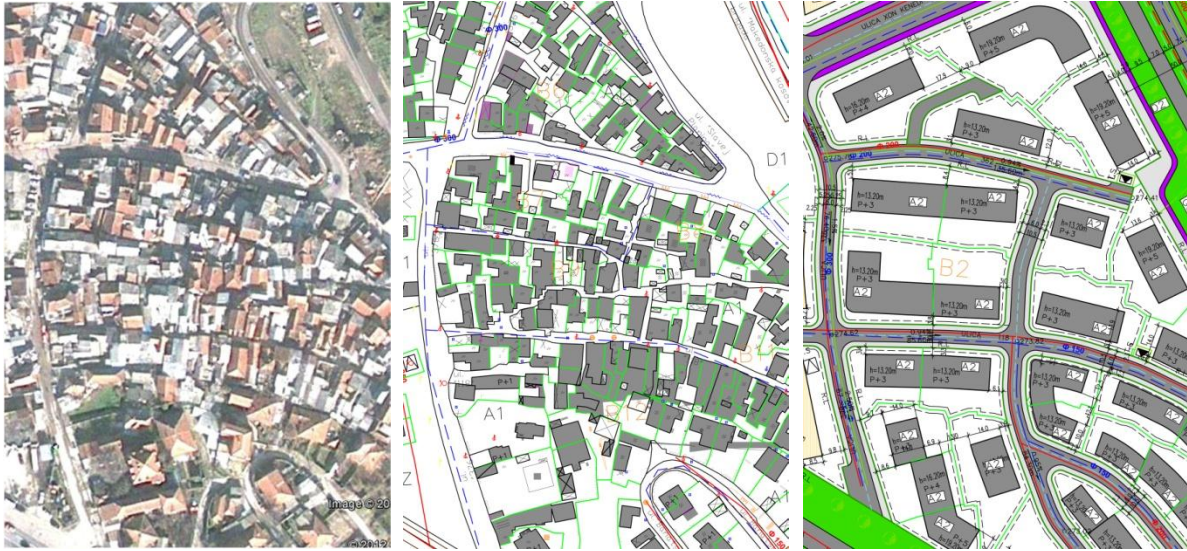
The Detailed Urban Plan (DUP) is the smallest scale of the three-level planning system in Macedonia, serving as a tool for detailed elaboration and practical application of all the planning decisions appointed in the larger-scale plans. The main purpose of the DUP is to define the size, position and use of the building parcels in which the land is divided, and thus it is the document according to which specific building conditions for each building parcel are issued – consisting of borders and building limits, height, numerical data regarding density, percentage of usage, number of required parking lots, etc. (Law for Spatial and Urban Planning, 2008).

The essence of the Macedonian planning system is the existence of two separate layers of regulations that deal with the urban development: the Detailed Urban Plans regulate the building rights, whereas the land ownership is regulated through the cadastral records. Logically, these two systems ought to be coordinated, but in reality they function separately, which is to say the planners design the building parcels’ size, location and use according to their own vision, and these are in no way obliged to coincide with the land ownership status of the same area. The property and land ownership issues are figured out and negotiated between the landowners and potential investors, *a posteriori* – after the urban plans have already been passed. While it is evident that the feasibility for realization of the urban plan grows proportionally the more it actually overlaps with the cadastre records, this is not always the preferred path of the planners. This complex mechanism is further rendered more difficult when the cadastre maps do not reflect the actual built reality, as is the case with rapidly growing informal settlements, the maps of which are not updated frequently enough in order to accurately reflect the transformed situation.

The DUP for Old Topaana is a typical example of a case of absolute divergence between the built on-site reality, the cadastre records and the urban plan for the neighbourhood. Planned as if on an empty patch of land with no given context, the DUP for Old Topaana predicts a network of wider streets, which define the outer borders of the “blocks”. These are then further divided into large building parcels, on which low-rise (3-5 floors) residential buildings are drawn in. A more thorough discussion on the drawbacks of the plan itself, in terms of block creation, building positioning and the distribution of public and open spaces would be rather futile, considering that it is an unrealistic planning vision to begin with, if one focuses on the plan’s disregard of the existing situation. The strangely positioned buildings are blatantly laid over the dense patchwork of semi-improvised houses, as if they were plain empty ground. Moreover, they are not planned as a substitute housing alternative for the community currently living there. Their dimensioning is not based on demographic surveys of the people whose houses would get demolished underneath, but rather in a naïve random manner, as if the Roma people would be simply relocated to an unfamiliar location. Ironically enough, the supposition that the target of the building overlay is potential investors would also prove wrong, as the buildings’ size is not sufficient to be a worthy investment either, presuming that the investors would have to compensate the Roma that lived on that land.



Unadjusted to the existing urban reality, the DUP becomes barren, incapable of production of built spaces, and resulting in, once again, zero realization of the plan.



Comparison of a Google Earth image, the Cadastre records and the DUP, on one part of Old Topaan. [a] *Google Earth image* [b] *Existing situation, Cadastre* [c] *DUP for Old Topaana, 2007.*

## A no-way-out situation

Moreover, the blame for this planning aporia is not to be found solely in the choices of the planners – they too have been disabled by two major pitfalls of the planning and legislative systems which have subsequently created a ridiculously contradictory set of rules.

Firstly, there is the land ownership legislative trap. According to the Law for Building, for one to have the right to build on a land, one needs to have a proof of the right to build, where the proof is in fact a document from the Cadastre confirming that the person is a legal owner of the land where he is planning to build (Law for Building, Art. 59a). On the other hand, one can acquire legal ownership of the land on which he lives by registering the land in the Real Estate Cadastre (Law for Real Estate Cadastre, Art. 112); and the right for registering the land in the Cadastre is gained if one is the owner of the legally built building located on that land (Law for Ownership and Other Material Rights, Art. 116). Since the Roma people had never built anything legally, they could never gain the right to buy the land. And they could never buy the land, because they could not register an illegal building in the cadastre. Thus, they ended up being twirled in a legal Catch 22 – in order to buy land, they must have a legally built building; in order to legalise a building, they must own the land.

Secondly, there is the urban planning legislative trap. In the decades of transition, it had become a wide-spread trend for greedy businessmen to bribe the urban planning officials that were prone to corruption – namely, the urban plans became tools for legalising illegal buildings, by implementing them into the plans after they had already been built. Thus, an addition was made to the Law for Spatial and Urban Planning in 2005 as a means of protection of the legitimacy of the urban plans as guidelines for future development. The law now states that “in the urban plans, no building conditions should be established that would enable for already built objects (who had been up until the beginning or during the drafting of

the plan built opposing the existing urban planning legislative or the Law for Building) to be fitted into the urban plan” (Law for Spatial and Urban Planning, Art. 14, Al.5), which means that no illegally built structure can be included in the urban plan. Hence, while in the National Strategy for Roma, the DUP is given a high spot as an operative tool with which the dwelling problems of the Roma should be tackled, the Law for Planning takes away from the DUP the power to treat the informal buildings in any way. These two system problems create an unbreakable wall preventing any activity in the Roma neighbourhood and are one of the core reasons for the ongoing aporia of the planners.

### **Can multidisciplinary tools solve the planning aporia?**

Now the question is: Could a large-scale mobilization of a number of actors, a massive social action fostering participative approach learning from successful experiences, improve or significantly influence the never-ending stagnation of the urban development of Old Topaana? It could be logically deduced that it probably wouldn't. In reality, the very presumption that an action of that scale is feasible in the Macedonian society at this point is utopian. Rationally, the current state of our country could not achieve a leap that ambitious.

But, hypothetically speaking, even if the state and local authorities had the knowledge and capacity to initiate a high-level programme for social integration, it would result in change and improvement in the spheres of education, employment, culture, etc. However, when it comes to the dwelling issue, any action, no matter how all-inclusive would eventually strike the same wall – the rigidity and systematic faults of the planning and legal systems, which allow for no flexibility.

Thus, steps need to be made in the direction of opening up possibilities for the integration of social inclusion policies into the urban planning system, i.e., acknowledging the incapability of the existing rigid planning system to tackle the diversity of urban conditions within its existing frames. This is to say, without necessarily making an unfeasible, borderline utopian leap towards strategic, large-scale, participatory-based strategies, adjustments can be made within the regulatory planning that could foster urban and social progress and development.

### **The underestimated power of the urban plan**

The most distinctive characteristic of the planning system in Macedonia is its rigidity, which is typical for planning of a regulatory kind. There are generally two methodologies of implementation of urban planning, i.e., two kinds of plans: regulatory and discretionary, or as Faludi (2000) divided them, project plans and strategic plans. He defines project plans as being “blueprints of the intended end-state of a material object and the measures needed to achieve that state” (Faludi, 2000: 303), where the process and the vision for the image of the future are both closed at the moment of adoption of the plan. On the other hand, strategic plans, he writes, “concern the coordination of projects and other measures taken by a multitude of actors” (Faludi, 2000: 303). In this case, the coordination of the set of the decisions taken by the actors is a continuous process and the future remains open.

Falling under the category of project plans, the Detailed Urban Plans for parts of Skopje are literal orthogonal projections of a firmly-cemented predicted future. The main criticism of this kind of plan, their disregard of the time-dimension and changeability of the city, comes even further to the front when its target is self-built, informal neighbourhoods, as is exemplified in the specific DUP for Old Topaana.

The case of Old Topaana puts forward the conclusion that social inclusion policies targeting urban conditions, particularly in situations concerning circumstances of extreme poverty, can almost without exclusion not be dealt with properly through a rigid planning system. Furthermore, the system has become more and more rigid, turning into a practice of drawing finalised architectural buildings onto the plan, leaving no space for flexibility. The only way that this planning system can tackle the issue of this slum is by complete demolition and relocation of its residents, as is apparently envisioned in the DUP, although in an unrealistic manner where there are no actual investment and relocation plans based on the number of people and finances. As the method of complete demolition of slums and relocation of its inhabitants has been already commented on as very likely to be unsuccessful, the only way to provide conditions for different treatment of this neighbourhood and any kind of on-site intervention would be a change of the planning system.

Providing a solution for an alternative planning system for Macedonia is a mission that would call for a long-term and thorough research, thus this paper simply offers suggestions for possible directions in which the current planning system can be modified, based on one crucial incentive – the planning system needs to be able to recognise and distinguish urban areas with a specific context, history and morphology (such as the informal neighbourhoods) so that it can substantially target their problems. Some possible suggestions are:

- Increasing the number of scales of urban plans; adding to the existent three-level system, a fourth or even fifth level, a plan that would go into an even smaller scales (in areas that would be recognised as such that need it), enabling the planners to work with micro-urbanism, practically penetrating into an architectural scale – which could, for instance, provide an opportunity to deal with the informal neighbourhoods by analysing, planning and designing solutions for one house at a time.
- Slightly skewing the project planning system towards a more strategic planning system, i.e., adding flexibility to the rigidity of the plan by not making a finalised unchangeable version of the Detailed Urban Plan but leaving it more open for modifications and adjustments, based on additional surveys, research, on-site work, local participation, etc.
- Implementing a system of classification of diverse plans – each category with its own set of rules, regulations, tools and methodologies. The current planning system does not recognise the difference between a rich suburb and an informal slum, so the rules are generalised and equal for all urban areas, which results in an insensitive treatment of sensitive areas or complete incapability to tackle more complicated issues. The diversification of plans would recognise differences, and thus offer appropriate strategies for planning each specific area such as: residential neighbourhoods, central city core zones, culturally protected heritage, protected environment zones, informal settlements, administrative quarters, deprived areas, etc.

## Conclusion

Through the case of the Old Topaana neighbourhood, an attempt was made to illustrate a specific urbanistic riddle – one whose solution is made difficult by a complex superimposition of contradicting regulations. Trying to highlight the power that the urban plan itself can have to stimulate or terminate social inclusion policies, the offered resolutions are merely provisional suggestions, carrying with themselves the risk that they too, could fail to succeed.

Nevertheless, they are based on one undeniable truth – the current planning system is not capable of handling diverse urban conditions, nor issues of a more complex social nature. Old Topaana remains to be an example in which the extreme possible consequences of pitfalls in the urban planning system can be seen; however, the suggestions for improvement drawn from this extreme case can be applied to a much more extensive, country-wide scale.

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## Liberalization, Urbanization, and Eviction Effect in Béjaia

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**Abstract:** The reform introduced by Algeria 20 years ago has produced several impacts that are more or less expected. One of those that wasn't forecasted is the way that the urban frame evolved in general and the city of Béjaia in particular. Liberalization had freed urban dynamics that *played* out to evict the public infrastructure and amenities from the city center in favor of housing in one hand and to evict *insiders* in favor of *outsiders* in the other hand. These facts don't matter if they don't produce imbalances that worsen the life of the citizens whom feel more and more that their city doesn't belong to them anymore.

**Keywords:** liberalization, urbanization, eviction effect

### Introduction

In 2010, Algeria bypassed the threshold of 50% urban population, while it was nearly totally agricultural area a half-century ago. The country has lived a fabulous experience of urbanizing/industrializing, which pulls small villages to the size of important cities and expands the previously existing cities to unforeseen sizes. The crisis of the mid-1980s ended socialism and obliged the country to take the path of the free-market economy. Accounting from this moment, the liberalization has put aside the State, freeing private initiative in several fields such as building, foreign trade, investment, and transport. Stressed for so long by an over-powered State, people understand this liberty as: *everyone can do what he wants*. In the matter of urbanization, it gives birth to a strange phenomenon that deserves to be analyzed: in the town of Béjaia, insider inhabitants are progressively evicted by outsider ones, coming in from all around the country. To be more accurate: the poor of Béjaia are being evicted by the rich of Algeria. It's this process that is analyzed in this paper, which is divided in four parts. The first one returns to the urban (dis)order that prevailed under the planning era. The second one analyzes upheavals that have been brought about by the liberalization in the matters of urbanization and urbanism. The third part describes how the eviction effect operates, and the fourth one tries to estimate the cost of this phenomenon.

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<sup>1</sup> Magister dissertations - Attractivité aux IDE: Quel rôle pour les villes en Algérie ? Cas de la ville de Béjaia - Le transport urbain et la reconfiguration de la ville : quelle interaction ? Cas de la ville de Béjaia - Quelle configuration de la ville pour accompagner le développement d'un pôle de compétitivité ? Cas de Béjaia - Croissance et développement en Algérie, y a-t-il un rôle pour les Villes nouvelles ? Research projects - Perspectives de développement de la région de Béjaia par le tourisme - Aménagement urbain et développement socio-économique dans la ville de Béjaia - Architecture urbanisme et rationalité économique - Analyse de l'impact de la libéralisation du transport urbain dans la ville de Béjaia. - Croissance et Compétitivité : quel rôle pour la ville. Cas de la ville de Béjaia Foreign Cooperation - Responsible of a Master: Aménagement du territoire et développement. Opened in the shape of a Tempus project with the University of Grenoble (France); 2011. Other - Contribution to the project Planning and Urbanism of Bejaia for the coming 25 years.

## Urban disorder at the era of the planning

From mid-1960s until the mid-1980s, Algeria followed the hard path of socialism, trying to offset a lack of financial and material means through extra goodwill. But it was not enough, at least in matters of urbanization where the project faces enormous constraints. The country suffers from the rarity financial, technical, and technological means on one hand and must respond to pressing needs on the other hand. Add to this that the new frame of life must respect the principles of socialism, assuming that somebody knows what is the socialist city (Kheladi, 1991). Squeezed between the urgency to do something and the ignorance of what to do, Algeria chose to take inspiration from the USSR experience.

### *The Soviet urban experience*

When looking back to the experience of urbanizing in the USSR, one finds that it is framed by the famous debates of the 1920s that tried to transform the man by transforming the city (Anatole Kopp, 1967, 1975, 1979). The ultimate purpose was to build the new man of the all-new society from where all forms of exploitation are banished. It goes without saying that the soviet thinkers took their inspiration from the ideas of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Unfortunately, those thoughts remained vague about the type of city that is compatible with a communist society. Luckily, Friedrich Engels (1979) discussing the question of housing, makes reference to a French thinker named Charles Fourier. Fourier is an *utopist* thinker of the second half of the nineteenth century who wasted his time to build mentally the frame of life in the ideal society, i.e., the society that excludes the existence of social classes.<sup>2</sup> This reference was sufficient to raise the *phalanstère* (as Fourier calls his pattern of city) to the rank of paradigm for those whom lack imagination and seek a source of inspiration.

The main feature of the communist city that derives from the *phalanstère* is doubtless the divide of the urban space into many specialized areas according to the main functions of a city.<sup>3</sup> This gives birth to zoning as a new principle of urbanism. The zoning idea reaches Algeria in the 1970s, after numerous dilutions.

### *The socialist city in Algeria*

Algerian planners imagine the city as a juxtaposition of many *New Urban Housing Zones* (NUHZ) backed up by an *Industrial Zone* (IZ). The divide of the city is intended to forge the features of the New Algerian Citizen. On the ground, this entity, in its elementary components, is represented by two basic functions: to sleep and to work. A part of the city is devoted to each of these functions.

### *The industrial zone*

In Béjaïa, planners obtain an original configuration by locating the IZ next to the city then beyond the IZ they locate the housing zone. It results then that the industrial area occupies the

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<sup>2</sup> Many analysts describe Fourier's model as a luxury prison.

<sup>3</sup> Later Le Corbusier distinguishes three major functions: living, circulating, and working.

heart of the city. The advantage is that it avoids commuting costs and gives opportunity to women for decent work. In fact, due to numerous factors those advantages never occur while the faults of the system play:

- As time passes, the IZ is squeezed from all sides by buildings, preventing it from expanding while the city widens at great pace. It produces an imbalance between supply and demand of jobs.
- The IZ cuts up the continuity between the two sides of the town, lengthening distances and rendering necessary to cross the IZ daily.
- Pollution spreads from the heart of the city itself.
- Plants are thrown randomly into the IZ, making it too heterogeneous. The gains of agglomeration are lost and factories become constraints for each other (Kheladi, 1991).

### *The housing zone: Public initiative*

Reflection on urbanism and urbanization was covered up behind factors such as: the smallness of the financial means, the little mastery of the technology, and the need to hurry up. These objective difficulties have freed builders from all responsibilities, leading to a very poor architecture and very hideous buildings. Buildings are posed on the ground regardless of their alignment, the continuity, the esthetic, the lighting, the sense of the winds, the economy of land use, and so on. Besides, buildings are devoted to housing only, services are gathered in a special area of the district but in 9 of 10 cases it'll never arise from ground. As soon as flats are achieved, the State hurries up, leaving the field. The pressure on flats being greatest, the State affords itself to neglect everything else, recklessly producing a situation where cities expand by adding more and more housing. They are called dormitory-cities. The life in cities that are devoted only to sleep is something close to nightmare because the least movement for satisfying the least need (such as buying a newspaper), shifts into an expensive business in matter of time lost and money spent. Day after day, the inhabitants waste their time, their money, and their forces to solve the same few problems that they have solved the day before and that they will solve the day after.

### *The housing zone: Private initiative*

Thing being what they are, the demand (of housing) is far and away smaller than the supply; the State is obviously incapable to respond to the tremendous needs.<sup>4</sup> The first thing newcomers in the city do is to subscribe for obtaining a flat. After years of waiting in vain, they resign to manage to solve the problem of housing by themselves. This important decision will transform the ordinary citizen into an outlaw for building is a monopoly of the State. A deal-like situation begins to take place between the public administration (which feels guilty for being unable to settle the problem of housing) and builders, who promise to be as discreet as possible. In the Kabylia region, possessing a house is a cultural need; explaining that all

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<sup>4</sup> Needs are boosted simultaneously by the massive destruction of hundred villages and districts during the seven years of the liberation war; the rural exodus that pours hundreds of thousands of poor peasants into the peripheries of cities; an exceptionally high birth rate that reaches almost 3%, and rapid industrialization.



threats and reprisals fail to build. In Béjaia, dozens of thousands houses are built at the very moment where the law makes it forbidden. Besides the will of people to possess their own house, one must add that incompetence, corruption, and incapacity of the State to enhance the demand, spur the parallel land market, and give a tremendous vitality to the shadow building sector. The setback of the State allows everyone to do as he wants and effectively everyone acts as he wants, in the shape and image that he wants, producing a kind of urbanism and urbanization that raises disorder and anarchy to the rank of art.<sup>5</sup> It is odd to notice that anarchy has never prospered better as it has during the period of the Planning. Spontaneously, people were in league against the State, suppliers and demanders of fieldwork hand in hand to avoid any business with the public administration, payments are in cash, and the simple *word* replaces all written contracts.

Practically, the business turns as following. A landowner divides roughly a field into plots of different sizes and forms, according to the features of the relief. Trying not to lose an inch of soil, he doesn't manage any free space except indispensable narrow streets where it is uneasy for a car to turn back. He doesn't care about how life may be in the future district without any service, believing sincerely that it isn't his duty or mission to enhance the quality of life of the people. It is hard to understand, but buyers share the belief and accept to be a party in misleading the public administration. Years later they regret their thin consciousness, but it is yet too late (Kheladi, 1991; Kheladi *et al.*, 2003; Kheladi *et al.*, 2007).

*In fine analysis*, despite that public and private builders start from opposite sides, the results they reach are very close: dormitory-cities that are conceived by merely juxtaposing ugly buildings. The only one difference that hurts the watcher is about the density (Figures 1 and 2). In both kinds of districts, it is useless to search for the main universal attributes of urbanism: they don't exist at all. Alignment, treatment of angles, public spaces, façades of building, global harmony of the street, hierarchy of street network, and so on – these are very luxurious commodities. The kind of city being built recalls the middle-age cities, when men work during the day and take rest during the night, with very little things in the 'between'. The city offers few spaces for functions others than working and sleeping.

In matter of urbanization, urbanism, and architecture, the socialism experience doesn't allow unforgettable memories. The authorities at this time have the excuse of working with the spirit of neophytes, a lack of skill, and paucity of money. The concern is to accommodate Algerians whatever can be the price in matters of the urban environment, image of the city, quality of life, and so on.

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<sup>5</sup> In fact, people reproduce the Kabyle village with its narrow and tortuous streets, little windows, and blind walls, but as they use using modern materials and the house has several levels; the results is that the narrowness of the districts is sharper while their ugliness is greater.



**Figure 1. Public district, too low density and no urbanism.**  
Source: Google Earth.



**Figure 2. Private district, too high density and no urbanism.**  
Source: Google Earth.

## Urban disorder in the era of the liberalization

One can ask why a country that has followed a socialist path for a quarter of century decides one day to abandon it and to embrace the hatred capitalist system? The response is very simple and it is useful to ‘hear’ it before explaining the turn that Algeria has negotiated from 1990 to now.

### *The economic crisis*

In the 1950s/1960s, both internal conditions and the external environment play to push the newly independent countries into the socialist sphere. The Algeria that gains its freedom after seven horrible years of war wants to go further beyond where the others countries stop. It aims to realize a ‘two-in-one’ operation, that is, to cut links with capitalism at the same time as it cuts them with colonialism. The secret hope is to build a new society that has little to do with the ancient one. However, there is a small problem: if the end is clear, the means to reach it are less obvious.

As it is fruitless to move randomly, the leaders at the time decide to look outside in order to take lessons from others. Fortunately, there was a great experience of development that was led by USSR. The soviet model relies on heavy industry, central planning, great public enterprises, and planning territory. ‘Miracle’ is the world that may describe the experience of the USSR, which succeeds to build a powerful economy within few years and to give the image of the antithesis of the capitalism system. Overwhelmed, Algeria chooses the path of socialism, planning, public sector, and great firms.

This choice done, Algeria faces another problem; it doesn’t own the necessary capital and it doesn’t master the necessary technology and the necessary skills to plan the entire economy and to make it competitive. Oddly, that it can seem that these problems were solved effortlessly, too effortlessly to be genuine and sustainable solutions. Several mistakes have been made; interpreted here as five beliefs:

- The belief that the kindness of developed countries is sufficiently great to make them sincerely transfer their technology.
- The belief that it is enough to import sophisticated machines to ensure the transfer of technology.
- The belief that Algerian workers are able to receive it, although more than 85% of the population were illiterate in 1962.
- The belief that heavy and expensive investments can be financed by foreign debt at a negligible cost.
- The belief that excess patriotism can easily replace lack of skill and competence.

One can’t dream about more wrong departures. Time will teach us that the will to plan billions of economic variables when the illiteracy is so deeply rooted is nothing but heresy. The generous project of development begins to drift, going farther and farther from the drawn path. All efforts to correct its trajectory worsen it. The country has fallen into the trap that it feared to fall in and that it tried desperately to avoid. From there, the economy moves according to the will of chance. First, the government refuses to admit the failure, seeking feverishly to hide it and to portray it as success. As long as the price of a barrel of oil remains high, it is easy to delude the people; foreign resources afford the government to import the kind of commodities that national industry ought to furnish. When the price of oil plunges in 1986, the weakness of the economy appears as brightly as the midday sun. Used to make up its mistakes by dollar-injections, the government finds itself somewhat naked, not at all knowing how to move. Roughly the problem is the following: the country exports about 10 billion dollars and it imports about 8 billion dollars and reimburses the same amount. The Shakespearean trade-off is between importing and reimbursing. It’s an unbearable situation and people don’t bear it: riots, uprisings, and terrorism begin to multiply, worsening an already-bad situation.

Quickly, Algeria arrives at the foot of the wall. Despite its ill-will, the government ends by sending an S.O.S. to the IMF for emergency help. The Fund responds but accompanies its response by the famous awful conditions of the *Washington Consensus*: liberalization, privatization, devaluation, and openness. The country is summoned to submit its economy to deep reforms that are expected to raise productivity and improve competitiveness. Doing so means nothing less than abandoning socialism and following the rules of the market.

This is the way the country jumps from socialism to the rules of the market. This ‘revolution’ wrecks the life of Algerian people. The image and the structure of the city reflects the shifts.

## *The city of the new era*

Repressed for a long time, Algerians are little prepared to jobs of business (borrowing, investing, managing, competing, innovating, exporting, and so forth). When the liberalization frees them to do business, they find themselves confused and not knowing how to behave. Unconsciously, money-owners go to the easiest option, i.e., a cross between Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) and Building and Public Works (thereafter BPW) that gives SME roles in the BPW sector. This type of firm enjoys several qualities such as it needs little capital, no technology, and few skills for its management, explaining why, nowadays, a third of the 600,000 existing SMEs work in the BPW sector. The liberalization of the land market at the same moment gives birth to a business of ‘developer’. The bulk of developers have little experience, but the scourge of unemployment is so strong that every initiative that creates jobs is welcomed, regardless to its possible drawbacks in the long run. It is needless to say that unleashing so many new businessmen without benchmarks doesn’t go without awful consequences on the *body* of the city. There are three stages in the process of transforming the city:

- Between 1986 and 1993, despite the will of liberalizing, the sector remains so rigid that it suffocates, discouraging investors.
- From 1993 to 2011, the liberalization becomes total; action *in* the city shifts to action *on* the city, then becomes *aggression on* the city (this is the period that we speak about here).
- Some developers go so far in the treachery that the government intervenes by 2011 to protect customers (rule 11/01 of February 2, 2011).

As builders run behind their own interests, playing a game that has no rules, anarchy begins to spread more and more. Building-enterprises flourish, holding up every inch of available ground. Freed from all rule, they give up to the temptation of overacting, multiplying faults of architecture and urbanism and producing districts that include nothing but housing. The final result is Kasbahs-like, not far from hovels. The density soars and the quality of life slows down, but the housing crisis is so sharp that the happiness of obtaining a flat covers up the numerous faults. In addition, districts are conceived as isolated islands that lack basic infrastructure (schools, shops, transport, post office, bank, spaces of leisure, and so on). By the time the local administration awakens to the fact that private builders participate to disfigure the city and to increase its repulsiveness, a lot of evil has been done. In particular, the terrain is exhausted, pulling up the price of housing and rendering it out of the reach of the average citizen.

It is funny to notice that this situation recalls the one that prevailed during the previous period: dormitory-cities. When socialism dominated, housing was considered to be a *social product* (the right to housing is guaranteed by the Constitution and the State tries to honor the rule as it can). As the State retires from business in favor of private actors; apartments shift into *economic products* that obey only the rules of demand and supply. Flats will go to those who have a sufficient purchasing power to buy them. Despite these opposite philosophies, public and private actors arrive to similar results. Doubtless, there is some lesson to take from this junction, but such a subject is beyond this paper’s present concern. What I wish to point out here is that the Brownian movement that takes Algeria gives birth, at least in the city of Béjaia, to an interesting phenomenon that touches the roots and the structure of the city. In effect, an observer can notice that there is a beginning of a transformation that ends by

rejecting the *natives* to the periphery and replacing them by *strangers*. Expressing the sentence otherwise, one can say that the rich of Algeria progressively evict the poor of Béjaia, as we shall see in the following section.

## The eviction effect

Before analyzing the eviction effect and the way that it operates, it is useful to give a quick image of the city being studied and to recall the economic context that prevailed during the two past decades in Algeria.

### *Béjaia at a glance*

Béjaia is a beautiful Mediterranean city of about 200,000 inhabitants (2012). It is one of the most ancient agglomerations of North Africa and it witnesses the main steps of the history of mankind. Phoenician, Roman, Vandal, Byzantine, Arab, Spanish, Turkish, and French civilizations crossed the region, leaving important cultural and architectural marks. Besides, the site gathers together within a thin territory: the National park of Gouraya, one of the most famous in the Mediterranean Sea; one of the most beautiful bays in the world; the second port of Algeria (after Algiers); an international Airport; and one of the longer rivers of the country (the Soummam River). Until 1962, the town is hooked to the Gouraya Mountain. Seen from afar, it looks like a gigantic amphitheater with roughly regular stairs but today this colonial city is flooded by an urban area at least tenfold greater.

In 1965, Algeria chose to follow the path of industrialization. While it waited for this moment, the city expanded into the plain that constitutes its nourishing hinterland, crosses it within few years, and then rushed to climb the opposite side (Sidi Boudherhem Mountain).<sup>6</sup>

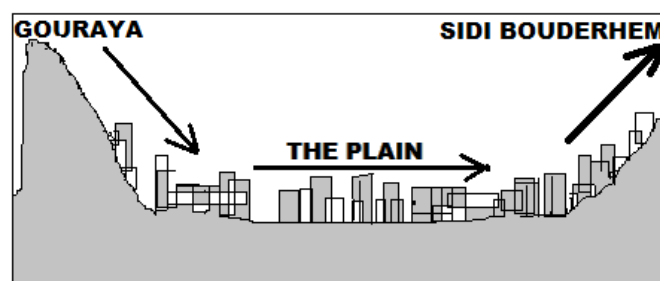


Figure 3. Districts of Béjaia

At the heart of the plain, is settled the Industrial Area that becomes an insurmountable rift between the two halves of the town. The Gouraya side corresponds to the colonial town, while the Sidi Boudherhem side corresponds to the town issued from the private initiative realized mainly during the socialism era. The plain receives mainly the works of the State.

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<sup>6</sup> After having *eaten* the north side of Sidi Boudherhem, the city begins to fall down across its southern side.

## *The economic context*

Since the last quarter of the eighteenth century, economics teaches that letting everyone acting as he wants doesn't lead to disorder and anarchy. There are forces that play out automatically to coordinate movements of million actors (each one of them seeking for its own interests) and put the whole economy in equilibrium. Producers (who try to maximize their profits) and consumers (who try to maximize their utility, given a level of revenue) watch how a price evolves and react consequently. The market is a costless wonderful machine to regulate the whole economy of a country.<sup>7</sup> By this ideology, Algeria deliberately ignores the qualities and advantages of market rules. As soon as it emerges from a long period of colonialism, it falls into the clutches of socialism, half by chance and half by choice.

## *The part of chance*

Chance plays when the French colonialists leave the country in July 1962, abandoning forever their important estates (farms, plants, buildings, etc.). The State was obliged to recover those estates, becoming, despite its will, the owner of the means of production.<sup>8</sup>

## *The party of choice*

The public had the desire, on one hand, make a break from the way of life of France and, on the other hand, to take lessons from the experience of the USSR that begins from nearly nothing in 1917 and succeeds to snatch half of Europe (and half of the world) from the almighty United States.

Having chosen socialism, Algeria launches into a war against the market rules. Within a few years, It succeeds in blinding the market; making the variable *price* totally meaningless for economic agents.<sup>9</sup> A low price doesn't mean forcefully low production cost, while a high price doesn't mean high cost. Prices are fixed arbitrarily, without reference to their cost. Reacting logically, Algerians exaggerate in consuming products that were formerly cheap but are really expensive. It is exactly what happens to the building land.

With an area of 2.3 million square kilometers, Algeria is one of the vastest countries in the world. However, this wide surface is *eaten* by the desert of Sahara (90%) and the mountains (80% of the remaining 10%). Afflicted with such a particular relief, the country greatly suffers from a rarity of valuable terrain (for agriculture or for urbanization). The desert moves in inexorably on one hand while demand coming from agriculture, industrialization, urbanization, and tourism increases, in the other hand. Wishing to make order in the sector, the State gives itself the total monopoly on the land, beginning from 1976, but despite the best of intentions, this monopoly induces unbelievable wasting of useful lands. As soon as the land becomes valueless and is offered in supposedly unlimited quantities, it becomes likely the

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<sup>7</sup> This naïve approach of economics has been criticized and challenged for a long time, but still contains a fund of truth.

<sup>8</sup> It is admitted that the main feature of a socialist country is the fact that the State owns the means of production, i.e., the set of products that constitutes what we call *capital*.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, a product that is sold for 10 dinars may cost 80 dinars to make, or may cost only 4 dinars. Prices are fixed at levels that have no relation to their production costs. For instance, sugar is sold at 2 dinars, while it is imported at about 40 dinars. With liberalization and openness, people were astonished to learn this.

smallest element constituting the cost of building. The lack of skill, competence, and experience of the enterprises are added to the weak capabilities of the local decision-makers to obtain the conditions to abuse the land use, i.e., consuming more than is necessary for each project. Financial and technical problems are systematically solved by an extra-consumption of land. For instance, in order to avoid hard technical studies or using expensive machines (such as high cranes) a building of ten levels on a plot of 500 m<sup>2</sup>, will be divided into 5 or 6 buildings of 1 or 2 levels, that are easier to build. The price of the easiness is the consumption of 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> (Kheladi *et al.*, 2008). This kind of urban planning wastes tremendous areas.

When it works, the State is a bad manager, but when it retires from business, things aren't better. The government falls into the error of believing that it is enough that the State retires from the ground to obtain a market economy. In fact, what happens is that the retreat of the State opens the door to so-called private operators whom are handicapped by their thin experience of business and the absence of benchmarks that may prevent them from stupidities.<sup>10</sup> These reminders done, the worthy question is: Why does the phenomenon of eviction appear in Béjaia rather than elsewhere?

### *Why Béjaia?*

Truly the phenomenon discussed here is universal, but a number of factors work to give it an uncommon size in the case of Béjaia. The city has about 200,000 inhabitants whom are lucky to live 'where others go on holidays' as the advertising claims. Several features made it *special* and rank it among the more attractive cities in the country.

### *A long, rich, and tumultuous history*

Béjaia is 2500 years old and it was known across history under many names: Gour, Saldos, Saldae, Naciria, Bugia, Bougie, Béjaia, and Bgayet, as it is called nowadays by its inhabitants. In the Aiguades cove, Phoenicians sailors met at regular periods with native tribes to exchange some commodities. Since this distant time, the city has benefitted from contributions of the major civilizations that exist around the Mediterranean Sea (Romans, Byzantines, Vandals, Muslims, Spanish, Turkmen, and French).<sup>11</sup> Once, the city was a shining capital from where the Arab knowledge (mathematics) was transmitted to Europe during the thirteenth century.

### *A beautiful landscape*

Béjaia is endowed with a fabulous natural site. The landscape is so beautiful that everyone who sees it for the first time is seized and bewitched. Sun, Sky, Sea, Mountains, Forests, and

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<sup>10</sup> The truth is that, there is no obstacle that some money can't lift, in a country where the functionaries are poorly remunerated and incompetent. In numerous cases, local decision-makers are the true owners of enterprises, even if they hide behind a wife, a son, or a brother. Today, bribery is so deeply rooted that no enterprise bothers about competitiveness; it is so much easier to solve problems with bribes. Besides, it seems that rules exist only to permit to certain decision-makers to receive bribes because the sole thing developers do is to break them.

<sup>11</sup> In 1942, the Allied troops landed in Béjaia Bay and the region has today as one of the most important Allies War Cemetery of the Second World War.

River are eternal partners of the city, which uses them as assets of attractiveness. Until now, Algeria has not worried about tourism but it is doubtless that, when it has interest in this, Béjaia will be its driving force.

### *Economic infrastructures*

Béjaia is one of the gates of Algeria to the Rest of the World. The port is among the most important of the country; it receives not only all kind of commodities but also travellers; and it is also the first platform oil export that is built in the country (in 1959). The Soummam Airport links the entire region to Europe, more essentially, to France.

### *An open and tolerant people*

As they were in close contact with peoples all around the Mediterranean Sea for centuries, the *Béjaouis* have developed a deep spirit of tolerance and acceptance of others, regardless of their color, their religion, their language, or their fortune. It's a rare quality that deserves to be pointed out. So, thus well-endowed, Béjaia is a privileged destination for great number of wealthy Algerians. From Algiers, Sétif, Tizi Ouzou, Msila, Constantine, and other places, they arrive with billions of dinars to buy secondary residences without bargaining. To possess a house in Béjaia offers several advantages, even if it is occupied only during short periods in the year:

- It is a good investment for someone who seeks a reliable placement. There is an important demand for such housing, from stars of football, senior executives of the big firms, and emigrates who want to reside temporarily in Béjaia and have the means to afford themselves a high-level flat.
- For a family of 4 persons, going to a comfortable hotel is a very expensive operation. Within 10 years, one can have spent the value of a flat. Even those who spend only two months a year in Béjaia find it more interesting to possess their own home. When possessing it, one can lend it to friends or rent it during certain periods.
- The dream of Algerians is to spend 15 days of holidays in Béjaia, which means that businessmen use flats as a tool of corruption. It suffices to lend an apartment for 15 days for the person targeted and he will eat in your hand. The most rotten businessmen may likewise practice buying and selling houses as a process of laundering money that is less or more regularly gained.

One can ask: where is the problem? A dynamic housing market is a sign of economic good health, isn't it? It is well known that when building goes well, everything goes well. In fact, things are less satisfying that they seem; when getting closer, the situation is far from enjoyable. Drawbacks of the phenomenon tend to overtake its advantages, due to several factors. The first is the nature of the relief: Kabylia is so mountainous that it offers little



urbanizing terrain.<sup>12</sup> This ungrateful relief explains the expensiveness of land and housing, which puts them far above the great bulk of the people. Knowing that terrain is at the center of a sharp conflict between urbanization, industrialization, agriculture, tourism, infrastructure, and so on; it results that the price of the field soars beyond the bearable threshold.<sup>13</sup> In the perimeter of the city, the price per square meter can reach eightfold or tenfold the Minimum Guaranteed Salary.

Buying a plot so expensively, developers can't afford themselves to deal with the poor or the middle class.<sup>14</sup> Their target is the high-revenue owners who demand housing of great standing.<sup>15</sup> Unlikely, such customers aren't running the streets in Béjaia. Also builders must address a larger market that encompasses the whole country. Without being aware of it, the process of eviction begins to occur.

### *How can it be?*

Elsewhere in the world, riches flee the crowded city center, preferring the comfort of large suburbs where they enjoy a high quality of life, far from pollutions. In Algeria, particularly in medium-sized towns such as Béjaia, it remains more advantageous to live in the core of the city which is better endowed with basic commodities (electricity, gas, telephone, water, sewers, transport, etc.) and many other services (shopping, banking, sports and leisure, and so on). These advantages become more and more diluted as one moves away from the center, until they nearly disappear. People are convinced that town is more lucrative than country, explaining that they enjoy the urban life, which also explains the force of the rural exodus since independence. Emigrants themselves, strongly tied to the homeland, build a house, not in their village of birth but in the nearest most important town. The land, although not much is available, incurs a so much demand that the price of the square meter jumps up, becoming a quasi-natural monopoly of the wealthier.

The setback of the State unleashes developers who rush as vultures to monopolize the free pockets of ground that remain here and there inside the city. Their voracity and their efficiency are so sharp that they exhausted all the potential building ground within few years. Nowadays, in many cases, major public infrastructure (hospital, post office, bus station, schools, and so forth) are purely and simply cancelled due to the non-availability of terrain. The local administration being structurally in shortage of financial means, can't afford to buy such expensive plots. As a consequence, housing (that responds to the needs of the wealthy Algerians) moves ahead while social infrastructure (that responds to the needs of the natives) is set back.

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<sup>12</sup> The second factor is doubtless the fact that in Kabylia, the land is majority owned by the private sector. Since the liberalization, the State itself has no choice but to buy the field for its projects.

<sup>13</sup> It is meaningless to give prices in absolute value (i.e. in dinars); relative values are more significant.

<sup>14</sup> In Algeria, the statistics that announce bad news are kept secret, as it is the case with illiteracy, unemployment, poorness, etc. About this last scourge, the Ministry of Solidarity situates the share of poor at 13 million (more than 1/3 of the population) while the CIA factbook situates it at 23 million (close to 2/3 of the population) who live under this level. To estimate the weight of poorness at its just value, it is enough to say the government has a Ministry of Solidarity which tries to ease the burden by distributing, from time to time, money, baskets of food, schoolbags, buses, and so on.

<sup>15</sup> High quality housing means 'high quality in comparison with the quality of the usual offer': better design, better finishing, lift, parking, water running 24/24, cleanup... These kinds of advantages are common elsewhere but don't exist in Algerian dormitory cities.

As free spaces become rare in the inner perimeter, builders design another strategy that consists of buying old houses, warehouses, and factories in the heart of the city and then demolishing them to obtain valuable plots. Those pockets of land offer precious advantages. They are already connected to the main networks (water, sewers, electricity, gas, etc. sparing money and time (to run between offices to obtain different permits).<sup>16</sup> A small house (say 150 m<sup>2</sup>) with a small garden (say 150 m<sup>2</sup>) are replaced by a building of 12 levels that contains 25 or 30 flats that will be sold hundredfold its initial price.

At first, the process touches the oldest houses but the thirst of building is so intense that it widens to include houses that are no older than a quarter of century. Poor people who own old houses are submitted to strong pressure from developers to sell their estate. Squeezed, they end, generally, by giving up. The ‘natives’ are, progressively, replaced by heterogeneous people who gather in Béjaia, coming from all around the national territory, even from overseas. The phenomenon is not without consequences.

### What’s the cost?

In general, dynamic cities attract people whom settle next to the ‘natives’. It’s the principle of concentration that is well known in the urban economy. What happens in Béjaia goes further beyond this logic. The eviction effect is so powerful that it is assimilated into a feeling of aggression by the ‘natives’. The feeling of aggression isn’t entirely imaginary because the phenomenon is accompanied by problems that undermine the cultural bedrock of the city.

#### *The State is beaten by the private operators*

Transition is an exceptional situation between two sustainable states of things. It’s a sort of no-man’s land where the ancient state is no more, while the new one is not yet reached. It ought to be as short as possible in order to avoid moving for long time in exceptional circumstances. In Algeria, the so-called ‘transition’ (between the socialist regime and the market economy) has run for more than 20 years. The country evolves in conditions of *no-rights* where all deviances are possible. This abnormal situation favors all those who like to move in the shadow and to practice irregular business. They seize this long period of uncertainty and use it in order to maximize their gains. Everyone thinks “All, right now!” putting aside the worrying about tomorrow, feeling himself free to do all what he wants, especially in the matter of building.

Everyone is seeking strict short-run interests; developers work to offer what the market asks for, that is, housing and nothing more. Béjaia expands mainly by increasing its housing park, creating an imbalance between houses and the infrastructure and amenities that must accompany them. There are several factors that widen the gap and deepen the imbalance between housing and infrastructure. First, private builders do not typically care about urban planning nor rules of urbanism. They build flats, and when they sell them, they go to open a new construction site in the neighborhood. If someone (the State for instance) thinks that social infrastructure is needed, this is the State’s business. Second, due to several constraints,

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<sup>16</sup> It may take several months, even years, to achieve all the connections of a new building. The lack or the lateness of sewers, for instance, constitutes a bottleneck that makes accommodations non-usable.

the local administration moves so slowly that it never catches up with the widening activities of builders. Finally, the cost of the housing is so high that it discourages projects that are not economically profitable. Nevertheless, the State cannot afford to endlessly flee its responsibilities of satisfying certain social needs (including social housing). Having no resources to compete against developers, it looks for fields that are within the State's estate and fills it with public projects. Beyond the fact that such areas aren't always localized where infrastructure is needed, one can notice that the administration overacts by gathering on the single plot all infrastructure needed. One who studies the map of Béjaia will be surprised to find areas of 100 hectares or more that receive only education/formation infrastructure (Figure 4). During the spare-times (weekends, holidays), these gigantic districts become dead zones and during the night they appear as islands of darkness. It's a new urbanism approach for the city, where amenities are located according to the availability of the field rather than to the needs expressed. It leads to an unbalanced city where users are tied between two kinds of mono-functional districts: housing areas, which are empty by day and full by night, and infrastructure/amenities areas, which are full by day and empty by night.

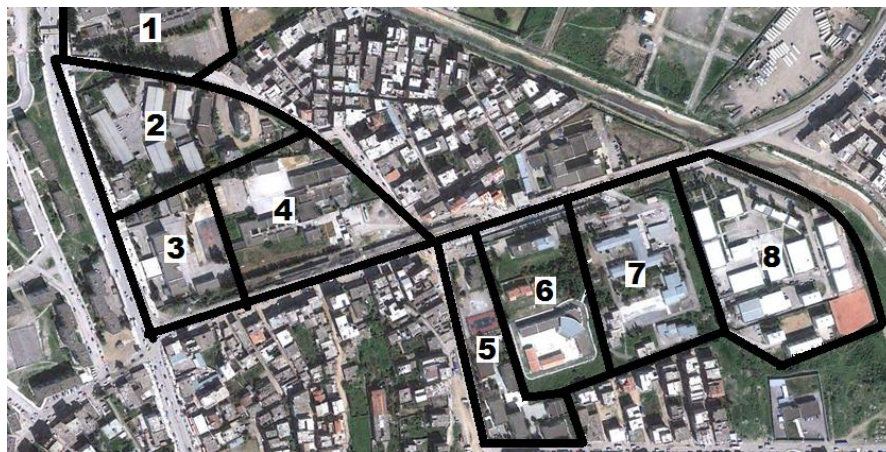


Figure 4. Gigantic area devoted to education equipments. Source: Google Earth.

### *The city: At the roots of the under-development*

The race of developers to monopolize the land in the urban area produces a great bulk of awful consequences:

- Native inhabitants feel themselves more and more strangers in their city, while those who come from outside remain strangers. It's an uncomfortable situation that creates the feeling that the city doesn't belong to anybody, which explains why all people love Béjaia but

strangely nobody works to make it better. Besides, seeing thousands of flats closed while suffering from the housing crisis<sup>17</sup>, gives the inhabitants a feeling of injustice.<sup>18</sup>

- Developers haven't the same duties toward the people than the State. They don't work to satisfy objective needs but to satisfy solvent needs and there is nestled the problem. Private actors work for the market, which means people that the demand is based on sufficient purchasing power. A sort of anti-selection phenomenon begins to play out, directing the rich to private developers and letting the poor for the State. As the later doesn't aim to realize benefits, each new project must be financed with new capital. It's a race that it is impossible to win considering the enormosity of the needs due to a high rate of demographic growth, the lack of building materials, unavailability of terrain and finances, and so on. The image of the State is linked to the idea of 'failure' while the image of the private actor is linked to 'success'.
- As builders move ahead, the State moves back, abandoning the ground. Not only does it turn out that the State is unable to protect and preserve the few green spaces that remain here and there from voracious developers but it becomes a pawn in their strategy (or the absence of strategy) too. Hunted from the city-center, the local dismemberments of the State react by two forms of behavior. First, they spread the idea that the ground is exhausted in the perimeter of Béjaia so it can no longer receive great projects financed by the government (hospitals, housings, colleges, stadiums, etc.) up from now. Second, the handful of structures that the State must build despite the sharpness of the problem faced, will be localized according to the availability of the field. Too little interest is paid to the difficulties that issue from ill-location. The only duty of authorities seems fully filled once something is built.
- As none of principles of urban planning are applied, the distance between the most common destinations of average individuals increases, widening the preferential spaces area, as we call it, to abnormal value, say, to more than a 2 km radius (Figure 5). The long distances that an individual must cover to satisfy the least need 'eats' his energy. Popular wisdom says that the Algerian worker spends his forces in the streets and takes rest at work. In effect, his productivity is one of the lowest in the world.
- The lack of inconsistency of the city plunges it into a Cornelian conflict. The distance calls for a system of urban transport while the narrowness and the irregularity of the streets makes it difficult. Local authorities solve the problem by concentrating 80% of the 350 buses that constitute the urban transport system along Liberty Street, the main avenue that is endlessly over-crowded, incurring all forms of pollution. Meanwhile, the populous districts of Tizi, Dar Djebel, Takléat, Smina, Ihaddaden Oufella, Ihaddaden Ouada, Taassast, and others suffer from being under-serviced, due to their relief and their ill-designed urbanism (Figure 6).

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<sup>17</sup> The census of 2008 says that there are about 6000 closed flats while other data notes that there are more than 6000 demands for flats that have waited desperately for years to be satisfied.

<sup>18</sup> During the Socialism era, *housing* was a right, registered in the Constitution. The socialism is no more but people continue to claim this right. Populist governments continue to build a million flats that are distributed according to given criteria. In counterpart, beneficiaries pay a symbolic rent.

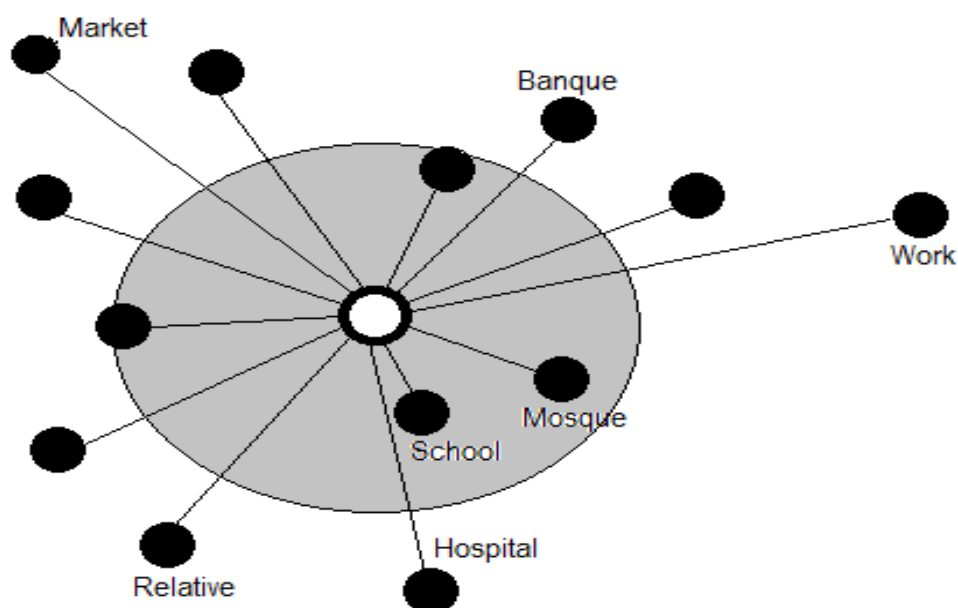


Figure 5. The preferential spaces area

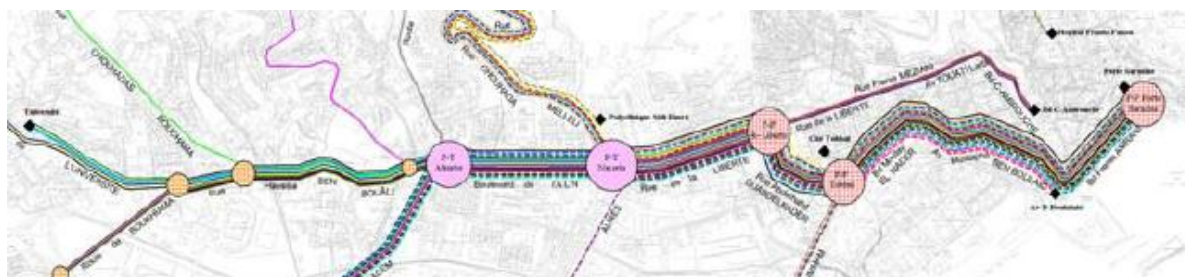


Figure 6. The network of urban transport, Liberty Street. Source: Kheladi et al., 2003.

### *The Insiders-Outsiders conflict*

Attached for a long time to the land and to agricultural work, Algerian people develop particular links towards their roots and their earth. By region, this feeling is more or less shared but it is doubtless that the Algerian is strongly tied to his place of birth. As far as he goes, he is never at home, out of his space of birth.<sup>19</sup> People who buy or build houses in Béjaïa don't escape this basic logic; the body is in Béjaïa but the head is *at home*, elsewhere. No force can dig up from their mind the idea that one day or another they will return to their *home sweet home*. Even if they live 20 years in Béjaïa, they always feel themselves as special guests who have no business about the problems of the city. Unbalances in the structure of the town (the lack of basic services, the bad governing, etc.) are out of their sphere of interest,

<sup>19</sup> This explains, in part, why Algerian emigrants have difficulties integrating into countries of reception (France and elsewhere).

and they don't care about it. The city includes more and more people who are little preoccupied by its fate.

## Conclusion

In 2012 Algeria celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of its independence. This half-century can be divided into two equal parts devoted respectively to socialism and to the economic market. Transition seems more difficult than it must be, according to the experience of Eastern countries, for example. The State is pushed to abandon its role of leader of the whole economy, freeing without caution the private initiative. The private actor, lacking experience, acts and reacts according to short-run interests, producing consequences that are often not expected, notably in matter of urbanism and urbanization, the subject that worries us here.

The city of Béjaia owns some qualities that put it at the core of an odd phenomenon: liberalization leads to driving poor natives from the city, replacing them by people of elsewhere. It's a conflict that opposes poor of Béjaia to the rich of Algeria. In fact, this form of urban evolution is common around the world; what is less common is that in Béjaia it works to impoverish and to unbalance the city, rather than to make it wealthier. This happens because:

- The country jumps from a situation where the State was over-mighty to a situation where it is over-absent, abandoning the ground to private actors.
- Private actors, lacking business experience, rush to invest in the activity that they master for it demands neither capital nor technology, i.e., Building and Public Works.
- Béjaia, being particularly attractive for such business, is submitted to unbearable pressure on land, the only commodity that the city can't increase. A Homeric struggle begins between the native poor citizens and the rich builders to conquest the field. As investors win, *foreigners* begin to pour into the town.

Arriving at a certain threshold, the insiders feel themselves *strangers* in their own town, while the foreigners are still convinced that they are strangers in this town. The city doesn't belong to anyone; that allows everyone to act freely, threatening to destabilize the coherence and the harmony of the city then, consequently, to make it repulsive in the long run.

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### **Texts of Law**

Loi n° 02-08 du 8 mai 2002 relative aux conditions de création des villes nouvelles et de leur aménagement in Journal officiel de la république algérienne n°15, du 12 mars 2006.

L'ordonnance n° 01-03 du 20/08/2001 relative au régime de l'investissement in Journal officiel de la république algérienne n°47, correspondant au 22 août 2001.

Le règlement n° 05-03 du 6 juin 2005 relatif aux investissements étrangers de la Banque d'Algérie in Journal officiel de la république algérienne n°53, correspondant au 31 juillet 2005.

Le décret législatif n° 93-12 du 5 octobre 1993 relatif à la promotion de l'investissement.

L'ordonnance n° 03-04 du 19 juillet 2003 relative aux règles générales applicables aux opérations d'importation et d'exportation de marchandises.

Loi n° 91-21 du 4 décembre 1991 sur les hydrocarbures.

Loi n° 90-29 du 01/12/90 relative à l'aménagement et l'urbanisme.

Décret exécutif n° 98-254 du 17 août 1998 relatif à la formation doctorale, à la post-graduation spécialisée et à l'habilitation universitaire.

Loi n° 90-08 du 7 avril 1990 relative à la commune.



## **Urban Environmental Justices and Greening the City**

## Towards New Directions in Urban Environmental Justice: Re-building Place and Nurturing Community

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**Abstract:** Traditionally, environmental justice (EJ) studies have focused on the disproportionate burden suffered by marginalized populations in regards to contamination or resource extraction. To date little is known about how underlying goals shape community organization *for* long term environmental quality in different cities around the world, and how concerns for health play out in projects such as park creation or community gardens. Through an analysis of neighborhood-based mobilization in Boston, Barcelona, and Havana, I integrate existing knowledge on urban place attachment and sense of community into the EJ scholarship in order to understand the role of place experience and attachment in activists' work. This study reveal common patterns of activism aimed at rebuilding community, addressing trauma, and remaking place, thereby addressing physical and psychological dimensions of environmental health.

**Keywords:** environmental justice, place attachment, trauma, mental health, revitalization

### Introduction

Life in historically distressed neighborhoods is often closely coupled with degraded infrastructure, substandard services, unhealthy housing structures, and severe environmental hazards. In these neighborhoods, low-income and minority residents generally receive fewer environmental amenities and services such as street cleaning or open space maintenance, while wealthier and white communities tend to benefit from environmental privileges – parks, coasts, forests – often in a racially exclusive way (Landry and Chakraborty, 2009; Pellow, 2009).

However, today activists within historically marginalized communities in a variety of cities around the world are organizing against long-term abandonment and neighborhood degradation. Examples range from the growth of urban farms and community gardens in Detroit or Los Angeles, the creation and enhancement of green spaces in Villa Maria del Triunfo, Lima, or community initiatives for improved waste collection and composting in Mumbai. The organization of distressed neighborhoods towards greater livability suggests that caring for one's place and improving one's community is not a function of wealth,

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political systems, or level of development. Nor does it seem to be a function of imitating trends or following funding sources, since community fights can be traced back to the late 1980s when global movements for urban sustainability were still quite new.

Traditionally, environmental justice (EJ) researchers have centered their attention on “brown” cases of injustice and on the fights of residents against disproportionate exposure to environmental toxins and other health risks (Bullard, 2005; Carruthers, 2008; Mitchell and Dorling, 2003; Varga *et al.*, 2002). However, EJ scholarship as related to struggles for “green” environmental justice and greater livability is still nascent, despite growing research about the United States (Agyeman *et al.*, 2003; Checker, 2011; Gottlieb, 2009; Gould and Lewis, 2009; Pellow and Brulle, 2005). Indeed, empirical and comparative research examining environmental revitalization activism in marginalized neighborhoods is much needed. How do underlying demands and goals shape community organization across a variety of cities? How do concerns for health play out in projects for greater urban livability? Through an analysis of neighborhood mobilization in Boston, Barcelona, and Havana, I show that residents and their supporters use their environmental initiatives as tools to rebuild a broken community, re-make place for residents, and address physical and psychological dimensions of environmental health.

## Theoretical groundings

### *Traditional perspectives on environmental inequalities*

Minorities and low-income populations have historically been victims of greater environmental harm and received less environmental protection than white and well-off communities (Bryant and Mohai, 1992; Bullard, 1990; Downey and Hawkins, 2008; Mitchell and Dorling, 2003; Pellow, 2000; Schlosberg, 2007; Varga *et al.*, 2002). In the United States, for instance, Locally Unwanted Land Uses such as incinerators, landfills, or refineries have traditionally been sited in poor black or Latino neighborhoods rather than in affluent suburbs (Bullard, 1990; Corburn, 2005). Deprived urban neighborhoods also tend to get the poorest environmental services, such as street cleaning, park management, and waste collection while wealthier and white communities enjoy environmental privileges – access to parks, coasts, etc – often in a racially exclusive way (Heynen *et al.*, 2006; Pellow, 2009).

In a similar way, in the global South, the lands of poor and minority populations have been disproportionately impacted by environmental contamination and intensive resource extraction. Over the past decades, millions of hectares in Latin America, Asia, and Africa have been affected by mining, oil and timber extraction, erosion from widespread farming, and dams (Carruthers, 2008; Hilson, 2002; Martínez Alier, 2002). Beyond the extraction of raw materials or contamination of natural resources, Northern nations and corporations also export toxic waste and computer and electronic products to poorer countries (Martínez Alier, 2002; Pellow, 2007).

The causes of environmental injustices are complex and interlocked. Environmental injustices originate in the lack of recognition of identity and difference between groups and individuals, and the lack of attention to the social context in which unjust distribution takes place (Schlosberg, 2007). They reflect broader societal problems such as the unequal distribution of power at the intersection of environmental quality and social hierarchies, by which people and agencies deny rights and identities to specific groups (Pellow, 2000; Schlosberg, 2007). Over time, multiple structures of domination in society create and reproduce environmental injustices and discriminatory practices (Pellow, 2000; Pellow and

Brulle, 2005). At the global level, inequalities in regards to toxic exposure or resource extraction require the use of a life-cycle approach to consumption, production, and hazards, with the economy of poorer countries and communities being rooted in what is known as the “treadmill of production”<sup>2</sup> (Pellow, 2000; Schnaiberg *et al.*, 2002).

The experiences of historically distressed communities indicate a clear and pervasive relation between environmental inequalities and health (Corburn, 2005). Air and water contamination is directly related to public health problems such as respiratory diseases, infectious diseases, or cancers (Brulle and Pellow, 2006). Today, low-income populations and communities of color are also less likely to live close to parks, playgrounds, fitness clubs, community centers and other physical activity facilities (Lovasi *et al.*, 2009), with subsequent disparities in health-related behaviors and obesity. Similar relationships exist between inequitable distribution of grocery stores and fresh food options by SES and race and ethnicity. A larger numbers of supermarkets, fewer numbers of fast foods, greater number of fruit and vegetable markets are located in wealthier neighborhoods (Moore and Diez Roux, 2006). Consequently, poor and minority communities do not have equal access to the variety of healthy food choices available to nonminority and richer neighborhoods: they are “food deserts” (Guy *et al.*, 2004).

### *New directions in environmental justice scholarship*

Residents of marginalized communities do not remain passive and silent vis-à-vis environmental inequalities, and numerous struggles have been taking place in the global North and South. From the start, environmental justice activists have portrayed themselves in opposition to the conventional environmental movement, at least in the United States, arguing that environmental NGOs reify the environment as pristine and wild ecosystems while putting people second or raising concern about contamination outside of its broader socio-economic and cultural framework (Bullard, 1990; Dobson, 1998; Schlosberg, 2007; Shutkin, 2000). In response, EJ organizations redefined “environment” as the place where people live, work, learn and play, and have defended the right of every person of all races, incomes, and culture to a decent and safe quality of life (Gauna, 2008).

In recent years, the environmental justice agenda has expanded its focus and breadth. It now encompasses the right to well-connected, affordable, and clean transit systems in cities (Agyeman and Evans, 2003; Loh and Sugerman-Brozán, 2002) and the right to healthy and affordable food and community food security (Gottlieb, 2005; Gottlieb, 2009). EJ organizations have also started advocating for green, affordable healthy housing along with recycling practices and spaces for gardens inside the housing complexes (Loh and Eng, 2010) or for the provision of economic opportunities for disenfranchised communities around the green economy (Fitzgerald, 2010). Environmentalism here associates social equity and wealth creation dimensions to the concept of sustainability (Agyeman and Evans, 2003).

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<sup>2</sup> The Treadmill of Production was a model initially developed by Alan Schnaiberg. According to Schnaiberg, progress in technology drives the expansion of production and consumption in a synergetic way. This process triggers a cycle of production which always asks for more production since the state, labor, and capital are dependent on continued economic growth to achieve their own goals (i.e., job creation).

In the global South, likewise, EJ activists advocate for greater voice in matters of social justice, access to land, labor rights, indigenous peoples' rights, wealth redistribution, and opportunities for engaged participation in land use decisions (Carruthers, 2008; Martínez Alier, 2002; Newell, 2005). Local groups and their supporters organize against the private appropriation and extraction of communal livelihoods and resources such as land and water (Martínez Alier, 2002; Pellow, 2007; Shiva and Bedi, 2002). In developing cities, the search for greater environmental quality and access to environmental goods for poor and minority residents has rarely been called or analyzed as environmental justice. Scholars refer to the concept of “urban livability”, putting an emphasis both on cities providing decent livelihoods for ordinary residents and becoming ecologically sustainable (Evans, 2002), but leaving little room for a thorough analysis of agency among distressed communities.

Often times, urban environmental justice demands resonate with broader and more general calls formulated by activists. First, many groups organizing within their neighborhood express claims closely connected to the “right to the city” (Connolly and Steil, 2009). Traditionally, the “right to the city” refers to citizens participating in the daily making of the urban fabric by living in the city, using it, and meeting specific responsibilities, which entitle them to have say in decisions influencing social and spatial relations (Lefebvre *et al.*, 1996; Mitchell, 2003). Recent calls for a right to the city encompass both economic and environmental justice, as residents fight the privatization of community space and demand a right to land (Connolly and Steil, 2009).

Spatial justice is another framework that can provide an overarching explanation and rallying point for EJ struggles (Soja, 2009). Defined as the equal allocation of socially valued resources in space and as the equal opportunities to make use of these resources over time (Marcuse, 2009; Soja, 2009), political theorists and geographers consider spatial justice as the broader dimension from which other demands for equity, including environmental justice, can and should be derived. It is not clear however whether – on the ground – the claims of urban marginalized communities for greater livability are exclusively inscribed within a spatial justice or a right to the city framework.

Furthermore, to date, the traditional EJ literature contains two core limitations: First, until recently and despite growing research about the United States (Agyeman *et al.*, 2003; Checker, 2011; Gottlieb, 2005; Gottlieb, 2009; Gould and Lewis, 2009; Pellow and Brulle, 2005), most academic work examining environmental inequalities has focused on “brown” struggles and analyzed the impact of core environmental threats and hazards to the health and livelihoods of marginalized communities. Second, most EJ scholars tend to have a limited view on what constitutes “the environment” of places and people and pre-define what is environmental justice literature.<sup>3</sup> In this paper, I want to question traditional understandings and boundaries of environmental justice scholarship. More generally, I challenge what the environment represents in the life of low-income and minority neighborhoods and concentrate my attention on proactive and holistic environmental revitalization rather than on reactive conflicts. I also pay close attention to the complex and interlocked dimensions of health in urban environmental revitalization.

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<sup>3</sup> The vision for the recently created *Environmental Justice Journal* confirms these trends and priorities: “The Journal explores the adverse and disparate environmental burden impacting marginalized populations and communities all over the world.”

## Methods

This paper is based on a comparative analysis of three emblematic minority and low-income neighborhoods in which local activists have organized around improved environmental quality and livability: Casc Antic (Barcelona), Dudley (Boston), Cayo Hueso (Havana). My inductive approach to research and preliminary fieldwork had revealed common patterns and experiences of environmental revitalization in marginalized neighborhoods across cities which, at first glance, do not share many attributes: Boston, Barcelona, and Havana. In my study, I wanted to examine the engagement of activists who have all successfully managed to assert their claims and achieve comparable improvement in neighborhood environmental and health conditions through concrete projects: parks, playgrounds, sports facilities, community gardens, farms, fresh markets and healthy food providers, waste management, and green housing. In each city, I chose centrally located neighborhoods to keep constant the geographic location within the city, physical proximity to elites and decision-makers, general infrastructure, and historic relevance.

On the other hand, I purposely maximized the diversity of political systems, contexts of urbanization, and histories of marginalization to test how these conditions affect (or not) the narratives, claims and struggles of distressed neighborhoods and the role of place in community organization. Boston represents the case of a well-rooted democracy with long roots of civic engagement and protection of liberties; Barcelona a case of a younger democracy re-established after forty years of dictatorship in 1977; and Havana an example of an autocratic regime with weak opportunities for citizens' engagement into decision-making. Boston is a developed and established city with a history of racial violence; Barcelona has been a dynamic and quite rich city, but was "up for grabs" upon the return of democracy – with (re)development projects taking root all over the city together with active contestation movements; and Havana is in a developing country immersed in a serious socio-economic crisis – the Special Period – since 1989. The baseline conditions and transformation of each neighborhood are briefly summarized in Table 1.

During my fieldwork, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 45 participants in Barcelona, 49 participants in Havana, and 50 participants in Boston. I interviewed members of community-based organizations and local NGOs working on improving local environmental conditions. I also organized interviews with active residents and leaders in each neighborhood. Last, I conducted interviews with NGOs and funders whose support to Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso seemed to have been decisive in the success of environmental and health projects. I used snowball sampling to select interviewees and recorded them upon their permission. In parallel, I engaged in observation of events, as well as participant observation of projects focused on environmental and health quality to better understand how projects developed, the dynamics between participants, and challenges encountered for their realization. Last, I collected data from secondary sources.

**Table 1. Summary characteristics of Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso**

Dudley	Case Antie	Cayo Hueso
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority of low-income African-American, Cape Verdean, and Latino residents</li> <li>• 1,300 vacant lots by the mid-80s, the majority of them combined and abandoned by the City of Boston and affluent property owners</li> <li>• Illegal trash transfer stations, lead contamination and arson on local land</li> <li>• Lack of parks and recreational facilities</li> <li>• Food desert, 50% of children below poverty line, and high crime rate</li> <li>• Since 1984, community-led land clean-up, management and (re)devepoled of parcels into urban farms, gardens, community gyms, and healthy food businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31% of residents as foreigners, and majority of them in poverty</li> <li>• Legacy of dictatorship: Crumbling housing, poor waste management, and abandoned and unsafe public spaces</li> <li>• 1980's: Unequal developments with the PERIS urban plans with acute social and environmental impacts</li> <li>• Urban conflicts since the end of 1990s (i.e. Forat de La Vergonya), occupation and auto-reconstruction of abandoned park</li> <li>• 2000s: Community-based environmental revitalization projects and advocacy for improvement in socio-environmental conditions directed at the City of Barcelona</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extremely dense and predominantly Afro-Cuban neighborhood in Centro Habana</li> <li>• By the 1989: Degradation of buildings and sanitation and further decay during the Special Period crisis</li> <li>• More than 50% of residents without daily access to potable water</li> <li>• Few green areas and safe public spaces</li> <li>• 1990s-2000s: Workshops for the Comprehensive Transformation of the Neighborhood (TIRB) promoted by the GDIC planning agency as autonomous community-based revitalization projects + independent resident projects around public space and recreational and sports facilities</li> </ul>

## An activist-based vision for holistic revitalization and place reconstruction

### *A holistic vision for community rebuilding and development*

The accounts of activists in Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso reveal a holistic vision for neighborhood revitalization. Activists have moved from initial clean up to safe environmental practices on gardens and fresh food provision, youth access to recreational and sports facilities, enhancement of public and green space, and last a healthy habitat. As I show below, projects strengthen and feed on each other, as they all contribute to improving neighborhood environmental and health conditions and to community rebuilding and development.

In an initial stage, residents and their supporters decided to engage in land cleanup and protection. Activists underline the importance of fighting trash dumping first – and the health consequences of exposure to contaminants – before turning to other environmental endeavors. In Dudley, at the end of the 1980s residents had to confront illegal trash transfers and arson and the ensuing human and health emergency. Addressing waste problems was a multi-tier process – from putting an end to dumping, asking the city to track dumping activity, ensuring the legality of waste management businesses, and today working with business owners to create waste management practices compatible with a safe urban environment. Activists also dedicated much energy to land cleanup, as ways to achieve quick and early victories and create a broader civic movement for long-term livability. Concrete, visible, and esthetically-

pleasing changes were meant to encourage other residents to take part in creating a new neighborhood environment.

From the start, land cleanup was strongly connected to the development of community gardens, urban farms, and the enhancement of healthy and affordable food options. In Cayo Hueso, the creation of permaculture projects and of an urban farm combined land regeneration with addressing food shortages, especially in a period of economic crisis. In Barcelona, initiatives such as Mescladis and the Xarxa de Consum Solidari embrace a holistic vision for neighborhood revival: They contribute to the consumption of more environmentally sustainable and socially just local food together with the provision of training and job opportunities for low-income and migrant residents. In Dudley, access to fresh and affordable food is at the center of community preoccupations. Environmental organizations such as the Boston Natural Areas Network or the Food Project have been providing raised beds together with technical advice to 15 community gardens. Today, the monetary benefits of community gardens amount to around \$400 dollars a plot, which allow residents to feed themselves and sometimes their extended families and save on the cost of groceries. Beyond technical support, environmental organizations act in the policy and advocacy realm. For instance, in Dudley the Food Project has partnered with the Department of Transitional Assistance to provide double the amount of groceries for customers using a food stamp card at their weekly farmers' markets.

Together with the enhancement of healthy food options, increasing the access of children and youth to community centers, sports grounds, and gyms has been a core component of residents' work in all three neighborhoods. Sports is a way to enhance physical health outcomes and, in Boston and Barcelona in particular, address raising obesity rates. In the Casc Antic, the mission of AECCA states that the organization works to "protect against the diseases caused by lack of exercise, strengthen the immunological system, improve quality of life, and raise greater awareness of our body." In Dudley, community leaders such as Brandy from Body by Brandy opened fitness centers because "there was no gym in the area and many populations of color have health issues such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart problems." Similarly, in Havana, community leaders such as Jaime from the Quiero a mi Barrio gym or martial arts teacher Cristián develop sports classes for children in spaces they have cleaned-up and renovated while teaching children the principles of a healthy and balanced diet.

In the mind of activists, the development of recreational and sports opportunities is tied to offering spaces for children to play and exercise safely. In Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso, activists value children's right to recreation and to play as core components of personal development. In such dense and heavily trafficked neighborhoods, children did not use to have decent recreational opportunities, were often confined at home, or played in unsafe outdoor spaces. Community leaders and organizations have thus put much emphasis on increasing the number of playgrounds and community centers. In Barcelona, the self-reconstruction efforts of the area called the Forat de la Vergonya were meant to provide new green and sports spaces. As new playgrounds and parks have encouraged people to play outside freely, they also increase the sense of proximity and safety for families and recreate a dynamic outdoor and street life. However, some of the newly built structures are enclosed. For instance, in Dudley, a multi-purpose facility in place of a huge lot of 6.5 acres called the Croc Center offers recreational and sports activities for youth and their families together with meeting and café space. Here, as members of community organizations explain, this new structure brings people together in an area where outdoor sport grounds are structurally or contextually unsafe and where residents did not use to have a place to socialize.



While activists view physical activity and play spaces as priority areas for enhancing local livability for residents, their initiatives are also aimed at creating a dynamic balance between environmental quality, physical activity, recreation, and learning. In Dudley, for instance, projects such as the Boston Schoolyard Initiative, which develops outdoor classes and schoolyards in schools, combine educational with environmental and recreational goals, and help children (re)create a new relation with their place. Children build an intimate relation with nature and are offered new opportunities for active play during outdoor recess and for class sessions outdoors, which ultimately changes the relation that they have with learning and with their neighborhood. Similarly, in Havana, places such as the Casa del Niño y de la Niña or the Quiero a mi Barrio gym create new recreational and play opportunities for children while providing them with a caring environment. In such facilities, children play and practice sports while receiving training in manual skills. Much focus is given to the individual needs, overall well being, and concerns of youth. The vision for these initiatives is thus multi-sided and comprehensive.

Last, Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso activists targeted many efforts to advocating for the improvement of the whole habitat and, in particular, to the environmental rehabilitation of existing buildings. In Barcelona, neighborhood associations successfully fought for upgrades in sanitation and water delivery systems and for the provision of healthy and affordable housing for low-income families. Such renovations were strongly pushed for by the neighborhood group Veins en Defensa de la Barcelona Vella, which connects saving historic buildings to acting for environmental sustainability – renovations consume less energy and materials than rebuilding buildings from scratch. In addition, housing cooperatives (i.e., Cooperativa Porfont) undertook structural improvements to existing housing stock and created social housing units on public land purchased at lower cost. Often times, the building's ground floor is occupied by community centers, residents' associations, or small sports centers or daycares. In Havana, the renovation of the old ciudadela building Espada 411 followed similar principles of improving the environmental safety and conditions for residents. In parallel, independent artist Salvador González together with residents completed the rehabilitation of a street, the Callejón de Hamel. As he provided residents with materials to improve the sanitation and structural conditions of buildings, he also developed an Afro-cuban project around public space, neighborhood greening, and Afro-cuban painting and sculpture.

More recently, community organizations and resident have started to put much attention on developing green housing and renovating buildings with higher energy efficiency standards and with integrated green spaces. This is particularly the case in Dudley through the work of DSNI and the CDC Dorchester Bay Development Corporation and the construction of Dudley Village, a group of LEED-certified housing units in which residents also planned the addition of green spaces and playgrounds. According to Dorchester Bay and DSNI, such projects improve the economic wealth of residents while enhancing their quality of life, as weatherizing and energy efficiency projects involve the provision of green jobs for residents.

As much as housing must be healthy and of good quality, it must remain affordable in order to be environmentally just. Indeed, local leaders connect the creation of a healthy and affordable habitat with the pursuit of environmental justice. In Dudley, Penn Loh, the former executive director of the environmental nonprofit ACE, emphasizes the importance for community organizations to work holistically in a variety of aspects all connected to addressing inequalities in the city, with a strong emphasis on advocacy for affordable housing in a newly revitalized and greener neighborhood:

We realized very clearly at that time that if we improve the environment, if we actually clean up the air, get good transit, if we get safe parks and green spaces, you know all the good environmental justice stuff and we haven't done anything to address housing [...] so that they can afford to stay, then we would only be exasperating the displacement of lower income folks. And so that would be the ultimate tragedy is that people fight to revitalize their neighborhoods, and then they can't afford to stay and they end up having to move to more marginalized areas that are less expensive but don't have all the same things that they fought for.

Similarly, in Barcelona, neighbor's associations (Associacions de Veïns) center their advocacy efforts on the continued provision of affordable and high quality housing in the Casc Antic.

In sum, activists have tied environment and health together and worked to bring in tangible changes to their neighborhood, which themselves triggered snowball effects over time. Activists anchored projects in one concrete aspect of environmental revitalization, but their initial endeavor was a stepping stone towards related environmental initiatives, as well as broader community rebuilding and development projects. Revitalizing environmental and health conditions in Cayo Hueso, Dudley, and Casc Antic means to conceive change in a holistic and transformative way. Activists are not only developing environmental quality and livability projects because they are “green,” but also because they strengthen the community in all aspects.

### *Remaking place, addressing trauma, and nurturing community*

In Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic, residents' stories reveal a deep connection to their neighborhood through the relations they built over the years and through its history and traditions. On the one hand, residents are moved by a sense of place and an attachment to their neighborhood. They are proud of its historical importance in the city – because of the social fights taking place throughout history, the industrial or artisanal activities, its architectural patrimony, or the deeply rooted artistic traditions. In Cayo Hueso, for instance, most leaders and community workers remember the Rumba and Son musicians, such as Chano Pozo, who entertained residents in old degraded solares of the neighborhood. In Boston, Trish, a former environmental organizer within DSNI shares similar impressions of people appreciating the liveliness and dynamism of the Dudley neighborhood:

There are a number of people who actually move to the DSNI neighborhood just because of the intensity, [...] who live there and stay there because they love the energy, they love the community and what it means. It's really hard to pull yourself away from it.

Over the years, activists' own individual and collective experience of the neighborhood has made them realize the growing negative impacts of neighborhood degradation on environmental quality as well as on the local identity. Along with this realization, grew a sense of responsibility for their neighborhood, its families, and the local youth. People's sense of responsibility is illustrated by the fact that many residents chose to remain in Cayo Hueso, Dudley, or Casc Antic, even if they point out that they could have moved away. They express a strong connection to their neighborhood, to how it helped them grow, and thus emphasize the importance of giving back to a community to which they feel indebted.

On the other hand, activists' stories show that environmental revitalization projects are a direct response to years of abandonment, to what they perceive as urban war, and to environmental violence and trauma. In Dudley, impressions of war zone and urban guerillas originate in the memories of permanent arsons and dumping in the 1970s and 1980s which

annihilated the neighborhood, as well as in the urban violence during the period of desegregation in Boston. Trauma originated in the arsons of houses and the sounds of sirens, screams of residents escaping flames, and firemen storming through Dudley. In Cayo Hueso, activists relate stories of building and infrastructure collapse and living in urban shelters, as well as stories of urban renewal with the removal of older buildings and their replacement with tall Soviet-like towers in the 1970s, which all triggered feelings of alienation. In Barcelona, in 2000 the area of the Forat de la Vergonya was a vacant hole full of debris and waste as a result of municipal contractors leaving rubbish behind after taking down buildings throughout the neighborhood. At that time, long-time residents started feeling that their neighborhood was being erased and that they were slowly pushed away from it. Such feelings were particularly strong as many expropriations were taking place at the end of the 1990s and 2000s in the neighborhood.

As a response to processes of neighborhood dismantlement and individual and collective loss, residents and their supporters engaged in open space clean-up, park construction and maintenance, and community garden development. Such efforts were directed at addressing trauma and grief, rebuilding their community, and preventing further disruption. Local activists fought for re-making a place for marginalized residents in the city and addressing fear of erasure. Many of them express strong feelings of nostalgia as they work to recreate the community as it was ten, twenty, or thirty years ago, and to avoid further disruption to the neighborhood. In the Casc Antic, the words of Joan, a long-time community activists are particularly revealing:

[We fought for protecting the territory] because it was for the street, for your neighbors with whom you've lived your old life, your friends, your environment, your space, your real space, what you have lived.

Residents and community leaders manifest much fear at losing the sense of proximity, strong social ties, and life of urban village in the neighborhood. In that sense, in the Casc Antic the self-reconstruction of the Forat into a green space was a segue to re-creating a livable neighborhood with public spaces of encounter and socialization for residents, and this in opposition with the urban redevelopment projects sponsored by the city. Activists used the parks and playgrounds they built as physical, social, and symbolic borders with outsiders and as deterrent to new changes and developments imposed from outside.

Furthermore, in order to re-make a place for residents, activists have placed much effort on strengthening traditional activities of residents. Much work has been developed around urban farming and community gardens as directly related to supporting and reviving traditional family or community practices. In Boston, a large number of residents emigrated from rural and/or poorer regions of the United States during or after the civil rights era; In Barcelona, many Casc Antic residents left farming regions such as Andalucía in Spain; and in Cayo Hueso, numerous families came from rural regions of Cuba. As part of a family tradition, residents were used to growing their own vegetables and fruit for their subsistence. Continuing this tradition reflects a desire to perpetuate this practice and grow certain culturally-valued types of food that residents could not access otherwise and are under threat of forgetting. Working in a garden and farm is a way to symbolically nurture the community and its roots.

While many environmental endeavors are oriented towards addressing grief and loss, they also give residents greater confidence to rebuild themselves and move forward after years of neighborhood violence and disruptions, as well as perceptions of exclusion or abandonment. Several community organizers coordinating activities with children in urban

farms, gardens, or community centers underline their effort to address traumatic life experiences. This is the case of Alexandria King in The Food Project in Dudley:

The team leadership curriculum is really essential to being able to process trauma. And that a good deal of youth of color in Boston are suffering from trauma [...]. The key with being able to overcome your obstacles is having proper mentorship that will enable you to make the next step.

Similarly, a staff member from the Boston Schoolyard Initiative explains how new schoolyards are meant to address harm to communities: “We have tried to heal neighborhoods, communities, children to be more accepting and moving beyond wounds.” New spaces of high environmental quality together with the activities organized in them offer residents psychological support and strength after experiencing trauma or conflict.

In addition, activists’ engagement in environmental and health endeavors is tied to providing a sense of security, safety, and soothing to residents: They are safe havens. New gyms or sports grounds such as El Beisbolito, Quiero a mi Barrio (Cuba), AECCA (Barcelona), Body by Brandy (Boston), healthy cafés Haley Bakery (Boston), or community gardens such as El Hortet del Forat (Barcelona) or the Food Project (Boston), are refuges in the community. There, beyond addressing needs for physical activity and healthy food, such initiatives provide youth with spaces that offer them psychological relief, warmth, sympathy, and a place for mentoring. Indeed, local leaders and community organizations emphasize the importance of providing children with spaces that provide them with a sense of safety and respond to their emotional needs as at-risk children from vulnerable social backgrounds. In a gym such as Bobby by Brandy in the basketball training of AECAA, youth exercise or learn about healthy food habits while enhancing their self-esteem and developing a positive body image, and draw positive goals for their future in a family-like atmosphere. Communities become more resilient and robust as activists integrate the concept of wellness into the equation of environmental and health justice.

Safe havens address multiple dimensions of protection, soothing, and place re-making. In new environmental spaces, participants are removed from the daily stresses they suffer, they can express themselves freely without the control of dominant groups, and they receive support to confront difficult situations and grow through the experience. Individual neighborhood leaders and community organizations develop and strengthen a shared identity for residents, with their initiatives providing a cathartic and soothing effect away from the pressures of the city relations, while bolstering the residents’ ability to deal with negative relations. In Cuba, a project such as the Callejón de Hamel help protect the culture and traditions of Afrocubans from government control and from being assimilated in the white dominant culture, all of this in newly remodeled street with trees, fountains, benches, playground and spaces for social gathering, as revealed by the accounts of Elias, one of its founders:

“It is a project for diffusion, for the socialization. We insert the culture of African origins in the place and create a place that people could touch. Also provide them with have an intangible heritage, a treasure, a resource.”

In sum, safe havens reflect a vision for protection, healing, and resilience for a neighborhood and its residents.

## Discussion and concluding remarks

In this paper, through a study of experiences in community-sponsored projects in distressed neighborhoods in Boston, Havana, and Barcelona, I have examined why similar patterns of organization for improved environmental quality arose in cities across different political and urban realities, how complex underlying demands and goals shaped community organization, and how concerns for health played out in projects for greater urban livability. In Dudley, Cayo Antic, and Cayo Hueso, as residents were faced with engrained degradation and long-term marginalization, they took action swiftly to collectively turn around their neighborhoods from an environmental and health standpoint. The recent decades of community-based revitalization reveal that improving the livability and environmental quality of distressed and marginalized neighborhoods involves a broad commitment around the revitalization of places and spaces where low-income and minority residents live, learn, work, and play all together. Activists have taken action in a variety of complementary domains which feed on each other and reflect a natural evolution towards community rebuilding.

Indeed, environmental initiatives are more holistic than traditionally presented, as activists do not envision their work in silos or compartments (i.e., “open space,” “parks,” “housing,” “jobs,” “food,” etc) separated from each other. Activists moved, for instance, from clean up to safe farming, green spaces to learning, or physical activity to education, and from outdoor habitat to indoor habitat. These are the tangible and concrete physical dimensions of place-based urban environmental justice and are connected to broader community development work. Here, urban environmental justice is part of a broader puzzle. It can not be envisioned without equitable and sustainable community development and rebuilding projects, in the form, for instance, of multi-purpose community centers, healthy and green housing, welcoming venues for healthy food and community activities, as well as economic opportunities and jobs based on these projects. Community development becomes a tool to advance environmental justice and reciprocally, and it is important that they are not separated.

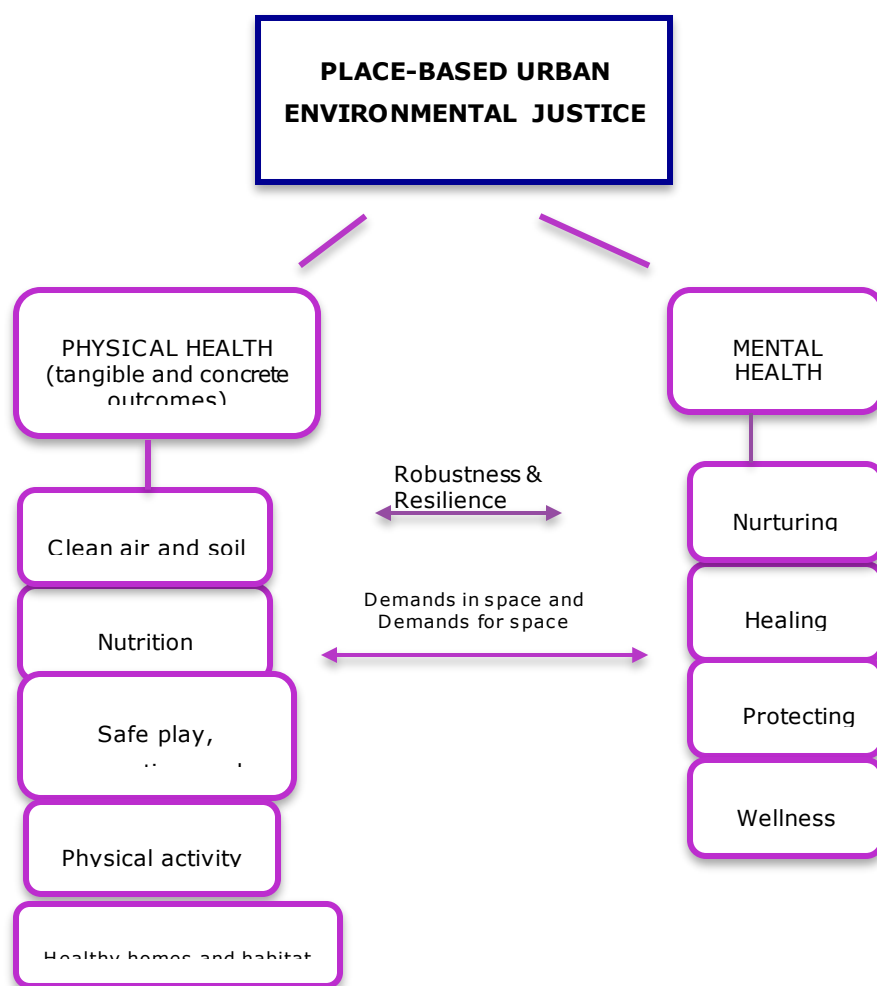
In turn, socio-environmental endeavors and the narratives activists have built around their projects are meant to remake a broken place, fight against grief, loss and violence, and create safe havens and refuges. They also encompass aspects of safety and security that go beyond individual protection against physical, social, or financial damage and harm to include soothing, nurturing, and resilience. In other words, constructing a new sports and recreational complex in place of a vacant lot, which brings people together in neighborhoods where outdoor playgrounds are structurally or contextually unsafe and where residents have no place to socialize, can be envisioned as poor residents’ idea of getting a green space. Activists’ engagement helps us refine and reconsider the construct and movement called “environmental justice” and emphasize the importance of holistic community health. Their struggles reveal that both physical and psychological dimensions of environmental health must be taken into consideration to achieve environmental justice in urban distressed neighborhoods.

In that sense, the stories of Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Cayo Antic activists expose similar experiences of marginalization, abandonment, and grief together with comparable visions for community development, place reconstruction, and soothing. People feel a strong attachment to their place, to the relations they have built in it, and to experiences of exclusion and loss, which motivates them for engaging in environmental revitalization. At the scale of cities, differences in levels of urbanization or political contexts do not have a substantial impact on the experiences and visions of activists. Space is quite central these territorial struggles: Environmental mobilizations are rooted in specific sites that are of strong value to activists

across cities. Space is a constitutive element of collective action and not simply in the background.

That said, this research reveals that the *environmental* component of justice in “environmental justice” is fundamental and that, contrary to many arguments (Soja, 2009), spatial justice is not the overarching framework through which all ranges of urban issues should be analyzed. The right to the urban community environment and health – with its physical and psychological dimensions – are core demands framed by activists, as illustrated in Figure 1 below. In all places, the dimension of urban sustainability present in EJ activism (Agyeman *et al.*, 2003) becomes enriched with social dimensions that are not limited to poverty alleviation and job creation. Social aspects of urban sustainability include a focus on community rebuilding, place re-making, and addressing trauma and fear of erasure.

**Figure 1. The connections between environmental justice, community development, and health**



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## Regulation of Land Use and Occupation in Protected Water Source Regions in Brazil: The Case of the Billings Basin, Located in the Metropolitan Area of São Paulo

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**Abstract:** This article aims at discussing the way in which Brazilian legislation has been regulating land occupation in protected water source regions, based on studying the law that was formulated for a dam in the metropolitan area of São Paulo. The legislation that addresses the hydrographic basins of this region has been undergoing a process of revision. Among other objectives, the Specific Laws for basins aim at facing one of the main urban conflicts of this region: the large, irregular and precarious occupation of protected areas. This article will discuss aspects of this new legislation that address the “re-urbanization” and regularization of precarious settlements in which low income population dwell, as well as the conflicts that emerge from these interventions, which, in turn, require an integrated approach to environmental, social, housing and urban infrastructure solutions, something that is not accomplished all the time. The reflection proposed aims at understanding in what way the legislation has been dealing with this necessary articulation and which project solutions emerged from this scenario.

**Keywords:** land regulation, housing, protected water source regions, metropolitan area of São Paulo

### Introduction

This article discusses the conflict over land use in protected water source regions in Brazil, based on the case of urban occupation in the Billings Basin, located to the South of the

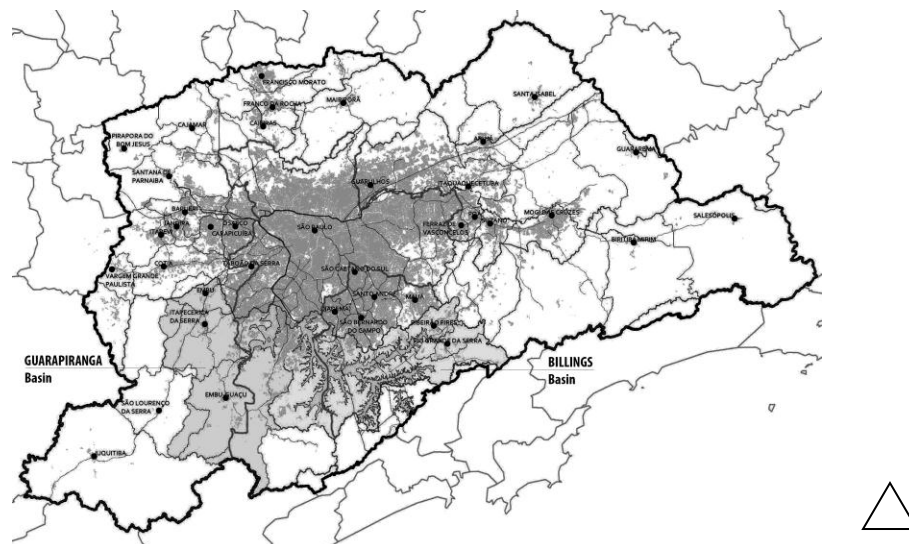
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metropolitan region of São Paulo (MRSP).<sup>3</sup> In these areas, the urban landscape is characterized not only by the presence of non-occupied portions of the territory,<sup>4</sup> but also by large areas used for multiple urban purposes.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, having been constructed as an element of the system of electric power generation, activity that did not depend on the quality of the water, the Billings dam, as well as the Guarapiranga, started to serve the water supply system of the metropolis as the urban population increased and, consequently, the demand for water. For many years it was also used for flood control of rivers that form it. The problem is that the increase in sewage input in the region of the dam was not followed by a proportional increase in its collection and integral treatment and, as a consequence, it remained in the water bodies. In the last few decades, especially from 1980 onwards, precarious urban and housing expansion in this area became significant, reaching approximately two million inhabitants, intensifying the tensions between incompatible uses like housing and the necessity of environmental protection to produce water, since it already is insufficient in relation to the capacity of support of the basin.

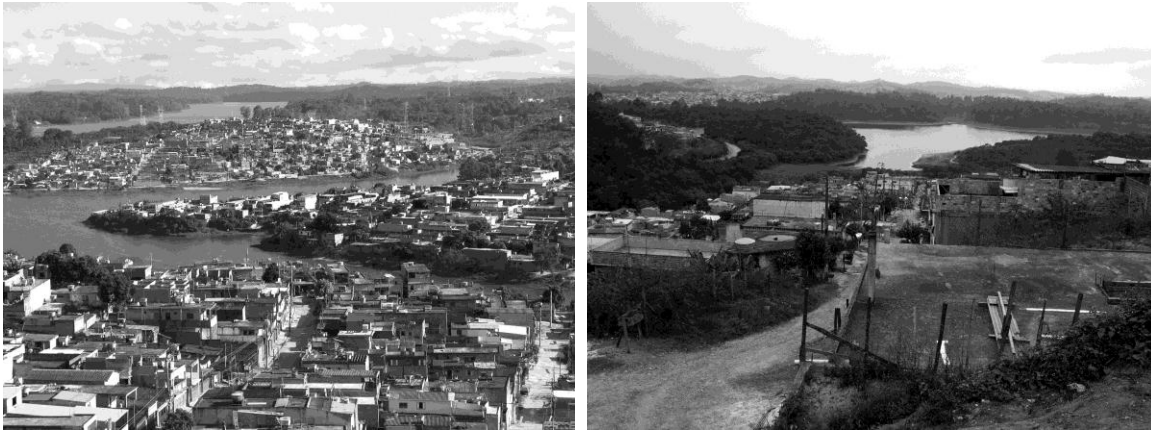


**Metropolitan Region of São Paulo and Guarapiranga and Billings basins**

The Guarapiranga system (formed by the Billings and Guarapiranga dams) supplies 3.8 million residents of the south and southwestern zones of the city of São Paulo. And the Rio Grande System (Billings dam Creek) supplies 1.6 million people from Santo André, São Bernardo do Campo and Diadema. The other cities of the metropolitan region and part of the city of São Paulo are supplied by other water-producing systems. Map's source: urbanized area 2005: EEMPLASA. Basins and rivers: Instituto Socioambiental. Prepared by Luciana Ferrara.

<sup>3</sup> The MRSP is formed by 39 cities in which about 19 million inhabitants dwell (IBGE, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> In 2006, the basin of the Billings had 43% of its territory covered by remaining vegetation of Mata Atlântica. (Whately *et al.*, 2008: 169).



Occupation in the Billings Basin. Source: Luciana Ferrara, 2005, 2008.

This article approaches the conflict between housing and environmental preservation as a result of the difficulty of access to housing by low-income extracts of population, who, having no access to public housing provision, or to the formal real estate market, are led to occupy areas that are restricted from urban use by urban-environmental regulations. As a consequence, this population resorts to occupying irregular settlements and slums, which are precarious for dwelling purposes, and lack all forms of infrastructure, placing them in a risk condition that involves insalubrity and impropriety for construction. The construction of housing and infrastructure networks takes place based on individual or collective self-constructed solutions and strategies carried out by the inhabitants to overcome the absence of the State, something that can last for many years, up until the arrival public urban interventions for urbanization.

Even though, is not uncommon to see environmental problems being regarded as occurrences that are specific and dislocated from their historical contexts; and even when social dimensions are included, there's a tendency to blame the portions of the population that dwell in places that are environmentally fragile, normally – and not by chance – the poor people, without taking into account the process of production of the urban space in a peripheral capitalist context, where the access to housing is determined by the income generated from work, which does not include the cost of the habitation. Access to housing for the lower income portions of these societies remains restricted, therefore, to self-construction of the house itself and urban infrastructure in the areas of the city that are “left”. In this way, there's a shift in the focus from the responsibility of the Government to provide housing and urban infrastructure, of the concessionary agencies of sanitation services and other agents involved in the production of the urban.

Historically in Brazil, the occupation and consolidation of precarious settlements in protected water source regions is made explicit in the form of social conflicts like: market relations of irregular purchase and sale of illegal land plots versus the emergency of the demand for housing; between the daily lives of the inhabitants and their demands to the public authorities and the time of execution of long-term infrastructure plans; between the different forms of organization of residents' associations and the influence of local politicians on these groups; between the different ways of understanding the environmental problem on behalf of the judiciary power, public power and residents, just to mention some. That is, in between the action of the government and its absence – both understood as practices that engender the production of the space – many relations of power are intertwined, plans and public or private investments are overlapped, which, as a whole, express the complexity of the formation of

informal settlements and their relation with the construction of the landscape. In protected water source regions, the contradictions concerning urban environmental issues are significantly explicit and permeate different scales of scope. These elements comprise a broad context that is needed to approach the socio-environmental issues in water sources, which is one of our premises.

Access to water and housing, key and concrete elements of urban life, are not evenly distributed in space. Unveiling the processes that produce the “precariousness” demonstrate the contradictions of the society of capitalist accumulation in which the current crisis makes explicit the gap that exists between the financial rationality and that of investments and the necessities of material reproduction, whose social, spatial and environmental results have proved to be disastrous. According to Harvey, the “creative destruction” of spaces is one of the striking traits of capitalism. And the current crisis can be partly understood as “a manifestation of a radical disjunction in space-time configurations” (Harvey, 2011: 155-156). To quote an example concerning the issue at hand, Sabesp (basic sanitation company at the State of Sao Paulo), a publicly owned company, responsible for sanitation in most cities of the metropolitan region of São Paulo-MRSP, does not universalize the service of water supply and sewage treatment, but was honored by the New York Stock Exchange for its excellent stock appreciation, 601% in 10 years, surpassing the performance of the Dow Jones index, which rose 29% over the period, in addition to the prominent position as the largest sanitation company in the Americas and the fourth in the world in terms of number of clients with 27.6 million people.<sup>5</sup>

The discussion proposed in this article does not deepen this problematic, but it is important to consider it in order to elucidate how economic interests intervene directly or indirectly in the design of public policies. This does not mean that actions taken by the public power against this trend do not exist, and that they contribute to broaden socio-environmental justice. Urban social movements, organized to a greater or lesser extent, also constitute important pressure in that direction, despite their own political inequality in relation governments and to the market.

## **State actions taken through laws and programs to protect and preserve water sources**

The Billings dam (1927), and the Guarapiranga dam (1909), were built by the private company *Companhia Light & Co* for the generation of electric energy (and for this, the quality of their waters did not matter) that was necessary for industrial activity. However, as mentioned earlier, as a result of the increasing demand for water, they started to serve for public supply (the Guarapiranga dam in 1928 and the Billings dam in 1958) and also for flood control. Since the 1930s, the occupation of the surroundings of these dams had a recreational character, with yacht clubs and ranches that served as residences of high income populations.

In São Bernardo do Campo, city to be explored in the present article, about 2/3 of its municipal area lies within the Water Source Protected Area (WSPA). In this in case, other factors explain the urban occupation in water source regions: in the 1940s, the construction of

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<sup>5</sup> Source: <http://site.sabesp.com.br/site/imprensa/noticias-detalle.aspx?secaoId=65&id=4038>, accessed June 2012.

the Anchieta Road connecting São Paulo to Santos promoted new occupations and it became the new complex of development of the region. In the 1970s, with the construction of the Imigrantes Road and the installation of an industrial complex along with the other cities of the ABCD Paulista (region of industrial tradition in the State), the first occupations of slums emerged in its surroundings.

As the population grew in the MRSP the demand for water increased, followed by a significant raise in the input of pollution in the dams – as a result of not treating sewers integrally. In early 1970, CETESB (Technology and Environmental Sanitation Company of the State of São Paulo) was obliged to perform operations to remove the anaerobic spot from the dam. This was a result of the lack of sewage collection and treatment which had intensified the pollution of the Tietê River and its tributaries, which compromised the quality of the water of the Billings dam.

In this context, state laws number 868/75 and 1172/76 had been promulgated to delimit the protected basins in the MRSP. This legislation was intended to control land use and occupation, through the establishment of urban parameters, which became the more restrictive the closer the land was to the water body of the dam. Thus, it was intended to control the density of occupation in the basins. In short, as far as housing is concerned, we can say that such parameters had established an elitist standard of ground occupation because only large lots (of at least 500 m<sup>2</sup>) and houses owned by one family were allowed. This model of occupation did not correspond to the dynamics of ground division that was already in course. Large private properties and ranches started to be split into smaller properties, often without approval of the project by the city government, with lots of 125 m<sup>2</sup> (also disrespecting other municipal building norms and the federal law of soil division number 6766/79). This process of creating irregular settlements was intensified throughout the 1980s. In this way, the law was one of the elements that made the real dynamics of ground occupation go against its preservation goal. One of the few positive aspects of its application, that took place in the authoritarian political context of the military regime, was the control of the expansion of industrial areas over protected areas.

The insufficient provision of housing by the State, the commitment of the family income with paying the rent, either in slums or tenement houses, turned popular settlements into a real alternative to have access to private housing, despite the fact that they were irregular (land and/or urbanistic wise). Now, from the point of view of the landowners, settlements became a profitable business.

In relation to infrastructure implementation, the Water Source Protection Law – WSPL also restricted it and in most areas forbid it from being implemented, because this was seen as a vector of encouragement to the occupation. Moreover, it considered only the capacity of self-depuration of the reservoirs without incorporating the systems of effluents treatment (Ancona, 2002). In other words, the entire sewage should be exported and processed outside of the protected basins, which in fact did not occur.

Inspection, which is under the responsibility of the State and Municipal governments, was not effective enough to deal with the fast pace of development of the process of occupation. As of the 1990s an integrated inspection system started to operate, “SOS Mananciais” (SOS Water Sources), but it did not remain active in the administration of the

following governments. Recently, inspection became the focus of intervention in the water source regions only in the city of São Paulo by means of a program called Defesa das Águas (Water Defense) (Polli, 2010).<sup>6</sup>

The extreme social and environmental precariousness of the occupations propelled the necessity to revise the legislation. Law number 9866/97 incorporated new forms of management of river basins (the three parts basins committees and subcommittees) and turned into something mandatory the formulation of specific laws for each basin taking into account the reality of each one of them,<sup>7</sup> and the definition of intervention areas. This law also allowed situations of exception to law number 1172/76 to make viable the implantation of infrastructure in the areas that were compromising environmental quality, through the Plano Emergencial (Emergency Plan).<sup>8</sup> We reached what we call the paradox of infrastructure, that is, as opposed to the initial goals of the water source laws, implementation of infrastructure in the most precarious areas (mainly the collection and treatment of sewage) became the main way to minimize pollution input in the reservoir and, at the same time, to secure the health and quality of life of the population directly reached.

In 2009, after a long process of discussions that took place in the scope of the Billings Subcommittee, the law that Defines the Area of Protection and Recovery of the Water Sources of the Hydrographic Basin of the Billings Reservoir (APRWS-B) was promulgated aiming at regulating the occupation, preservation and recovery of this water source, Law no. 13.579 – known as Billings Specific Law. This law not only considers sewage collection and treatment something fundamental, but also establishes the implementation of infrastructure as a key element in the process of regulating popular settlements (according to article 40).

In relation to the programs of intervention in precarious settlements, the precursor was the Guarapiranga Program developed as of 1989, by the City of São Paulo and it was designed to carry out environmental improvements and urbanization of slums in the Guarapiranga basin.<sup>9</sup> In 2000, the program was expanded to the Billings basin – Guarapiranga and Billings Program. From 2007 onwards, then named after Water Sources Program, and under coordination of Sanitation and Energy Department of the State of São Paulo, it started to count on funds from the City Governments of the cities involved (São Paulo, São Bernardo do Campo and Guarulhos), from the State government (through Sabesp, CDHU and financing from BIRD), and from the Federal government (through the Growth Acceleration Program – known as PAC in Brazil).

The legislations for water source protection had been slowly being modified throughout time, allowing the implementation of infrastructure, moving from a situation of exception to a situation that enabled conditions for implementation and regularization of consolidated, precarious areas occupied by low income population.

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<sup>6</sup> The author shows how this public program enforced the law of environmental crimes over the poor population who live in protected areas as way of restraining new occupations.

<sup>7</sup> The first one to be formulated and approved was the Specific Laws for the Area of Protection and Recovery of the Water Sources – Guarapiranga (state law number 12.233/06 and decree 51.686, /07).

<sup>8</sup> Law 9866/97 art° 47. Stated that in water source protection regions, until the Specific Laws for the APRWSs – Area of Protection and Recovery of the Water Sources were not promulgated, emergency works could be performed in case environmental and sanitary conditions posed life and public threatens or compromised the use of water sources for supply purposes.

<sup>9</sup> For a critical evaluation of the Guarapiranga Program, see UEMURA (2000) and FILARDO (2004).

At the same time, interventions in the settlements had to be connected with general infrastructure networks – water, sewage collection, draining. A significant sum of the resources of the Water Sources Program is destined to sanitation works (implementation of trunk collectors for sewage capitation) that have been prevailing over housing solutions<sup>10</sup> and generated a larger number of removals, which are difficult to manage and control the long term by the public authorities – the risk of turning provisory housing situations into permanent ones quite is large. Even considering that some of the displaced families are relocated to housing estates within or outside the intervention area, this does not always reach all the families. In these cases, it has been possible to observe that different housing solutions are being implemented in each city. For example, in recent years the city of São Paulo has adopted as a current practice the payment of rent aid, which is not enough to provide for a decent house and does not last long enough for the family to overcome its lack of a home.

If on one hand the necessary environmental sanitation has been expanded, on the other hand the concept of “environmental recovery” of water sources cannot leave the housing issue in the back burner, otherwise the cycle of reproduction of occupation spaces that are further and further peripheral for the unassisted families will remain the same. The necessary articulation between sanitation and housing is still a defective point in public policies directed at protected areas.

### **The Emergency Plan: The exception that turned into rule**

Still in 1996, the elaboration of the Emergency Plan enabled the City governments to define what areas were going to be urbanized. This plan meant that there would be an expansion of sanitation infrastructure in the most precarious areas, mainly for the Billings dam, because it included permission for improvements in 228 neighborhoods in its surroundings (67 in the city of São Paulo) and 20 in the Guarapiranga dam, out of a total of 313 areas that were included (Polli, 2010).

With this, contrary to what the state law for protection of water sources understood, implementation of infrastructure in the most precarious areas (mainly the collection and treatment of sewage) became the main way to minimize pollution input in the reservoir and, at the same time, to secure the health and quality of life of the population directly reached. However, the Emergency Plan functioned more as a more flexible approach to the law, which allowed cities to improve the settlements determined by them, than as an intervention plan articulated with a type of management that is committed to urbanization and improvements in the basin as a whole.

In São Bernardo do Campo, according to interviews with technicians from the city government of that time, almost all the irregular areas that did not have a judicial judgment were demarcated in the Emergency Plan and forming the areas that are included in the “Bairro Ecológico” (Ecologic Neighborhood) Program. With this, the city government started to operate along with the Public Ministry in negotiating the Terms of Adjustment of Conduct, aiming at re-qualifying the settlements, involving all the agents responsible for its creation.

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<sup>10</sup> This can be surveyed in the Relatório Ambiental of SSE (SSE Environmental Report), in the table “Valor do Programa por componente (Value of the Program per component)”, which shows that the investments are concentrated in the environmental sanitation component (p. 64).



Due to civil suits against associations and those who created the irregular settlements, the city government started to dialog with the population explaining the impact of the occupations on the dam and quality of the water, thus aiming at splitting responsibilities in the actions of recovery and urbanization. This experience is considered as a relevant development, especially with respect to socializing the environmental passive and the necessity to imply the responsible ones in the search for solutions and is in line with a key idea of splitting responsibilities. From the point of view of infrastructure solutions and their results over the quality of the affluent water of the dam, a precise examination has not been carried out, and it deserved a more thoroughly evaluation.

Carmo and Tagnin (2001) present a critical point of view in relation to the generalized demarcation of areas in the Emergency Plan, which ended up depriving it from its emergency character, something that was aggravated because the implementations were not made. According to the authors, a large portion of the sanitation implementations, which were to be undertaken by the state concessionaire, with its own funds, according to what was provided in the law of the Emergency Plan, was not carried out in that moment and were later included in the Programa de Recuperação Ambiental da Bacia da Billings (Environmental Recovery Plan of the Billings Basin), which counted on external financing (Carmo and Tagnin, 2001: 437).

Despite the deficiencies of the Emergency Plan, new possibilities of intervention emerged, that is, there was the onset of the search for technical alternatives that could better conciliate the permanence of the population and minimize the impacts of the urban occupation on a sensible area. This line of development justified the experimentation with unconventional solutions developed in some projects, even if isolated from the broader intervention policy. Beyond neighborhoods located in São Bernardo do Campo, in the city of Santo André, the project Parque Andreense proposed an urban design that integrated infrastructure solutions, especially drainage in areas of pedestrian circulation and community squares, besides the local sewage treatment plant.

In the city of São Paulo, despite the prominence of specific solutions proposed by the urban design, which led the Guarapiranga Program to be acknowledged even abroad due to the recovery of water streams, creation of public spaces and areas for community entertainment, and popular housing projects were carried out for 18 years; little of the Program was revised considering the criticism against conducting fragmented infrastructure initiatives that compromised environment effectiveness of the interventions and of the gradual reduction of the social work done with the families before, during the course and after the initiatives were carried out. Although there are good projects, they are not replicated in an equally way throughout all the precarious settlements, generating differentiation of urban treatment and investment between areas of greater or minor visibility, in which conflicts that are not disclosed take place,<sup>11</sup> thus maintaining part of the population practically isolated from the rest of the metropolis.

A perverse effect of these re-qualifications is the consequent real estate appreciation resulting from the urban improvements, which ends up changing the income profile of the population that lives in these areas, who are usually more vulnerable from the socio-economic point of view.

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<sup>11</sup> This is registered by the movements formed by the people involved in pages on the Internet like <http://redeextremosul.wordpress.com/o-que-e-a-rede/>, but in very few newspaper articles.

Another important aspect, which is not the focus of the present article, is the participation of the population residing in the areas that are delimited by projects. This depends on the capacity of mobilization and organization of the residents, who live in contexts that make social meetings and the practices of collective organization more and more difficult, as well as of on political orientation of those who are conducting the projects. In this context, participation mobilization and demands become even more important, in a way that they are attempts to restore the possibilities to claim for rights, the power to make choices and appropriation of the place in which they live.

Currently, the new normative scenario with the Specific Laws for basins poses a debate about its consequences for public policies in water source areas. According to the Billings SL implementing infrastructure stopped being forbidden and turned into a requirement of regularization and, therefore the “reurbanization” became a central topic for cities that have urban areas that are overly occupied. The question that arises is to what extent the implementation of infrastructure, in the context of precarious housing and lack of alternatives for environmental protection from the State – which, in turn is more focused on performing large initiatives, will manage to recover this water source?

### Considerations about the Billings Specific Law

The Specific Law of the Billings Basin (number 13.579/09) defines the Area of Protection and Recovery of the Water Sources of the Hydrographic Basin of the Billings Reservoir (APRWS-B) as well as regulates the occupation, preservation and recovery of this source. The studies that supported the elaboration of this law began in 1999, by hiring a sequence of consulting companies and conducting seminars promoted by the State government as well as by the civil society. Until its approval in 2009, there was a long process of debates within the scope of the Billings Subcommittee, based on the knowledge about the urban reality of the basin that was accumulated. Political participation of the civil society (residents’ associations demanding land regularization to the environmentalists) and of the different groups of representatives of economic interest expressed diverse positions that became manifest before the changes that were proposed, each of them defending its own point of view.

Moreover, many proposals present in the initial debates, which aimed at extending the measures to halt occupation and requalification of the areas that were already occupied, were not detailed in the law. At the same time, the measures for recovery of precarious areas became conditioned with the performance of infrastructure. If this aspect is essential to re-qualify settlements and stop the dam from receiving *in natura* (or brute) sewage, on the other hand, it depends on the execution of large initiatives under the responsibility of Sabesp, as well as of long-term plans and investments. In this way, the fragmented logic of conventional infrastructure expansion, without spreading out solutions that are better adapted to precarious standards of occupation, was maintained. In other words, the law strengthened this fragmentation to the extent that carrying out initiatives was not articulated to a combined planning, which demonstrates lack of consensus when dealing with the recovery of the water source.

In view of the complexity to regulate protection and recovery of water sources, in a urban context of precariousness, which requires the articulation of sectorial policies that are traditionally treated in separate ways, and in which divergent economic and political interests clash, even among the cities, the control, use, destination and occupation of grounds is adopted as an essential tool in this law. The difference in relation to the previous ones, is that this one is based on a mathematical model that correlates ground use and occupation with

water quality, by means of controlling pollution input (measured by the load of phosphorus, generated by sewages) that reaches the water body, with maximum values for each compartment of the basin (MQUAL).

This goal of having a level of water quality for each compartment will have to be achieved until 2015, provided that the Plano de Desenvolvimento e Proteção Ambiental (Development and Environment Protection Plan – DEPP) (recently published) establishes intermediate goals. Thus, each city has a maximum load of phosphorus allowed per day and the monitoring has to be done in the receiving arm.

The MQUAL tool is limited as an instrument that aims at monitoring something very dynamic like the occupation of urban grounds, and will only be used if there's a stage of learning and handling this tool by the cities, besides the constant need to update it. However, for some researchers, this measure of control is proposed without knowing precisely how much pollution is accumulated in the dams (Whately *et al.*, 2008).

The proposal of controlling pollution in the scale of micro basins or draining basins, using them as a reference of unit for infrastructure interventions can be an alternative planning, which is not being considered as such in the local scale (Martins, 2006). The relations between pollution control and urban settlement raises new contents to be incorporated into the planning and territorial intervention aiming at articulating environmental and urban recovery, which are more advanced in terms of theoretical elaboration than in practice.

While the environmental compartments figure as ground limits for monitoring water quality, the areas of intervention are the “program areas” over which the environmental and urban guidelines and norms are defined (art. 4<sup>o</sup>, II) and assume a central position in the debate about the future of its occupation. The law defined areas of intervention based on the three categories previously stipulated by Law 9866/97: Restriction to Occupation (ROA), Direct Occupation (DOA) and Environmental Recovery (ERA). The Billings SP-APRWS considers the three types of areas of intervention and creates subdivisions for the areas of directed occupation (the following map shows each intervention area and sub-area). The areas of environmental recovery will be indicated by the cities and can, after being recovered, be reclassified as Areas of Restricted Occupation or Area of Directed Occupation.

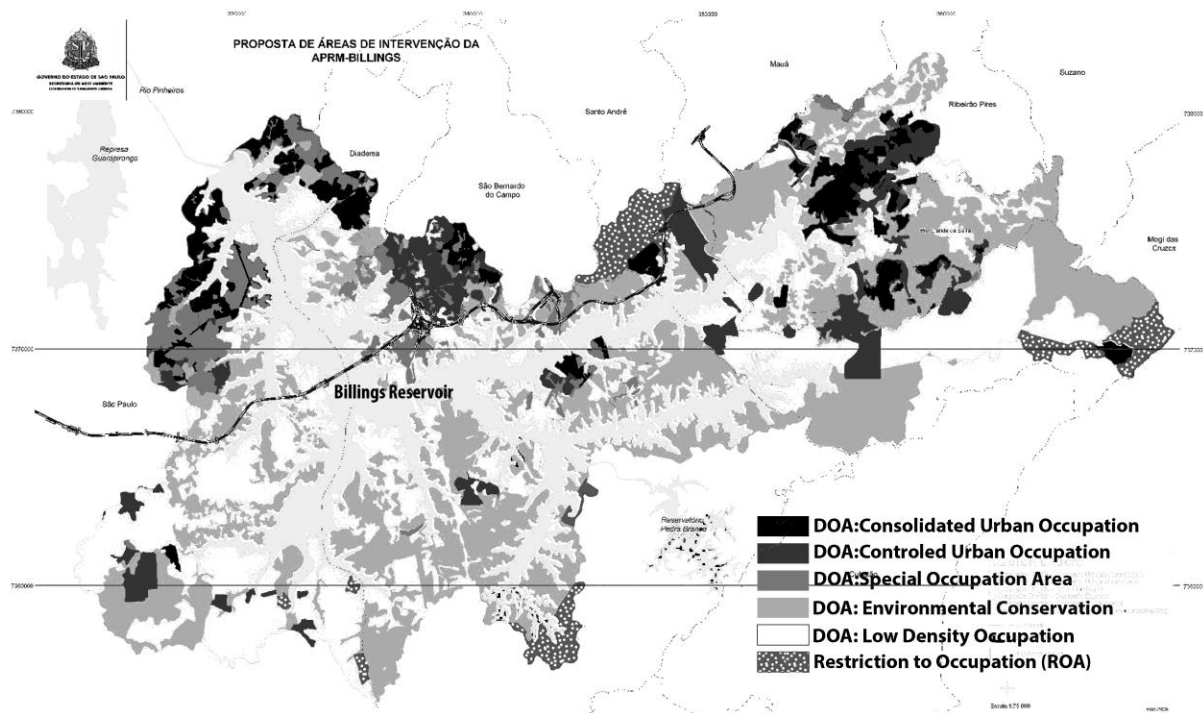
About this form of territorial organization, even before the promulgation of the law, critical analyses called attention precisely to the quantity of areas not densely occupied that had been classified as to permit urban occupation, in detriment of the amount of preservation areas, considering the integral area of the basin. They affirmed that the law contained very few (or no) areas classified as Restricted Occupation, and enabled dramatic population growth as of the delimitation of the proposal. The law that was passed, however, did not modify this classification. (Whately *et al.*, 2008) The law also did propose the creation of new parks or areas of conservation, that is, the government did not hold itself responsible for the costs related to the recovery.

There's a relation between the compartments and the areas of intervention – directed occupation – in relation to the parameters of ground use and occupation. The restrictions increase as the area is best preserved. If the law seeks to compensate with more restrictive parameters the delimitation of a large Sub-area of Low Density Occupation, it is essential to have other basic protection incentives besides the occupation parameters, since the control over irregular land division still is defective in terms of inspection. However, there are no consistent examples of projects that act in this direction in the MRSP yet.

However, it's worth pointing out that the law allows the cities to modify the urban parameters, as long as they safeguard environmental requirements. Therefore, it is relevant to

formulate proposals that propose land use and occupation that are compatible with the environmental characteristics of the region, and also for different sizes of properties, even for housing projects of social interest.

Moreover, forms of compensation among the cities that are more protected and, therefore, guarantee the quality of the water source, and cities that are mainly consuming water is another debate that also has not been deeply approached by the regulation.



**Map with the delimitation of the APRWS-B and areas of intervention (attachment 1 of the law)**

Source: Diário Oficial do Estado de São Paulo, 119(128), 7. 14 July 2009.

The city of São Bernardo do Campo has most of its territory inside water source protected areas and inside of it there's the prevalence of Areas of Directed Occupation (ADO), which have specific indexes and parameters that vary according to the environmental compartment and subarea.

With regards to urban, land and environmental regulations, the law has three main instruments. One of them is the compensation that allows changes in the urban indexes and parameters established in the SL or in municipal laws, after it has been made compatible with the SL, for licensing and regulating enterprises, and maintaining the Valor da Carga Meta Referencial (Value of the Referential Goal Load) per Compartment or City and the other conditions that are necessary for water production (art. 4º XI). Moreover, the law lists a series of compensation instruments that range from the creation of PRNH (Private Reserve of Natural Heritage) and land donation for preservation, to financial compensations (but they are not detailed). In AER 1 object of PRSI, compensations like these cannot be performed.

The other instrument is the PRSI – Program of Recovery of Social Interest in Areas of Environmental Recovery 1 (AER 1). The PRSI can have its elaboration and implementation under responsibility of the organs and entities of the public authorities from the three spheres of Government, or by shared responsibility with local resident communities organized into

residents' associations or other civil associations, as well as with the person who is responsible for dividing the land and/or the owner of the area. In the areas of the urbanization plan new houses with social interests/new social housing are allowed, when these represent better adequacy with the physical and environmental situation of the place.

Third is the PERWS – Project of Environmental Recovery of Water Sources in Areas of Environmental Recovery 2 (AER 2) that has to be elaborated, presented and performed by those who are responsible for the degradation that has been previously identified by the competent environment department. Apart from the instruments, installation, expansion and regularization of constructions, enterprises or activities are conditioned to the implementation of a system of sewage collection, treatment or exportation throughout APRWS-Billings.

## About the Program of Recovery of Social Interest – PRSI

According to the definition contained in the decree regulating the Billings SL, the Program of Recovery of Social Interest (PRSI) is

a set of measures and interventions of corrective character of existing degraded situations and of urban and environmental recovery, previously identified by the competent Public Authorities, with the aim of improving the quality of environmental sanitation and land regularization of the locations included in the category Area of Environmental Recovery 1 – AER 1.

The public authorities who are responsible for and proponents of the plan, must first direct justification to classify the settlement as PRSI with the technical department, which is currently the CETESB (Technology and Environmental Sanitation Company of the State of São Paulo). The analysis report must have a physical, socioeconomic and environmental diagnosis of the intervention area, initial stage that is important in any project of urbanization of precarious settlements.<sup>12</sup>

After obtaining the classification, there's the stage of licensing the PRSI. The public department or entity responsible for this classification must present a Urbanization Plan, containing the complete project of environmental sanitation infrastructures, earth-moving, landscape planning, social work, public transport circulation, proposal and strategy for environmental recovery of free areas or areas that are going to be vacated by the intervention, proposal and strategy of an land regularization plan, social housing project that privileges the best relation of environmental gain between the constructed area, height and the largest area of permeabilization and replanting as possible are some examples of what has to be regulated. In other words, the demand to draw up a plan is intended to promote integrated interventions, which include structural transformations in the settlements and avoid occasional initiatives that many times are not sustained over time with the rise of population density, something that demands re-investments in the very same areas. On the other hand, we consider that the irregular settlements in the Billings basin have different levels of precariousness and

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<sup>12</sup> The analysis report to classify an area as PRSI must contain: I – characterization of the occupation and socioeconomic condition of the population; II – environmental and sanitation risk in relation to the water source; III – condition and viability of implantation of systems of environmental sanitation; IV – physical schedule of the intervention with its estimate budget; and V – indication of the agents who implemented the PRSI.

necessities. In this direction, the technical department needs to recognize this diversity, and allow different projects and solutions to coexist.

The parameters of the decree that aim at securing environmental quality in the PRSI are: a) guaranteeing and/or expanding permeable areas (or other technically proven forms that ensure infiltration in the ground); b) verifying reduction of the polluting load generated by the intervention, simulated with the MQUAL tool; and c) establishing the maximum heights for buildings of social interest, according to the sub-area. Beyond these, the minimum area of the house unit of social interest is 42m<sup>2</sup>.

In the AERS-1, the land regularization can be made effective after performing the works and urban and environmental initiatives, and will be finished after evidence of two years of maintenance of the of the environmental sanitation projects. One of the points that is made clear in law is how will land regularization in irregular settlements of social interest that contain partial infrastructure will be carried out.

Considering the definitions of the Specific Law, the two illustrations bellow show different urban situations of the two PRSI performed by the government of the city of São Bernardo do Campo to measure how the projects have materialized such guidelines, and which solutions related to environmental sanitation and recovery of areas of permanent preservation had been developed.

It is interesting to analyze the experience of this city because it was the first one to make the Master Plan compatible with the Specific Law and to get settlements classified as PRSI. Therefore, the Special Zones of Social Interest (SZSI)<sup>13</sup> of the Master Plan are equivalent to the AERS-1. They also tried to increase the amount of demarcated areas to meet the goals of reduction of the inhabitant deficit stipulated by the Master Plan for Housing of Social Interest.

## **The PRSI in São Bernardo: The project of the Grande Alvarenga and Capelinha/Cocaia**

In order to illustrate examples of how the PRSI was interpreted in intervention projects, two very different experiences are going to be used. We do not intend to compare them, but to highlight characteristics that bring to light some conflicts and possibilities for urban and environmental recovery of popular settlements.

### *The PRIS of the Grande Alvarenga*

The project of *the Grande Alvarenga* started in 2005, as part of the federal program called Technical Assistance Pro Sanear, whose primary purpose was offering support for federal units for planning and actions in the field of sanitation. But with the perspective of getting financing from the federal program PAC Slum Upgrading (the federal Growth Acceleration Program in its modality of slum upgrading) in order to increase the amount of interventions, the project was adapted, updated and revised, turning into an “integrated urbanization”, being adjusted to fulfill the requirements of the PRSI and of the environmental licensing.

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<sup>13</sup> The SZSI are areas defined in the municipal Master Plan that are designed to have housing of social interest.

The project includes four nucleuses, occupations of slums in settlements that are already consolidated: Jardim Ipê, Sítio Bom Jesus, Alvarenga Peixoto and Divinéia-Pantanal I and II. These nucleuses have a high level of precariousness because they're located in the margins of streams, and are inside of a urban region whose surroundings does not have much green or vacant areas. Out of a total of 2514 registered units, 610 will be consolidated, that is, they will receive infrastructure and regularization. And 868 families will be resettled in new housing units in the area and 1026 families will be resettled in Conjunto habitacional 3 Marias, located outside the water source protection areas. According to interviews conducted in SEHAB and during fieldwork, although the project comprises a wide area and involves many families, the resettlements and removals did not create major conflicts, and the dwellers had an active role in the process of organization of the families.

The first phase of the project, in Sítio Bom Jesus, contemplates environmental sanitation, production of housing units in the area, a linear park and consolidation of the existing houses. The second phase, Divinéia Pantanal I and II have same the components. In the third phase, in Jardim Ipê, 679 houses were removed and resettled and a large linear park will be built in the area. And the fourth stage, in Alvarenga Peixoto, there will be more consolidation of units and fewer areas are going to be transformed into recreational areas.

The solution for recovering stream margins in this project, besides the construction of a linear park, recreational areas and public equipment, presents an interesting proposal of adding commercial units for the residents who already carry out this economic activity.

As for housing construction and environmental sanitation solutions, the project features extremely conventional solutions that need greater integration if integrated solutions were, in fact, proposed. Architecture, urban and infrastructure projects deserve a more careful approach if the projects intend to be innovative and to qualify such an environmentally sensible area that has immense landscape potential, which was not considered thoroughly in the project.



Areas of intervention of the Grande Alvarenga project. Names from left to right, clockwise: Sítio Bom Jesus, Alvarenga Peixoto, Jardim Ipê, Divinéia, Pantanal. Image courtesy of PMSBC, 2011.



Conventional stream canalization solutions (left) and housing units (right). Source: Luciana Ferrara (2012)

### *The PRSI Capelinha and Cocaia*

The Capelinha nucleus extends over a more isolated area of the urban area of the city, in the region called Riacho Grande. According to the Memorial by Assessoria Técnica Peabiru (technical consultancy), the project sought to integrate the built areas with areas of environmental preservation surrounding them and the main guidelines were: providing the nucleus with infrastructure; ensuring quality housing for all; and improving environmental conditions of the area.

Capelinha is an irregular settlement formed by 120 lots that have the typical dimension of lots located in water source areas, that is, 125 m<sup>2</sup>, and its division started in 1991 and it has no infrastructure. In a lawsuit filed by the Public Ministry in which Sabesp was the defendant, the company was already convicted to solve the water supply in the region.

In order to implement infrastructure and remove houses from the area of permanent preservation, it was necessary to integrate it with an area nearby, Cocaia settlement, increasing the chances of resettlement because it is an area with many unoccupied lots.

In the Capelinha, the proposal of implantation of new housing units was adapted to the preexisting forms of occupation, “sewing” new units with the consolidated standard of occupation, aiming at minimizing the impact of the interventions, creating collective and leisure spaces between the buildings, which, in turn make the transition between collective and private spaces. The project includes 246 new units and about 300 removals out of a total of 826, nearly one third, which is a low percentage in comparison to other projects conducted in São Bernardo. In Cocaia the project expects to build 52 units, 8 of which are relocations to individual lots in the very nucleus and 44 are going to receive the residents from Capelinha.

As for the recovery of areas of permanent preservation (APP), topic that was discussed in an interview with the architect of the staff, it was possible to recover one spring and one of the margins of the stream while the other water stream that figured in the letter by EMPLASA was not identified according to the technical report. This is the reason why the de-characterization of the APP was accepted in this case.

With regards to the demands of the population, beyond the area with a soccer field, an area was destined to build a day-care center. Other environmental sanitation infrastructures that are intended to be implemented in the region by the project are extremely conventional ones, just like what happened in the case of the Grande Alvarenga project and similarly to what has been going on in Brazil with the financing from the program PAC Slum Upgrading.



Although it is far reaching and has had the merit of allocating unprecedented federal funds for the department of urbanization of precarious settlements, the PAC Slum Upgrading has spread outdated sanitation solutions, like, for example covering streams and the use of techniques of covering stream margins with concrete, which have already been understood as limited in relation to integrating urban rives to the landscape surrounding it and the use the landscape of water streams.



**Implementation of the project of intervention housing units.**  
**Source: provided to the author by Peabiru, author of the project.**

## Final considerations

The Billings Specific Law creates instruments and procedures that put into effect the performance of urbanization projects and requires, for this mean, the creation of a wide plan of interventions. If the law is positive in this aspect, because it does not allow the performance of construction works and specific improvements in situations of extreme precariousness, there are two considerations worth pointing out. Firstly, the Specific Law does not consider situations of different levels complexity, that is, it does not define how regularization or intervention are going to take place in more or less precarious situations, and in settlements that are more or less integrated with the urban network. Another aspect that still remains as a key goal is the sanitation of the basin, which cannot be carried out if it's not articulated with housing solutions.

One conflict that is not new, but reemerges when projects of urbanization of precarious settlements are conducted is the large amount of removals generated by the need to implement environmental sanitation. The technology employed for the construction of water and, specifically, sewerage networks, along the margins of streams, require the removal of the population that is in these areas. On one hand, actions of removal can be combined with the goal of reducing population density in very unhealthy areas, or are necessary to remove families who live in flood risk areas, that is, in situations in which it is not possible to consolidate the occupation. But there are cases in which solutions that are more integrated with housing projects would be possible and, however, are not considered. Moreover,

currently, restrictions for situations of regularization in areas of permanent preservation had advanced with federal law number 11977 (that discusses the Program My House, My Life and land regularization of settlements located in urban areas) and can be used to support projects of this type legally.

This question is raised because it's necessary to look for solutions that conciliate the permanence of the population in areas that have already been occupied with environmental recovery, otherwise, horizontal peripheral expansion will keep on propagating, with the occupation of areas that are even further and more sensible from the environmental point of view and segregating from the social point of view.

The project of the PAC Alvarenga is characterized by the solution of a linear park for the recovery APPs in the margins of streams, which will be used as a leisure area, activity that is practically inexistent in the urban network in which it's located, and expects less common uses in projects like this which are commercial buildings associated to linear parks.

The linear parks seem to guarantee the environmental quality of the projects, because besides being areas of removal of constructions, they will form free spaces for collective use with vegetation. However, the linear park replicates itself and is established as solution, but in recent projects it has not been possible to observe initiatives that advance in terms of infrastructure solutions that involve the whole of the intervention. For example, superficial draining solutions that have great importance to restrain diffuse loads and slow down water speed increasing the infiltration capacity of the ground are treated in conventional ways. Beyond this example, there are other possibilities of urban design articulated with infrastructure solutions. In this direction, the Billings Specific Law does not place impediments, at least in the text of the law. But the practices of the building companies and some project design companies do not advance in solutions in this direction.

The concern with a system of free spaces, depending on the density and complexity of the standard of the consolidated settlement, can generate new possibilities for "reurbanization" and environmental recovery. For this, the strict technical connotation of urban infrastructure has to be included in the discussion of projects as something yet to be known and appropriate collectively; even because this element is a historical claim of the residents of the peripheries. The same challenge is placed when seeking articulation between housing spaces, free spaces, and the infrastructures. The project of the Capelinha nucleus points out possibilities in this direction. The projects briefly analyzed indicate that integrated solutions, which are offer more proposals in terms of urban design, suggest forms of appropriation of spaces that go beyond the solution of the environmental sanitation, giving new urban and environmental qualities to the settlements.

And, finally going back to the issues initially raised, what is possible to observe is that for the precarious settlements in São Bernardo do Campo, the demand for the elaboration of the PRSI has not generated hindrances to conduct the projects. What is at stake is the way in which these projects are going to articulate themselves to promote social, urban and environmental adequacy in the basin as a whole, avoiding the proliferation of precarious settlements over non-occupied areas, which is essential to maintain the water source producing drinking water. In this way, it seems to clear that public policy needs to go beyond technical solutions and infrastructure.

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## Urban Inclusion from an ‘Urban View’: Spatial and Social Appropriation by Collectors<sup>1</sup> of Recyclable Materials in São Paulo’s Downtown

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**Abstract:** The work of collecting recyclable materials is commonly regarded as an outcome of great exploitation in the time of financial capitalism. Housing property restructuring in cities often results in gentrification and increased social conflicts, as can be seen in central areas of big cities. In spite of these conflicts, some groups resist and remain, as in the case of socially excluded collectors in São Paulo’s downtown. To understand this contradiction, we propose two complementary venues of reflection. First, we look back to the history of social and spatial appropriation of these collectors. Second, we introduce Henri Lefebvre’s reflection about a possible Urban Society. Thus, this paper proposes an ‘urban view’ as a way of reflecting about the possibilities of social urban practice.

**Keywords:** financial capitalism, spatial appropriation, collectors, urban view, urban society

### Introduction

The current form of capitalist accumulation, predominantly financial, is usually the basis of analyses that seek to understand recent urban transformations. This framework results in exclusionary processes of integration (Pereira, 1997) on a global scale, in which traditional forms of social mobilization seem to be innocuous, if not contradictory. Several new experiences of mobilization that spread throughout the world, such as Occupy Wall Street or

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<sup>1</sup> “Collectors” is the literal translation for *catadores*, a term largely used in Brazil. “Waste picker”, used in English, is an expression these workers don’t like. For them, they work with recyclable materials, not waste.

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the Indignados in Spain, are too recent to enable drawing any form of diagnosis from them. Aiming at finding a nexus and viewing an overcoming horizon, we propose an analysis that extends our look on social reproduction beyond capitalist reproduction. We propose an analysis on the basis of the urban interpretation offered by Henri Lefebvre, who since the 1960s has presented a possible Urban Society, which will be reflected upon a recent residual social practice that is intrinsically urban: the spatial and social appropriation of São Paulo's downtown by collectors of recyclable material.

## **The urban under the recent form of capitalist accumulation: Social conflicts**

Since 2007, most of the world's population is concentrated in cities. But this does not mean that the advantages of urban life benefit the greatest part of its population, as emphatically illustrated by the Mike Davis' recent book, *Planet of Slums*. Neil Smith (2007) points out that since the 1960s the dissemination of a new 'frontier' of territorial occupation has occurred, which reverses suburbanization: it is the process of 'revitalization' of old decaying city centres in the United States, which introduced the concept of 'gentrification' into the vocabulary of urban researchers. More recently, the so-called "fortified enclaves" (Caldeira, 1996) have extended their gated communities' logic in terms of scale and dissemination through "real estate restructuring" (Pereira, 2006).

Many researchers try to understand these processes by looking at local social practices. Harvey (2002) mentioned the Zapatista movement in Mexico and the Movimento Sem-Terra (Landless Movement) in Brazil. In a recent book (2012), he deals with urban mobilizations in Latin America and the Occupy movement scattered around the world. Sassen (2007) notes an incipient organization of migrant workers that contrasts with the increasing rejection of their mobility in developed countries. In Brazil, Kowarick and Telles (2011), among others, updated their interpretations of the urban social movements made during the 1980s; Vainer, who in 2009 referred to national movements – such as the Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens (Movement of People Affected by the Dams) and the Movimento em Defesa da Transamazônica e Xingu (Movement for the Defence of the Transamazônica and the Xingu) – pointed out that social mobilizations are now emerging due to the impact of urban restructuring related to the World Cup 2014 in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

Most of these conflictual social facts are caused by what Harvey (2008) has called "accumulation by despossession." This is an interpretation that reflects the core of the current debate, which takes land issues as central to the predominant form of capital's reproduction and financial logic:

a process of displacement and what I call 'accumulation by despossession' lie at the core of urbanization under capitalism. It is the mirror-image of capital absorption through urban redevelopment, and is giving rise to numerous conflicts over the capture of valuable land from low-income populations that may have lived there for many years. (Harvey, 2008: 34)

We propose to analyse the case of collectors of recyclable materials in the city centre of São Paulo. Along with other groups of low-income families living precariously in slums, shantytowns, and occupations in the city, homeless and street vendors have consistently suffered processes of expulsion since the 1990s. The reason for the existence of these groups takes us back to the 1950s, when there is an absence of interest in the city centre as a housing location and by the business elite. At that time, the housing dynamics were directed into new

centres in the western part of the city. The downtown, without public and private investments, became physically degraded and the property values decreased. However, the quality of urban inclusion was not lost due to the proximity of schools, hospitals, shopping, and the high accessibility of public transport.

Four decades of permanence are sufficient to establish settled uses, which cannot be easily overcome by what Harvey (2008) calls “creative destruction,” that is, the destruction of old urban structures built through earlier processes of accumulation. This is the case of the so-called ‘revitalization’ of old central areas, also socially known as ‘gentrification’ processes. Social conflicts will therefore acquire intensity and complexity.

The first urban reform realized in the region started in the 1970s, but gained greater importance in the 1990s with the formula of “cultural anchor” (Jose, 2010), that is, huge investments by the government in the reform of old historic public buildings, which received cultural uses, such as three museums (Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Museu da Língua Portuguesa, and Estação Pinacoteca) and the Sala São Paulo, a special building for the São Paulo State Orchestra, all concentrated in the Luz (Light) neighbourhood. However, all of them became ‘islands’ for the use of middle and upper classes, while their surroundings remained with the same popular character and urban social problems. Even some special urban laws, such as Operação Urbana Centro (Urban Center Operation), and economic incentives, such as tax exemptions, were not sufficient to attract private investment.

Over time a particular issue proved to be central: the property configuration. Part of what some describe as “hardness” in the ancient centres (Tourinho, 2004) are their lots and buildings: with reduced dimensions, small owners, and legal problems that hinder their commercialization such as contending family heirlooms, abandonment, and tax debt. This requires numerous negotiations with small-scale enterprises that are incompatible with the current international business. The flexibility that has been required from workers must also happen in matters of land ownership.

This is the reason for the creation of a new urban measure: the Urban Concession (Law nº 14.917/2009), immediately applied to the region of Luz. What was conceived as an instrument of urban renewal in order to address the environmental degradation of a set of blocks became an instrument of exchange of populations and business profiles, as can be seen in the city’s main project called “Nova Luz” (New Light). The central object of the concession is expropriation by the state. This new law granted the private sector a possibility of overcoming bureaucratic obstacles of the State and enabled greater flexibility and an increased capacity to intervene. Construction in other areas of the central region has also gained pace in recent years, as the Praça das Artes (Square of the Arts), next to the Anhangabaú Valley, and Parque Dom Pedro II (Dom Pedro II Park). In this place, a residential landmark, the São Vito and Mercúrio buildings, where 768 low-income families used to live, was demolished in 2011.

Unlike the 1990s, when cultural anchors failed to attract the middle class to the area, these new projects coincide with a recent reversal of population decline in the central districts. While between 1980 and 2000, there was a decrease of 30% of the city centre’s population, between 2000 and 2010 its population increased by 10%, above the rate of 8% for the whole city, in relation to 13 districts in downtown: Bela Vista, República, Santa Cecília, Liberdade,

Consolação, Sé, Móoca, Cambuci, Bras, Bom Retiro, Belém, Pari, and Barra Funda.<sup>4</sup> Other factors that contributed to this pattern are the implementation of public sector administrative activities, private universities, and “call centers”, among others (Jose, 2010: 167).

But along with these changes there is a structural condition that has driven interest to downtown: land as a base of global financial capitalism advance, a shift in the predominant form of growth based so far on industrial production. São Paulo is the economic capital of Brazil, which has gained international prominence for its economic growth and for overcoming of the world financial crisis of 2008. The importance of the city became a major showcase for attracting international investment to the city. This can be seen in the opening of real estate companies on the stock exchange in 2005: the first company to do it had growth of 284% until 2007 (verbal information). Despite high variations, the result was a strong real increase in the value of property in São Paulo: some neighbourhoods have had an over 50% increase in property value in 5 years (Brazilian Company of Heritage Studies – Embraesp, 2004-2008). Only in 2011 it has the pace diminished. Mattos (2007) interprets this as a trend of “marketization of urban development” (p. 83).

Given the size of such economic interest, conflicts with many popular uses of the city centre could not be avoided, as they have consolidated themselves in the region after decades of disinterest by the elite. This involves a wide variety of social groups. The various forms of resistance that were present in the 1990s started from 2005 to contain violent responses, fitting the description by Vainer (2009): “war of the places.” The presence of the state through police force over the years dangerously composes the history of urban struggles – in São Paulo’s downtown or in other cities, as in the extreme case of ‘Pinheirinho’ in the city of São José dos Campos. On the other hand, the same social groups express their desire to remain in their places through the strengthening of their rights and social participation. One example is the Dossier Complaint “Human Rights Violations in Downtown São Paulo: Proposals and Demands for Public Policies” (FCV, 2006)<sup>5</sup>, which exposes the conflict between the municipality and social movements (organized groups of street vendors, roofless people, homeless populations, collectors of recyclable materials, vulnerable children and young people, and those who act against the criminalization of poverty, as well as human rights advocates).

In downtown, the balance has swung towards economic interests and away from social interests, reflected in a decrease in the amount of Terms of Use Permit (TPU) for street vendors as well as in low-income housing production. A few popular groups remain. To understand how they still remain can lead to meaningful reflections. We propose here to observe the case of Glicério’s organized collectors of recyclable materials.

## Space appropriation by the collectors of Glicério

For collectors, the social conflicts that increased since 2005 in the city centre of São Paulo lead at first to the apprehension of the collectors’ cart and the materials collected and selected, sometimes putting people under the risk of losing their own place of work, even if working under an authorization of use set by the municipality itself. After that, various forms of

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<sup>4</sup> Data is from the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE – Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics).

<sup>5</sup> It is available in digital version in Portuguese at: <https://centrovivo.sarava.org>.

resistance by organized groups reduced the apprehensions. But problems continued in two ways: poorly organized groups of collectors are transferred to locals under government control, i.e., with loss of autonomy in the collection and sale of recyclables, and groups working in cooperatives or associations repeatedly pass through precarious agreements with the municipal administration, such as facing problems in the supply of recyclable materials collected by the municipality and in the maintenance of work infrastructure.

In terms of public policy, virtually stalled negotiations with organized collectors were paralyzed, even with secured federal funds for the construction of hangars and the purchase of machinery for them. A suitable ground for the work became a point of disagreement with the municipality, as few places were provided. At the metropolitan level, there is a proposal for the implementation of waste incineration plants for energy generation. From the point of view of the collectors, it's a mistaken solution because it eliminates recyclable materials, the basis of socially important work, and also characterizes an economic, social and environmental risk in terms of public health, as proven by international studies. At a nation-wide scale, the collectors participate in the development and implementation of the National Policy of Solid Waste. As the basis that ensures recycling rates in the country, generating wealth to an entire industry, collectors want to participate in the formulation of public policies. To do so, they are organized around the National Movement of Recyclable Materials (MNCR) and have the support of various environment and social justice advocacy groups.

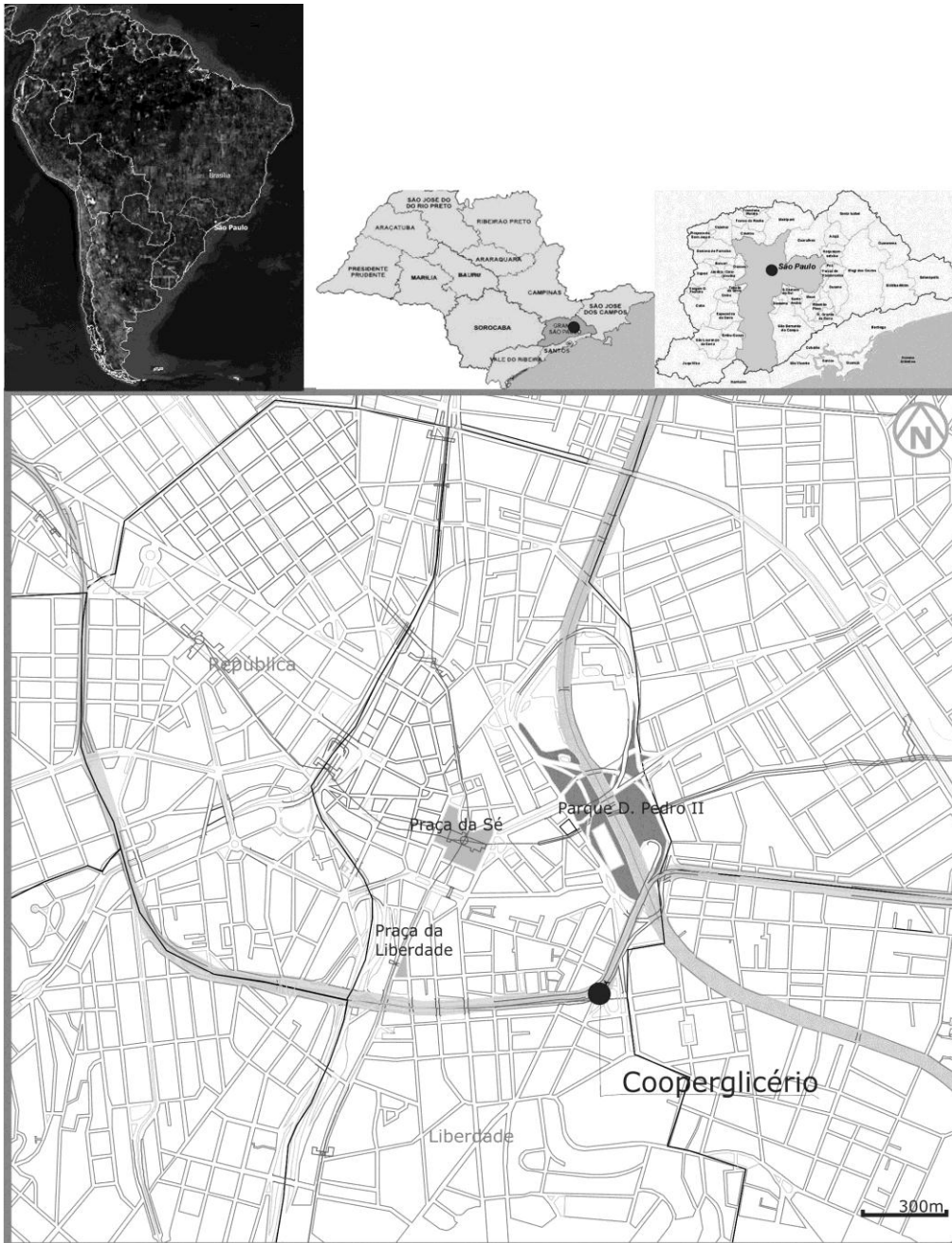
So far, it is possible to perceive the current frame of advances and retreats of the organization of collectors in the city of São Paulo. The curious thing about all this preamble, from the local to national levels (perhaps even Latin American), is the almost umbilical relationship with the Glicério, a place in downtown known as the largest concentration of collectors in the country. We can grasp it by examining the story that will be now analysed, about the only organized group that remains in the region, the Cooperglicério (Cooperative of Collectors from Baixada Glicério).

This cooperative is located under one of the many bridges in the region and was legally formalized in 2006 after a formation process in the recycling school Recifran (Franciscan Service for Recycling Support). This school started in 2001, primarily gathering collectors of a square in the neighbourhood and those who have worked in Glicério. Today the group isn't the best-equipped one, but is recognized as the most autonomous of the city, operating without structural partnership of NGOs, churches, or governments, and guaranteeing the income of their members. This income comes from two sources: from the collection in the same places for over 10 or 15 years, like offices or shops; and from contracts established after 2006 with public or private institutions. The partnerships that exist complement the activity of recycling, supporting bureaucratic activities, improving working conditions and workplaces, giving attention to the health care issues of workers and their families, and opening the cooperative to interviews and participation in documentaries, which are widely disseminated and rewarded.

They remain at risk of being taken away from their place because they still cannot get the definitive assignment of use for the public area where they work. There's also a greater risk due to ongoing urban interventions in the surrounding areas previously mentioned, as well as public constructions in the Parque Dom Pedro II area, which are part of the project of revitalizing the downtown area. The public screenings in the cooperative became a cornerstone in ensuring its permanence, as there could be loss of political support with their withdrawal. However, there are also other elements linked to the historical urban constitution of the Glicério, specially its intrinsic relationship with the recycling activity.



The forms of space appropriation of this space since the early twentieth century took place according to the logic of the industrial growth of the city. But it is located in its less valuable side, because the cooperative is located near a floodplain area. So it is a place for the poor and workers, as well as for circulation to the south and east sides of the city. It also became a place of religious and cultural activities of blacks and foreigners, soon followed by migrants from the north and northeast of the country in mid-century. Thus, it acquired a peculiar importance with its cheap housing in tenements and kitchenettes, the possibility of temporary and undemanding work, religious services, charities, informal businesses, among other features.



**Cooperglicério – Location map. Brazil > São Paulo State > São Paulo City > Glicério neighbourhood. Source: maps elaborated by the author, designed by Andrei E. Gusukuma (top maps) and Nair Rika Sasaki (bottom map).**

Considering the religious and assistance component of so much poverty, this place also suffered the influence of reflections around the political changes that took place in the suburbs of the city and in the factories in the 1970s and 1980s. While in the periphery there was a reflection on the lack of infrastructure and urban services, in Glicério the problem was the rise of unemployment or job insecurity in the midst of so much wealth that flowed through the commercial activity in the area. What is at stake are extremes: those who do not even have poor housing, such as those living in the streets, the homeless, and collectors of recyclables.

Social relations have established the presence of more than religious charity organizations. In the 1990s, NGOs with social assistance public contracts aimed to supply accommodation and services for daily living for the poor, specially the homeless population. They also tried to advance the construction of homeless rights and alternative sources of income. One of the largest homeless hostels in the city (now closed) was installed, the Associação Minha Rua Minha Casa (Association My Street My House), which inspired the name of the main federal housing program, Minha Casa Minha Vida (My Home My Life); one of the largest ‘popular street fairs’, which inspired the solidarity exchange fair; the Marcenaria Escola (Carpentry School), in which abandoned objects were turned into decorative objects; and the first experiences of alternative housing for homeless people took place.

In this context, the first organized group of collectors of the city appeared in the 1980s, no longer slaved by the owners of junkyards but gaining autonomy and scale of production to negotiate with suppliers of recycling industries. In 1989, establishing themselves legally as Coopamare (Autonomous Cooperative of Collectors of Paper, Scraps and Reusable Materials), they moved to Pinheiros, a neighbourhood of middle- and upper-middle-class residents, where some of the collectors of this new region were included in the cooperative, encouraging the formation of new ones. A similar method was applied to the formation of Coopel (Cooperation in Recycling Paper, Scraps and Reusable Materials) who moved into the Luz (Light) district. The group Coopere-Center, in Bom Retiro district, although not located in Glicério, was born in 2003 from a partnership between organizations that participated in the formation of Coopamare, like Organização do Auxílio Fraternal (OAF – Organization of the Fraternal Aid), Centro Gaspar Garcia de Direitos Humanos (Gaspar Garcia Center for Human Rights), and the Província Franciscana (Franciscan Province), which created the Recifran. This was all in the context of a municipal public policy that encouraged the formation of cooperatives. Such cooperatives became an alternative example of social work and income generation for other groups, spreading such experiences to the Metropolitan Region of São Paulo and also to other parts of the country.

This context raises the possibility of acting on another scale in two different senses: First, in a political sense, in 1999, with the establishment of a national organization, the Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis (MNCR – National Movement of Collectors of Recyclable Materials) and, secondly, in a productive sense, through networking, such as the emergence of Network Catasampa in 2006, which improved the production chain and gains over the unit value of materials. Both had their first headquarters in Glicério and have now moved to other areas of the city.

### **Urban inclusion: Collectors’ space and Lefebvre’s urban view**

What brings together such a network of relationships, whether as a business, as a health care service, or as a public service, would not exist if there were no collectors. Their history of appropriation of Glicério allows us to look at this area from another perspective: not only as

an area of no interest for the elite and the property market or, even worse, as one of the most critical places in the city in terms of degradation and urban violence. To apprehend the totality of the constitution of this space it is necessary to reverse the perspective under which we look at it. A differential use of the space was introduced, consisting of a differentiated form of appropriation and production of the space. If we follow the suggestion of Telles (2005: 2) and look at the “urban mobility” of the “users” of this space, i.e., the trajectory of the lives of the collectors, we realize a change in how they define their social reproduction.

Apart from the work of the recycling industry or the so-called industry of poverty, a reframing of their working world occurs, a struggle for life with autonomy. There is no more dependence on the owner of the junkyard, who gave a roof and a cart for the collectors in return for exclusivity over the product of their labour: picked materials. As a labour reserve or lumpenproletariat, they temporarily accepted such exploitation. In Glicério, however, they found other forms of social relations that allow them to perform the same activity with an increase in dignity and autonomy. By circulating on the streets of the downtown, they share knowledge about alternative places to sleep, such as in the hostel or in other social projects; they realize the existence of other places to separate the collected material, such as in abandoned homes or public places; they learn from others where to sell with better prices, because they are free from the dependence on food and a ceiling from the junkyard owner, which makes it possible for them to seek other buyers; and they have the experience of a place where, instead of being a religious charity that gives them some attention and food, they are themselves ensured with the same food but with a different focus: a collective way of preparing food based on solidarity.

They find a space to talk about their status as someone ‘without job’ or unemployed, about the metal workers’ strikes, about occupation of land in the suburbs, about political freedom. It is the space to build other forms of relationship, to create new social relations based on their own work. The collective form, which begins with the preparation of food, becomes a compelling way to pursue the organization of life and work, as everybody now knows the price given by the owner of the junkyard and dominant parameters of quality and quantity for the recyclables. They get their own carts with the income and knowledge they already have. A place to work in order to get a certain amount of material was possible with the pursuit of donor resources for the purchase of a house to work.

Since then, new social relations have been built around these collectors. Since 1989, another form of relationship between the collectors and the city was established. Until then they were considered *sugismundos*, a pejorative neologism that refers to someone that makes the world (*mun*do) dirty (*sujeira*). Since then, they have begun to receive support mainly on what is most difficult for them: a suitable place to work, which implies a certain size and location near to major shopping and services centres. That’s the case of the valued urban centrality of Pinheiros, where Coopamare has moved. So collectors from this region join this opportunity of work, in an organized way.

Meanwhile, Glicério is increasingly becoming a place of opportunity, in contrast to an increasingly restrictive employment context. For the impoverished population, it is possible to find there cheap housing in the region with the highest concentration of a variety of jobs in the city; an increasing amount of free or affordable services; a place of donated food or accessible restaurants for their scarce resources; a place to buy or change clothes, not just in the ‘popular street fair’ but now also in the solidarity fair trade; a place for learning about other professions and job opportunities in numerous social projects, in order to generate income, either by NGOs or by agreements with the government; a place to come into contact

with the possibility of learning how to gain access to publicly funded housing, by living in abandoned buildings organized by housing social movements.

Finally, Glicério emerges as a meeting place where a number of strategies are constantly created into a social network that becomes wider and wider, mainly because it is a place for recycling and autonomous income opportunity and a place increasingly structured for those who do not fit into a day-by-day more restrictive job market, for those with few or no formal education, for those with little experience, for those with experience but already old or not so old, and for those with some physical restraint whose income has for a long time been guaranteed by collecting.

## Urban society and the possible

What is so exceptional in this story? Would it constitute another possible world? After all, it continues to reproduce the social relations of production that exploit workers and perpetuate the appropriation of this space as a means of industrial production, in this case, the recycling industry. In other words, profits are obtained based on collectors' work and the appropriation of Glicério as a place of capital formation (Burgos, 2008: 65). What emerges as a difference may find an analogy with the main contradiction of capital. As Lefebvre explains,

in effect, a commodity escapes the world of the commodity: the labour, or, rather, the working time of the worker (proletarian) ... Through this gap it is possible to open space for the repelled "values", the value of use, the relationships of free association etc. There isn't any occasional gap. More and better than it, the contradiction itself is at the heart of the cohesion of capitalism. (1999: 136)

We propose the same reasoning for land. As in Marx's trinity formula "land-capital-labor" (1968: 936), a formula that gives us the basis of capitalist cohesion, land can also get outside of "the world of the commodity". Through the urban, highlighted in Glicério, we also found a break from capitalist cohesion, a breach from the reproduction of social relations of capitalist production that shows us another way of reproduction, one that approaches Lefebvre's vision of a seed found in the contemporary society, an Urban Society:

Orienting the growth towards development, therefore towards the *urban society*, means above all to explore *new needs*, knowing that such needs are discovered through their emergence and that they are revealed during their prospection... Consequently, this means replacing the economic planning for a social planning, a theory that was not yet elaborated. (Lefebvre, 2001: 124)

And so we promptly affirm that in this story we found the logic of use in the production of space in Glicério. We note that, when snubbed by the elite, it becomes a breach where property devaluation means absence of privileges of *exchange*, and *use* emerges. This space, the product of such absence, encompasses a turning point, the social mobilization of the late 1970s into the 1980s and its respective political reflection. It is a time of opportunity to create a logic that best fits in the materiality found there (materiality of agents and things), and the construction of another form of the recycling activity, not anymore the form of exploitation of people who, in order to survive, undergo almost enslaved work. Instead of it, we find a collective form where a group of people gathers in an Association to overcome the exploitation as well as unemployment. We encounter a collective form to ensure their income, and so their inclusion in the city in an autonomous way.

Let's observe the materiality that exists in a place that was forgotten by society. When unemployed people work there with recycling activities, in certain ways capital does not determine the conditions of work over the land. The work of collection and separation of

recyclable materials occurs over a land that has no value, like abandoned lots or in public spaces. Similarly, the material that passes through this work, a recyclable one, is also disposed by the society, also with no value. The means of production to enable this work, the cart and the workforce, belong to the collector. Finally, there is no figure of a landlord or owner of the means of production with whom the collector has to share the income of his/her work. He/she has found a moment of autonomy of domination, which constitutes a specificity:

This urban space *is* concrete contradiction... The urban center fills to saturation; it decays or explodes... The shape of the urban space evokes, and provokes this process of concentration and dispersion... where people walk around... contains a null vector (virtually); the cancellation of distance haunts the occupants of urban space. It is their dream, their symbolized imaginary, represented in a multiplicity of ways... This is utopia (real, concrete). (Lefebvre, 2003: 39)

Such conditions would not be possible if there was no meeting of urban centre conditions: a rich trade that in a specific way gives the opportunity to work and housing solution, education, access to health and leisure, for her/himself and her/his family; and also the meeting of conditions of restructuring of social values. After all, old representations of the world of work have not served to support his/her social insertion because they do not have the training for labour market demands, nor the youngness, the fullness of a body physical condition to compete with other workers. If society gives them only representations of urban violence, they also find there solidarity and collective values, developed in their work and in the moments of reflection on the reasons for so much poverty and violence. The values that shaped the cooperative, not only because of moral and religious entities' values, but also because it is how they solve their condition of social insertion, overcoming the way that no longer serves them, the way that left them only the social abandonment of the streets.

For this complex set of reasons, collectors can obtain an income that is sometimes larger than one from the formal labour market. And this also accompanied by a number of other overcomings that are more than just a prevention of the risk of becoming another homeless dependent on the religious charity or health care services at the City Hall. The overcoming is political, because they want and have to organize themselves by joining other cooperatives and ensuring their source of income in order to obtain improved working conditions (machinery and management), recognition of their role in politics, social, and environmental sustainability of the cities, and as workers and environmental agents.

So they organize themselves politically, by different means: forming a national movement, MNCR, with regional coordination and interaction with Latin American countries; linking up with other environmental groups and some politicians, academics, and cultural groups; participating in the debates for public policy formulation of environmental sustainability; and, notably, by ensuring the permanence of many groups of collectors located in areas of property interests. Until now, in spite of difficulties, collectors organized at Glicério gathered at Cooperglicério and other cooperatives elsewhere, have managed to maintain their work and their home in downtown and other central regions.

The urban condition shows itself as a concrete and present element to be appropriated by use of a coping strategy, marking a pivotal moment in the formation of the collector as a political subject. This perspective puts emphasis on an urban vision, instead of an industrial view that understands a lot about the social reproduction related to surplus value. It's rather an attempt to advance in understanding the reproduction of social relations of production as a totality. From it emerges a picture of urban interpretation constituted through the work of

Henri Lefebvre, an urban praxis with the potential of a horizon of political praxis that envisions a renewal of utopian thinking that aims at the City as a Right.

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## Challenging Marginalisation in the Decentralised Neighbourhoods of Dondo, Mozambique

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**Abstract:** Subsistence lifestyles, the use of domestic space and familiarity with nature's ecological cycles has been updated in the cities of Mozambique to sustain livelihoods, create a comfortable microclimate and preserve kinship relationships inside the neighbourhoods surrounding the 'cement city'. In order to resist marginalisation, the external space that surrounds the house – which I call the 'Outdoor Domestic Space' – is adapted to integrate both farming and businesses, shaping a green and ruralised urbanisation. This paper examines the historical background underpinning the dialectics between the human habitat and nature to find out how, under scenarios of continued hardship, urban communities have generated patterns of space use that overcome adversity by looking at the knowledge of people drawn from the case study – the decentralised neighbourhoods of Dondo municipality.

**Keywords:** outdoor domestic space, history of Africa's urbanisation, spatial resilience, urban agriculture, dualistic post-colonial city of Mozambique

### The domesticity of traditional forms of production

The historical evolution of pre-capitalist agro-based forms of production in decentralised human habitats, such as urban agriculture and domestic farming, represents the continuation of the symbiotic relationship between social and natural living systems functioning together as one. Traditional forms of production in Mozambique are analysed here within the analytical framework of agroecology and sustainable agriculture. Traditional systems have apparently evolved through a well-balanced management of resources, demonstrating close knowledge of local natural cycles and processes. They have been evolving throughout history and contemporary criteria for assessing the validity of their sustainability may be considered still very recent. Today's forms of food production are a modified hybrid system that has emerged from a base that is probably sustainable, since it would otherwise have been eliminated long ago.

The high rate of unemployment stimulates the development of informal business and subsistence agriculture. Since the colonial period, women were forbidden to work in the cities, meaning that men were not available for agricultural work whilst engaged in waged work. Nowadays, unemployment is one of the factors that has triggered the engagement of

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both men and women in ODS domestic production, sharing businesses and agro-based production tasks from home. Despite this, women combine domestic tasks with seasonal agricultural work on distant farms, the *machambas* (see Figure 1). According to Chayanov, the loss of one working family member affects the balance of consumption and degree of drudgery, which in turn makes the household more vulnerable either to food scarcity or to overburdening the remaining family members (Chayanov, in Thorner *et al.*, 1986). Therefore, the absence of men or their reduced contribution to work, and the loss of family members due to disease, abandonment, migration or death, are decisive and disruptive factors. Women are forced continuously to compensate for the men's inadequate wages or absence from farming and domestic productive activities with extra hard work. This causes an unfair and unequal distribution of labour: the balance between women's domestic production, men's waged work and household consumption are modeled according to the principles of diversity and flexibility but are sharply differentiated in terms of the household's distribution of labour by gender, which privileges men to the detriment of women. On the one hand, it seems that the traditional household structure and division of household roles by gender continue, or have evolved, in a centralised patriarchal manner that sharpens gender discrimination. On the other hand, the growing tendency for neighbourhood communities to engage in domestic production based on individual ODS, as seen in Dondo, apparently tends to foster a more democratic distribution of household roles and enhances women's autonomy and their social and economic participation within the community. Furthermore, the continuation of the agro-based family subsistence economy and the development of alternative wage-earning opportunities based on ODS have been largely led by women. The historical evolution of urban agriculture and domestic farming in the Mozambican city has been driven by women (Sheldon, 1999) and is deeply grounded in the innate symbiotic relationship between humanity and nature, which is totally overlooked.

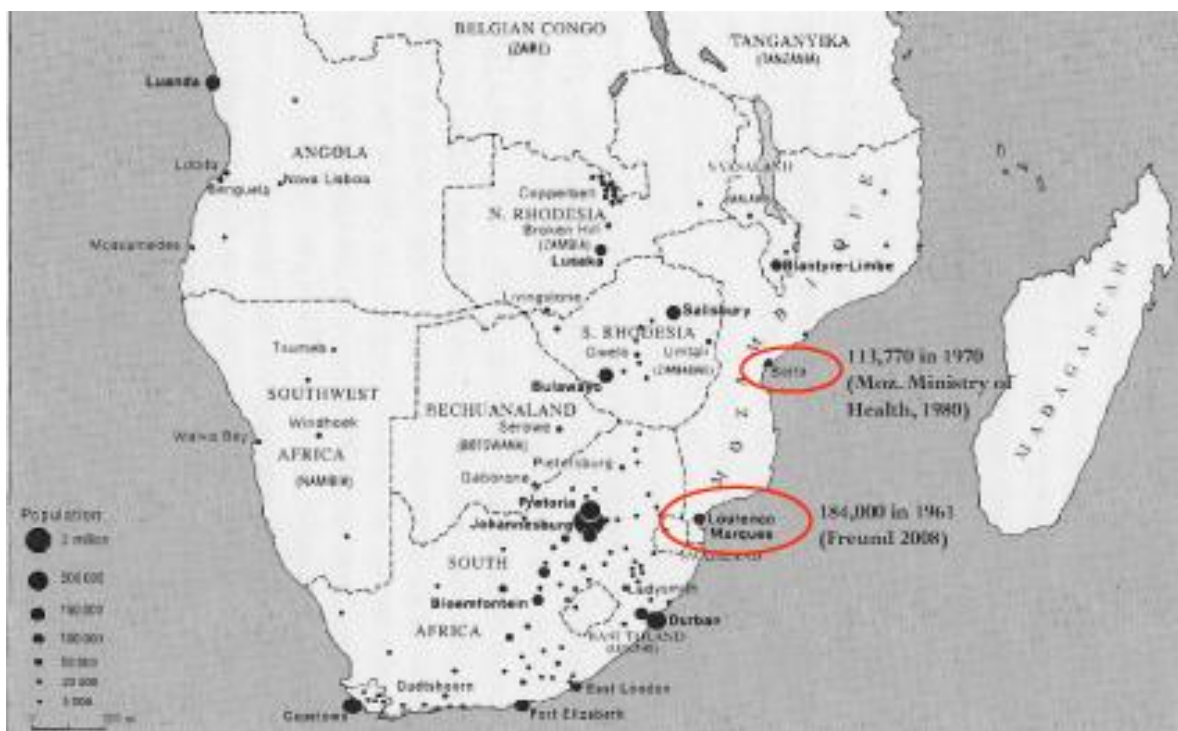


Figure 1. Lourenço Marques (today Maputo) and Beira in the urban network of Southern Africa in the 1960s.  
Source: Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2005: 312.

## Self-organised vs. medium-sized cities – the dualistic urbanisation of Mozambique

Although Africa is the most rural continent, registering a rural population of 62% in 2005, according to the United Nations, it has the world's highest rates of urbanisation since independence, advancing in successive phases since the 1960s, from rural-urban migrations. According to the same source, Africa's urban population growth increased by 3.36% annually during 2005-2010, and its urban population is expected to rise from 39.6% in 2009 to 61.6% in 2050, 58% of whom will be in urban areas mainly distributed within a network of dispersed medium-sized cities of less than 500,000 inhabitants (UN-HABITAT, 2010). Challenging the general assumption that Africa is rapidly transforming from a ruralised to an urbanised continent, Deborah Potts has recently advanced that urbanisation rates in Africa are actually increasingly slow. She argues that rather than rural migration flowing into the cities, natural increase and circular migration are the main urban population growth factor (Potts, 2012a: 3). Unfortunately, this is so not thanks to improved rural development, but resultant from externally caused economic austerity since the Structural Adjustment Programs until today's pressures from the global market economy. As a result, rural migrants are increasingly discouraged to settle in larger cities and urban households' livelihoods are increasingly self-organised relying on both agro and non agro-based activities at the margins of the formal city (Potts, 2012b). All of this points out new directions towards a more legitimate conceptualisation of urbanisation in Africa and in Mozambique, released from broad generalisations and acknowledging local communities' resilience.

**Table 1. Classification of urbanisation based on MAE criteria**

	Municipality	Category		Province
1	Maputo	City	<b>A</b>	Maputo
2	Matola	City	<b>B</b>	
3	Manhica	Town	<b>V</b>	
4	Namaacha <sup>a</sup>	<sup>b</sup>		
5	Xai-Xai	City	<b>C</b>	Gaza
6	Chibuto	City	<b>D</b>	
7	Chokwé	City	<b>D</b>	
8	Mandlakazi	Town	<b>V</b>	
9	Bilene-Macia <sup>a</sup>	<sup>b</sup>		Inhambane
10	Inhambane	City	<b>C</b>	
11	Maxixe	City	<b>D</b>	
12	Vilankulo	Town	<b>V</b>	
13	Massinga <sup>a</sup>	<sup>b</sup>		Sofala
14	Beira	City	<b>B</b>	
15	Dondo	City	<b>D</b>	
16	Marromeu	Town	<b>V</b>	
17	Gorongosa <sup>a</sup>	<sup>b</sup>		Manica
18	Chimoio	City	<b>C</b>	
19	Manica	City	<b>D</b>	
20	Catandica	Town	<b>V</b>	
21	Gondola <sup>a</sup>	<sup>b</sup>		Tete
22	Tete	City	<b>C</b>	
23	Moatize	Town	<b>V</b>	
24	Ulongue <sup>a</sup>	<sup>b</sup>		
25	Quelimane	City	<b>C</b>	Zambezia

	Municipality	Category		Province
26	Mocuba	City	<b>D</b>	
27	Gurue	City	<b>D</b>	
28	Milange	Town	<b>V</b>	
29	Alto Molocue <sup>a</sup>	<sup>b</sup>		
30	Nampula	City	<b>B</b>	Nampula
31	Nacala	City	<b>D</b>	
32	Angoche	City	<b>D</b>	
33	Ilha	City	<b>D</b>	
34	Monapo	Town	<b>V</b>	
35	Ribáue <sup>a</sup>	<sup>b</sup>		
36	Pemba	City	<b>C</b>	
37	Montepuez	City	<b>D</b>	
38	Mocímboa da Praia	Town	<b>V</b>	
39	Mueda <sup>a</sup>	<sup>b</sup>		
40	Lichinga	City	<b>C</b>	Niassa
41	Cuamba	City	<b>D</b>	
42	Metangula	Town	<b>V</b>	
43	Marupa <sup>a</sup>	<sup>b</sup>		

Source: INE, 2007; World Bank, 2009.

## The evolution of sub-Saharan urbanisation

Pre-colonial sub-Saharan urbanisation is apparently omitted from the African city debate as if urbanisation was a concept and phenomena only introduced with colonialism (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2005). However, the evolution of the earliest form of African urbanisation may be considered to have been disrupted by colonialism. Forced to reinvent itself to adapt to adversity, its self-organised and resilient essence remained in the duality between central and decentralised pre-colonial urban system. Pressure from economic and political forces reshaped the urban dualism of social spatial segregation,<sup>2</sup> which facilitated the exploitation of resources and the dominance of centralised political control (Rakodi, 1997). Although literature concerned with the challenges of urbanisation in Africa tends to acknowledge the importance of rural development and urban self-organisation at grassroots level, its discourse continues to separate ‘rural’ from ‘urban’ as totally separate entities, resulting in misleading and over-simplistic interpretations. The correct interpretation and measures needed to address the phenomenon of urbanisation in Africa are also substantially compromised by a mainstream neo-colonial approach that seems to persist in urban planning practices, driven by market and political priorities.

Until the nineteenth century, Western knowledge of African cities came from both 8th century Arab and sixteenth century European sources that described the majestic cities of the great empires hidden in forests or near deserts, shifting radically to a discourse of ‘miserable collections of huts’ during colonisation (Bruschi, 2001). The reason why the earliest urban history of Africa has been neglected is probably based on the common assumption that the

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<sup>2</sup> Previously, during Portuguese occupation, the agro-based livelihoods adapting to the city and the imposed colonial metropolitan model and later, after independence, the newly formed militarist socialist states (Coquery -Vidrovitch, 2005).

urban model must be the Western one, ignoring empirical evidence and existing local knowledge of early urbanisation in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the cultural significance of today's 'squatter settlements' labeled by foreign aid agencies discourse. The development of trade based on agriculture, ivory, gold and slaves across the Indian and Atlantic Oceans gave rise to port and trade cities along all the African coast from Mogadishu to Sofala (Figure 1), as well as the development in the interior of pre-colonial agro-towns of 10,000-20,000 people in today's Botswana (Freund, 2007), the ancient settlements of Yoruba in West Nigeria, and the Shona Great Zimbabwe and Monomotapa States, that were all established before the modern colonial cities were built in Africa (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2005).

The independence of the colonised African nations in the 1960s was characterised by national development measures that concentrated on transforming agro-based economies on the basis of urban industrialisation policies. By the 1970s, after this strategy had failed, urbanisation was viewed as a counterproductive process that led to underdevelopment, and there was a shift towards integrated rural development programmes that paid little attention to the settlements and were highly dependent on state intervention. Since the 1980s the focus has been on the interdependence of the rural and the urban, and the theoretical debate has stressed the importance of decentralisation in establishing local priorities to stimulate both urban and rural development. Some countries, such as Mozambique, have implemented a decentralised system, but the main constraint has been the great dependence of local bodies on the central government due to low annual budgets and a lack of local revenue. Nevertheless, democratisation and the decentralisation process have been gradually leading to a greater involvement of the community in bottom-up decision-making (Baker and Pedersen, 1992; World Bank, 2009). The decay that followed a decade of Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 1980s-1990s led to new grassroots adaptive strategies focusing on rural-urban relations in the context of medium-sized cities.

Renewed considerations concerning medium-sized cities as centres of economic growth in the regional development of Africa emerged after the 1990s. Anders Aeroe identifies five approaches to the role of medium-sized cities in the development debate: (1) the 'growth pole approach' – selected medium cities are spatial nodes for the proper diffusion of economic growth; (2) the 'dependency approach' – discarding local development dynamics and regarding development and underdevelopment as dependent on planned spatial structures rather than social relations, in the 1950s and 1960s; (3) the 'functionalist approach'; (4) the 'territorial approach'; and (5) the 'economy of affection approach' from the mid-1970s (Aeroe in Baker and Pedersen, 1992: 51-60). Rondinelly (1983) developed the regional 'functionalist approach' to Africa, which focused on small or medium-sized cities as a way of contributing to rural development and equalising urban spatial development through a diffuse pattern of urbanisation at national level. However, he saw local agriculture and resources as feeding the wider economic system instead of local needs and his approach was implicitly top-down. The focus of John Friedmann's Agropolitan 'territorial approach'<sup>3</sup> to urban villages is closer to urban planning than to the real scale of the emergent medium-sized cities (Mabogunje in Tarver, 1984). The 'economy of affection approach' established by Goran Hyden refers to support networks consisting of groups of people linked by family, community

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<sup>3</sup> Friedmann's agropolitan growth-pole approach was used in Frelimo's post-independence socialist policies.

or other personal affinities to provide survival strategies and resources to support members of the network (Hyden, 2005). In attempting to define smaller urban centres, Satterthwaite argues that there is no division between the urban and the rural population but rather a rural-urban interface in the midst of a continuum of rural and urban characteristics. This may be called a ‘rural-urban continuum’ approach, which includes large rural villages and small urban towns, regardless of local concepts and official classifications based on population size and levels of non-agricultural economic production (Satterthwaite, 2006). The fact is that more than half of the world’s urban population – 51.5% in 2005 – live in urban sites of less than 500,000 inhabitants and only a small minority – 9.3% in 2005 – live in cities with more than 10 million inhabitants (UN, 2005). Although urbanisation still tends to focus on the phenomenon of larger cities, UN urbanisation estimates suggest that in future most of the world’s urban population will be using agro-based forms of subsistence, despite the global market economy system and advances in high technology (Satterthwaite, 2006). It is precisely because the current capitalist paradigm is in decay that the expansion of resilient decentralised medium-sized cities, such as Dondo in Mozambique, implies a community based spontaneous approach.

## **The historical background to urbanisation in Mozambique**

### *The pre-colonial period (AD 200-1884)*

The earliest stages in Mozambican urbanisation on the coast are closely linked to the Indian Ocean trade which began in the sixth century with the founding of the port and trade city of Sofala. From Mogadishu to the Limpopo River Valley, the trade in gold, resins, incense, ivory, food, timber, animals and slaves was managed and ruled by the Islamic faith and culture. The Arab occupation of Sofala was threatened from 1498 onwards when the Portuguese became established in Mozambique and sought to dominate the Indian Ocean trade. Along the East African coast there are the remains of 400 ancient settlements (Garlake, 2002).

The Great Zimbabwe State ruled in Central Mozambique from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth century under a sacred feudal system and pre-capitalist economy based on foreign trade from Sofala (Rita-Ferreira, 1999). The ruling elite was clearly set apart by massive granite walls that served to enclose the royal residence and courts and are analogous to the urban dualism found in the contemporary Mozambican city. The elite dominated the gold trade with foreign traders accumulating prestige goods, just as the Mozambican elite trade land resources and properties on the international market. Similarly, the unequal distribution of wealth served as a tool to reinforce hierarchical relations within the ruling elite and their control over their people, as it does today. Parallel to this hierarchical system, self-organising communities developed inside and outside the Monomotapa regime. As mentioned above, as early as the third century. The Shona and Bantu people had developed a communal system of land ownership based on family kinship forms of production from domestic settlements – the *muti* (Tarver, 1994) – as a decentralised pre-capitalist family-based subsistence economy.

For almost 450 years the Monomotapa managed to prevent environmental pressure from the settlements and subsistence agricultural economy by using mixed modes of production that minimised the effects of the intensive human presence and long and recurrent droughts and by diversifying into mining, trade, hunting and cattle-raising. Whereas the predominant hypothesis for the decline of the Great Zimbabwe State was mainly related to environmental pressure,<sup>4</sup> the decline of the Monomotapa State may have been associated with the disruption caused by the Portuguese gaining gradual control over their territory and resources to acquire a total monopoly. This was achieved through successive land occupation strategies: firstly through the *feiras* and later the *prazo* system, to such a predatory extent that they caused gold stock shortfalls, which led to political instability, conflict and finally decline (Rita-Ferreira, 1999).

### *The colonial period (1838-1975)*

Urbanisation during the colonial period is marked by the impact of the *prazo* system and the Charter Companies, and is characterised by (1) the escape from the degrading *chibalo* forced labour and taxation practiced by the *prazeiros* and the Charter Companies, through territorial dispersion at national level involving a return to isolated rural life – from the seventeenth century; (2) the first colonial cities and towns developed under the modern tropical state – from the early twentieth century, intensifying in the 1960s with expanding industrialisation and economic growth; (3) the dormitories for male workers in the colonial city, marking the origins of the first informal settlements on the outskirts of the colonial city; (4) the use of mass urban labour for industry, tourism and domestic work, which brought families to the cities and marked the rise of the ‘cement city’ vs. ‘reed city’ Mozambican urbanisation; (5) the exclusion of Mozambican women from the work system and the low men’s wages, which increased the development of alternative business and the vital importance of a reinvented traditional agro-based form of production by women in the ODS in the expanding neighbourhoods.

The transformation of Mozambique’s traditional urbanism began when the traditional family economy entered the market economy via capitalist production relations at the end of the nineteenth century, mainly due to the following factors: (a) abusive taxation since 1893, which forced people to work under the *chibalo* system for a wage; (b) emigration to seek better waged work in the gold mines of Transvaal, today South Africa, and other neighbouring countries; (c) colonial forced cultivation for income during the 1940s, which resulted in formal and informal open commerce; (d) the network of *cantinas* designed to distribute commerce in remote rural areas, creating small surrounding settlements and the rise of informal markets; and (e) the granting of loans for agriculture to maintain peasant dependence on the market economy during the 1960s. Although these influential factors could have disrupted traditional family social relations, they instead managed to remain dominant (Raposo, 1988). The end of the *prazo* system in 1932 and the decline of the Monopoly Charter Companies in 1942 facilitated the spread of family-based agriculture in the

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<sup>4</sup> Environmental pressure from overexploitation of the natural resources surrounding the settlements and the occurrence of the tsetse fly (Garlake, 1973).

neighbourhoods, as well as the rise of trading in the informal markets, expanding into a parallel city with a parallel economy.

### *Post-independence (since 1975)*

After independence in 1975, land was nationalised and the government established collective production sectors, although 98% of the investment was allocated to state production intended mostly for export. This almost reached collapsing point when production failed to supply exports, agro-industries or cities, let alone secure the subsistence needs of its salaried workers. Among other factors, the failure of the Communal Villages and State Farms programme was mainly the result of underestimating traditional social knowledge and identity, and its ability to react and resist centrally imposed state militarism which was forcing a shift from family kinship relations to a foreign type of communal identity. In the cities and villages, the nationalisation of land and housing resulted in very rapid urban growth<sup>5</sup> and densification, speculation on the real estate market, rising corruption and spatial stratification, as well as the collapse of buildings, urban infrastructures and services. The mismanagement of property, land and resources, the failure to reorganise the colonial commercial network after independence, pressure from the destabilization war and the overall deterioration in living conditions all contributed to the breakdown of Frelimo's socialist reforms.

In 1982, the first National Meeting on Urban Planning shifted Frelimo's concerns to urban areas and discussed the need for structured plans to manage the urban environment in each regional city area. Despite this, the intensification of the destabilization war with Renamo following a stronger surge of support from South Africa triggered a nationwide rural exodus to the cities, as well as to neighbouring countries, which exhausted the capacity of the already inadequate urban infrastructures to serve such a rapidly increasing population (Saul, 1987).

The post-independence period may be structured according to the following representative features: (1) the first phase of urban sprawl following the nationalisation of land triggered a massive exodus of Portuguese from Mozambique's cities, factories and farms, which resulted in an accelerated urban growth from massive rural migration flows to the existing cities; (2) the impoverishment of the population due to the collective socialist policies for rural development in the countryside, which gradually drove people to the cities; (3) the second phase of urban sprawl, resulting from the rural exodus to urban sites in search of security as a result of increasing war conflict and natural urban population growth; (4) after the war, increased population flows to the city due to the deterioration of rural and natural areas as a result of environmental and economic stagnation, a series of floods and droughts, and the ecological damage caused by the Renamo troops in remote areas, which compromised the natural resource base; (5) higher urban growth rates in small and medium-sized cities than in the larger cities of Maputo and Beira where challenges for recently arrived are bigger, demonstrating rural adaptation to urban conditions in a national network of smaller cities; and (6) the predominance of incongruent imported models for urban planning and housing policies.

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<sup>5</sup> Maputo's population grew 490% in the 1950-1975 period from 91,000 in 1950, to 532,000 in 1975 and later to 1,588,000 in 1990 (UN 1989, 1991).

The general uncertainty in defining urbanisation affects the interpretation of official quantitative data and limits the understanding of the scale of the problem, in which possible strategies to address urban challenges may become blurred. Official sources provide three definitions of ‘urban’ for the context of Mozambique: the Ministry of State Administration (MAE), the Ministry of the Environment (MICOA) and the National Institute of Statistics (INE). The lack of any agreed definition for urbanisation reveals the uncertainty behind the inadequacy of current approaches and their inefficacy in dealing with the challenges of marginalisation caused by dualistic urbanisation. The Ministry of State Administration (MAE) defines urban areas as *ciudades* ‘cities’ and *vilas* ‘towns’ classified as types ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’, (see Table 1) on the basis of political, economic, social, cultural, density, industry, level of development of trade activities, education and sanitation criteria. According to the MAE, Maputo, the capital city, is classified as Type ‘A’, Type ‘B’ refers to provincial capitals and second cities important to regional development, Type ‘C’ includes smaller provincial cities and other cities with similar economic development and infrastructure characteristics, and Type ‘D’ describes the majority of cities, which are those with an important role to play in terms of local development. Another urban definition comes from the Ministry of the Environment (MICOA) based on land management criteria which aim to: (a) promote the sustainability of urban areas; (b) foster better management of urban land by municipalities and central administrations; and (c) ensure better development planning for cities (Muzima and World Bank, 2009). The MICOA’s criteria for the sustainability of cities are defined according to urban land, sanitation and environmental conditions, the development of transport and communications infrastructures, and housing. For the National Institute of Statistics (INE) (see Table 2), urban classification is based on census stratification mapping within each province: (a) capital cities; (b) cities with more than 20,000 households; and (c) the remaining urban areas in the province (INE 2007, Muzima and World Bank, 2009). Hypothetical urban classifications based on population density, and adequate access to infrastructures, transport, paved roads, energy, health care, education, permanent housing, and several other criteria on which Western cities are commonly based, would certainly drastically reduce the number of officially classified cities in Mozambique. This is because most cities in Mozambique have less than 200,000 inhabitants (see Figure 2 and Table 3) and are mostly low density (see Figure 4) with a spontaneous urban growth pattern that is poorly served by infrastructures and services, and is highly ruralised. This shows that Mozambique’s urbanization pattern consists of a scattered network of medium size cities (see Figure 3) that expand spontaneously and that foreign models are probably not the best way to address the urban reality of Mozambique, which has to be viewed and addressed from a different and locally adapted perspective.

**Table 2. Classification of urbanisation based on census mapping**

23 Cities	There is Urban area (yes=1)	There is Rural area (yes=1)
1. Maputo City	1	0
2. Matola	1	0
3. Beira	1	0
4. Nampula	1	0
5. Chimoio	1	0
6. Nacala-Porto	1	0
7. Quelimane	1	0
8. Tete	1	0
9. Xai-Xai	1	0



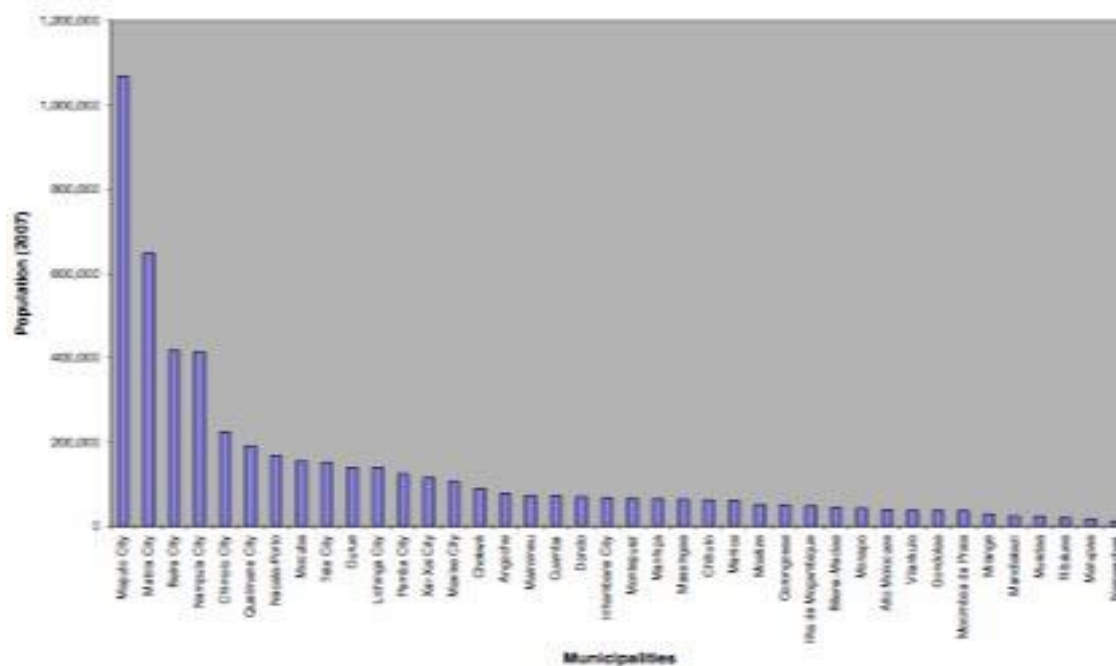
<b>23 Cities</b>	<b>There is Urban area (yes=1)</b>	<b>There is Rural area (yes=1)</b>
10. Gurue	1	1
11. Maxixe	1	0
12. Lichinga	1	0
13. Pemba	1	0
14. Dondo	1	1
15. Angoche	1	1
16. Cuamba	1	1
17. Montepuez	1	1
18. Mocuba	1	1
19. Inhambane	1	0
20. Chókwe	1	1
21. Chibuto	1	1
22. Ilha de Moçambique	1	0
23. Manica	1	1
<b>Total cities</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>9</b>

<b>68 Villages</b>	<b>There is Urban area (yes=1)</b>	<b>There is Rural area (yes=1)</b>
1. Lago	1	1
2. Mandimba	1	1
3. Marrupa	1	1
4. Mecanhelas	1	1
5. Sanga	1	1
6. Chiure	1	1
7. Ibo	1	1
8. Macomia	1	1
9. Macimboa da Praia	1	1
10. Mueda	1	1
11. Namapa-Erati	1	1
12. Malema	1	1
13. Meconta	1	1
14. Mogovolas	1	1
15. Moma	1	1
16. Monapo	1	1
17. Mossuril	1	1
18. Murrupula	1	1
19. Nacala-Velha	1	1
20. Ribae	1	1
21. Alto Molocue	1	1
22. Chinde	1	1
23. Lugela	0	1
24. Maganja da Costa	1	1
25. Milange	1	1
26. Morrumbala	1	1
27. Namacurra	1	1
28. Namarroi	0	1
29. Pebane	1	1
30. Angonia	1	1
31. Cahora-Bassa	1	1
32. Moatize	1	1
33. Vila Nova da Fronteira	1	1
34. Mutarara	1	1
35. Barue	1	1
36. Gondola	1	1
37. Machipanda	0	1
38. Messica	0	1
39. Buzi	1	1

68 Villages	There is Urban area (yes=1)	There is Rural area (yes=1)
40. Caia	1	1
41. Cheringoma	1	1
42. Gorongosa	1	1
43. Marromeu	1	1
44. Nhamatanda	1	1
45. Govuro	1	1
46. Homoine	1	1
47. Inharrime	1	1
48. Inhassoro	1	1
49. Jangamo	0	1
50. Mabote	0	1
51. Massinga	1	1
52. Morrumbene	1	1
53. Vilanculo	1	1
54. Zavala	1	1
55. Bilene Macia	1	1
56. Vila Praia do Bilene	0	1
57. Chicualacuala	1	1
58. Vila de Xilembene	0	1
59. Guija	1	1
60. Mandlacaze	1	1
61. Boane	1	1
62. Magude	1	1
63. Manhiça	1	1
64. Vila de Xinavane	0	1
65. Marracuene	1	1
66. Matutuine	1	1
67. Moamba	1	1
68. Namaacha	1	1
<b>Total villages</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>68</b>

Source: INE, 2007.

**Figure 2. Mozambique's medium-size cities urban pattern**

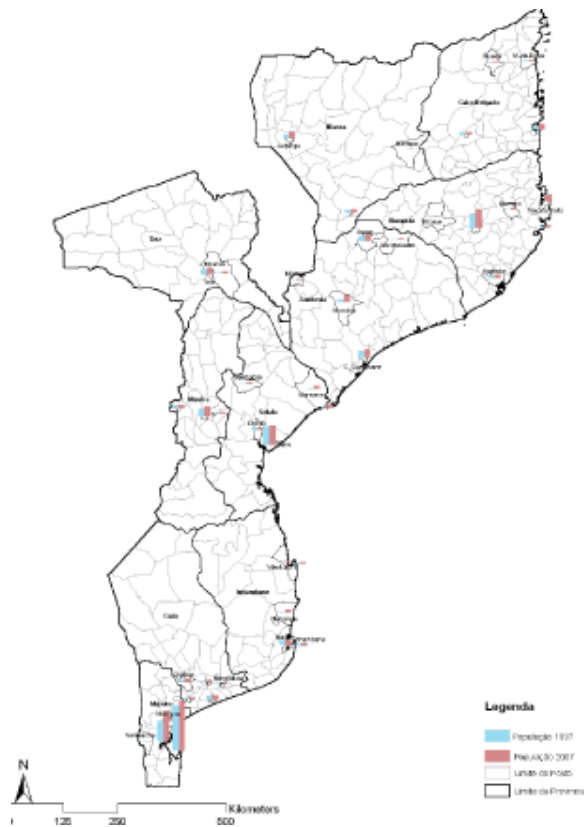


Source: Muzima and World Bank, 2009, based on INE 2007.

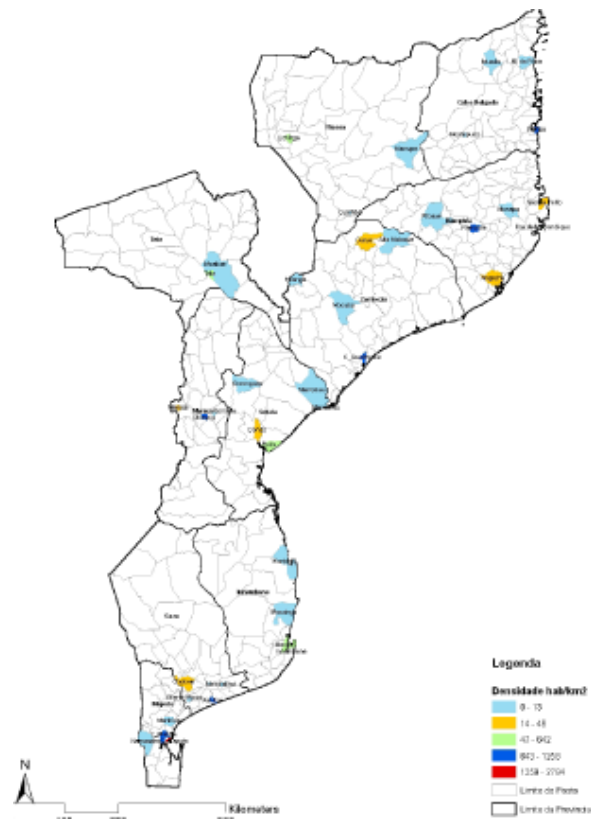
**Table 3. Population by municipality in Mozambique, population census 1997 and 2007**

Province	Municipalities	1997	2007	Annual average growth rate (%)
NIASSA	Cuamba	58,594	72,056	2,09
	Marupa <sup>a</sup>	6,525	17,908	10,62
	Metangula	<sup>b</sup>	<sup>b</sup>	<sup>b</sup>
	Lichinga City	87,025	139,471	4,83
CABO DELGADO	Mocimboa da Praia	26,132	37,633	3,71
	Montepuez	57,408	65,659	1,35
	Mueda <sup>a</sup>	15,927	24,140	4,25
	Pemba City	87,662	125,635	3,66
NAMPULA	Angoche	59,778	77,794	2,67
	Ilha de Moçambique	43,188	48,839	1,24
	Monapo	20,721	43,065	7,59
	Nacala-Porto	161,460	167,038	0,34
	Ribáue <sup>a</sup>	16,075	20,859	2,64
	Nampula City	310,955	414,958	2,93
ZAMBÉZIA	Alto Molocue <sup>a</sup>	13,845	38,956	10,90
	Gurue	100,319	140,025	3,39
	Milange	17,123	29,534	5,60
	Mocuba	57,584	154,704	10,39
	Quelimane City	153,501	191,476	2,24
TETE	Moatize	26,963	52,205	6,83
	Tete City	103,550	151,981	3,91
	Ulongue <sup>a</sup>	<sup>b</sup>	<sup>b</sup>	<sup>b</sup>
MANICA	Gondola <sup>a</sup>	26,909	37,714	3,43
	Manica	53,767	61,598	1,37
	Chimoio City	175,006	224,088	2,50
	Catandica	<sup>b</sup>	<sup>b</sup>	<sup>b</sup>
SOFALA	Dondo	62,424	70,436	1,21
	Gorongosa <sup>a</sup>	12,295	51,394	15,38
	Marromeu	18,827	72,822	14,48
	Beira City	405,040	418,141	0,32
INHAMBANE	Massinga <sup>a</sup>	18,214	64,592	13,50
	Vilankulo	20,644	38,271	6,37
	Maxixe City	96,193	107,047	1,07
	Inhambane City	53,932	68,285	2,39
GAZA	Bilene-Macia <sup>a</sup>	27,187	45,668	5,32
	Chibuto	47,330	62,759	2,86
	Chokwé	57,585	89,633	4,52
	Mandlakazi	24,133	25,067	0,38
	Xai-Xai City	102,053	115,831	1,27
MAPUTO PROVINCE	Manhiça	19,449	65,341	12,88
	Namaacha <sup>a</sup>	10,251	12,564	2,06
	Matola City	430,700	648,025	4,17
Maputo City	Maputo City	966,000	1,068,607	1,01

Source: INE 1997, 2007.



**Figure 3. Population variation of Mozambique 1987-1997 – 33 municipalities in 2007. Source: INE, 2007.**



**Figure 4. Population density of Mozambique – 33 municipalities in 2007. Source: INE, 2007.**

## The municipalization process

From 1992, post-war state objectives continued to focus on rural redevelopment and it was only in 1997 that the government decided to concentrate on urban development and land management, establishing a new ‘Land Law’ that retained state ownership but provided rights of tenure, and the ‘Municipal Package’ which created 33 democratically elected municipalities (44 today) (see Table 3). Since they began functioning, democratic elections have taken place in 1998, in 2003 and more recently in 2008. The municipalities have been facing an increase in functional responsibilities (see Table 4) in the following departments: Local Economic and Social Development; Environmental Management; Basic Sanitation; Public Utilities; Health; Culture; Recreation and Sports; Education; Municipal Police; Urban Development and Construction and Housing (Répubblica de Moçambique, 1997, 2007) which exceeds their actual planning and governance capacity. They are particularly constrained by a lack of qualified human resources and financial dependence on the central authority, which provides them with as little as 3 to 20 U.S.\$ per capita/year, around 1% of the national budget (World Bank, 2009). Therefore, the municipalities rely exclusively on foreign donors and private investors for capital input. Taxation of property and activities is a source of municipal revenue but is insignificant, as not enough properties have been registered. Another constraint for urban planning and management is the dual legal political framework, where Mayors and city councilors are elected whereas political representatives in the districts, administrative

posts and localities are appointed by the central government, which sometimes generates tension between the parts (Cabannes, 2009: 80-81).

The supply of services and infrastructures by the municipalities, is constrained by urban management needs, functional responsibilities, poor resources and obsolete budgets. Yet, the impossibility of providing sufficient urban infrastructures to control the local impact of industrial pollution on the neighbourhoods and to provide adequate overall urban management may have been partly compel authorities and communities to engage in alternative coping strategies, such as the Dondo Municipality Participatory Budgeting and Planning Programme. Good governance practices are created to promote more democratic governance with civil society participation to objectively address urban priorities from the perspective of the local population and joint efforts are made to mitigate urban problems that are probably otherwise impossible to address. Although it is not the intention of this paper to make a tabula rasa of this, nor about participatory governance, and medium-sized low density cities may also be badly administrated, when facing adversity and obstacles, the central urban system may be compelled to be resilient and engage with the community in collaborative efforts to remedy the shortcomings of the central authority.

Looking back to Mozambique's municipal development first decade, Cabannes argues that although there has been progress, the participation dimension is fair in terms of formal democracy and poor in terms of political participation and, that the role of traditional powers is not yet well defined. This suggests that the popular engagement in elections and social associations have a very significant role that needs to be strengthened through mechanisms that improve the relations between municipalities and the civil society (Cabannes, 2009: 89). Despite all the constraints and difficulties, in the past decade the municipalities seem to have been capable of setting up their own structures, providing some basic services for their populations, managing the complex municipal urban-rural territory, as well as giving rise to successful cases of innovative participatory practices, as seen in the Dondo Municipality participatory budget system (Cabannes, 2009). Nevertheless, the rapid urban growth trend in medium-sized cities is adding pressure to the current municipalities' capacity to face growing socio-economic and environmental challenges. According to the UN, Mozambique's urban population in 2009 was 37.6%, and is expected to reach 50.1% in 2025, and 67.4% in 2050 (UN, 2010). Still, this urban growth can be seen as an advantage for economic growth in rural as well as urban areas, given that the official classification of 'cities' includes areas that are genuinely rural within city administrative boundaries and that the actual urbanisation of Mozambique is spontaneously built.

**Table 4. Local municipalities' responsibilities**

<p><i>A</i>· Rural and Urban Infrastructure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1· Green spaces including municipal gardens and plantations</li> <li>2· Municipal roads, including sidewalks</li> <li>3· Affordable housing</li> <li>4· Public cemeteries</li> <li>5· Municipal public services offices</li> <li>6· Markets and fairs</li> <li>7· Fire brigade</li> </ol>
<p><i>B</i>· Basic Sanitation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1· Municipal water supply</li> <li>2· Sewers</li> <li>3· Solid waste collection and treatment and public space cleaning</li> </ol>
<p><i>C</i>· Energy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1· Distribution of electricity</li> <li>2· Urban and rural public lighting</li> </ol>
<p><i>D</i>· Transports and Communications</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1· Urban and rural transport network</li> <li>2· Public transportation within the municipality</li> </ol>
<p><i>E</i>· Education and Teaching</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1· Pre-school centers</li> <li>2· Primary schools</li> <li>3· School transportation</li> <li>4· Equipment for adult education</li> <li>5· Other complementary activities related to education, namely social action, school and leisure.</li> </ol>
<p><i>F</i>· Culture, Leisure and Sports</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1· Culture centers, libraries and museums</li> <li>2· Cultural, landscape and urban heritage</li> <li>3· Camping parks</li> <li>4· Sport and leisure equipment and facilities.</li> </ol>
<p><i>G</i>· Health</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1· Primary health care units.</li> </ol>
<p><i>H</i>· Social Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1· Support activities to vulnerable groups</li> <li>2· Social housing</li> </ol>
<p><i>I</i>· Environmental Management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1· Environmental protection or recovery</li> <li>2· Forestry, plantation and tree conservation</li> <li>3· Establishment of protection areas</li> </ol>

Source: Lei de Finanças e Património das Autarquias, 2007.

## Urban-rural continuity

More than half of the world's population lives in areas that are classified as urban. In developing countries, a substantial and growing proportion lives in or around metropolitan areas and large cities, including the zone termed the 'peri-urban interface', where their livelihoods depend to some extent on natural resources such as land for food, water and fuel, and space for living. (Brook and Dávila, 2000: 1)

Similar to other developing world regions, African urbanisation is complex and cannot be generalised by universal definitions (Freund, 2007), nor can urban space be conceptualised without incorporating peri-urban and non-rural areas (Falola and Salm, 2004). Freund argues

that the city is based on an evolutionary model that needs to be modified by incorporating earlier urbanisation elements into later urban development – just as forms of rural settlement may be carried into urban ways of living (Freund, 2007: 1). Both Coquery-Vidrovitch and Freund agree that African urban space must be analysed as comprising peri-urban and non-urban areas and the urbanisation process in Africa must be understood as a complex (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2005) and evolutionary (Freund, 2007) process supported by political, economic, cultural, religious and social aspects. The perception of ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ as separate entities is the result of a continuing western-based discourse which, in the context of agro-based Africa, is an obstacle to understanding the complexities and implications of current and future African urbanisation.

The reciprocal aspects of the interrelation between the city and the rural environment highlight the issue of migration flows to the city and the desertification of rural areas. O’Connor talks about an urban-rural dichotomy in African urbanisation based not only on socio-economic links but in particular on family kinship: residents often have one temporary house in the city and a more permanent one in the village, and some people actually live in both places. The intensity of family kinship and the desire to keep land rights secure in the village or the land frequently cultivated for the household food supplies, are some of the reasons that link ‘rural’ to ‘urban’ and are shared by all income groups among the urban population, confirming that *there is no clear division between urban and rural population* (Caldwell cited in O’Connor, 1983: 274). Evidence from the Dondo case study indicates that although there is constant contact with the rural site for several reasons,<sup>6</sup> the population in both ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ areas seem to prefer settling in one single location as the distances involved are either not far enough or too far to justify having two residences. Exceptions are made in the inter-city context of Dondo and Beira where (men) construction workers from Dondo have a residence in both places, returning home for the weekend. Certain physical differences between urban and rural settlements may be indicators of a distinction between urban and rural realities (O’Connor, 1983: 274), although in the case of Dondo these distinctions are very blurred because urbanisation is potentially ruralised and urban and rural areas are innately linked. Besides the clashing difference between the formal ‘cement city’ and the *bairros*,<sup>7</sup> former ‘reed city’, the sub-urban urban neighbourhoods and the peri-urban/rural domestic settlements share more features than differences in terms of spatial, economic and biophysical characteristics. Although there may be a certain level of permeability between the two, the evident cultural and socio-economic dualism of the traditional (native) vs. modern (foreign) city centres is the outstanding contrast between the elitist statism of the ‘cement city’ neighbourhoods, foreign commerce and large-scale urban industries, and the thriving and vibrant Mozambican semi-rural neighbourhoods.

In dense and large urban areas, the population living in the peri-urban interface is, on one hand,

particularly vulnerable to the impacts and negative externalities of both rural and urban systems. This

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<sup>6</sup> The reasons identified during fieldwork were daily journeys to collect firewood, building materials and to work on distant plots (women), forestry work, fishing and cattle-raising (men and women).

<sup>7</sup> The term *caniço* has a colonial connotation since it was used to describe the Mozambicans’ urban neighbourhoods. Now, the term used is *bairro*, the Portuguese word for *neighbourhood*. This is probably a post-colonial reaction meant to restore dignity to residential areas.

includes risks to health and life and physical hazards related to the occupation of unsuitable sites, lack of access to clean water and basic sanitation and poor housing conditions. Environmental changes also impinge upon the livelihood strategies of these communities by decreasing or increasing their access to different types of capital assets (including access to natural resources such as land, water, energy). (Brook and Dávila, 2000: 1)

Yet, on the other hand, strategically located between urban services and natural resources the population living at the peri-urban interface of medium size cities, such as Dondo, when certain conditions are met, may be able to develop more diverse, flexible and safer livelihoods. According to Dávila, given the importance of farming in Mozambique in both urban and rural areas, the economic and social interaction between the two is central to most of the population as it provides an avenue for diversifying livelihoods, in the context of economic uncertainty (Dávila *et al.*, 2009: 144-145).

### Access to land and land occupancy

Informal neighbourhoods usually tend to develop either on land that is central but often unsuitable for construction<sup>8</sup> and is closer to urban wage-earning opportunities, or are pushed into peripheral environmentally sensitive areas. The nationalisation of land was formalised by the 1979 Land Law and reviewed under a neo-liberal approach in 1997 (in the aftermath of the war, peace negotiations between Frelimo and Renamo, the new constitution and the actions of the IMF), granting security of tenure following registration (Saul, 1987). The new Urban Land Regulations only recognise areas developed under an urban plan, assuming that informal areas are regularised by the same processes used for formal areas (World Bank, 2009).

Most of the population live under customary social structures and are unaware of their civil rights, the advantages of tenure and the regularisation procedures and also cannot afford the cost of the process. Formal access to land is hampered by a very bureaucratic system, which makes it irrelevant, although it clearly does not stop people from settling spontaneously. People are more aware of the spontaneous illegal occupation of their land by close neighbours or passersby,<sup>9</sup> than by official authorities or foreign investors (Veríssimo, 2010). Excluding the very limited and stratified allocation of land by the state in planned urban expansion areas, most urban land is usually occupied spontaneously or purchased, inherited, transferred or allocated informally by the local community leader (World Bank, 2009) and rarely involves any type of official document proving entitlement or ownership. When people are aware of a possible threat of eviction due to lack of tenure, they may either feel discouraged from continuing with house maintenance, thus making them more vulnerable to risks from precarious housing, or may react by building more permanent houses. In Dondo there is a very small rate of land registration and the great majority of households interviewed had not registered their plot, found eviction absurd and had a strong sense of ownership. This

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<sup>8</sup> Example: flood prone areas, soil erosion, pollution and proximity to hazardous sites such as factories, waste dumps, excavation or construction sites, main roads, rail tracks, etc.

<sup>9</sup> According to fieldwork, when perceived as a problem illegal occupation is usually solved by green fencing, talks with the neighbours involved and at worst with the help of customary neighbourhood law, or it is simply not perceived as a problem.



reveals both that Dondo is still free from the pressures of the land market and that the actions of the municipal authorities have had little effect in terms of land registration.

## The urbanisation of Mozambique: Recognising the self-organising urban system

The dualistic urbanisation of Mozambique consists on the one hand in a formal centre, called the ‘cement city’, built during Portuguese colonisation which is provided with services and infrastructures like a modern European city centre linked with the global economy. On the other hand, the informal urban area, formerly called the ‘reed city’ where houses were built with reeds, which is now known as the *bairros*, is the place where most of the population lives through subsistence agriculture, and informal commerce and services, adapting tradition to the modern economy and urban challenges. Informal neighbourhoods expand freely without any kind of plan, and have grown faster than the ‘cement city’ from independence in 1975 onwards (Robson *et al.*, 2009: 165).

Recent urbanisation rates<sup>10</sup> in Mozambique are more stable than during the early years following independence and the civil war, and current growth factors seem to be associated with: (a) natural urban population growth; (b) rural-urban migration; (c) inter-city migration; (d) rural economic stagnation; and (e) the transformation of formerly rural areas into urban areas due to an increase in the population, and new or altered administrative boundaries. Although the 1997 population census indicated that the urban population had doubled between 1980 and 1997, urban sites in Mozambique did not grow proportionally in terms of permanent housing and infrastructure development, suggesting a biased interpretation of real urbanisation (Araújo, 2001) of a dualistic urbanisation pattern (see Figure 5). This is because the urban growth rate is not proportional to the level of access to urbanisation facilities – paved roads, public lighting, public electricity, mains water, urban waste collection, health and education services transport and so forth. Although the vast majority of the population live in poorly-served neighbourhoods, the neighbourhood communities develop sustainable coping strategies, quite often in innovative and quite effective ways, which seem to reactivate the basic human instinct to re-establish a balance with nature, as identified in the Dondo case study. These kinds of self-organised grassroots innovative strategies, may prove very efficient in solving certain urban problems that are crucial to survival in the short term, although greater emphasis has to be given to the sustainability of these practices to ensure the continuation of living systems in the longer term.

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<sup>10</sup> An average annual growth rate of 4.8% from 2000 to 2005, compared to 9.9% from 1980 to 1992 (UN, 2008; World Bank, 1995).



**Figure 5. Dualistic urban structure of Mozambique's urbanisation – satellite image of Beira showing the transition between the 'cement city' and Bairro da Manga. Source: Googlearth, 2010.**

Mozambican cities and towns are structured into 'urban', 'sub-urban' and 'peri-urban' areas. The 'urban areas' are the former colonial areas, today the formal administrative and commercial 'cement city' and denser informal neighbourhoods (see Figure 6). These spontaneous neighbourhoods, which are where most of the urban population lives, expand less densely radially in sub-urban areas towards the domestic settlements scattered in the natural and rural land of the peri-urban areas. Despite the usual negative connotations associated with neighbourhoods without adequate infrastructures and serious environmental problems such as in denser cities, e.g., Maputo, informal neighbourhoods in medium size cities contain a powerful traditional form in the sense that they shape a ruralised form of urbanisation, adapting rural livelihoods to the challenges found in urban setting: "The majority of city dwellers today continue to have rural habits. Without jobs in the formal sector, they maintain a traditional lifestyle and engage in all sorts of informal activity, avoiding all attempts at regulation. Hence the reality is the 'ruralization' of the urban environment" (Rosário, in Ferraz and Munslow, 1999: 187). The production of space in the human habitat reflects the political economy as well as the social form of organisation and translates into the essence of urbanisation in Mozambique. This urbanisation pattern appears to be the result of a long-lasting family kinship tradition dating back to the first Bantu agro-pastoral settlements, which has been preserved by updating resilient decentralised lifestyles to the present today. Findings indicate that today's ODS is linked to similar pre-colonial modes of production and organisation of space, from which it may have evolved. The predominance of domestic agriculture, cattle raising and businesses developed in the Outdoor Domestic Space in today's neighbourhoods is combined with farming outside the house plot by the women and, in some cases, with waged work, by the men. This spatial strategy of transforming domestic space in urban neighbourhoods is vital to securing the livelihoods of both the majority of the poor and the better-off 'middle class', due to inadequate salaries,

showing that informality is not in fact marginal or secondary to the city, but the dominant urban normality.

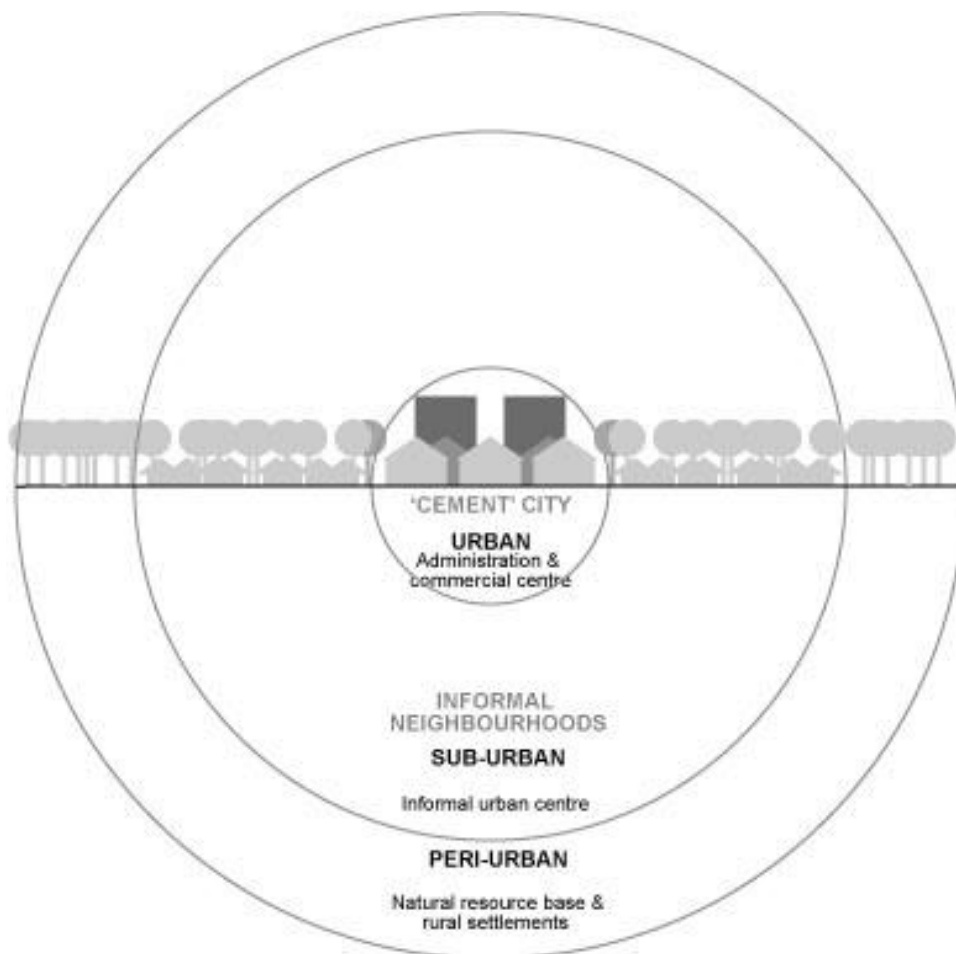


Figure 6. Dualistic urban structure of Mozambique's urbanisation – schematic diagram.  
Source: Veríssimo, 2010.

The application of imported urban planning concepts to a totally different urban context has proved to be not only inadequate but an obstacle to proper urban policy-making, planning and management, as well as socio-economic development, which dramatically affects the well-being of the population and distorts local cultural identity. Therefore, today's Mozambican cities are, on the one hand, a kind of 'perpetuation' of foreign intrusion that fuels the segregation of social space and social and natural impoverishment. This is due to both the continuing clash between foreign and local interpretations of urbanisation, and the uneven distribution of wealth and resources. On the other hand, the process of urbanisation involves a constant reinvention of the 'Mozambican city' through spatial resilience and resistance, with new modes of production combining present challenges with past knowledge. The way in which informal production is spatially organised from the Outdoor Domestic Space is the cause and effect of this urbanisation process. This is the reason argue that today's ruralised and green spontaneous neighbourhoods probably represent a possible rebirth of the Mozambican concept of urbanity, since they express organised, ancient notions, forms and

functions through self-organised norms based on a socially and naturally regenerative decentralised model of society.

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## Urban Agricultures: Spatial, Social and Environmental Transformations in Rome

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**Abstract:** Urban gardening represents a phenomenon that is becoming more and more significant in many countries around the world. It often takes place in interstitial and abandoned areas that are ecologically re-planned by institutions or by active social groups. Community gardens entail a variety of sustainable environmental practices: self-production, short food chain, “zero km”, composting, recycling, and use of renewable resources. Community gardens work as social incubators too: they can be interpreted as public spaces that are potentially able to stimulate inclusion, solidarity and social bonding by involving people in shared activities related to cultivation. This study is focused on the city of Rome where most community gardens are the result of informal appropriation practices. These forms of social mobilization can potentially increase the environmental and social quality of life in highly urbanized environments. But they need to be supported. In this perspective they represent a crucial challenge for planning. What role could institutions play? What kind of tensions need to be explored between social practices and institutional powers? Can public policy promote urban inclusion by legitimizing these self-guiding society expressions?

**Keywords:** urban gardening, social mobilization, urban planning, institutions, informality

### Vegetables versus bricks

Nowadays the city is everywhere and in everything. It loses its traditional configuration and flows into megalopolis: a fragmented built nebula where a clear distinction between urban and rural is not readable anymore. The city is no longer a self-evident object opposed to the countryside. It is no longer enclosed by walls that define what is the inside and what is the outside. Many attempts at defining the contemporary city (edge cities, outer cities, exopolis, peripheral urbanization, postsuburbia, technoburbs, metroburbia) have tried to interpret it as a urban form made of extensive, densely networked and increasingly globalized polinucleated mosaic settlements (Soja, 2000, 2011). One of the distinctive features of this post-metropolis geography is a constant and accelerated land consumption rate.

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In Italy, in the last 50 years, urbanized territory had a 1000% increase, despite a negative demographic trend where births don't compensate deaths. According to Italian National Institute of Statistics, from 1950 to 2005, the total amount of un-built land in Italy fell from 30.000.000 to 17.803.010 hectares, a reduction of 12.196.000 hectares, that is 40,35% of the total. Rome's case is even more meaningful. According to Legambiente<sup>2</sup>, Rome is the city with the highest land consumption rate in Italy. The urbanized land in the capital city increased of 12% between 1993 and 2008, 4800 hectares, that is, three times the historical centre inside the Aurelian Walls.

This phenomenon produces lasting and serious impacts: deterioration of natural environment, reduction of agricultural land, permanent damage on natural cycles' regulation and biodiversity. It generates sprawl, longer and longer commuting times, more and more unsustainable infrastructure and managing costs. This is an urban development model that has been recognized to be an ineffective and energy devouring one. It fosters territorial decay and social instability, favouring social fragmentation and individualization processes.

Urban planning has a role in this. Without adequate, progressive and environmentally conscious public policies, its complicity with real-estate speculation and land rent ends up favouring massive land consumption and unlimited urbanization. In this respect, urban planning risks to be trapped in the mantra of urban growth, namely the territorial equivalent of the still untouched myth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Against these dynamics, urban gardening could potentially succeed in saving portions of territory from further and dangerous urbanization processes. These urban gardens can actually be seen as drivers for a different model that reject the acceleration impressed by the linear hypertrophic growth of the present urbanization. They can be interpreted as islands of resistance where concrete utopias could put a de-growth philosophy into action. It is the possibility of abandoning "the goal of exponential growth, as that goal is promoted by nothing other than a quest for profits on the part of the owners of capital and has disastrous implications for the environment, and therefore for humanity" (Latouche, 2010: 7).

Urban gardens not only resist urban growth. Urban gardens are incubators of a new idea of city based on a different ecological and social consciousness. They entail a variety of sustainable environmental practices: self-production, short food chain, "zero km", composting, recycling, and use of renewable resources. They work as social incubators too: they can be interpreted as public spaces that are potentially able to stimulate inclusion, solidarity and social bonding by involving people in shared activities related to the cultivation. In this respect, urban gardening can be a way to cultivate the territory of de-growth by subverting the actual urban trend and by nurturing an *horticountercultural politics* (McKay, 2011) where progressive and inclusive social change may occur. The subversive potential of urban gardening takes place in those spaces where "you can find above all a possibility, already realized but potentially still enhanceable, of silence, slowness, shadow, disconnection (in a hyper-loud, fast, brightly lit and connected world), the possibility to experience a different temporality that is regulated by nature and body and that, in an environment governed by technique, is confined in the residual, liminal and inaccessible world of nature [...], not yet turned into a show and often surprisingly close to our residences

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<sup>2</sup> Italian Environmental Association.



(Lanzani, 2011: 31). From this point of view, urban gardening put into being a new social ecology as well as a new urban concept where slowness doesn't mean "retardation, backwardness, underdevelopment, but rather a different movement" (Lanzani, 2011: 19). It's a different way of living and imagining the city.

The universe of urban gardening experiences is extremely varied: despite some interesting institutional initiatives, most of them come from citizens and grassroots organizations that rescue, occupy and re-plan small pieces of interstitial and abandoned urban land. These subjects are part of a transversal and g-local urban movement aimed at re-designing the cities we live in. They have local roots and global strategies. They are all involved in the attempt of reclaiming a right to the city by transforming the city itself. The right to the city cannot in fact "be conceived of as a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities". Rather, "it can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed right to urban life" (Lefebvre *et al.*, 1996: 158). As Harvey points out, this right cannot be confined in accessing what already exists: it is a right to change it. This is what is happening in Rome.

### Agricultural practices in Rome

Rome has been publicised as the European city with the largest amount of agricultural land: 51.000 hectares, that is, 40% of the whole municipal territory. The "Agro Romano" surrounding the city is the biggest part of it. But an increasing amount of agricultural land is interstitially located inside the urban fabric. In 2006, the Department of Environmental and Agricultural Policies of Municipality of Rome took a census of the urban gardens: 2500 areas assembled in 67 sites. Since then, some urban gardens have been abandoned and many others have been created. It is a very dynamic and constantly evolving reality. Nowadays UAP (Urban Architecture Project) has mapped more than 100 urban gardening experiences including shared gardens, temporary gardens and guerrilla gardening actions.

This increasing phenomenon is extremely diversified in terms of typology, size, juridical state, subject configurations and objectives. What follows is an exemplifying recognition of some of the experiences being carried out in Rome. They've been analyzed in a more complex<sup>3</sup> research framework and here inevitably and brutally synthesised: tiny fragments of urban stories.

#### *Garbatella urban gardens: An anti-speculation device*

In 1992 the Municipal Authority of Rome presented a project named "Piano Gerace" for a congress centre and accommodation facilities (total 1.800.000 mc) in the areas along via Cristoforo Colombo. In order to contrast this massive urbanization project, people mobilized

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<sup>3</sup> Roman urban gardens have been object of a collective survey conducted together with the students of the course of "Analisi dei sistemi urbani e territoriali" (Analysis of urban and territorial systems), (academic year 2010-2011, Degree course of "Ingegneria per l'Ambiente e il Territorio" [Environmental and Territorial Engineering]). The survey entails: analysis of the most significant events connected to the urban gardening experience; analysis of the subjects involved (citizens, associations, institutions) and of their relational structures; analysis of practices and everyday life forms put into being by the populations (the aim is to read urban gardens as "communities of practices", that means communities of people that define themselves by sharing the same actions); the analysis of the policies through a critical reading of project documents and public announcements as well as through half-structured interviews to institutional representatives.

and presented two popular resolutions to the Municipality. In 1999, after long and enduring conflicts, local residents and the Municipality reached an agreement according to which the formerly private property of that area became public. In 2006 the area was assigned to the Municipal Garden Service, and a participative planning process started. The goal was to plan an urban park, whose realisation would have been guaranteed by municipal funds. In the following years, several political changes at both Municipal and Regional level ended up stopping the planning process. In this highly instable situation, given the existing conflicts, the lack of funding for the urban park re-conversion project and the risk of a massive building invasion, a group of citizens along with several grassroots associations (Legambiente Garbatella, Casetta Rossa, Città dell'Utopia, Associazione Controchiave) started to occupy 700 mq of the area, reclaiming it for agricultural use.

On June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010 the Urban Garden Garbatella started operating in 15 lots of roughly 40 mc each. It soon became one of the most significant experiences in the roman panorama: a self-financed initiative aimed at protecting a fragment of territory; a form of political pressure based upon the potential of urban agriculture; the re-appropriation of a threatened space and an informal territorial project.

### *Eutorto: Fight against social and productive exclusion*

Eutorto is an urban garden managed by a group of former workers (from Agile ex Eutelia Information Technology, Rome) who want to be still together after having lost their job, in order to overcome together the subsequent social exclusion. Their story is paradigmatic of the global crisis we all live in. It is the effect of controversial property changes, acquisitions and big industrial readjustment plans. These workers have been receiving redundancy payment since 2010. They protested. In vain. Progressively they felt the urgency to have an occupation again, to maintain the relationships built in the working environment and to protract their political mobilization by pursuing a different kind of visibility. Rather than continuing their protest through traditional forms, they decided to create an urban garden in order to keep alive the public attention on an emblematic and severe social situation, to address depression due to unemployment through social activities, to mobilize economic resources and support their family balance, to continue a fight for rights that had been taken away from them. Inspired by the Urban Garden Garbatella, 23 ex-workers decided to put their ideas into action, by creating a urban garden. Through support of the Provincial Authority, they obtained a piece of land owned by the Agrarian Institute, in Via Ardeatina (XI district), where they started this new activity in 2010.

This urban garden, named "Eutorto", has great potential and can be considered unique in its genre. Nevertheless it is facing some problems. The amount of money (19.000 euro) promised by the Provincial Authority is not available yet. Also trust and cooperation between Eutorto and the Agrarian Institute is gradually failing. The school blames the gardeners for their lack of interest in cooperating with them: according to the school they are just strategically using the urban garden for their political goals. The relationship risks becoming highly conflictual with possible important repercussions on the existence of the Eutorto. The agreement is valid only for the duration of the redundancy payments. What will happen when and if the agreement won't be renewed? Will the only possible solution be a redundancy payment for the urban garden?

### *Magliana social garden: Support and rehabilitation activity*

In the neighbourhood Magliana the association “Scuola viva” and the social cooperative “Albero riflesso” involve people with psychic and physical disabilities in agricultural activities. The garden laboratory has been working since 1987 and is based on the principles of *garden therapy*: through the direct care of plants, from seeding to harvest, people acquire sense of responsibility, learn how to do a job and succeed in reinforcing their self-esteem as far as they are able to see the outcomes of their work.

The laboratory is organized as a series of activities: the greenhouse (where seeds and different kinds of topsoil are stocked and catalogued through tags prepared by the kids), the tanks for the herbs (made for being easily accessible and usable: from a small porch used as “relax area” one can see all the lots that are elevated of 20-25 cm and divided by brick paths), the proper garden (managed according to the principles of organic agriculture, through sustainable geo-disinfestations such as *solarisation*, through agronomic practices such as biological intercropping and through natural fertilizers such as compost and manure), the earthworm breeding (that allows to recycle food and garden waste, but also the paper used in the association’s office), the hens’ nests (made with the dried grass of the lawn; the litters are made with sawdust periodically replaced and used to feed earthworms; each kid has his own hen that he can recognize thanks to a coloured bracelet at their ankle). The “Orti sociali della Magliana” (Magliana social gardens) are a very particular kind of urban garden: their lack of interaction with the surroundings is due to the presence of individuals with disabilities who take part to the activities and who need to work in a protected environment. Recently, anyway, the community has expressed the will to communicate more with the neighbourhood. That’s why the “Laboratori integrati di orto e arte” (Integrated garden and art laboratories) have been born, starting from this year, for the participation of small groups from the elementary and middle schools of the neighbourhood. There’s still plenty of work to do and most of the potential of this experience hasn’t been fully realized: scarcity of funds and lack of institutional support risk to demean this virtuous experience that promotes both social and environmental sustainability.

### *Garden park of via della Consolata: The first project promoted by the municipal authority*

In 1975 a group of 25 citizens occupies an abandoned area belonging to the religious institute Missionari della Consolata: 80.000 mq located in the XVI district, neighbourhood Pisana, between via del Fosso Bavetta and via della Consolata. The land was then progressively and informally converted to urban gardens. In 1995 the Municipality acquired the area. In the same year the squatters constituted the association “Fosso Bavetta” (64 members) as a unique referent in the subsequent re-planning of the area, a project that the municipal authority was very willing to implement in order to formalise and re-design the garden. The initial project was a very ambitious one: a small pond to use as tank, 38 gardens with driveways, tools boxes and composting area. A political change in the city council along with a reduction of the allocated funds ended up scaling down the size of the project. Its implementation was difficult and marked by complex negotiation between the planner and the association. Conflicts dealt especially with the definition of the lots’ size and, more in general, with the question of the collective-individual fruition of the area: the project indeed entails the creation of urban gardens individually managed (4200 mq) within a public park. Thanks to a total investment of

roughly 400.000 euro, in 2010 the “Gardens Park of via della Consolata” are finally operating. Based on an agreement signed by municipal authority and Associazione Fosso Bavetta, the gardens are temporarily assigned to the latter, that committed itself to take care of them according to the guidelines given by the authority. An internal regulation issued by the Associazione defines in full details how the gardens are to be assigned and how life within the park must be. The Gardens Park of via della Consolata is the outcome of a typical process of regularization of a previous occupation. On the one hand this process recalls the intelligence of the institutions in being able to read and support bottom-up practices and projects. On the other hand it has all the ambivalences that are typical of institutionalization processes when they end up crystallizing the informal urban flows and its disruptive potentialities.

### *Fosso delle Capannelle: Coexistent urban agricultures*

Fosso delle Capannelle is a part of the *Agro Romano* belonging to the provincial authority of Rome and located in the north-western quadrant of the city. The area has a huge naturalistic interest and is surrounded by important urban infrastructures and by transforming city portions: the hospital san Filippo Neri, the retention home of Casal del Mamo and the former psychiatric hospital of Santa Maria della Pietà (an area included in the “centralities to be planned” of the new city master plan). At the end of the Seventies the area was occupied by a group of youngsters who started an agricultural activity in a degraded place. The goal was to experiment a new and virtuous relationship between rural and inhabited spaces. In 1978 the Provincial Authority and the occupants, organized in a social cooperative (Co.Bra.Gor), formalized their relationship and signed an agreement that guaranteed to the cooperative the free use of a land of 66 hectares. Later the relation between Co.Bra.Gor and the Provincial Council became very turbulent. The Provincial Council blamed Co.Bra.Gor for not having taken care of some areas adjacent to the Fosso delle Capannelle, areas that meanwhile had been occupied by another group of inhabitants. After a long fight culminated in the revocation of the agreement in 1988, Co.Bra.Gor and the provincial council have now achieved a new agreement. In this territory therefore two extremely different urban agriculture projects coexist. On the one hand the social cooperative Co.Bra.Gor: an institutionally recognized reality that produces high quality food as well as cultural and recreational initiatives. On the other hand the informal gardenists of the Fosso delle Capannelle, who created a mosaic of small lots along the ditch’s sides: this is a controversial occupation but nevertheless is not firmly opposed by local authorities, since it affects very small and liminal spaces along the shores of a virtually inaccessible ditch. The future of this occupation is uncertain: the high level of water pollution that characterizes the ditch will be tackled through a very contentious project of water intubation that doesn’t take the gardens into account at all. Eventually, a project of legalization of the illegal gardens will take place, in the wake of what the Municipality already made in via della Consolata.

### *The social gardens of Castel di Leva: Social periurban agriculture*

The story of the urban gardens of Castel di Leva is tightly linked with the story of the Social Integrated Cooperative “Agricoltura Nuova”. In the 1970s, Agricoltura Nuova (along with the Capodarco community and two local branches of the Communist Party) occupied a land in Castel di Decima, between via Laurentina and via Pontina. They appealed the “Gullo-Segni law” according to which lands that were left uncultivated or badly cultivated by the owners could have been assigned to other agricultural cooperatives. At that time, of the 180 hectares

occupied, 120 were planned to host a new settlement of low-cost housings. The project of a new densely inhabited neighbourhood (70.000 individuals) was thankfully put into discussion by a report of the Ministry of Agriculture and by subsequent surveys conducted by WWF (World Wildlife Fund) and by the Archaeological Office that confirmed the agricultural vocation of this portion of land and its incompatibility with any urbanization hypothesis. In 1996, after many years of illegal occupation, the ground was formally assigned to Agricoltura Nuova. The following year the cooperative decided to expand by enlarging the spectrum of its activities. It rented further 65 hectares with the aim of hosting a care home for disable members, shops (of wool, of bread, of preserves) and an agri-playschool. The social garden is the most recent project. It consists of 111 lots (40 mq each) assigned through a tender open to everybody.” The meaning of this experience is very well condensed by Aldo Arbusti: “Social gardens are the best way to allow citizens to perceive land as a common good that must be safeguarded and protected. Gardens are not only places of production but also of encounter and exchange of information and opinions. The extent of our success is testified by the very long waiting list of people wanting to run a garden. But perhaps our major satisfaction is when we see children walking through the gardens and discussing about the colours and names of vegetables, on the amount of water needed by the young plants, or when they feed the compost with the discarded vegetables. This is how socio-environmental education starts”.

As it clearly appears from the bunch of cases taken into consideration, the landscape of urban gardening in Rome is highly differentiated. Nonetheless some tendencies do emerge and are worth highlighting. First of all Roman urban gardens are usually the result of informal occupation processes. In some cases the phenomenon is acknowledged by local institutions through specific agreements that assign to group of citizens the temporary gratuitous right to occupy a ground (as occurred with the social cooperative Co.Bra.Gor). In some other cases institutions intervene by setting *ad hoc* policies (the Department for environment and green areas has created the “Guidelines for the realization and management of urban gardens in Rome”) that aim at regularizing existing occupations and at jointly re-drawing occupied spaces (as in the Gardens Park of via della Consolata). But mostly, with very few institutional exceptions, Rome is characterized by the presence of significantly informal experiences that can be “inscribed in the ever-shifting relationship between what is legal and illegal, legitimate and illegitimate, authorized and unauthorized” (Roy, 2009: 80).

Formalising the informal is an approach that prevails in other cities in the world (France, Germany, Canada, U.S., etc.) where institutional intervention is significant. If we wanted to draw a stadial theory of the evolution of urban gardening (from informal occupation to institutional project), the predominance of spontaneous garden would put Rome near the beginning of this time line. But it also allows thinking the case of Rome as an interesting anomaly within which a new relationship between informal practice and institutions can be experimented.

### **A challenging paradoxical path**

In Rome there are more than 2 million mq of decayed and abandoned areas (Census of the decayed and abandoned areas, Parks and Gardens Office, Rome Municipal Authority): “A large amount of uncertain spaces with no function and that are even difficult to name. They don’t belong to shadow and don’t belong to light. They occupy the margins” (Clément, 2005: 10). Spaces located in the forgotten folds of the urban: residual places that constitute, as Gilles Clément put it, a “third landscape” that creates tension between light and shadow. This

third landscape is a hybrid entity that crushes the most recurrent traditional categories of interpretation, denying the analytical opposition between city and countryside:

Indeed, while most of contemporary urbanization isn't able to generate city and urban space, neither does countryside take care anymore of the land as the traditional rural world used to. This remarks an increasing disjunction between urbanization and city, as well as between countryside and land care. Anyway, more simply, any geographical observation will report hybrid landscapes that are urban and rural at the same time. It is no accident that most of the situations tackled here and referred to a rural world are based on a recovery of land care activities, on the presence of urban subjects and on experimenting new coexistence modes. Also more urban situations, anyway, show a penetration of land care practices and of a relationship to nature within them, in the interstices of the urbanized world. (Lanzani, 2011: 38-39)

These urban situations are in fact intersections of a multitude of practices, namely informal urban gardening experiences, which potentially offer an alternative territorial development pattern: a way to transform the city from within. "If the process of production of cities by societies is most evident in the case of social revolt and spatial innovation, it is not limited to such exceptional events. Everyday, in every context, people acting individually or collectively produce or reproduce the rules of their society, and translate them into their spatial expression" (Castells, 1983). These actions "are not dramatic and exceptional events. They are, in a permanent form, at the very core of social life" (Touraine, 1978: 45). They often contradict power and institutional structures and try to imagine and produce a different city.

In this respect informal urban gardening practices can be interpreted as expressions of a self-guiding society (Lindblom, 1990): micro tactics of spatial appropriation and re-signification (De Certeau, 1990) which directly challenge the normative sphere; a whole of unexpected accidents that transgress the orderly text of the planned city; the result of various attempts at profaning power devices (Agamben, 2006); a net of "temporary autonomous zones" living consciously outside the law and determined to keep it up, even if only for a short time (Bey, 1991).

In Rome, urban gardens are indeed (for the most part) informal practices of occupation/reinvention of fragments of residual territory that, thanks to the intervention of local population, can build significant laboratories of social and environmental experimentation. These experimentations are activated by "*poetical* because *poietical*" subjects: they are builders, craftsmen, authors not of texts but of practical and ethical acts that inspire plausible alternative scenarios of possibilities to come (Gargani, 1999). Moreover, they can be interpreted as an interconnected urban movement that is able to produce integrated instances rooted in a renewed social, political and environmental consciousness. They succeed in merging land care, occupation, production, security, social inclusion and participation:

They are the organizational forms, the live schools, where the new social movements of our emerging society are taking place, growing up, learning to breathe, out of reach of the state apparatuses, and outside the closed doors of repressed family life. They are successful when they connect all the repressed aspects of the new, emerging life because this is their specificity: to speak the new language that nobody yet speaks in its multifaceted meaning. (Castells, 1983: 330-331)

Nevertheless, as Castells would argue, most existing research on social movements and informal practices combine romantic descriptions with populist ideology. A substantial literature interprets informal practices as a revolution from below (De Soto, 1989, 2000), emphasizing the role of marginalized people in acting against the State. This stance is comprehensibly sympathetic to the various struggles that take place in the informal territories of claims. Nevertheless, this approach risks producing an ideological celebration of the

informal without understanding its inner differentiation and complexity. Informal practices are not, for themselves and without distinction, a virtuous and homogeneous social entity that acts on the base of shared and progressive values. In some cases they end up implementing spatial privatization processes based on forms of neo-liberal individualism. In other cases, they appear to be forms of “urban populism” (Castells, 1983) that do not necessarily call into question the urban status quo or create a just city despite their good intentions (Roy, 2009). Finally and interestingly some forms of insurgency succeed in producing “public” (services, spaces, goods), implementing an alternative model of urban space production and effectively transforming the city itself. But under which conditions? Or what should be done to achieve this goal? What role could institutions play in this respect?

First of all institutions should learn how to develop a “policy of attention” by distinguishing practices that produce “public” from the ones that subtract or impoverish it. This “policy of attention” is a difficult approach “that needs continuous observation and learning: know how to recognize persons and things that, in the middle of hell, are not hell, and make them endure, give space to them” (Calvino). It requires exquisitely political and analytical wisdom aimed at recognising, naming and identifying what produces “public” and subsequently what is worth sustaining. The “public” nature of goods, services, spaces is a controversial issue. It cannot be interpreted as an intrinsic property of the good itself nor it can deterministically be the outcome of an intentional action or of a regulatory imposition (a space doesn’t become public as an effect of a law or project). What is perceived as “public” is rather the result of the multiple relationships put into being by its fruition or often the collateral product of other unintentional social practices. In the case of urban gardening in Rome, most of the informal practices succeed in producing public, by favouring social inclusion, by re-imagining productive and reproductive activities, by reclaiming and re-planning spaces to be used collectively. In some other cases (for instance the urban garden of Via dei Quattro Venti whose story is not presented in this paper) informal urban gardening is nothing but a land appropriated by a single person who ended up privatizing a piece of the city.

With regard to those practices that are able to produce public, it is important to acknowledge that a whole set of resources, knowledges, experiences and competences aimed to address public problems cannot be confined in formally recognized institutions (Cottino and Zeppetella, 2009). Rather this whole complex set often lies in those informal practices that are able to find significant and usually unconventional answers to collective needs. In this respect, public institutions cannot be considered the only subjects entitled to provide public services or to produce public politics. Informal practices can be thought as *de facto* public policies if (and when) they succeed in addressing public issues (Crosta, 1998).

From this perspective, “intelligent institutions” (Donolo, 1997) should be able to put a subsidiary approach into action by: self-reflectively recognizing their incapability in addressing some kind of social needs; delegating the resolution of some public issues to other informal actors that need to be legitimized as public actors as well; experimenting a fecund collaboration with insurgent networks through forms of mutual learning (Friedmann, 1987) and complementary cooperation; nurturing those important informal initiatives that risk to die without attentive institutional support (economic, logistic, etc). I’m talking about a potential support that is a dangerous tightrope walking. The risk is to incorporate the informal into the formal, killing the vital, propulsive and unconventional capabilities embedded in the insurgency. It is an unsolvable and irreducible tension between formal and informal, between what’s established and what’s establishing. On the institutional side, it means moving through a difficult equilibrium between intervention and “letting be”: between the action that is

necessary to undertake in order to sustain potentially fragile informal practices and the indispensable respect of the dynamics of a place (Lanzoni, 2006), of the disruptive potentialities of the very same informality.

“Letting be” is crucial in order to maintain the vital strength of self-organized practices that are able to spark off a change precisely by virtue of their non-institutionality; practices able to adapt themselves according to the environment they fit in; practices that bring up the value of difference because, being plural, they challenge the unitaristic paradigm of the political demand embodied by the State (Crosta, 1998). Some of these practices anyway, if not adequately supported, are doomed to fail, as some cases of urban gardening experiences in Rome would demonstrate. In many cases in fact they risk to dry up rapidly without affecting significantly the urban reality. As a consequence certain very important insights coming from civil society would remain unexplored in the absence of institutional support (Cottino and Zeppetella, 2009), as well as skills and projects molecularly widespread in the territory would risk dying (Scandurra, 2012). In this case a wise and careful institutional intervention is necessary in order to consolidate “territory projects from below” that otherwise would lose their vitality and fail. Very often, just after the initial stage that capitalizes commitment and enthusiasm of volunteers, many informal initiatives lose their strength and vanish out. In such a situation the role of institutions could be essential: they could help structuring the know-how spontaneously emerging from the territory and sustain those practices from an economic point of view (Cottino and Zeppetella, 2009) but also by removing administrative obstacles and by solving technical and organizational problems. Of course intervention must be calibrated in order to avoid forced institutionalization and crystallization of the practices. In this regard institutions should work towards soft but targeted intervention, aimed at consolidating but not risking to dampen down the strength of these micro-action of territorial change.

In a process of this kind not only territorial practices take advantage from the support of the institutions. Also the latter do have their compensation. First of all they would be able to offer, thanks to the involvement of citizens and grassroots organization, services that they wouldn't be able to offer otherwise. Secondly they can learn from diffused creativity and collective intelligence, as well as understand social demands that haven't been codified yet. This is not to be intended as an ideological praise of informality, but as the capacity to acknowledge some forms of social activism that enrich the public sphere (spaces, services, goods): a valuable resource for those institutions willing to welcome transformation.

Urban gardens are an interesting training ground where new synergies and cooperation forms between institutions and civil society could be experimented. This cooperation implies giving up part of one's own sovereignty. Citizen's sovereignty when they claim their right to autonomously provide to some of their needs. Institution's sovereignty when they consider themselves as exclusive providers of services.

Urban planners, being manifestly incapable of intercepting new social demands and even of adequately responding the existent ones, could play a paradoxical role in this framework: they could learn how to legitimate a social activism that challenges institutional power, the same power their discipline is the direct expression of. This arouses some crucial and thorny questions: can urban planning, from bio-political device aimed at governing men and women, turn into a tool for enhancing the ability of society to guide itself? Which tension, which potentiality can be observed between constituent and constituted power, between regulatory sphere and life forms? To legitimate informal territorial practices means exclusively to try to neutralize their profaning strength? Can we imagine creating virtuous synergies between social self-organization and institutions?



It may appear as a paradox for an institution to recognize those who act “outside any prescribed set of regulations or the law” (Roy, 2009: 80), namely informal actors. But paradoxes are able to produce new grammars. And that’s where social change may happen.

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## Urban Agricultures in Maputo: Other Forms of Production

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**Abstract:** Walking around the city of Maputo is not a mere sensory experience. The city multiplies in many ways, in progressive ways, when the viewer is able to remove from his eyes an urban model of city. It is many cities when one is able to understand the space as the result of historical factors, social structures and relationships forged and redefined rather than through an ad-hoc observation. The historicity of Maputo is closely linked to the historicity of urban agriculture in a dynamic relationship of cause and effect. Thus, agriculture is examined as a space constructed from the city, an approach that emerges from its socioeconomic and political contexts. The article starts with a characterization of the meanings of urban space in Maputo in order to better qualify the spaces identified as urban agriculture, and then draws up a holistic conception sufficiently strong to support the assumptions of this research.

**Keywords:** urban space(s), urban agriculture, city, other economies

### Introduction<sup>2</sup>

From an urban center built following a model of a European city, still in colonial times, Maputo developed spaces where urban and rural contrasts subvert themselves into another paradigm of the city. A possible relationship and intersection between urban and rural practices in socio-economic matters characterizes this outlook.

Insofar as it progresses away from the center towards the continent, these relationships are mixed and become opaque to any regular segregation. The suburban areas do not feature land use/occupation planning but there is, as a counterpoint, some proximity between the territory and relational forms of occupation, even though often in a precarious salubrity. There is a strong trade in agricultural and manufactured products and the presence of services, all specifically targeted to the resident population, at the expense of other product types.

Close to the political limits of Maputo, the periurban zones feature rural occupation but also housing expansion from the urban center. There it is possible to find farms, homes and major occupations of unproductive land. These are areas where a range of longitudinal spaces of family farming and traditional housing, in a broad sense, coexist with more urban characteristics of occupation.

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<sup>2</sup> All direct quotations of this paper were translated by the author.

The periurban areas are marked by a low occupancy rate, but with some densification when a distinction is drawn between the territories occupied by the urban sprawl of the city and the occupation of the less wealthy, where many small areas of housing and agriculture sometimes coexist.

As a result of all this, Maputo becomes many cities: a city that escapes a unilateral observation of any theoretical framework, a city where the forms of land occupation and, especially, the people who are moving through it are based on historical, social and economic elements. However, if we abandon the Western model of a city, perhaps Maputo is not many; it is just a city that holds a historicity capable of creating an urban space that contains elements not classifiable or identifiable by a Western city model.

## Historicity

Mozambican cities mostly originated as transpositions of European models, representing the creation of urban territorial spaces where some rules, relationships, socio-economic structures and urban policies were transferred to the Mozambican territory.

These “urban islands” inside the territorial context of pre-colonial Africa – identified as rural in comparison with cities in sub-Saharan Africa – have created spaces of occupation unrelated to their surroundings in terms of social, economic or political characteristics (Araújo, 1999). The city appears as a space for accumulation of colonial production and as a point of production flow for the metropolis. They are poles draining raw materials and agricultural products without any capital accumulation in these spaces (Baia, 2004).

Still in the colonial period, the urban centers also become regional administrative centers, while reproducing the model city of the metropolis and inserting into their modes of life precepts of the capitalist economy (Baia, 2004). In a concomitant way, given the array of plantation agriculture and exportation to the metropolis, there were large habitation areas in the vicinity of the colonial cities, which supported the necessary workforce.

The growth along the city limits interested them, providing new spaces of residential occupancy, better soil quality for farming, and improved lifestyles for the colonists who moved from the metropolis, etc. The result of this process was the emergence of racial demographic stratification belts which ranged in size and space occupied in accordance with the urban core, but always outside the nucleus and adapting to the territory the new residents had left (Araújo, 1999; Baia, 2004):

The colonial city established itself as a place segregated and exclusionary, a symbol of domination to the black population. Thereafter, the urbanity, limited to the formal practices of the lifestyle of the white population in the city, spread to the suburbs in a weak way, involving small factions of the black population through policies of assimilation. (Baia, 2009: 28)

After independence in 1974, the colonial towns were occupied by the national elite and the ideology remained in the housing belt that provided manpower to the urban core. This process could still be seen some years following independence, when racial exclusion once again gave rise to multiple exclusions – ethnic, economic and political.

However, the process of development of urban areas suffers a rupture of paradigm in the early years of independence. On one hand, the government identifies the rural area for a concentration of effort and investment in the country's development. On the other hand, the city defines itself only as the political center, not incurring interventions of any kind. One can speak of an urban space that keeps the socioeconomic status segregated and then reinforced when it became a destination for regional migration and a representation of power.

## From expansion to growth

Different theories help to explain the expansion and growth of Maputo, but none fit a dogmatic Western approach of a planned expansion with coded understandings and perceptions of a classical model of the city. In Maputo, and more widely in Mozambique, one cannot speak of the expansion and growth of urban space without acknowledging the influence of structural factors determined by the periods of civil war (ended in 1992) and socialist rule.

In this sense, we must start from conceptions of the *cidade de cimento* and the *cidade de caniço*, terms from the colonial era. The first refers to the urban center stocked with an urban infrastructure and its planned expansion, where one can find services, buildings, houses, etc. The second refers to that area around the center where there is a poorer population attracted by job offers. That space is formed by the opposite of the urban center, adding an inefficient public transportation network, and a place where “the reed houses dominate, whence comes the name, and wood and zinc are present as symbols of a certain urbanity” (Araújo, 1999: 176).

Also added to the Maputo context is the annexation of rural areas adjacent to the city limits in 1986; a state policy to eliminate barriers to the main sources of supply of the agricultural market towns and to create territories available for expansion:

Thus, one day the population was considered rural and lived and acted as such, the next day came to be urban, it had occurred without any change in the occupation of space in the forms of production, behavior and family economics. It is from here that there is a new designation for the terminology of urban in Maputo: periurban neighborhoods of the city that had nothing of urban, if we consider the classical concepts, and without having been defined such through its characteristics. (Araújo, 1999: 177)

In other words, the urban core remains as the political and economic center of the city and the territory occupied by the *cidade de caniço* or suburban area remains subject to the expansion of the core, leaving them what is not (yet) the appropriate to expansion of the “cement city,” but from this time also bounded by the newer area identified as *periurban*.<sup>3</sup>

Thus characterized, the expansion of Maputo as a systemic structure originated from the creation of the city in the midst of a non-Western urban context which, by the socioeconomic and political vectors of the colonial period, gave rise to a fringe suburban poor, black, non-urbanized and economically dependent on the urban center. And later, this suburban area would be bounded also by creating a rural area annexed to the district urban, suburban, poor and dependent on agriculture for income and livelihood.<sup>4</sup>

The growth of the city of Maputo should be seen and perceived by the confluence of the dynamic forces that circumscribe the elements of territorial, economic, social and demographic policies. The presence of rurality in urban space is not an approach that isolates and separates suburban and periurban areas, such as islands or rings without relation to the

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<sup>3</sup>According to Araújo (1999), even in recent times it is possible to observe this phenomenon of marginalization of the *cidade de caniço*, where the poverty is conditioned itself by the spaces left by the city, as well the job offer. In some situations, it is clear that contrast emphasizes the residential segregation as a linear and bounded form.

<sup>4</sup>Araújo (2003, 2001-2002, 1999) supports this theoretical approach to the development of urban rings in Maputo, each characterized by socioeconomic, housing and productive factors. See also Araujo (2003: 170) in his characterization of urban, suburban and periurban.

urban core. Rather, it conceives an argument that, based on their political and socio-economic, demonstrates how these areas relate to the center. They therefore constitute a new paradigm of urban which cannot define what is *rural* and what is *city* (Baia, 2004).

In the 1990s, the growth of Maputo became a new demographic expansion out of the urban core: a city grown beyond its housing belt of manual labor, which then “jumped” to a suburban territory that surrounds the area and redefined it as a periurban area connected with the core. Again, the housing belt, poor and marginalized, remains as an area lacking political and economic interests and now bounded by the nucleus and the new urbanization (Araújo, 2001-2002, 1999).

The city was established, then, with connecting flows of people and core services in this new emerging urbanization process, without the loss of the political and economic centrality of the core, but keeping the suburban area as a territory surrendered to its fate. Another strong feature of this new development is the lack of growth beyond the population growth, where economic activities are subsistence or linked to other traditional elements.

In turn, the perception of the growth of Maputo is conditioned by dynamic and sometimes is opposing forces of expansion and refraction of growth. The urbanity of Maputo is taken as the ever-changing spaces: it is through the continued growth of urban space that discontinuous spaces of urbanization are perceived (Baia, 2009).

Traditional Western models of space occupation, however, do not take into consideration feelings of belonging and different forms of land use; they empty the notion of urbanity and do not incorporate the meanings and perspectives of individuals who inhabit the territory.

The so-called suburban spaces are in a constant process of expansion and refraction because they are subject to the development of urban activities and the growth of the city. For periurban areas – a second urbanization or the third ring of the city of Maputo – are not something static, formed out of any expansion plan. Those spaces are occupied according individuals who, for economic or other reasons, decide to occupy an area outside the center. They feature occasional interventions where the individual is responsible for all structures: housing, roads and sanitation.

These findings provide some clues to realize what an urban space is, and in this case, also what is suburban and periurban in the city of Maputo. On the one hand, there is a territory already occupied by a rural environment; on the other hand, it is the result of a demographic intervention of individuals desirous of new housing.

Taken as periurban, these areas are spaces where the specificity of rurality coexists with urban interventions but do not share the assumption of the urban center, because in both cases the space is conditioned to the group of individuals who occupy it (Baia 2009, 2004).

### **And what is done in periurban space?**

A territory cannot be classified as periurban without realizing what is urban in that context. Assuming that the concept of urban or urbanity is in addition to a classification of housing and infrastructure, the periurban area of Maputo brings together elements that both identify and orient to other classifications.

The city of Maputo does not have a growth plan for the urban space, so its development is at the mercy of political and economic interests of public managers and private equity. This, in short, has generated a demographic occupation of the urban space where the economic resources that would support the nascent urbanization are insignificant (Araújo, 2003).

This feature of the growth in Maputo reflects the behavior of local power and private capital based on their understanding of urbanization, where population growth is the vertex of the main occupation of space. Still, it demonstrates a form of organization and relationship with the space-time of the city, where the downtown remains as the provider of an economic income and labor market.

Thus, this study's approach attempts to understand the socio-economic relations as contextual, to the extent that the city is understood as a space where rural and urban elements coexist and are interrelated, but also incorporating other factors not connected to these natures. It is through this argument, where the city is a strange element to the rural place, a monolith, which may suggest an analytical framework that places it as one

... transition between order next – relations of immediacy, direct relationships between people and groups that make up society (families, organized groups, professions and corporations etc.) relations with the surrounding countryside – and an order apart, that “society in making a whole” – order of society, governed by large and powerful institutions (church, state), formalized by a legal code or not, by a culture and significant sets. As a transition, the city is the place to express the contradictions of society, among them the contradictions between political power and the various groups that have common affinity with the State. (Baia, 2004: 24)

The colonial city amended the existing socio-economic relationships – structures based on family relationships and co-parenting, where agricultural production was more of a relational link which constituted those societies – to a relational form that created family units (home), and away from a subsistence system of production with relationships to the family living space, workplace, and place of residence (Baia 2009, 2004).

After independence, the social constraints, economic and war suffered by the national population of households involved the creation of the family household, which several families inhabit a housing unit or living in intimacy of affinity and survival. These new spaces are occupied territories in suburban and periurban areas. And it is in this context that agriculture, never exhausted or abandoned to that population, remained as the main source of livelihood and financial resources, but part of a different context of rural, a space of rupture and discontinuity of the city (Baia, 2009).

The results of this relationship is the coexistence of different ways of life involving a new way to consider the inclusion of the wage earned by those individuals in urban centers. Their interests and their ability to accumulate income and consumption, and their perception of the living space are beyond the urban-rural divide. It can think of a hybrid form based on their relationship and perceptions of both the city or the rural of their ancestry.

The coexistence of agricultural activities from different sources creates a hybrid space of spatial and personal relationships, without being connected. A rural activity remains and makes use of traditional production methods; while an underlying urbanization brings its mechanisms of use of space. However, a possible point of convergence is the informality in the occupation of space, in economic production and the acquisition of means of production. Both activities are beyond the formalization of the urban core, while using the spaces occupied by perceptions of the territory.

And it is here that the experiences emerge as periurban agriculture; before classified as rural or traditional. This designation for the site occupied by periurban Maputo comes from this geographic or occupation approach at the expense of productive or socio-economic characteristics. This renamed local, now included in the conception of city, addressed the traditional farming activities once defined as *countryside*. In an outlying area, one can see peasant farming remaining as an activity included in the urban areas, as well as a new form of

urban development adjacent to agricultural production and its socio-economic relationships (Araújo, 2003).

It achieves, therefore, a structure of perception of urban space derived from relationships and socio-economic forces and magnitudes that promote certain characteristics. What characterizes the periurban area in Maputo can be defined as a set of juxtapositions of historical matrices, housing, demographic, cultural, and socio-economic policies, which ultimately translate that form of occupation into a place where rural ancestry and urban practices coexist, marked by an economist market.

### **Conflicts and constraints in access to land in the periurban area**

Land for cultivation is the conditioning element of agricultural production as a potential property for land use and access by farmers, as a factor in production, is closely linked to the economic result of its use. In the case of urban agriculture, another factor is revealed: the conflict between its use for primary production (agriculture, livestock, etc.) and its use for housing, services and transformation activities.

In Maputo, as in Mozambique more generally, during the socialist era, which lasted until 1992, land was nationalized and remains so until the present day. Dated from 1975, the law states that the land is considered a national asset, not alienable by private interests, and therefore its management was entrusted to the State, the last representative of the individual and public interests (Boucher *et al.*, 1995).

Local governments and formal neighborhood organizations and groups organized by the state, “group facilitators,” were established to be responsible for managing and granting land in their spheres of activity. Its use has been allowed to any individual or national collective, and subject to an activity defined at the time of granting authorization for use (Boucher *et al.*, 1995; Roth *et al.*, 1995).

Even in this environment, immediately after independence, conflicts against colonial law still occurred in Mozambique, causing problems for the governability of the country, mainly in the South and in Maputo. In the capital, however, the main problem faced was the lack of agricultural products that could meet the growing demand for food.

With the emigration of settlers responsible for much of the agricultural production and removal of machines for South Africa (transfer of funds from the settlers), came a high dependence on imported products, especially cereals, and imminent poverty in periurban and suburban populations. The supply of food for the city became an essential policy for the region (White and Manghezi, 1982).

However, the impending civil war, which mainly affected the rural areas, and the search for better economic conditions of life, coupled with the return of workers to South African mines, set up a counterpoint between the intentions of state intervention, the rural situation, and a growing demand for urban land (Malauene, 2002; Roth *et al.*, 1995).

Population growth is not natural in Maputo, with greatest impact in the post-independence period until 1992, especially in periurban areas of the city, areas not yet populated, and with good soil for growing, unregulated, and with some access to the center city. In response to this demand and the need for a policy of incentives for agriculture, in 1980, the State officially defined a territory of so-called “green zones” and created the Office



of Green Zones (GZV), the state agency responsible for managing and encouraging agriculture (Roth *et al.*, 1995).<sup>5</sup>

The GZV assumed the role of redistributing the territories occupied by the Portuguese colonists and also to plan new occupations according to the demand for land and a way to stimulate agricultural production in accordance with the potential productivity of each area. The “group facilitators” and local associations played an important role in this task, serving as interlocutors between the interests of individuals and families and public policy management and land grants.

The land is, to a certain extent, maintained in orderly manner by individuals, family units and private entities, but on an unregulated basis. The forms of production of individual households and rural mechanisms and instruments used, the specificity of the ancestral population, is subsistence-oriented and mostly developed in monocultures. Private entities, in this case the associations derived from that occupation process, maintain the same production methods but with the aim of obtaining financial income for the subsistence of its members.

Initially, the production was centered on subsistence mostly in their familiar forms and associations, and from 1989, also turned itself to the municipal market for the supply of agricultural products (Malauene, 2002). This turning point is marked not only by a change in policy interventions in the economic area, addressing the serious macroeconomic problems accumulated since independence such as degradation and political and economic causes of war, but also by a greater penetration of forms of production for productive use by those farmers.

Even in the socialist period, which could be understood as a period of transition to a market economy, patent after 1992, it cannot be said to be a government policy driven by capitalist economic regiments. It was a historical moment where the policy determinants took place in public interventions, without the loss of national economic capacity but far from a paradigm of urbanization or a capitalist society (Baia, 2009). However, in this assumption, the state interventions created an effect not expected in urban relations since “it produces an urban space that strategically provides not only the reproduction of social relations, but, fundamentally, the accumulation of wealth in the manner of the colonial market economy in a context dominated by a specifically capitalist economy, although dependent” (Baia, 2009: 29).

This eminent transition of the conception of the use and occupation of urban space creates and redefines the land question in the periurban zone. From the standpoint of the state, the struggle for land in periurban areas occurs through the conflict of interests between producers who desire to control the most fertile land and the interests of former owners in rescuing their territories. However, this situation changed, especially in the postwar period, when the attentions of state and private investment turned to the urban development of the country (Boucher *et al.*, 1995).

Alongside those conflicts, disputes also take place beyond the agricultural production. Politicization in parties emerges as a segregating factor of the interests against the leadership of the district. As well, the lack of formalization of land use has created a precedent for that to be questioned in court (Boucher *et al.*, 1995).

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<sup>5</sup> The green areas are also marked as 'temporary exploration', 'provisional' and 'unregulated' zones (see Malauene, 2002).

The land in periurban areas, mostly rural until the early 1990s, suffered a rupture in the paradigm that defined its use and its economic interest. It is at the point of convergence of economic factors and magnitudes of urban sprawl, where the periurban zone changed its status on the periphery of the urban center to an area of strong interest and speculative trading.

Three other elements are patent and are interlaced: the change of land law in 1997, when the customary rights come to be known in the use and transfer of land; the demographic expansion of the city to this uninhabited territory in urban terms, subject to strong speculation in land for the creation of luxury housing parks and their adjacent shops and services; and exceptions to the law granted to private investment groups, linked to that speculation, for the occupation of the land (Malauene, 2002; Roth *et al.*, 1995).

This situation, which still exists today, is characterized by a strong decrease of the cultivated area in the periurban areas at the expense of increasing urbanization, giving rise to contemporary problems that trigger land conflicts, arable territory loss to housing, removal of the traditional population due to the lack of legal documentation of land use, and production and economic constraints that affect local production capacity.

## Political and economic changes in periurban agriculture

In a possible characterization of the activity of urban agriculture in Maputo, one should take into account the difficulties in defining what is urban, suburban and periurban (Chicamisse, 2005). It appears equally important to find the spatial and temporal factors determining in each of those areas and to identify how the demographic expansion of urban areas met the agricultural activities born within the city.

To best fit the position defended here, setting must be chosen that features urban agriculture for its socio-economic relations, to the extent that the activity is subject to the prevailing social and economic elements in the space labeled as *urban*. However, it is argued that the treatment of urban agriculture is multidimensional and tries to identify the issues in an analytical and interconnected way without neglecting the other factors extraneous to that approach.

What distinguishes the suburban and periurban areas in Maputo is not their respective locations territorial, but the forms of occupation and their relationship with space. The periurban areas have agriculture as their main economic activity and have a low occupancy rate; suburban areas have a high population densification under conditions of degraded infrastructure and are dependent on wage labor from the urban center (Araújo, 1999).

The urban space itself holds these characteristics, to the present day, in both areas of Maputo. The exception is the periburban area that has been the target of expanding housing and services over the withdrawal of farmers. In other words, there remain *countryside* economic forms which are, from the point of view of an incipient urban agriculture, constrained by the expansion of city boundaries. An outcome of historical phenomena, in that these cities have developed social and economic fields, is that the non-urban or rural population was drawn to unskilled jobs in the cities but never to its center, which then led to a process of forming a belt of poverty in the cities (Araújo, 2003). The periurban areas, once rural, later attracted speculative investment in housing services to its territory. The urban agriculture in Maputo is being marginalized by different institutional arrangements in the absence of proof of use of land by farmers; its low competitiveness with foreign products, especially the Brazilians and South Africans; and the absence of a clear and objective public policy that favors the activity (Araújo, 2003).

What is observed in modern times is a multifaceted periurban space permeated by elements of both a rural and urban population and unplanned, in both cases, based on different perceptions of land use. In turn, the socio-economic private relations with each phenomenon and its possible intersections became a

... juxtaposition of different spaces and times and interpenetrating ... because, with an excluding urbanization, different strategies adopted by poor, unemployed and semi-employed and public officials average in order to survive in the city. Thus, the urbanization appears, therefore, as an incipient process in motion and an unfinished production space. (Baia, 2009: 29)

The urban agriculture arises in the periurban area of Maputo as an activity derived from historical cultural, political and socio-economic aspects. In the early years of the post-independence period (when that area starting to be called *periurban*), agricultural production in that region is encouraged as livelihoods and also by the formation of associations of agricultural producers. These associations are in fact groups of people and cannot be taken as a production approach along the lines of classical economics. Their objectives are focused on resolving internal issues of the associated, as well as other factors linked to activity such as land tenure, land use title, etc. Members have complete freedom in deciding how and what to plant, as well as its commercialization when possible, and having a duty to pay a fee to the association (Chicamisse, 2005).

It is necessary to highlight another political role of farmers in that period, as well as an instrument against the holdings at work and in gender relations and class. To some extent, it also represented a mechanism of transmission of the central power of the state in economic and political divisions in the field of urban agriculture – “the decisions of the members [...] were subjected to state controls, the regulations and the socialist political” (White and Manghezi, 1982, cited in Croll, 1979). In this context, the institutions intermediately between associated farmers and the state, as the case of the Green Zones Office, assume a monitoring role and gain power, compared to the associated, as a political maneuver for the management of agricultural production (Mosca, 2008).

Thus, the cooperative movement in agriculture in periurban Maputo is a response to these political and economic issues raised by state control. This is when people’s associations changed themselves from a group of individuals and moved towards a form of production that treats them the production of a collective manner and in favor of their interests. The General Union of Cooperatives of Maputo (UGC), formalized in 1980, represents a good example of this practice.

The UGC emerges to manage the relationship between such cooperatives and Green Zones of the Municipal Office, and also as an alternative to the problems resulting from low socio-economic development, the rural-urban migration and the struggle for access to land (Cruz and Silva, 2003). It would become in 90 years the largest cooperative of agricultural products in Mozambique, but:

The objective of the UGC is not to manage each of the individual cooperatives, because that would mean take the place of the directions of the cooperatives. Its function is to assist them in solving general problems and that are beyond the scope of the directions and cooperative unions zone. In short, this means represent the interests and solve the problems of cooperatives with the State, organize the provision of services necessary to develop the cooperative movement. (Gabinete das Zonas Verdes da Cidade de Maputo, 1984: 7)

It would be difficult to discern, without previous observation of the experience of UGC and other cooperatives, the advantages and disadvantages of this perspective, and it will

depend on the theoretical framework of the observer. On one hand, from the perspective of the competitive logic of the capitalist market, this associative process is flawed in that it does not guarantee an association with a greater competitive power market against the large producers, and lacks strategic organization in deciding on a crop and its possible forms of commercialization. On the other hand, from perspectives and experiences beyond this capitalist logic and outside a classical framework of economic associations, this practice ensures the associated group with a better (higher) capacity for conflict resolution and strategies which may involve what would be called foundational issues in urban agriculture: access to land and the means of production.

Still, this suggests building a common understanding supported by a convergence of individual responses addressed to the problems in question, common to all or not, in productive activity. This insurgency is due to a reaction process of the producers, where the association was specific to the formula of creating a space for public discussion.

It would be naive to speak of building a common good when the bonds to which the cooperatives are tied are affective in nature or family. It cannot support this scope of classical analysis, which treats it as a collective output element constructed as solidarity, in some cases, for the convergence of interest.

It can be inferred, in part, that this cooperative is a group of individuals united towards finding resolution mechanisms for common problems, but without losing the individuality of decisions involving the production. One can also notice the failure to add certain value-added to the commercialization of a production cooperative; it is spoken about only as an association of individuals and a better ability to solve common problems and benefits that may be common (Chicamisse, 2005).

However, we also observed in UGC interventions that it can also be viewed as collectively building human capital from agriculture, which includes training for soil preparation, technical training conditioned to the type of cultivation and seasons for more efficient production, and dissemination of relevant information (Chicamisse, 2005).

And, accepting the idea that financial income earned is reinvested or used to purchase other goods, without the accumulation of wealth, will it need an awareness of profit in a market sense of maximizing production or can we think of a way of calculation that considers the capital versus the expected result, based on individual expectations of producers?

In the first case, it is difficult to find a theory that supports and can be applied. What about the second? Since the result is not driven to maximize profit, how to create a theoretical framework that supports the expectations and needs of each individual producer in its activity?

One hardly finds a robust enough answer to give sustainability to the context of Maputo without considering the specificity of its urban space; it reveals itself as

a society whose reproduction is based on the complementarity contradiction of three fundamental logical: an incipient capitalist sector and dependent, but dominant; a centralizing State and hegemonic; a subordinate and dominant family sector. The three logical interact in the production of an urban area, differentiated contents of which are reflected in the cityscape. It is then of a space of fragmentations that reproduces the fragmentations / divisions within Mozambican society. (Baia, 2009: 146)

Then, the political and economic nature in periurban areas of Maputo can be read as a perception of the needs and interests in a context where the economy appears to be the link of perception of the territory, not to the detriment of political and social, but as an instrument to achieve a particular social life expectancy. *Rurality* is always included within the meaning of urban space, as an element that is interconnected and interactive with others and different

spaces in the urban territory and can therefore be considered a form of politeness always present in cities.

## Final comments

Urban agriculture in Maputo is the result of the congruence of different factors in a process of transformation of urban space. Opting for transitory forms of occupation of space, this study notes the extent to which the creation and expansion of the city has developed a structure of complex analysis and coded political, economic and social elements.

When taking a scope analysis of forces driving the expansion of the city of Maputo, we have an example of a city that escapes the Western model and is beyond all duality of rural and urban areas that can be drawn from a hegemonic conception. Maputo is a possible antithesis of urbanity in a rural area and its opposite.

Urban agriculture can be classified as such only with the understanding of what it means to periurban in that context, which is the result of a historical cultural relationship with agricultural production and the action of a political force that pushes other territorial classifications. The development of urban agriculture was marked by the presence of the public as a mechanism of political impetus and the emergence of a collective consensus form of production, which gave rise to a form of production to that particular context. The urban agriculture that generates economic results is a form of production that emerged within a hybrid model city and a system of colonial capitalism.

In its historicity, one can see the breakthrough times that have created urban agriculture in the socio-economic relations of the space by the counterparts generated in the lives of its members and the micro-scales related to their social contexts.

Beyond this approach, the production of agriculture in the urban green zones of Maputo also escapes the reductionism of an activity linked to social welfare pure and simple. Forms of production are linked to the livelihoods of those people and constitute the income of several families. It is hoped, in this study, to identify the constraints and the potential that these activities have to create a space for social accumulation that locates the axioms of capitalism only in its economic component, eliminating them from society by reducing capitalism to at most a social phenomenon.

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## Social Inclusion as a Collective Urban Project: Urban Farm in Lisbon and Street Vendors in Rio de Janeiro

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**Abstract:** In this paper, we present urban experiences in different contexts as an answer to the complex issue of social inclusion. We provide ideas to achieve a balance where city, urban space and social inclusion integrate migration, cultural diversity and poverty. We propose, using two different but interrelated case studies, ‘the urban farms in Lisbon’ and the ‘informal public markets in Rio de Janeiro’, to discuss the question of social inclusion. We see this issue not as a problem that exists and must be solved, but as reality to be integrated into a collective project, which is to live and to work in the city and in society. The urban offer and its accessibility to the population are important aspects to consider, with the participation of citizens crucial from a perspective of collective learning. The proposals presented can provide a range of open and flexible possibilities.

**Keywords:** social inclusion, urban farm, informal street vending, Lisbon, Rio de Janeiro

### Introduction

This paper presents urban experiences in different contexts as an answer to the complex problem of social inclusion. These experiences are cases of informal activities that are performed by people who, for different reasons, are excluded from certain aspects of society, for example, the formal labor market or social interaction.

Informality in the urban context is a topic of great relevance, strongly related to processes of urbanization in developing countries. Nevertheless, informal activities can be observed in all countries, since the informality acts as a buffer of the effects of the socioeconomic crisis or

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appears as a consequence of social exclusion. In general, informal, illegal or clandestine activities can be broadly defined as activities that are carried out in disagreement with the law. According to Komlosy *et al.* (1997), in informality the legal rules are replaced by social networks, their traditions and limits.

Informality has advantages and disadvantages for the society. On one hand, it often implies public or private property misuse as well as tax evasion and potentially unsafe activities. On the other hand, it is an alternative to fulfill the basic needs of individuals when this is not possible in a formal way. Without the buffering effect of informality, these situations could lead to severe social instability problems. The management of informality represents a big challenge for governments because of its polymorphic and ambiguous nature. It is not clear, however, what is the best way to handle this phenomenon. Due to its constant growth and the current economical conjuncture, it is nevertheless urgent to reflect on this issue.

Two different cases of informal activities, which developed in different contexts, are studied. Both cases are activities suffering from a legalization process. The cases are the urban farms in the city of Lisbon and the street vendors in the city of Rio de Janeiro. In the two cases, we analyze the policies employed and discuss their effect on the social inclusion of the people involved.

## Urban farms in Lisbon

Nowadays, urban agriculture is on the agenda of many political programs, community requests and speeches of activists of various movements. In cities like Lisbon there is a large dissemination of initiatives related to urban agriculture in the form of urban farms, community gardens, vertical farms and micro-home-farms. However, the motivations for such initiatives vary and may be linked to social inclusion of immigrants or ethnic minorities, measures to supplement the income of disadvantaged households, urban sustainability and resilience and new lifestyles. The locales of the implementation of urban agriculture activities are also diverse, from private plots to areas on the edges of highways, through public or private expectant spaces<sup>3</sup> and small private yards. The occupation may be illegal or not. Urban agriculture is often developed in private spaces by appropriation without the permission of the owners or in public spaces, also illegally occupied.

Urban farms are one of the typological and spatial varieties considered in the field of urban agriculture. Urban farms can be seen as the main type of urban agriculture and that stands out by its economic, ecological and social importance, as well as its relevance for leisure (Matos, 2010). Urban farms are defined as growing food in the urban environment. In general, the growers seek in the urban farms a supplement to the family income or a possibility for leisure. The foods grown are produced for the family, community or for sale. The urban farms are deployed in small private plots, in public space or on private land free of buildings.

According to Cook, Lee and Perez-Vasquez (2005), urban farms can bring social, environmental, human, economic and emotional benefits. Matos (2010) completes the

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<sup>3</sup> *Expectant space* is a void land that is waiting for the implementation of any plan or design. Using the vocabulary of Solà-Morales (2003), 'expectant space' is a 'terrain vague'.



argument in favor of urban farms by pointing out that they provide flexibility and a capacity to adapt to changes in community demands. The author adds that urban farms can contribute to community development, generating social participation and urban regeneration. If urban farms can generate a lot of benefits and are flexible and adaptable to community needs, they can influence the improvement of quality of life. The farms may begin as a complement to economically disadvantaged families in a situation of unemployment. Over time, when the market is able to re-absorb the inactive population, the farms can become community recreation areas and a source of environmental education.

Urban farms can be seen as a legacy of the past that resists the real estate market. They present themselves as enclaves of residual landscape from the functional and morphological point of view, and can ensure living spaces, economic aid and food to citizens (Pinto, 2007).

Urban farms can be seen as an answer to the complex problem of social inclusion, as well as a reality to be included in the collective project that is living and working in the city and in society. In the case of Lisbon, the creation of horticultural parks, or sets of integrated urban farms in a bounded area, has been promoted by the *Câmara Municipal de Lisboa* (CML), Lisbon City Council. This has been done in response to the existing conditions of the urban farming activities, which were in precarious and disorganized conditions. The initial need for regularization and incentives was the genesis of a set of infrastructures to support citizens in Lisbon, as in many other cities.

Urban farming appeared spontaneously due to economic needs, as well as for leisure purposes, in expectant empty spaces of the city or in spaces between roads. It has been an activity organized and regulated by CML, although a lot of urban agriculture activity still occurs in precarious conditions (especially along the highways and traffic axes, and land with steep slopes and poor conditions of urbanization).



‘Informal’ Urban Farms, IC17, CRIL – Lisbon. Source: Archive of Teresa Silva.

In 2009, CML initiated a project to create a set of infrastructure and reorder 40 acres of urban farms. Among them were the horticulture park of *Chelas*, the urban farms at *Quinta da Granja* and *Jardim da Graça*, projects for two farming and gardening lands in *Telheiras*, and the horticultural parks in the *Vale do Rio Seco*, *Ajuda* and *Ameixoeira* (*Diário de Notícias*, 2010). Together with the creation of these infrastructures, a commission to legalize urban farms was responsible for the development of a “Regulation for the Installation and Operation of Urban Agriculture Areas” (Matos, 2010: 210). After the reshaping of land, CML opened

competitions for assigning plots to interested citizens. The regulation, in general, aims to contribute to environmental sustainability, public health, landscape valuation and cultural valuation of handcraft production systems, as well as to demonstrate the nutritional benefits of consuming fresh food and economic benefits of organic agriculture. In the “Regulation for the Installation and Operation of Urban Agriculture Areas”, four types of urban farms for Lisbon are defined, each with its own specific objectives: social or community urban farms, leisure urban farms, pedagogical urban farms and dispersed urban farms. For each type of urban farm, the document also defines the areas of implementation such as the use that should be made, what kind of people can grow and the destination of the products to be grown.

**Table 1. Regulation for the installation and operation of urban agriculture areas**

Urban farms	Objectives	Target population	Implementation area	Products grown
social or community urban farms	. occupational therapy . social interaction	. underprivileged population . inactive ages	. green spaces and urban parks (PDM - urban farming areas)	. own consumption . to sell
leisure urban farms	. contact with nature . leisure	. inactive population (age or physical/mental disablement)	. municipal land with agricultural capability	. own consumption
pedagogical urban farms	. environmental education	. population and entities interested in the connection man - land		
dispersed urban farms	. to legitimize the occupation until the temporary occupation agreement . environmental, ecological and landscape valuation	. underprivileged population	. public expectant land	. own consumption . to sell

Source: Matos, 2010: anexo II.

The revision of the *Municipal Master Plan (Plano Director Municipal – PDM)* in 2011 strengthens the public policy in favor of urban farms, suggesting that urban agriculture should be encouraged in the city’s green spaces. The aim is to increase local food production and consequently the self-sufficiency and resilience of the city, and the cohesion of urban communities (CML, 2011a: 55-56). In the same year, the first calls for the assignment of plots in the horticultural parks of *Quinta da Granja* and *Jardins de Campolide* (CML, 2011b) were opened. At *Quinta da Granja*, plots were assigned to social urban farms in 20 out of 326 applicants (CML, 2011c) and others were granted to people who already practiced farming in the area. The growers have to contribute with an annual fee of 55 euros, plus a payment of the maintenance costs of the park to CML, obtaining in this way, access to water and a place to store tools (CML, 2011b). As for the plots of the *Jardins do Campolide*, 21 were selected from among 169 candidates for the cultivation of leisure urban farms, and the growers must pay fees between 55 and 100 euros as well as maintenance costs (CML, 2011b). Since the number of applicants was much larger than the number of plots available, the proximity between residence and horticultural park and the order of entry were determining factors for selection (CML, 2011c).

In order to provide a means of environmental education, CML organized courses to promote urban agriculture together with the School of Gardening (CML, 2011d) and

independently in the *Jardins do Campolide* (CML, 2012). The themes ranged from the organization of an urban farm to organic agricultural techniques.

In addition to the previously mentioned benefits, such as providing food and financial income for citizens, other benefits can be obtained from these activities: social (recreation, therapy for individuals with special needs, rehabilitation of youth in risk), environmental (renewal of abandoned urban spaces, diversity of urban land uses, increase of biodiversity, preservation of the water, soil and air cycles, reducing the ecological footprint), human (promotion of sociability, social contact, health benefits through physical exercise, greater diversity in diet), economic (stimulus to local economies) and emotional (break in daily routine) (Matos, 2010: 205).



‘Formal’ urban farms, Campolide – Lisbon. Source: Archive of Teresa Silva.

At the time of the divulgation of the reorganization project of urban farms in Lisbon, Ribeiro Telles, a landscape architect and a great defender of urban agriculture, declared in an interview with the *Diário de Notícias* that the inclusion of agriculture in urban policies for green spaces in Lisbon is justified to ensure the food supply and reduce the reliance on national or European food supply policies. Ribeiro Telles argues that the supply of fresh food should be interrelated with the plan of the city, defending the idea of sustainability corridors in the city where meat, milk and vegetables are produced (*Diário de Notícias*, 2010).

Beyond these benefits at the territorial scale of the city, the urban farms contribute to the development of the communities where they operate, generating social participation and regeneration of urban spaces, many of them expectant. According to Rute Sousa Matos, the creation of more open spaces built with vegetation in urban areas will also create more educational opportunities, more pedagogical information on the production of food and animals (including school visits and educational activities), integration of people with learning difficulties and/or other special needs, and the development of practices of community enterprises such as cafes, garden centers and/or community business. These are among the activities directly related to the development of urban farms (Matos, 2010: 206).

The political measures that have been applied to legalize and promote urban farms in Lisbon are top-down policies. However, the necessity, viability and benefits of some farms in the urban territory have been identified by the population itself, when some citizens appropriated expectant land to grow food within the city. Growing food in the form of urban farms is born spontaneously by the need to ensure food for the family or for leisure. Thus, it is possible that when the policies employed are bottom-up, they could create even more benefits and be more inclusive.

It can be noted that the process of selection of growers for the new stands does not take into account socioeconomic factors that could give the urban farms a more inclusive character. Only the proximity to the residence is taken into account when choosing among candidates for the new plots created by CML. Factors such as labor inactivity (unemployment or retirement), family income, number of family members and physical or mental disabilities could be included for the selection of candidates, making the urban farms more inclusive and with more economic benefits for communities.

## Street vendors in Rio de Janeiro

Like the urban farms in Lisbon, the situation of the street vendors in Rio de Janeiro is also an opportunity to address the issue of social inclusion.

Dealing with informal street vending, the most visible part of the informal market, is a challenge for governments because this activity has potential benefits for the society. Its proper management can be beneficial for the vendors involved, for the general population and even for government itself. An informal market in the public space is a reflection of some social problems such as a lack of employment and social exclusion. It is comprised of an economic activity outside the legal rules and the illegal occupation of public space, and generates urban problems. However, informal street vending can also be seen as job creator, a motor of vitality in the public space and a creator of commerce and supply of services (Bromley, 2000: 1).

The government has many responsibilities in the management of informal street vending. It is responsible for law enforcement, tax collection, consumer protection, control of public space, promotion of employment opportunities and ensuring supply of goods and services (Bromley, 2000: 16, 17). Although the roles of government are clear, the policies implemented can be divergent. Persecution, regularization, promotion and tolerance policies are commonly used (Bromley, 2000: 22). The way that governments deal with informal street vending depends on many factors such as interest of influential groups and the ideology of the ruling political party.

An extreme case of persecution is the policy of 'Zero Tolerance', which is the repression of any sign of disorder, including informal street vending, to keep the city clean. Such a policy was promoted by Mayor Giuliani in the city of New York, which eradicated the informal vendors from the streets. Extreme cases of persecution of informal vendors are typical when a city is the future host of a big international event, when the government sees itself obliged to clean the image of the city to sell it to foreign visitors (Bromley, 2000: 30).

There is no ideal solution, but in general the idea of regulating and promoting simultaneous economic, social and urban planning approaches can produce the best result, minimizing the negative aspects and highlighting the positive. On the impossibility of creating formal jobs, the government should see street vending as an escape valve for a surplus labor force, which needs to generate income. However, the regulation of economic activity is necessary to enforce health and safety rules, for the benefit of vendors and consumers, to ensure tax collection, to include social security benefits and to control the occupation of public space.

As a case study, we consider the city of Rio de Janeiro, which has a quite inclusive law regulating street vending. First, the rules that regulate the street vending, described in the law, will be presented. This will be followed by two examples of the formalization of informal street vending, which were studied over the years 2009 and 2010. Finally, the public policies

put in place in Rio de Janeiro starting from 2009 will be discussed. These policies aim to prepare the city to host the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2016.

Informal street vending has been present in the public space of Rio de Janeiro for a very long time. The first reference dates back to the beginning of the nineteenth century (Lopes, 1996: 37). Since then, the informal street vendors, *camelôs* as they are known in Brazil, have been the subject of many, often contradictory, policies.

The informal street vending phenomenon in Rio is characterized by its diversity. This can be observed in the variety of vending places, in all neighborhoods of Rio from streets to public transportation; in the many ways that the sales are done, using different equipment to expose and carry their products; in the wide range of working times – they can be found 24 hours a day during the whole year; and in the heterogeneity of the vendors. Many people unable to find a formal job become informal street vendors and remain in the informality either due to the continuous lack of formal opportunities or their adaptation to being self-employed informal street vendors (Monte, 2010).



‘Informal’ street vendors – Rio de Janeiro. Source: G1.

In Rio de Janeiro, street vending is not necessarily an illegal activity; the vendors have the possibility to become formal and work inside the law. The legal rules that regulate the street vending are a frequent matter of discussion due to the relevance of the street vendors in the urban space and in the economy. Changes in the legal rules usually reflect politicians’ perceptions about the informal street vending phenomenon (Monte, 2010). The main rules in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro are currently presented in *Lei do Ambulante* (Municipal Law 1876, of June 29, 1992). This municipal legal rule regulates multiple aspects of street vending in Rio, defines who can be a street vendor, which products can be sold, where the street vendors can work, and how they can exercise this activity.

The law defines street vending as a temporary professional activity, which is exercised by a person in the public space at his own risk as self-employed. To be a ‘formal’ street vendor, the person should have a license issued by the municipality, but not everyone is eligible for such authorizations. The candidate must belong to one of the following categories:

- Being a disabled person
- Being more than 45 years old
- Have been employed as a street vendor before the law change of 1992
- Have been unemployed for more than one year or being an ex-convict (allowed for a maximum of 2 years)

Even if someone falls into one of these categories, it is possible to not obtain a license because its number is limited. To assign those licenses, a system of points is used, which takes into account the social conditions of the candidate. Aspects as age, the existence of

dependent relatives, and time of unemployment are relevant. Those who obtain a license are insured by the public social security and pay taxes for their insurance and the use of public space. The authorized street vendor is also allowed to have one assistant by paying a payroll tax; in the case the assistant is a relative, the tax is exempted.

The license lists the name of the vendor, the assistant's name, the kind of products sold and the vehicle's license, if used. This license is not definitive, it can be canceled or confiscated and the vending location can be changed. All authorized street vendors have one established place to work, which can be a specific location of the public space for the vendors with a fixed point or an area of a neighborhood for the wandering vendors. The violation of rules can be punished by a fine or a license cancellation, and products or equipment outside the rules can be seized.

Observing the *Lei do Ambulante*, street vending is still perceived as a transitory phenomena that temporarily provides work to individuals who will return sooner or later to the formal marketplace. Despite this, many workers become trapped in this way of life.

As examples of intent to observe compliance with the legal rules, two examples of street vending formalization in Popular Markets, *Camelódromo da Uruguaiana* and *Mercado Popular da Rocinha*, were studied. The Popular Market, or *Mercado Popular* in Portuguese, is a program that was created by the municipality with the objective of constructing organized and standardized spaces for street vending (Secretaria de Obras, n.d.) in areas of the city with high demand for this activity.

The *Camelódromo da Uruguaiana* was founded in a plot, a property of the metro offered by the municipality but without any additional infrastructures like electric and water supply, toilets and storing facilities. The foundation of the *Camelódromo* in 1994 originated with the transference of the *camelôs* operating in the center of Rio, spread throughout busy streets of the city center, to the empty space in *Uruguaiana Street*. *Camelódromo da Uruguaiana* was the first experience to promote a street vendor concentration in a delimited area of the public space. The results were very positive and the idea was applied in other areas of the city (Lopes, 1996: 67).

After the reallocation of the street vendors in the *Camelódromo*, the municipality did not offer any assistance or infrastructure. Initially sales decreased because the *Camelódromo* was not in the main route of people flow, which made them lose lots of customers. However, the low prices eventually brought the customers back over the time, making the *Camelódromo da Uruguaiana* a famous place. The overall infrastructure constructed in the *Camelódromo* was done by the vendors' association, while each *camelô* remained responsible for his own stand.<sup>4</sup>

The strengthening of the *Camelódromo* also increased the value of the stands, which led some vendors to rent or even to sell their stands. This was against the rules established by the municipality since the vendors do not have ownership of the stands plot, but only the license to work in the area. The original purpose was to offer a place to those working as street vendors.

The original *camelôs* who founded the market are not easily found vending in the stands any more. Some of them have sold the stands and others rent them, but most of them have more than one stand and work in the administration of their employees. Usually the stands

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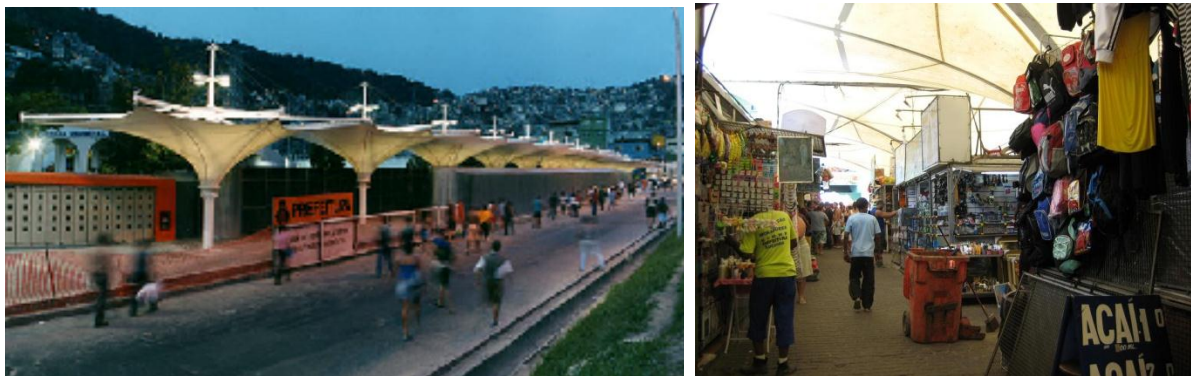
<sup>4</sup> Interview conducted in 2009 with an administrative member of *Associação do Mercado Popular da Uruguaiana* (Monte, 2010).

have two vendors who are informal workers, while the ‘owner’ of the stand is a formal micro-entrepreneur.



*Camelódromo da Uruguaiana. Source: Arbex/O Globo Online.*

The *Mercado Popular da Rocinha* is located at the entrances of the Rocinha’s *favela*. The market was implemented in 2004 in the same area of the public space where the informal street vendors already worked. The infrastructure of the market was completely constructed by the municipality under the architecture design of *Azevedo Arquitetos Associados*. The design of the market assigns regularity to it and includes it in the formal urban design of the city. Nowadays there are some changes with respect to the original design made by the vendors to improve the stands.



*Mercado Popular da Rocinha. Source: Arcoweb/Archive of Marianna Monte.*

The formalization of the market under a well-done infrastructure increased the sales, but, similar to the cases of the *Camelódromo*, some of the street vendors who worked on the original informal street vending activities sold their stands. In the case of *Rocinha*, this has led to a single individual possessing more than one stand, sometimes joining them together in a double stand. While the number of stand ‘owners’ has decreased, the total number of people working in the market is now bigger. Almost all stands have more than one person selling products. There are stands where the ‘owner’ works together with an assistant and there are also stands where various assistants work in different turns for an ‘owner’. All the people who work in the market live in the *Rocinha favela*.

In these two examples of street vending formalization, it was observed that the social measures applied by the law do not last long. Some formalized vendors cannot afford the

taxes and leave the market; in contrast, others do so well that employ more than one assistant, but informally.

Both markets presented here, as well as many other clusters of street vendors, are organized into associations. These associations are responsible not only for the administration of the common areas and maintenance fees, but also for the protection of the group. The leaders of the associations represent the interests of street vendors with the government on occasions of discussion of new policies involving street vendors. The associations deal with the public institutions and politicians to ensure the continuation of the markets and they use their electoral power, through the high number of voters involved in each association, to make political pressure in defense of their interests. Thus, even in top-down policies the vendors have their interests defended by some politician that they support.<sup>5</sup>

In 2009 urban policies were created for the city of Rio de Janeiro to prepare it for international sporting events to be held in 2014 and 2016. Part of the attention was focused on the elimination of urban disorder and the minimization of informality. The measures regarding street vending are specified in the ‘Operation to Combat Urban Disorder’, a plan to restore public order. Regarding the street vending, a set of programs, operations and tools to persecute, promote and regulate street vendors were put into place. Different measures are used in different ways in different localities of the city, depending on the characteristics of each locality as well as the interests of stakeholders. The program also aimed to ensure that the already established rules were respected again.

Persecution occurred from 2009 to 2010 by the *Choque de Ordem* (Shock of Order), which controlled the compliance with legal rules, confiscated and demolished irregular equipment and confiscated prohibited products. Regulation involved the formulation of *C.U.C.A. – Cadastro Único do Comércio Ambulante* (Single Cadastre of Street Vendors) in 2009 based on the Municipal Law 1876, of June 29, 1992. With the C.U.C.A., the municipality aimed to reduce frauds in the promotion policies, and ensure the compulsory taxes payment and the guarantee of social insurance (Secretaria Especial de Ordem Pública, n.d.). The promotion policies are based on the program *Empresa Bacana* (Nice Enterprise), which stimulates the formalization of street vending into micro-enterprises, guarantees that the micro-entrepreneurs have access to credit and special taxation, creates new work opportunities to people not included in C.U.C.A. and determines new locations for authorized street vendors (Paes, 2009). Other measures to promote street vending are the program *Mercado Popular* and the insertion of urban furniture for street vending in urban design projects in the city. The program *Mercado Popular* creates and maintains popular markets around the city. The use of urban furniture for street vending defines patrons, standardized uses<sup>6</sup>, upgrades the vending activities and promotes new activities, and facilitates control over the street vendors (Monte, 2010).

However, the formalized popular markets are not outside of the municipal policy of persecution and regulation of informality. The municipality carries out control operations in the market, searching mainly for irregular products, usually pirated media, clothes and fashion accessories (*Notícias Rio*, 2009).

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<sup>5</sup> Interview conducted in 2009 with an administrative member of *Associação do Mercado Popular da Uruguaiana*.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with a Manager of Secretariat of Urban Furniture and Landscape of *Instituto Municipal de Urbanismo Pereira Passos*.



## Conclusion

By reflecting about urban farms in Lisbon and street vending in Rio de Janeiro, it can be concluded that both are urban products accessible to people of low incomes who otherwise would not have access to the labor market. As we have explained, the presence of citizens is crucial from the perspective of collective learning, as well as the measures implemented by the respective public powers.

The growth of cities is due in large part to migration from rural areas to cities. This is particularly important in current times when cities face new challenges such as a shortage of jobs and infrastructure, as well as the planning and maintenance of open space for healthy recreation (as opposed to supermarkets and shopping centers). Food also forms a substantial part of the budget expenditure of each household (many with low incomes). Given these facts, the informal market and urban agriculture may thus constitute an alternative to improve the living conditions of many families and alleviate the effects of a depressed economy.

The cities are capable of providing a range of open and flexible opportunities, taking into account each case and each urban context, in the case of Rio through the informal markets and in the formalization of street vendors, and in the case of Lisbon through urban agriculture and the implementation of different types of urban farm.

In the case of urban farms, they offer to the society a set of opportunities to exchange experiences, based on collective living. In urban areas and in inhospitable places of the cities, new urban spaces can arise where the diversity of experiences contributes to a better society.

In the case of informal markets, the strategies and stakeholders involved differ from case to case. The aim of the popular markets is the creation of a place where street vendors can work formally in better conditions and with a better infrastructure. The real consequences of the popular market are positive for some and negative for others. While some vendors thrive on sales and expand their business with the purchase of other stands and hire new workers in an informal way, others cannot afford the costs of formalization and have to sell their stands. Both cases are out of the legal rules and pose difficulty in terms of the social inclusion proposed by them. However, as in other cities, perhaps after the full implementation of new policies currently taking place in Brazil, these situations can be minimized. With access to a micro-credit company presented through *Empresa Bacana*, pioneer vendors maybe can keep their stands. C.U.C.A. can also facilitate the control of licensed vendors. However, these actions could be in part prevented by participatory policies that take into account the needs and priorities of the suppliers.

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## Lifestyle Change Raises a Stronger Claim for Public Parks in Hanoi, Vietnam

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**Abstract:** Hanoi, the capital city of Vietnam, has been growing rapidly for several decades. Most of world cities' well-known social problems also occur in Hanoi. In line with the reform of the society – social change is an unceasing process. However, it seems that the change process in Asian countries is not continuous, but leapfrogging. Due to several beneficial functions, urban green areas (UGAs) should play a central role in urban planning, particularly in inner cities. Nonetheless, Hanoi citizens are not used to petition for social-welfare infrastructure, for UGAs in particular. Therefore, a hypothesis is that Hanoi citizens will demand more public parks. To check this hypothesis, triangular methods were set up in this study, which include literature review, empirical study and observation. Some main factors of changing lifestyles, those most influential to lifestyles of people in the usage of UGAs, namely age, gender, geographical factors and mentality, are chosen to analyse. Some essential evidences were found that Hanoians' lifestyles will change to use more public parks. Our findings also provide plausible proofs supporting that Hanoi citizen will ask for more parks strenuously.

**Keywords:** Hanoi, changing lifestyles, park

### Background

Urbanization is a blossoming trend in the next decades. This trend peaked in Europe and North America in 1950s, Japan in 1960s, is now coming into Asia, and later is projected to reach Africa (United Nations, 2012). It is confirmed through experiences from developed

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countries that they had to face with many well-known problems such as traffic, crime, and pollution, slums, and environmental degradation (Steingrube, 2010: 415).

While the developing countries adopt modern knowledge, they also take lessons learned from developed countries to quicken the processes of change. This is the “leapfrogging” phenomenon. *Leapfrogging* is the notion that areas which have poorly developed technology or economic bases can move themselves forward rapidly through the adoption of modern systems without going through intermediary steps (Cascio, 2004). This process manifests in almost all aspects of a society, namely, the economy, culture and policy. A complete picture of change as an example for the process is urban areas in developing cities, as in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. Since the human is at the centre of all those aspects, the processing of Hanoians’ lifestyles is an important topic. Over the past century, Hanoi inhabitants’ lifestyle has been “characterized more by change than by continuity” (Drummond, 2000: 2378).

Vietnam is urbanising at a very high rate: 3.4% per year (World Bank, 2012). The share of urban population will increase in the next 30 years (see Table 1). The impacts from this process plus the consequences of the leapfrogging phenomenon that brings about the problems listed above are even more extreme in Hanoi, one of the two biggest cities in Vietnam. Thus, those negative factors impacts urban green areas, the environment, health, food (Steingrube, 2010: 416).

**Table 1. Share of urban population in Vietnam**

Year	1931	1936	1955	1975	1981	1982	1985	1989	1996	2002	2010	2050
Share of urban population (%)	7.5	7.9	11.0	21.5	18.6	19.2	19.3	19.7	21.0	23.5	33.0	50.0

Source: Nguyen Minh Hoa, 2012.

Vietnam changed from a planned economy and top-down planning process with a huge administrative apparatus to a more inhabitant-involved process (see Table 6) and to a socialism-oriented market economy (which is known as the renovation/Doi Moi, since 1986). The latter economy enhances private sectors to more quickly develop the economy, one major condition to support socialism.

Vietnam is in a ‘transitional period’ in its political process to socialism. This term means:

Socialist political parties use the term “transition period” to refer to a specific phase in the life of a people, the essential features of which are a break with the old order and the introduction of a new economic and political system, which does not yet imply, however, the full emancipation of all workers. In this respect, all the minimum programmes of the socialist political parties, for instance the democratic programme of the opportunistic socialists, or the communist programme of the “dictatorship of the proletariat”, are programmes for the transition period. (Organizational Platform of the General Union of Anarchists)

This period is a “leapfrogging” phase in policy. However, general attitude and the political culture<sup>3</sup> change more slowly. Both need reaction time for citizens to adapt themselves with new policies and actively deal with the new political system.

The Hanoi inner city (before 2008, it included four main districts) has only a few UGAs left. Even inside some parks, the green surfaces are ‘soft-converted’ to grey surfaces with what sounds like plausible reasons, such as for a parking lot, ice-cream kiosks and restaurants. Public parks are also facing the reduction of land. Parks in Hanoi are under high pressure of intensive utilization. This indicates a high demand on using parks. The situation sounds simply like a demand-supply problem, but it becomes more complex in the rapid growing city. Parks compete with many other land-use purposes.

Our hypothesis is *Hanoians will ask more democratically for parks*. In other words, does the above relationship stay the same or is the demand of using UGAs rising? Are citizens asking more democratically for parks while the inner city might not be able to supply more?

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of the establishment and utilization of parks and gardens in Hanoi, Vietnam, and to discuss the complex changing trend in demand for parks. For this paper, we found some proof from our own empirical and recorded documents to support a hypothesis that Hanoi’s inhabitants will ask more strongly for more parks in the future.

First, our paper will describe the context of changing lifestyles in Hanoi, in terms of using public parks. We will focus on the most fundamental aspects influencing lifestyle changes in the chosen area of Hanoi. How people use parks and future trends will be interpreted and critiqued in this paper. Second, we will research policies applied to park use; and of course, how people react to those policies will be investigated.

UGAs include many different types of green spaces, namely, public and amusement parks and gardens, a zoo, meadows, traffic islands, traffic separator bands and a cemetery. In this study, we focus on public parks and gardens only, which serve the citizen’s daily life activities. In Hanoi, the term *gardens* is used indistinguishably from *parks* in public areas. For example, the botanical garden is called as a park (công viên Bách Thảo). Furthermore, amusement parks (leisure parks or Freizeit Parks in German) are excluded. Therefore, in this paper, we use the terms UGAs, public parks, parks and gardens synonymously.

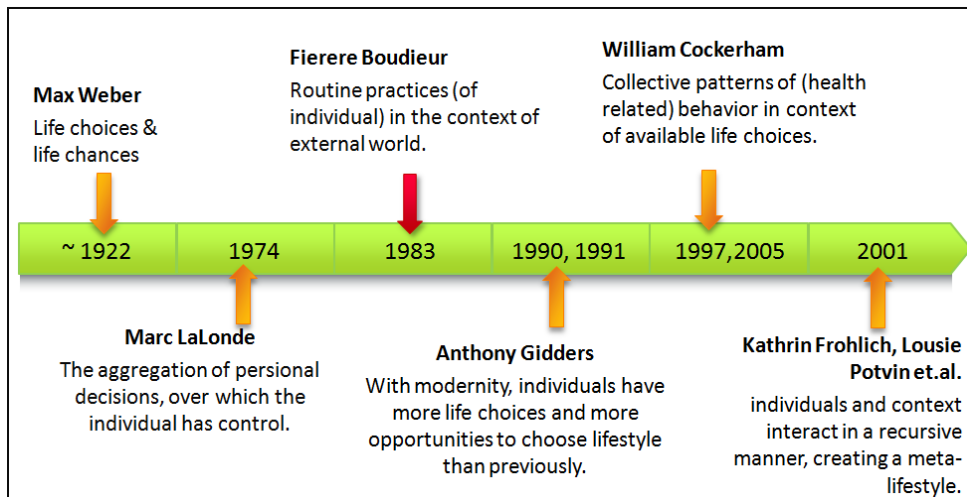
## Review of concepts of lifestyle

*Lifestyle* is a word commonly used in our daily life. It is also a popular category in social media. However, since the academy has tried to understand and explain people’s lives and their behaviour by this term, it has been an ambitious concept. Lifestyle is an object for many disciplines and inter-disciplines: psychology, health, culture, ecology and human geography. Six main extracts from lifestyle concepts are roughly arranged by publishing year, as in Figure 1.

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<sup>3</sup> “Political culture is the traditional orientation of the citizens of a nation toward politics, affecting their perceptions of political legitimacy” (source: <http://www.photius.com/countries/brazil/glossary/index.html>).

**Figure 1. Concepts of lifestyle**



Sources: Cockerham, 1997: 321-342; Giddens, 2003: 94-117; Cockerham, 2005: 51-67; Frohlich, 2002: 1401-1417; LaLonde, 1974; Frohlich, 1999: 90.

We found that Bourdieu's concept is the most practical to apply to empirical studies. According to Bourdieu (1984, cited in Marshall 2012: 97), lifestyle means "the mix of social and cultural capital." This mix shapes "the quotidian relationship between people and the things they own and use, as well as the value judgments and social relationships" (Leshkovich, cited in Marshall, 2012: 97).

However, these are world notions of lifestyle. How is it in Vietnam? Concepts of lifestyle in Vietnam are established in the same way, and also partly inherit the notions in the world. Nguyen (1985) provides an overview of the ideas in Vietnam concerning lifestyle, briefly described as:

- In psychology: lifestyle is a fixed manifestation, typically in personality and in different ways of behaving and thinking, specific to each individual, group or community.
- In politics and philosophy: it is a modality, a state of struggling/existing of human being with their specific history. Lifestyle presents morality's criteria, laws and different ways of living culture of different social groups.
- In culture: it is symbols of culture and of social values.
- In medicine (WTO, 1998): lifestyle is the way of living based on specific behaviors, which forms through reactions with personality.
- In general public discourse: Lifestyle is an aspect of culture. It can be divided as individual lifestyle and group or community lifestyle. Lifestyle becomes a criterion to assess each individual, group, and community in the process of exchange and establishing social-relationships.

Lifestyle is not merely activities, such as the way of behaving and moving around, but also, in a broader meaning, includes attitude, ways of working, and behaving in processes and social relationships. Lifestyle is reflected through behavior, over long periods of time, of an individual, group of people or a community (Nguyễn, 1985).

In this study, we find Bourdieu's concept most closely describes the lifestyle of parks' users. For this study, we suggest a simple understanding of park users' lifestyles as routines and permanent behaviours of groups or/and individuals in parks.

Lifestyle is displayed in many aspects of life, through time, spaces, and roles of each individual in their own life. This study focuses on the part of lifestyle that is shown in public parks and gardens.

Furthermore, it is known that when two or more cultures meet each other, *acculturation* processes occur. Acculturation influences the lifestyles of a city's inhabitants through changes in "ideas, words, values, norms, behavior, and institutions" (Redfield *et al.*, 1936: 149, cited in Sam, 2006: 11). In Vietnam, these changes can be described as "the transition from traditional culture to modern culture, characterized by the transiting logic from single-style culture to multi-style culture" (Mai and Pham, 2010: 24).

Factors influencing lifestyle are divided into two groups: (1) *internal factors* such as personality and free time, and (2) *external factors* such as social trends (technical and science), climate, and mentality. Those factors, which Oguz (2010) refers to as "natural, cultural, and economic systems", change continuously. On one hand, these changes affect lifestyles. On the other hand, lifestyles change in Urban Green Areas (UGAs), in aspects that "people's way of spending their time and leisure activity preferences also changes" (Oguz and Cakci, 2010: 721). That means people might spend their free time in different courses and duration in parks, and their activities are of a wider variety. Oguz and Cakci (2010: 721) also conclude that there is an "increasing need 'to consume' in today's societies."

We noted that park users' lifestyles are characterised by routines and permanent behaviours of groups of people or/and grouped activities of individuals in parks.

## Changing lifestyles and rising demand for public parks

Lifestyle changes have strong influences on demand for UGAs. How Hanoi's inhabitants are changing their lifestyles and why it affects their demand for using parks are explained next.

### *Changing lifestyles in Hanoi*

It is easy to recognise that Hanoi is in a globalizing process, which provides flows of goods (Bélanger *et al.*, 2012: 6-7), finance, knowledge, technology, and culture to the city. As introduced above, the *lifestyle* concept has a direct relation with the concept of *culture*. Therefore, Hanoi's inhabitants also adapt 'global lifestyles' (Bélanger *et al.*, 2012: 7).

Hanoians are changing their attitude from 'comfort is better than pride' or 'eat stodgy food, dress in long-lasting clothes' (ăn chắc, mặc bền) to 'eat delicious food, dress in fine clothes' (ăn ngon, mặc đẹp). These changes also affect their choices on how to spend their leisure time. They might choose indoor activities (e.g., shopping, watching movies, entertaining in cafés or with funfair automates,<sup>4</sup> doing sport in fitness centres) or outdoor activities (e.g., going to parks, enjoying street foods and drinks). Nevertheless, economic

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<sup>4</sup> Tables for casino games, automatic bowling alley equipment, and other funfair, table or parlour games, incl. pintables (excl. operated by coins, banknotes "paper currency", discs or other similar articles, billiards, video games for use with a television receiver, and playing cards). Source: <http://www.smartexport.com/en>.



growth and acculturation enhance the abundance of facilities for those activities to appear. The more those facilities appear in the city, the more opportunities the city provides. Those facilities serving these activities and those ‘global’ flows compete against parks and gardens for space and people’s choices.

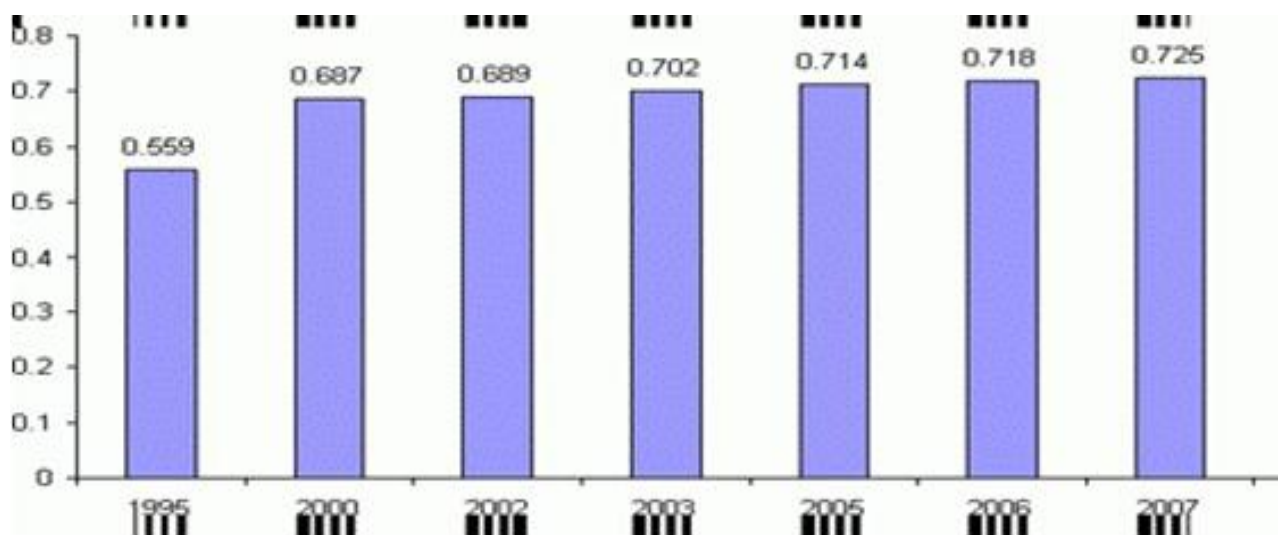
Emerging facilities that compete with parks and gardens for space in Hanoi include western fast food restaurants (BBQ Chicken, McDonald), shopping malls (Trang Tien plaza, Vincom) and amusement parks (the Ho Tay water park, the Kinder park). They are new and successful businesses, and are sometimes the reasons that the city is losing UGAs.

However, the globalisation process also brings positive changes to the city, such as tangible changes in using public parks as well as enhancing the development of parks and preservation of nature inside the city. For example, through social media, vanguards of young people are eager to protect the environment, to clean parks. They establish their own clubs and groups and act actively through Internet platforms (e.g. Raising Awareness on Environment and Climate Change Program: [www.raecp.org](http://www.raecp.org).) as well as in practice (e.g. Ho Guom waste gathering group).

Another indicator shows that the Hanoi living standard has improved. The Human Development Index (HDI) of Vietnam is rising (128/187 national research 2011; Chien, 2011) (see Figure 1). Certainly, HDI in the area of Hanoi, one of the two biggest economic centers of Vietnam, is higher than the average of the whole country. This index shows an integrated change in three factors, namely life expectancy index, education index and income index. These are also indicators for the changes of lifestyles in Hanoi.

At both the international level and in Hanoi, urban public parks are recognized to have many benefits. The Hanoi authority and its citizens have better awareness about parks’ importance through diverse information channels (academic and administrative conferences, workshop, multi-media, daily life conversations and so on).

**Figure 2. Vietnam Human Development Index**



Source: Tuoitre, 2012.

## Rising demand for public parks

This part provides some evidence of public parks' utilization in the past, describes the recent situation, and projects future demands for parks.

In emperors' time (before 1858), there is a little evidence to suggest that there was not much social life in urban public spaces in Vietnam because these spaces, which were the village communal house or the Buddhism temple, "were restricted in access according to gender and status" (Drummond, 2000: 2381). Kinh (2011) also confirms these points. He affirms: "Hanoians in the past had no behaviour of going to parks, because there was no public park until when the French invaded Vietnam."

**Table 2. Developing trends of functional spaces in multi-function parks in the world**

Year	234 (AC)	1623	1678	1955	1970	1972 till now
Recover	x	x	x	x	x	x
Eco-tourism						x
Culture	x		x	x	x	x
Culture-historical tourism						x
Sport		x	x		x	x
Adventure tourism						x
Relaxation-games				x	x	x
Education/practicing		x				x

**Table 3. Developing trends of functional spaces in multi-function parks in Vietnam**

Functions	Year		1958	Late XX century	Begin XXI century till now	
Recover		(not listed)	x	x	x	
Eco-tourism				x	x	
Culture			x	x	x	
Culture-historical tourism				x	x	
Sport			x	x	x	
Adventure tourism					x	
Relaxation-games					x	x
Education/practicing						x

Source: edited from Lan (2009: 36).

Since then, however, similar to parks in the other part of the world, their utilization is becoming diverse. Lan (2009: 36) collects and compares park's functions all over the world and in Vietnam. The earliest public parks established in Vietnam concur with the time when

the French invaded Vietnam. Then, parks were used for recovery, eco-tourism and sport (Lan, 2009: 36) by mostly the French and those working for French officials. The working class had very little opportunity to access these parks. The utilization of parks in Vietnam and France at the time were quite similar. There were few parks in Vietnam and they did not serve the majority of the population.

*Park utilization after fresh independent period.* Since 1954, when Vietnam gained independence, the parks' utilization has developed as many functions as elsewhere in the world. People started to use parks commonly in the period of Ho Chi Minh president, who was the Vietnamese president at the time. Ho Chi Minh called upon citizens to exercise. As a movement, Hanoians gathered in groups to practice physical exercises. For groups, a large space was required. So people started to do these exercises in the already existing public spaces. About the same time, Ho Chi Minh also decided to construct new parks and to renovate old parks (Thanh Nien street with large green pavements, Thong Nhat park). At the time, Tai Chi, a Chinese martial practice known for both its defense and health benefits, also started becoming popular in Hanoi. Old people gathered in the morning to practice Tai Chi for good health.

*Park utilization in the last 40 years.* The leisure activities of the majority citizens in parks were not all that diversified. These activities are fundamental, depending on availability of space. The actual uses were restricted by the citizens' ages, gender, the free time available of each individual, as well as hobbies, although spending free time mainly belongs to 10 groups of activities:

1. Extra job to earn more income
2. Extra learning to broaden knowledge
3. Educate their own children, domestic works
4. Volunteer, political/cultural activities in communes
5. Hobbies and/or club activities likes composing art, science, technology
6. Exploit information
7. Contact with nature (taking a walk alone/with family/friends)
8. Physical training, sport or exercise
9. Watching and/or listening (TV, radio)
10. Socializing (Tran, 1975)

As Tran (1975) records, there were three group activities (numbers 4, 5 and 7) taking place in parks. Nevertheless, 10 years later, leisure activities in parks are diverse, as recorded in an empirical work in 1985. Of the 10 free time activities listed above, parks and gardens can offer six of them (numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8) (Nguyễn, 1985: 47).

*Contemporary park utilization.* The lifestyles of Hanoians are changing. The way the city's inhabitants have been utilizing public spaces since the 1990s can be characterised by two terms – *inside-out* and *outside-in*:

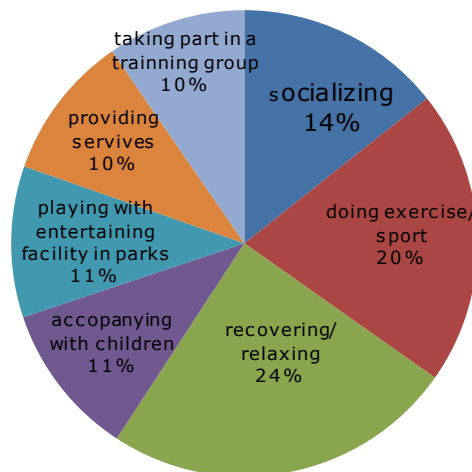
- *Inside-out* means “families and individuals make use of so-called public space for private activities to an extent and in ways that render that public space notionally private” (Drummond, 2012: 90). That might suggest that there are more diverse activities take place in parks. For example, people eat, sleep and show private emotion in parks.

- In contrast, *outside-in* means “public engagement in the organization and conduct of the ‘private’ space of the household within the home” (Drummond, 2012: 90).

Recently, Drummond (2012: 90) observes Hanoi society continuously and she argues, “there is far less mixing of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’.” By “far less mixing”, she means several indoor activities in the 1990s are moved to out-door activities in these decades (2000-2010s). This might also indicate that there are more diverse activities take place in parks.

Our current observations and surveys show a large number of people doing their exercises in parks everyday as a routine. More activities occur in parks than earlier (as shown in Table 3). Our survey indicates seven main categories of activities in Hanoi parks (see Figure 2). Relaxation, sport and gathering with friends are the dominant activities. Interestingly, a new group activity is now taking place in public parks: socializing/communicating (number 10 in the list above), which highlights that parks are for public use. Furthermore, it is one of the three biggest group activities in the parks. This demonstrates a high demand for socializing spaces. Parks seem to be the most favoured places of inhabitants.

**Figure 3. Activities in Hanoi parks (n= 2114)**



Source: own data.

Parks are areas for socializing (communicating), because those visitors going alone to parks tend to spend a shorter time there than those going with friends and/or colleagues (see Table 4).

**Table 4. The relationship between accompanying and length of stay (n= 2114)**

			How long did you stay in this park today?				
			<30 minutes	<1 hour	1-2 hours	>2 hours	Total
With whom do you go to this park?	Family	Count	11	46	136	67	260
		% within with whom do you go to this park?	9.0%	15.7%	14.7%	8.7%	12.3%
	Friend/ Colleague	Count	46	116	381	422	965
		% within with whom do you go to this park?	37.7%	39.6%	41.3%	54.8%	45.8%
	Alone	Count	63	129	395	274	861
		% within with whom do you go to this park?	51.6%	44.0%	42.8%	35.6%	40.8%
	Others	Count	2	2	11	7	22
		% within with whom do you go to this park?	1.6%	0.7%	1.2%	0.9%	1.0%
	Total	Count	122	293	923	770	2108
		% within with whom do you go to this park?	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: own data.

Furthermore, the rate of complaints between groups that stay longer or shorter in parks does not depend on whether they feel they are being disturbed (between 8-10% of each group, see Table 5). However, according to study of Wong's group (2004), dissatisfaction in the Hanoi parks is higher than in Kowloon park in Hong Kong (Wong and Domroes, 2004: 273). In their study, the rate of dissatisfaction is 1%, with the mean satisfaction index (1.0-5.0). The reason might be that Kowloon park is a beautiful park in Hong Kong, with higher investment.

**Table 5. Relationship between length of stay and feeling disturbed**

How long do you stay in the park today?					
How long do you stay here today?	Length of stay	Do you feel disturbed?		Total	% Yes
		No	Yes		
	< 30 min	111	9	120	8%
< 1 h	257	30	287	10%	
1-2 h	840	76	916	8%	
> 2 h	701	68	769	9%	
<b>Total</b>		1909	183	2092	9%

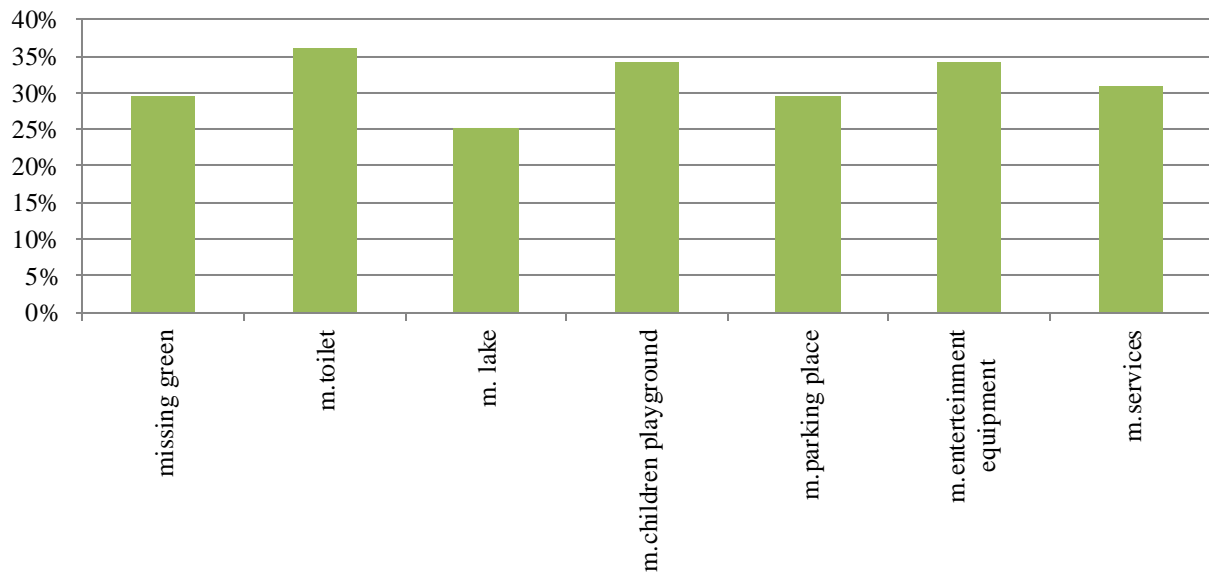
Source: own data.

### *Complaints of the park users*

Expectedly, park users complain about missing (m.) basic facility in the parks, like toilets and a children's playground. But people also miss entertaining facilities (see Figure 4). That implies these parks might attract people more when entertaining facilities are provided.

In little bit lower rates, people wish these parks have more trees, grass, and a better parking lot. These data indicate that the environmental elements should be improved and that these parks serve a great number of inhabitants who go there by bike or motorbike.

**Figure 4. Missing elements in the parks**

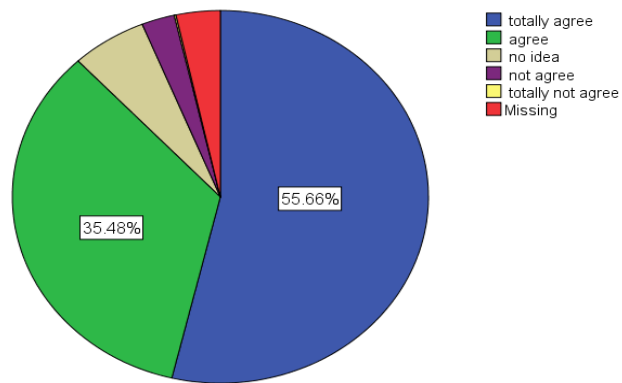


Source: own data.

*The inevitable trend.* To forecast social trends of park usage, we need data about people's expectations for future and ongoing behaviours concerning parks. In the context of the high density of buildings and other necessary infrastructure facilities in the inner city of Hanoi, it seems nearly impossible to have more parks. Nevertheless, the park users were asked if they think Hanoi should have more parks. As expected, the overwhelming majority agreed, 91.1% answered that they agree or totally agree (see Figure 5). Among the small group of people who did not agree, some mentioned that the existing parks should be maintained better. However, we have to consider that such questions achieve usually a high rate of approval. But it confirms the rate of dissatisfaction in Table 5 above.

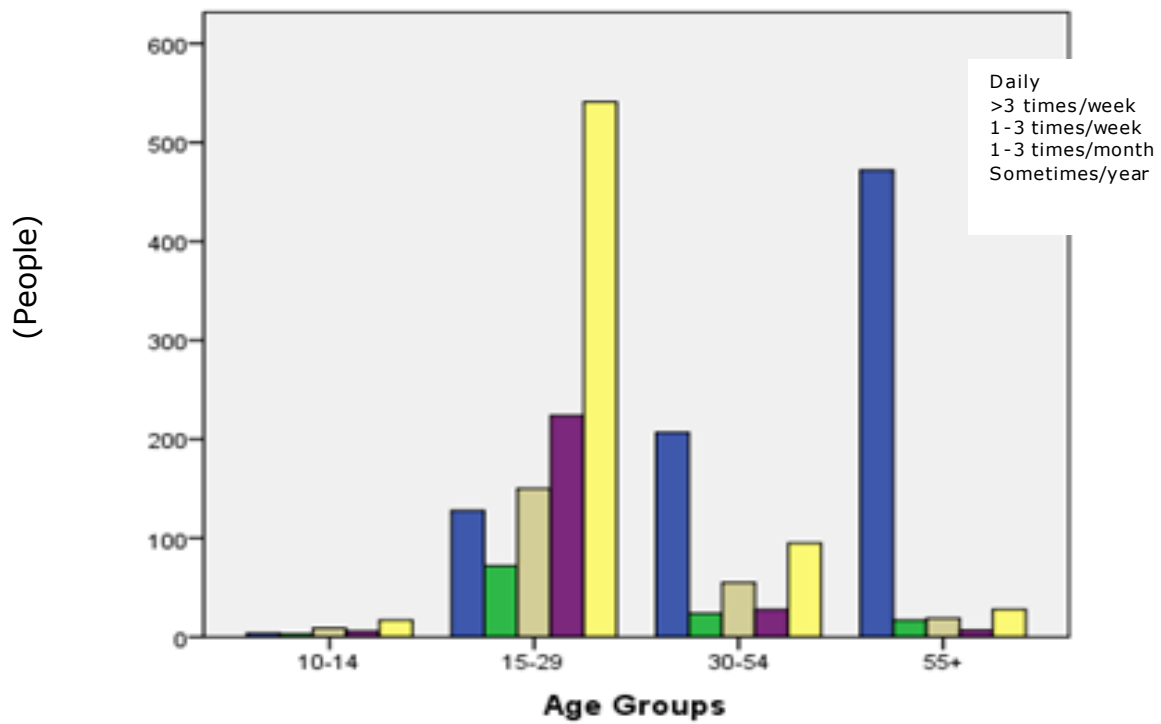
The second factor supporting the trend that the number of potential park users is rising is an aging public. Regarding the age of park users, we notice that younger people go to parks less frequently and park users over 55 years old (most of these people are already retired) tend to visit the parks daily (see Figure 6).

**Figure 5. Should Hanoi have more UGAs (N=2114)**



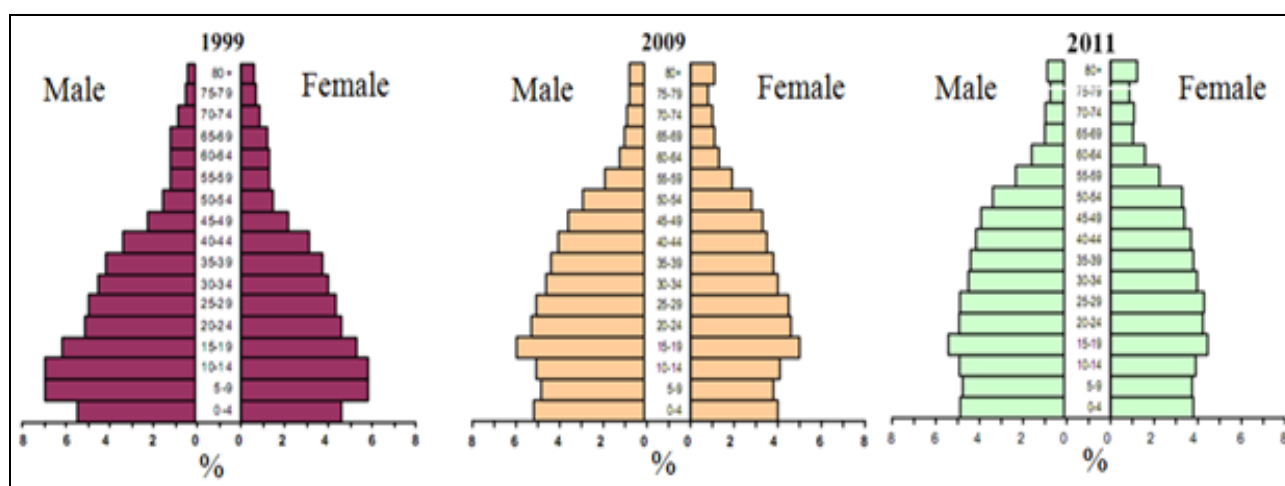
Source: own data.

**Figure 6. Frequency of visiting parks (N=2114)**



Source: Own data.

Figure 7. Vietnam's population 1999, 2009, and 2011



Sources: General Statistic Office, 2010, 2011.

People visit and use parks in their free time. There are several developments in Vietnam which will lead to more personal free time for several groups in society:

- The above mentioned “aging society” will have a higher rate of retired people – with a lot of personal free time.
- The older people are, the more free time people have, officially. In the article 75<sup>th</sup>, Chapter VIII, Vietnamese labour law 2005, “The number of days of annual leave shall be increased according to seniority to work in a business or an employer who, every five years an additional rest day” (Tsairport, 2012: no page).
- As the economy grows, slowly more people have more free time. While total working hours per week in Vietnam has not changed from the labour law of 1994 to the newest law in 2005 –following those, total working hours per week is 48 hours (Tsairport, 2012; Thu vien phap luat, 2010) – since 2000, many government offices and companies reduce work time on Saturday afternoon or the whole Saturday by adding one working hour each day during working days.

All these developments will enhance the demand for public parks by a quickly growing number of potential parks users.

### Changing political behavior

This section discusses changes in policy in Vietnam and reaction from society, particularly in Hanoi. As already mentioned, Hanoi recently has high rates of economic and population growth (known as ‘hot growth’). This contributes to rapid changes in land use and occupational patterns of urban spaces (Zérah, 2007: 122). The construction environment is changing the city image, for example, new “large commercial centres, well-located spaces” (Zérah, 2007: 122) and “the private gate (modeled on the Brandenburg Gate)” are constructed (Drummond, 2012: 79-80). “Hanoi at the end of 21<sup>st</sup> century’s first decade presents an urban landscape that is often described primarily as ‘chaotic’” (Drummond, 2012: 80). Particularly, *chaotic* might be the right word for describing “everyday life in the city” and the utilization of parks and gardens is not excluded from this description. As a consequence, trade-offs between competing objectives are deeply involved in many major conflicts of urban development.



In addition, as demanding places in daily life, but infrastructures in parks and gardens are often not well maintained, due to low budgets from the authority, on the one hand. On the other hand, overlapping responsibilities of many disciplines and administration levels leads public spaces management into a logjam (Đỗ, 2011). For instance, a situation that has not happened before, due to policies change or lack of precedent, will be take long time to clarify.

### *Urban planning in Hanoi seems to be still working as a top-down process*

There is a governmental office that is responsible for urban planning, but the development of the master plans is done by several consultancy organizations (business companies or institutes) in a kind of contest (so-called a bid). This first phase is named ‘inviting to bid’. A Committee, established by the responsible office, has to choose the “best plan”. This second phase is called ‘bidding’. The “winner plan” (or the successful tenderer) then is shown to the political body of the city (the People’s committee of Hanoi) to confirm and to make a decision to implement the plan.

Then, Hanoi citizens become more involved in the further planning process (see Table 6). The master plan and several detail plans are made available to the public, which means the plans are shown in a kind of public exhibition. It seems that through this step some public participation does exist. There are three groups of participating people:

- The people directly affected by the new plans mostly “only” complain about the loss of their private property or other existing benefits which might be taken away by the new plan.
- Many “normal citizens” can give their comments only very “unprofessionally” due to their low level of experience with such planning processes (often it is difficult to understand what they would like to change or to point out).
- Until now there are only few people (scientists, planners, managers, and other well educated people) who are able to discuss the draft of the plans well.

**Table 6. Government articles concerning participation**

Governmental decree/ circular	Content
Government’s decree No. 91-CP, on 17-8-1994 Management committee charter of urban planning.	Chapter 2: Establishment and construction plan approval of urban. Article 7. A. The plan approved urban construction should be made public so that people know and follow.
	Chapter 5: Article 39. All infrastructure construction of urban technical when completed test must be held. People’s Committees of provinces and cities directly under the Central Government authorities responsible for the management of the use and exploitation of such work.
Circular No. 07/2008/ TT-BXD Guidelines and evaluation, approval and construction management plan. (Part 3)	In the process of making detailed plans of construction, consultancy organizations shall coordinate with local authorities to consult the organizations and individuals in the planning area in the form of meetings, exchanging or distributing tickets directly consulted on the planning of the content information center of the city, town, district and ward for people to easily access and comment. The comments have been fully synthesized and reported to the competent authorities for consideration prior to approval.

Source: Government, 2011.

We observed residences of Hanoi since 2000 and the popular situations that people claim about property in circumstances concerning the government's land use projects. The most common reason is that those projects trespass on private land with inadequate compensation. For example, in an urban public space management and development conference in Hanoi, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011, a participant from the authority of Tay Ho district, who responded to the construction of dykes and a concrete road by the West lakeshore, reported that the households located by the lake do not want to move, delay this move, and refuse compensation money. This is due to other house-owners behind them getting more benefits from new road, while the compensation money is lower than the value in the free market.

It is not transparent how the participation process is managed. The transparency index shows prevalence of corruption level within each country and transparency level and ranks those countries into six levels (high, transparent, semi, low and opaque). In 2010, Vietnam is ranked 76/81 countries and is ranked in the low transparency group (Jones Lang LaSalle IP, INC., 2010: 5). This is a little quantitative evidence that implies a low level of transparency in the planning process.

The guidelines for the planning process do not determine how the public feedback (information and comments of people) is processed after the exhibition. No revised plans will be shown to the public afterwards, means the people do not know whether or how their comments are considered. As there is no new political decision of people's committee about a revised plan needed, the population's opinion is that there are no big changes and most comments are ignored. This unsatisfying feeling could be (easily) avoided by publishing revised plans that everybody can see whether and where changes are based on the comments of population.

Concerning the implementation phase, there are two forms of financing infrastructure projects in Vietnam, namely BT (Building-Transfer) and BOT (Building-Operate-Transfer). The BOT process starts with the Government calling for companies to finance pre-built (Built) through bidding, followed by an operation phase that is directly exploited by the company/ies (Operation), and finally transfers (Transfer) back to the government owner/managers. The build-transfer form (BT) is similar to the BOT form, but without the operation phase.

These implementation forms lead to the following recent situations of public spaces in urban areas:

- Inherit or take benefits unintentionally from urban spaces
- Public spaces are diversified in terms of size, location, shaping and use purpose.
- Random/arbitrary hierarchy in management
- Unequal benefits
- Lack of utility, often is damaged. (Le, 2011: 146)

### *Evidence of a more democratic society*

As the economy grows, and Vietnam's goal is to be an industrialized country by 2030, participation seems to be not only necessary but inevitable in any policy process. Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's president, argued already 20 years ago (1991): "Once you reach a certain level of industrial progress, you have got an educated workforce, an urban population, you have managers and engineers. Then you must have participation because these are educated, rational people. If you carry on with an authoritarian system, you will run into all kinds of logjams."

Thus many NGOs come to Vietnam to support the Vietnamese government with advanced policy from developed countries. They also collaborate with local citizens and experts to change the policy system. Recently, several NGOs worked with the Vietnamese Government to develop planning processes as well as to provide tools and establish frameworks to support the development of participation processes. For instance, Health Bridge and UN Habitat assist the government in policymaking and public forums (Hanoi public city) and public bodies (Ashui, an architecture forum) provide platforms for citizens to criticize policies, plans and the cities' news.

Nowadays we can observe situations where Hanoians raise their voices about urban plans. The vanguards, those who first debate against irrational plans, are architects, scientists and other well-educated people. Of course, these do not represent the majority of inhabitants. But nevertheless, it is a first step and gives other people examples, ideas and also courage to discuss and to claim for more transparency.

Slowly, there are more and more people who are well educated, rich and well-behaved in the community; these vanguards drive to new trend of lifestyle by which people make claims better for society's needs. Through lifestyle changes, people learn how to claim for their own demands. Everyday topics (body, health, exercise, weight, appearance and vitality) are commonly conversed and advice exchanged (Craig, 2002).

Moreover, the fast development of technology – the Internet platforms, social networks, etc. – delivers useful tools for raising citizen's opinion. There are already websites about parks in Hanoi (for instance, <http://60s.com.vn/V-Congvien-Hanoi.aspx#top>), and even a single website for the big park (Thong Nhat). However, their function is just to introduce the parks; it is not a platform for people to comment, to improve those parks.

Sufficient conditions to ensure “that government at the local level can become more responsive to citizen desires and more effective in service delivery” and finally ‘democratic local governance’ becomes “now a major subtheme within the overall context of democratic development” (Blair, 2012: 21).

## Conclusion

Until few decades ago, Hanoi's inhabitants did not use public space because the access was restricted for most people due to age, gender and low social class. But lifestyles change rapidly nowadays as a consequence of a ‘hot growing’ economy and globalization. Thus, today a large number of people go to parks and gardens as an everyday place. People use urban green areas intensively for diverse daily activities, which did not occur in parks in the past. It can be expected that this demand for public parks and gardens will grow very fast in the near future. Therefore, city planning should be aware of this demand. Although people in Vietnam are still patient, they learn very fast to claim for their needs and later on city planning has to react.

As lifestyles change rapidly and are influenced by many factors, more continuous social observation is necessary. This empirical study did not access people who do not go to parks. They might have totally different attitudes. In follow-up papers, we aim to access them and discuss their issues critically.

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## **Practices of Urban Protest and the Right to the City**

## Whose City? Occupy Wall Street and Public Space in the United States

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**Abstract:** Since September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Occupy Wall Street movement has inspired, confused, and empowered people across America. It has illuminated an important aspect of urbanism: conflicting goals for the use of publically dedicated urban space in the United States. Public space is conceptually at the heart of the Occupy movement. The vision of reclaiming public space has been a metaphor for reclaiming power since the movement's inception. Providing for political dissent is one of the founding principles of America, but this right has never been secure. The Middle Eastern countries of the Arab Spring revolutions have not tolerated groups of any size publically speaking against their government, and American authorities currently tread perilously close to making the same mistake. The United States has a strong history of preserving the institution of urban commons under public control, but regulation of publically dedicated spaces has increased dramatically. In modern America these spaces are increasingly privately owned, heavily programmed, or dominated by stringent liability regulations. Urban planning can and should be instrumental in making our cities democratically controlled and publicly accessible. Occupy Wall Street has provided planners with a blueprint for creating socially equitable space that tangibly, truly belongs to the American people.

**Keywords:** Occupy Wall Street, public space, social justice, urban planning, United States

### Part one: Theory

Land is power. As old as civilization itself, the right to control land has signified the security of continued survival and the freedom of self-determination. Throughout history, the control of land meant the ability to produce food to provide against future uncertainty, it meant the ability to construct housing facilities, and access to natural resources such as water, vantage

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points, building materials, fuel, and game. Land has remained the most concrete and overt, the most primal, symbol of power.

Occupy Wall Street uses peaceful occupation of public space as a multifaceted tool of grassroots empowerment. The movement claimed that power not only in its occupation of publically dedicated land, but also in its choice of location. It chose to occupy Zuccotti Park, near New York City's famous Wall Street financial district, to create a visible contrast with America's iconic corporate bureaucracies. The New York Stock Exchange and the other financial markets at Wall Street, the policy and legislation that supports them, and their collective culpability in the 2007-2010 financial crisis, is the target environment of the Occupy Wall Street movement. As a strategy for being seen and heard in an environment where the movement could have the most contrasting socio-economic and ideological backdrop, Occupy Wall Street was an instantaneous success.

When I first saw the Occupy Wall Street encampment at Zuccotti Park in New York's financial district, I was immediately struck by the rarity of seeing people using public spaces in American urban centers for anything other than getting to and from work. Before the protests, Zuccotti Park and its surrounding streets were filled with professional men and women during morning, evening, and lunch rush hours, hurrying to and from work, hastily eating their lunches so they could get back to business (Austin, 2012). In New York City's imposing financial district, with its monumental expanses of stone, concrete, and glass, its famous bronze "charging bull" sculpture, and little Zuccotti Park, geometrically paved over and planted with a uniform stand of manicured trees, it is clear who really owns the public spaces.

Calling a public space "programmed" means that there are specific intended uses that the designer of the space had in mind: "A program for an environment, whether a park, an office building, or a mall, is the menu of activities that the space is designed to facilitate" (Austin, 2012: no page). To the extent that programming is a reaction to the specific needs of a space, it is an appropriate consideration. Hiking trailheads, for instance, benefit from drinking fountain and restroom facilities. Streets with bike paths need bike racks. Sidewalks should be designed to be both safe and comfortable for pedestrians. However, urban spaces are increasingly designed for highly specific activities, with little truly flexible space for creative or adaptive use. This increase in programmed space is enhanced by New York's Privatization of Public Spaces Incentive program, which gives legal benefits to developers in high-density areas for providing spaces for public access. Programming space is also an approach to addressing security issues: deciding whom the developer is intending to serve, and what activities the developer would like to encourage, are issues that are usually implicitly addressed by a combination of design and regulation.

Privately owned public spaces such as Zuccotti Park are situated in an amorphous legal no-man's land, due to a lack of clearly defined regulations, the loophole that allowed Occupy Wall Street to set up camp. There was an obvious breach of the owner's intentions for how the space should be used. In lieu of the Occupy Wall Street encampment, Zuccotti Park's legal owners, Brookfield Office Properties, wanted to "restore the park to its intended purpose [of passive recreation]." (Berg, 2011) As political protest was ostensibly one of the intended purposes of civic space throughout American history, what the Occupy Wall Street protests have done is to highlight how Zuccotti Park is not a civic space. "First Amendment protections don't really apply when the owners of a space are non-governmental" (Reynolds, 2011: no page). Thus, Occupy Wall Street has shown the world that the phenomenon of privatized public spaces are slowly taking away the civic spaces, and the rights that go with them, from the American public.

So what's going on here? How have private interests come to be in such conflict with community interests in the public realm? Big business, structured for economic gain, has been granted by the American government the right to own what were once public institutions, "public spaces that are not really public at all but quasi-public, controlled by their landlords" (Kimmelman, 2011: no page). Private businesses are not structured with the goal of protecting public interest, but of making money. A financial district where people don't act out, where people are encouraged to move along to work, and discouraged from eating a leisurely lunch in the park, is simply aimed to increase productivity. "There's a basic tension between the public purposes these kinds of spaces are supposed to serve and the actual interest of the private property owners" (Yglesias, 2011: no page). The privatization of civic spaces is an effort by the government to finance public services through imposing regulations on private entities, but this places public services under the yoke of private interests, which are ultimately aimed at increasing profits and not at community benefit.

As American society has expanded its acceptance of the diverse communities it consists of, it has at the same time become more homogeneous in its behavior. The existence of Occupy Wall Street in Zuccotti Park (and in cities across the United States) as encampments, assemblies, and marches across the public realm has highlighted the ways in which the country has grown to favor corporations and the wealthy by integrating capitalist interests into policy and legislation (Moynihan, 2011). Privatized public parks are just one example, and Occupy Wall Street has ventured into trade ports, disused farms, and abandoned buildings, and has attempted to interfere with evictions and hold general strikes. All these actions are meant to reclaim public interests by reclaiming the space that has been appropriated by corporations and wealthy institutions for the purpose of making money. Whether these measures are successful or not is immaterial to the concept that land that exists for the public good must belong to the public, and not to private interests. The theory of Occupy Wall Street is: we own the space we occupy; let's occupy the spaces that supposedly exist for our welfare, and remind our government and the American people that these places belong to us.

## Part two: History

The nature of public space in America – its purpose and its limitations – has changed with the years, and Occupy Wall Street is by no means the first instance of civil dissent to challenge perceived social injustices by leveraging their right of assembly in a publicly dedicated space. The most significant example in recent history, the 1971 May Day protests against the Vietnam War, blocked Washington, D.C.'s key bridges and streets, and overflowed the city's jails. "The protesters failed to shut down Washington, but they made clear that the government could not wage war in Vietnam and have peace at home" (Mills, 2011: no page). What makes Occupy Wall Street singular is its lack of a central demand or specific goal. This revolution is more of a state of mind and a flexible outlet for frustration, disconnection, and a wide variety of grievances against American government, institutions, and corporations. It is precisely because the movement does not have a single goal that can be satisfied that it has been so internationally appealing. The lack of a list of demands is itself a demand of the systems and individuals in power: we are angry, and it is your job as community leaders to help us change the systems we live in. We are not going to figure out the solution for you. We are going to have to work together on this, and we will not cooperate with you until you cooperate with us.

Occupy Wall Street, the beginning of the international Occupy movement, was initiated by Adbusters, a Canadian activist group. It began on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011, and a few hundred

protestors began to camp in Zuccotti Park, which was open overnight, an anomaly in New York City's municipal public parks, due to its status as a privately owned public space. It was inspired by the Spanish anti-austerity "indignado" protests and Arab Spring revolutions of 2011, especially the Egyptian Revolution's protests in Tahrir Square. The Arab Spring, primarily depending on civil resistance and social media as tools for organizing, communicating, and advertising their grievances against oppressive regimes, though taking place in a far more overtly hostile political climate, was a blueprint for Occupy Wall Street. The Arab Spring has so far toppled four governments and widely provoked governmental changes, and, although Occupy Wall Street and the other Occupy movements around the United States have not aimed to overthrow the American government, the themes of nonviolent protest, online networking, citizen journalism, and, most of all, occupation of public space, have proved consonant with the objectives of the American Occupy protests.<sup>2</sup>

And what are those objectives? This question has circulated in American media and academia endlessly because traditional society and traditional politics have little context for a movement with no central leader and no central demands. This state of affairs was confusing to the American public and governmental agencies alike, but the purpose of Occupy Wall Street began to be clear, nevertheless. When I traveled to New York City to see the demonstrations in Zuccotti Park, I didn't know what to make of what was happening. Exploring the encampment, talking with demonstrators, and participating in the general assembly all showed me that what was taking place was a microcosm of the kind of small-scale, community-based urban structure that the protestors believed was possible. There was a medical tent that served as a free clinic, a library with open donations and borrowing policies, a kitchen where free meals were served, funded by donations collected online and at the park. The camp wasn't clean, but it wasn't filthy either. There were cases of theft and harassment within the camp, but for the most part, everyone looked out for one another.

Before I arrived in Zuccotti Park in November 2011, I didn't understand the purpose of the protestor's insistence on the encampment, but after I spent a few days at the park, it was clear. The movement needed to build a community, and living together was the quickest way to accomplish that. The challenges the group had to face together – day-to-day living, internal conflict resolution, dealing with troublemakers, helping every person who wanted to speak be heard in the "human microphone" of the daily general assemblies, where a person speaks and the group repeats her words – bound this community and made it strong. And the Occupy communities, in the cities in which I demonstrated, Oakland, New York City, and Washington, D.C., were very eager to work together. They seemed hungry for the companionship, for the power to be seen and heard. Above the din of petty name-calling and grandiloquent analyses in the befuddled media during Occupy Wall Street's early days, the voices of the protestors could be heard, chanting, conversing with protestors and onlookers, and challenging the police. They became citizen journalists on twitter, livestreamed video footage, posted photos, and interviewed for news casts around the world. I arrived shortly before the November 15<sup>th</sup> Zuccotti Park eviction, and, after a long night of reconvening, protesting, and avoiding police barricades, I found myself sitting for the emergency general assembly at Foley Plaza as the sun rose. Later that day I would be interviewed on broadcast

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<sup>2</sup> Accessed on 06.08.2012, at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occupy\\_Wall\\_Street](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occupy_Wall_Street).

radio by the BBC, and I told them what I told the NYPD officers who were telling us to go home: this is our land, and we have a right to be here and to be heard.

Throughout history, American governance has struggled with balancing security with freedom. While there are foundations for using public space for congregations of political discourse and dissent in the United States Constitution, there are also foundations for retention of central power by elected officials for the purposes of security and freedom for the public majority. Democracy demands that public property be ruled by popular opinion, but there are many entities (corporations, institutions, activists, and government itself), which attempt to influence and manipulate popular opinion. As more of the public realm continues to be privatized, manipulating public action and opinion becomes increasingly a matter of good business practices. At their worst, public spaces in the United States have become a free-for-all of fear mongering and greed.

In Oakland, where law enforcement is chronically overtaxed and underfunded, and where police are rigorously prepared for the higher level of crime specific to that city, the Occupy protests received some of the worst treatment by law enforcement in the entire movement. Oakland became a national example in the early months of the protest, as television, news, and YouTube were flooded with images of the Oakland Police Department pepper spraying protesters at close range, firing flashbang grenades and rubber bullets, and manhandling unarmed protestors. The protestors, too, responded with anger, and there were some instances of assaults and vandalism, eroding the support of the local community and worsening the relationship between Oakland's municipality and the Occupy Oakland movement. Oakland, and other cities across the United States, showed the world that at least one system, law enforcement, needed to reform its techniques. How many of our economic and political systems, many asked, also needed reform? The movement was a beacon: as more bureaucratic systems were suddenly called into unexpected action, problems in local and national legislation came to be identified. Rather than a movement with a list of demands, Occupy Wall Street served as a catalyst for Americans to ask questions about the framework of their country.

As a professional with a background in landscape architecture, ecological design, and urban planning, it seems natural to me that raising public awareness, pinpointing problems, and effecting positive change relies directly on the accessibility and visibility of the public realm and its legal protections. For instance, it is easy to overlook a homeless problem that is stowed away into disused areas of a city, difficult to fix building systems that are not easily accessible, and natural to spend more time walking instead of driving when there are safe, attractive, and comfortable routes to jobs and other destinations. Transforming the anger and frustration of the underserved 99% of American society into the visible entity of the Occupy protests, which invites interaction and participation, follows this line of thinking. Returning American public spaces to their originally intended use for congregation and the exchange of ideas and resources, explicitly inclusive of peaceful political dissent, is an act with which planners of sustainable urban spaces can connect. Give a common space to a neighborhood, ensure resources for its maintenance and safety, and community gardens, barbecues, playgrounds, and music events will arise on their own. When Wall Street business men and women walked past the Zuccotti Park occupation last fall, they stopped ignoring the human aftermath of the economic crisis in 2009 and began either listening to the protestors, or defensively speaking out against them. Either way, a dialogue was begun, by making a problem normally invisible to Wall Street workers into a full-fledged encampment, at the very steps of their workplaces.

By October 9<sup>th</sup> of 2011, Occupy demonstrations were active in over 600 communities in the United States, many forming organized encampments with shelter, medical services, libraries, meeting points, and places for general assemblies. This was a strong statement; the Occupiers were literally living in the public spaces that were presumably dedicated for their use. Different cities responded in different ways, with evictions, compromises, ambushes, and crowd-control measures, some brutal, some not. Such efforts usually increased the power of the movement. Marches swelled in size after encampment evictions and instances of police brutality. This wave of reactive energy was strong, and the message that came across was of power and autonomy. “The people no longer trust their leaders and are even starting to indict the system itself. They think we can do better. We are all leaders” (Gauntney, 2011).

Protest, like all public gatherings, builds community. I knew this before I joined Occupy Wall Street in New York City. What I didn’t know, and in fact discovered quite suddenly, while I was marching in a crowd of over 50,000 over the Brooklyn Bridge during the November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011 demonstration, was that public protest inspires patriotism. I realized that I had never felt particularly like a citizen of the United States. When I traveled to other countries, I felt about as much at home in any city I happened to like; it wasn’t until I took part in the protests last fall that I felt involved, even at home, in the politics of my own country. More than reading a history book, or the newspaper, or visiting the D.C. monuments, or even voting, I felt like I was doing something effectual and important when I was with the demonstrations. I was talking with total strangers of all different backgrounds about politics and history and what kind of country we wanted to live in, and we had a chance to act on what we came up with. One day I felt moved to link arms around a building on Wall Street and block workers from getting to their jobs, and another day I did not, and simply showed my support by talking with angry business men and women about what we were trying to say. I had never before felt as though I had actively participated in my country’s political system, and this experience, more than anything else in my life, made me love my country enough to want it to change.

Occupy Wall Street is patriotic, and it is distinctly American. It quickly developed its own proud, inclusive subculture: language, organization, resources, and online presence. It drew musicians, religious leaders, performers, and celebrities with its infectious culture. People who felt marginalized, powerless, and alienated, found solidarity. Those dispossessed of their houses found a home. The right of the public to stand up against perceived political injustices is as critical to democracy as it is to universal suffrage. Despite all the confusion and complexities, occupation of public land was an elegantly simple approach. Everyone took notice.

### **Part three: Rebuilding democracy**

The events surrounding Occupy Wall Street in New York and other cities across the United States have shown that the public realm is less friendly to the right to public assembly and public political dissent than it has a constitutional right to be. A material reason for this, derived from New York City’s Privatized Public Spaces’ total lack (and understandably so) of advocacy for civic and community interests, is that corporations and capitalist business interests have intruded into the public realm. As an urban planner interested in building and retrofitting green, connected, sustainable communities, I believe that an abundance of publicly owned space is essential both to building healthy communities and to furnish a stage for political participation, locally and nationally. These spaces cannot belong to private entities if

they are to truly serve the public, they must exist as publically owned property, and their rules must be based on democratic decisions, preferably on a regional level.

One issue with Occupy Wall Street that has repeatedly surfaced is a conflict about security. Law enforcement and municipal authorities argue that their actions are for the sake of keeping the peace, protecting innocent civilians, and protecting property, and protesters make the same argument. That law enforcement is willing to use weapons and force and the vast majority of protesters are not is where the clash becomes most visible. When I saw police in New York, Washington, D.C., and Oakland crush unresisting protesters against the ground, yank a cameraman off a bus shelter, and punch an angry middle aged woman in the face, I thought about what security means, and where it comes from. In every instance of police violence I witnessed, I could see the crowd of protesters get angrier. The crowd-control tactics of tear gas, rubber bullets, kettling, and pepper spray did not calm the crowds. At most, they might send people home or to medical care for a day or so, and then more would return, with more energy, more assurance, more anger. This is not where lasting security comes from.

Governmental backlash against dissent, protest and revolution has tended towards violence to the extent that the government in question distrusts its relationship with its own people. The impetus to control what one fears is a part of human nature that is as old as the drive to procreate. What isn't so readily apparent is that the softer aspects of control, such as the progressive marginalization of grassroots empowerment by a governing body, also leaves a trail of blood. A people who are systematically stripped of their right to challenge their government, their right to use their own judgment in regards to their safety and happiness, their right to use land that has been deeded in perpetuity for public use for peaceful purposes, will not be contented. Discontent manifests itself in many ways, erupting not only in revolutions and riots, but also in self-destructive action and directionless violence. The micromanaging of public spaces in the United States will only increase noncompliance. Lasting security doesn't come from tighter control.

Security does come from a balance of consensus government and individual self-determination. By creating an environment that enables individuals to form communities, to challenge authority, to educate themselves, to live decently, and to think for themselves, a governing system becomes flexible instead of brittle, and thus achieves enduring strength. In other words, governing bodies and corporations do not deserve protection as much as people do. The concept of corporate personhood, a term that has suffused some of the political discourse that Occupy Wall Street has generated, is a good example of this. Giving corporations some of the same legal rights as American citizens is a development conceptually related to the privatization of public land; both are representative of modern policies where private interests take priority over community interests. Occupy Wall Street re-created community by bringing the intentions of individuals back into the public realm.

Advocating the use of public space for peaceful protest is one of the most meaningful symbols possible of a democracy. One of Occupy Wall Street's most valuable functions is to make social injustice and hypocritical policy visible. Indeed this is in part the function of all protest. When people participate in their own government, which is the ultimate intention of all democracy, they must share ideas, they must be seen and heard by their elected officials, by their own communities, and by the general public. When corporations and government institutions become more worthy of protection than individuals and public needs, the foundations of human rights and social justice are threatened. Through acknowledgement of the public realm as the property of the public, ultimately governed by their communities and protected by the active consensus of local businesses and residents, a country can uphold democracy on a very tangible and visible level. By empowering individuals to use the space

dedicated to them, while remaining peaceful, active, and engaged, a nation can achieve the best and most long-lasting security: a strong, participatory citizenry. On every level, cities must belong to communities rather than businesses or institutions that do not represent public interests, and the Occupy movement in the United States has made it clear that changes need to be made for cities to be returned to their rightful owners.

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## #Occupy in the San Francisco Bay

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**Abstract:** If Occupy Wall Street focused attention on the transnational resistance to the imaginaries and practices of neo-liberalization, the networked protests, collectively identified as #Occupy each emerged out of particular places, contexts and histories of contestation. This paper examines the significance in one urban region, the San Francisco Bay, and especially the intersection between #Occupy and longer-term residual urban social movements. Understanding neo-liberalization as a dynamic process, I begin by mapping the vectors of contention in the regional imposition of the neo-liberal project, and especially the sectors of housing, employment, education and media representation. I then analyse the intersection of the #Occupy moment, between two different politics – the direct action and militant commons, and the longer-term subaltern counter-spheres of the residual organizations. I then identify the impact on the dynamics of mobilization and intervention, and especially the imaginaries and practices of urban space, inclusion, and knowledge production.

**Keywords:** contentious politics, counter public spheres, enclosure, commons

### Introduction

In their 2008 article documenting the contestation of neo-liberalization in cities and regions around the globe, Leitner, Peck and Sheppard described four realms of practice. Recognizing an enormous variety, with groups simultaneously engaging in several at once, they identified “direct action, lobbying and legislative action, alternative knowledge production and alternative economic and social practices”. In the United States alone, thousands of organizations had engaged in struggles over living wages, job security, affordable housing, welfare, quality education, healthcare and transportation, and immigrant rights, among many others. Although some used direct action on a small scale, the most common practice that Leitner *et al.* identified was lobbying and legislative action (18). With the notable exception of the Seattle anti-WTO demonstrations, mass protest was rare with “little public resonance and support” (p. 15).

#Occupy Wall Street (OWS) and the hundreds of linked actions known as #Occupy, seems to have changed all that, almost overnight. Although organizations in New York and elsewhere have been targeting Wall Street and the financial sector for many years, the continuous occupation of Zucotti Park, coupled with the all-important securing of the

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powerful global media centered in New York, sparked a groundswell of loosely linked actions across the U.S., Canada and other global cities and shifted the public imagination. OWS disrupted the frame of the dominant corporate media, and of the Washington neo-liberal consensus. Fingering Wall Street and the tiny minority of Americans, or “the 1%”, for their responsibility for the economic and social crises affecting the great majority of people, or “the 99%” they not only expanded the collective lexicon, but put poverty and systemic inequality back on the political agenda (Stelter, 2012). OWS also shook the myth of American exceptionalism, as commentators of all hues linked the urban protests in New York and other American cities with those in the public squares of Tunis, Cairo, Athens, and Madrid. Finally, OWS not only popularized a critique of the practices of global neoliberal capitalism; it dramatically put to rest Margaret Thatcher’s notorious slogan, “there is no alternative.”

## #Occupy in the Bay

In the San Francisco Bay area where I live, a combination of novices and political veterans from new and long-standing organizations quickly followed OWS and set up #Occupy camps in San Francisco, Oakland and Santa Rosa, which lasted until December. Since then, #Occupy has inspired a very wide range of actions, including a second mass protest, or “general strike” at the Oakland Docks, a series of solidarity protests with striking ferry and other workers; coordinated student demonstrations at campus throughout the bay; the occupation of foreclosed houses on both sides of the Bay; several day-long take-overs of San Francisco financial district streets protesting the actions of Wells Fargo, weekly protests of the Bank of America in the San Francisco neighbourhood of Bernal Heights branch, May Day demonstrations in four different sites (two immigrant neighbourhoods and downtown squares of Oakland and San Francisco), several protests against police brutality towards youth of colour, and educational events throughout the region.

#Occupy not only represented a very wide range of social sectors, action repertoires and collective imaginations. They also involved more people than any public mobilizations since the huge mass protests against the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2002 and 2003. The disruption of the dominant frame, and the scope and scale of the actions captured the imagination of many. Media activist Tracy Rosenberg told me, “the #Occupy meme of the 99% framing was powerful in attracting people into a movement. The ordinary participant wanted and needed the power of the 99% idea. People don’t want to be outnumbered. Even when they fight something, they want to be in the majority and they want to have a fighting chance at winning.” Although the refusal of #Occupy to list specific demands has been widely criticized, it provided an umbrella for hosting a very wide range of individuals and groups, allowing as Rosenberg (2012) said, people “to step out of their own silos, forcing more cooperation. A whole lot of cross-fertilization happened.”

#Occupy represented the growing immiseration of the American middle class, and especially the youth who face a new horizon of precarity. As importantly, the movement in the bay area drew from the work of those thousands of organizations that had been contesting neoliberalization. As Maria Poblet from the Latino and African American tenants’ housing rights organization, Causa Justa/Common Cause, said:

Finally the people of the US have taken issue with the corporations of the US that have done so much harm to our communities inside the US and also in other countries. I remember thinking, maybe not everybody is asleep. Maybe people have noticed what’s been happening over the last 10, 20, 30 years, maybe now the US people’s movements will actually show their face and show their allegiances, and their allegiances will their corps, but instead with regular everyday people. And the fact that it was just out in the streets where

nobody could deny it, and where it was control of everyday people, it was inspiring. (Holmback *et al.*, 2011: no page)

The Bay area #Occupy was and is part of a very complex, multi-scalar web, of regional, national, translocal and transnational organizations and networks. Nevertheless, it arose from, and was situated within very particular local spatio-temporal dimensions, histories of contestation and of social movement organization, partly due to the innovative decision, taken, according to Steve Williams from People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER), to call on existing “community organizations, trade unions, other affinity groups” and organizations to engage with the “99% movement” (Holmback *et al.*, 2011). My own immediate perusal identified activists from previous global protests (counter-globalization, against the war on Iraq, and the environmental summits), the student and labour movements, anti-poverty and housing advocates, youth and criminal justice organizations, and groups aligned with the Right to the City Alliance<sup>2</sup>. These residual organizations contributed in many different ways, providing financial and other support, lobbying civic officials to stop and/or delay police intervention, and, as we see below, contributing narratives, political analyses/action frames, organizing and media strategies and tactical repertoires.

This paper examines the impact of #Occupy on the practices of inclusion, mobilization and intervention in the San Francisco bay area. A work-in-progress, as #Occupy is still ongoing, I focus on the interplay between the emerging organizational repertoires of #Occupy, some of which were part of a larger transnational movement for the commons, and those of existing urban justice organizations, which utilized the political praxis of community organizing of counter-hegemonic public spheres. I draw from participant observation at several street events and public forums, interviews, a reading of the publicly available media of #Occupy and allied organizations, of the dominant, public service and alternative media, and academic literature. Drawing on a decade-long study of the changing media ecology of the Bay area, I begin by mapping the growing spatial, temporal and social dimensions of contention over neo-liberalization, highlighting some of the vectors of injustice, and the organizations which have emerged in response, to provide the historical context to understand the Bay #Occupy movement. I then analyse the convergence between emerging and residual forms of organization, including the political intervention of the movement of the commons, and of the subaltern counter public sphere, focusing especially on counter-hegemonic practices of knowledge production, embodiment of city space, media representation, and economic and social practices.

## “It’s San Francisco”

The San Francisco Bay region has long been a magnet for people from all over the world, as much for its iconoclastic identity, as its educational, employment and lifestyle opportunities, and natural beauty. Summed up by the catch-phrase, “it’s San Francisco,” the region is popularly imagined as socially inclusive and “diverse”, with a cornucopia of meanings, ranging from tolerance of race, ethnic difference and sexual identity, to individual

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<sup>2</sup> These included Causa Justa/Just Cause, Chinese Progressive Workers’ Association, People Organized to Win (POWER), Pride at Work/HAVOQ.

eccentricities, outspokenness and radical politics. The historical memory of the urban social movements who developed this imaginary is a little fuzzy. Nevertheless, the DNA of activism of the anti-war and LGBTQ movements, Black Panther and other African-American urban justice organizations, United Farmworkers and immigrant rights organizations, militant dockworkers, Berkeley Free Speech movement and 1960s era Diggers and other communards, is still discernible in the collective imagination, existing urban justice organizations, and, as we will see, in that of the Bay area #Occupy movement.

This practice and imagination of contestation is stickily interwoven with the libertarian ethos of the urban frontier. Often cited as a global model of entrepreneurial and informational capitalism, the ideologies of competition, risk-taking and innovation date back much further than Silicon Valley and the neoliberal project. The City of San Francisco, (known simply as “the City”) emerged during the gold rush of the mid nineteenth century, and still hosts the headquarters of several large banks, financial service institutions, and corporations. The port was relocated after the 1934 General Strike across the bay in Oakland; it is still important for international trade. Although no longer a military center, which some would blame on the anti-war movement (Hooper, 2007), the extensive U.S. Government military investment in high technology is still discernible in the defense, high-technology communications, pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical engineering industries, centered in Silicon Valley, in the South Bay near Palo Alto and Stanford University, with a number of satellite start-ups, back office, web design, and web-entertainment companies in the City and other municipalities. Complementing these are several well-known private and public universities, such as Stanford and Berkeley, and vibrant cultural communities of musicians, artists, filmmakers and writers.

### “The playground of the rich”

In line with many global cities, San Francisco and other Bay area cities are fast becoming “playgrounds of the rich.” Jobs with Justice activist Sheila Tully (2012) used the phrase to describe the growth of upscale commercial, residential and recreational developments for a wealthy minority, rather than for working and middle class communities. The city councils of San Francisco, Berkeley and other Bay area cities have sometimes fought this trend with social policies, such as living wage and health ordinances, and support of immigrants. However, they have largely been unsuccessful at stopping the larger neoliberal shift, begun by Reagan, in which affordable housing, healthcare, and education, were clawed back, with the simultaneous introduction of an ideological imaginary that moved the responsibility for poverty reduction away from the national government towards state and municipal governments, private providers, and individuals.

Gentrification, exacerbated by the new cash-ready millionaires of the tech boom, and massive cuts in public housing, has made affordable housing out of reach for most people.<sup>3</sup> As a result, thousands have been forced to the outer rings of the region, disproportionately affecting Latino, African American and other working class communities of colour, as well as

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<sup>3</sup> Nationally, 400,000 Section 8 vouchers, the housing subsidies for low-income people were cut, and 300,000 units of public housing turned into for-profit developments, removing them from availability to low-income people (Gans and Messman, 2012).

artists, and non-profit organizations. The recent housing crisis has only made things worse, with 35,000 homes lost to foreclosure since 2007 in Oakland alone, a rate more than double the national average (Arnold, 2012). It's easy to map the resulting "territorial injustice": poor communities of color are concentrated on the flat lands surrounding the bay, with rich white communities in the hills beyond (Pastor, Benner and Matsuoka, 2009: 62).<sup>4</sup>

However, these crises have also contributed to the bottom-up formation of several local social justice organizations, as well as regional and national grassroots networks (Leitner *et al.*, 2007; Pastor *et al.*, 2009; Soja, 2010; Harvey, 2012). Some of these groups played active roles in #Occupy San Francisco and #Occupy Oakland as I describe below. Causa Justa/Just Cause is a merger of two groups, the St. Peters Housing Committee and Just Cause, which formed to deal with the gentrification of urban neighbourhoods, of Latinos in San Francisco, and African Americans in Oakland, respectively. They have identified the problem as "gentrification and neoliberalism." Their practice combines support of tenants and homeowners through advocacy and direct action, policy lobbying at municipal and state levels, and campaign to pressure Wells Fargo and the other financial institutions responsible for the thousands of mortgage foreclosures.

Housing activists, such as the Coalition on Homelessness and the San Francisco Tenants Association have long advocated for poor people and those without adequate housing. They have fought against the imposition of "quality of life" citations that target and criminalize poor people in the downtown core especially (Kidd and Barker-Plummer, 2009), and more recently, regulations such as the sit/lie ordinance in San Francisco (Blue, 2012). They have also spoken out against the national, and indeed global, trend in which downtown public space has been privatized, if not in Mike Davis' words, "militarized." In the bay area, this has resulted from the establishment of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), which bypass the fiscal and governance limitations of California municipalities to operate with "state-like powers in policing, sanitation, redevelopment and taxation" (Drummond-Cole and Bond-Graham, 2012). Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and real estate interests, their aim is to create environments conducive to urban consumption (shops, restaurants and high-end services) geared to tourists and the professional class who work in downtown offices. The BIDs enclose public space by taking over the "curb to property line", employ private security, and actively shut out poor people, and youth, and anyone who didn't fit the shopping profile from the downtown core and the transit services.

The third, intersecting vector of injustice is waged employment. In the new economy of flexible capitalism, the higher paid engineers, programmers, technicians and professional staff of finance, information and communication technologies (ICTs), and education and research have a rising horizon of opportunities. However the majority of people compete for a declining number of service jobs, with precarious conditions. The Chinese Progressive Workers' Association,<sup>5</sup> People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER),<sup>6</sup> Pride at

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<sup>4</sup> Oakland, Richmond, Vallejo and Daly City are some of the poorer working class communities, while Berkeley, Palo Alto, Marin are wealthy.

<sup>5</sup> The Chinese Progressive Workers' Association was founded in the 1970s, and focuses on employment rights, and tenant rights.

<sup>6</sup> People Organized to Win was founded in 1997 in response to the federal government's austerity programs and especially the comprehensive slashing of welfare.

Work/HAVOQ,<sup>7</sup> and La Raza Centro Legal) and Jobs with Justice are all organizing for the rights of workers. The significance of the temporal shift was made visible, as we see below, in some of the San Francisco demonstrations in the downtown core.

The economic crisis has only reinforced the exclusionary employment forces by affecting education. Student and faculty organizations annually mobilize against the deep cuts in programs, and the increasing costs of tuition and fees. The foreclosure crisis eliminated the wealth of millions of working class and middle class Americans, who had invested in a home, and left many families no longer able to finance their children's schooling. At the same time, student loan costs have risen, leaving many students with enormous debts.

The final vector considered here is media space and time. The region, like much of the U.S., experienced a massive contraction of the public sphere when corporate commercial consolidation in the 1980s and 1990s led to a reduction of most investigative and labour reporting; and local sources of news and cultural programming (Kidd and Barker-Plummer, 2009; Barker-Plummer and Kidd, 2010). This severely reduced the portrayal or discussion of the role of organized publics, or citizens' organizations, in the diagnosis and remedy of social issues (Kensicki, 2004). Organizations representing low-income people of colour, Spanish or other non-English speaking people, and anti-poverty and housing advocates were the most affected, and especially those that directly challenged the commercial logic of city newspapers, whose advertising budget is dependent on the real estate industry (Kidd and Barker-Plummer 2009).

During the 1990s and 2000s, these effects were mitigated to some degree by the growth of the alternative and independent media sector, which provided programming partly in response to the freeze-out of counter-hegemonic perspectives by the dominant commercial and national public service media. These outlets included community-based media, as well as a small contingent of media projects operated by social justice organizations (Kidd, 2010: 11). This marginalization from the dominant media sphere led, in part, to the development of alternative and independent media, during the 1970s and 1980s, as a platform for subaltern counter-public expression. More recently, subaltern counter-publics themselves have created their own means of communications, for analysis of the regulations and operations of the systems in which they live, the development of common frames and identities, and alternative imaginaries, and the exchange of tactics and strategies of contention. As I argue below, one of the most significant contributions of *#Occupy* has been their own self-generated communications, often outflanking the corporate commercial and independent media. By 2012, the innovations introduced by this sector had become socialized and *#Occupy* was able to draw on the residual alternative media, as well as assembling their own communication networks.

## Political praxes – the movement for the commons

Two parallel, and overlapping political praxes, help locate the direct action of *#Occupy*, and the longer-profiled community-based organizations. *#Occupy* draws from the movement of the commons, and combines direct action with alternative economic and social practices; the

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<sup>7</sup> Pride at Work/HAVOQ, is a self-identified collective of queers who work towards economic and social justice with a focus on issues of labor, gentrification, immigration and homelessness.

existing groups use a politics of subaltern counter-public spheres, linked to alternative knowledge production and interventions with the state.

Long evoked by organizations in counter-globalization movements, including those involved in urban justice movements in the United States<sup>8</sup> many #occupiers used the discursive frame of the “movement for the commons.” Sylvia Federici participated in OWS and visited #Occupy Oakland:

By “movement for the commons” I refer to the struggles to create and defend anti-capitalist spaces and communities of solidarity and autonomy. For years now people have expressed the need for a politics that is not just antagonistic, and does not separate the personal from the political, but instead places the creation of more cooperative and egalitarian forms of reproducing human, social and economic relationships at the center of political work. (Haiven and Federici, 2011: no page)

The strategic intervention of the #occupiers was not only to contest the *enclosure*, and interrupt the privatization of public land, and the exclusion of the 99% from it. Much more, their goal was to produce a collective space, which they then cooperatively tended with elaborate systems of governance, and social reproduction, prefiguring a new paradigm of alternative forms of social and economic production as a commons.

#Occupy Oakland and #Occupy San Francisco created several different working groups in the square and outside, which attended to people’s daily needs, such as food, shelter, health & safety, to ongoing activities for kids, and arts, media and cultural representation. The assemblies and working groups provided extended space and times for disparate groups to cohere, providing the glue, as Right to the City advocate Peter Marcuse writes, “a community of trust and commitment to the pursuit of common goals, physical proximity to each other, the close working together over time, the facing together of common obstacles and hardships” which “fosters strong reciprocal trust and mutual support” (2012: no page).

They not only modelled a different paradigm of governance and political intervention, but an alternative form of economy and social reproduction, creating new material/immaterial values, rather than a coalition of “no’s” to state or corporations. Michelle Mascarenhas-Swan, a member of the east bay group Movement Generation, adds, “This is not just about making demands on the state, but also about reclaiming our right to meet our own needs directly, in community – to restore our resilience, our ability to support one another, to look after each other, to have the means to do that collectively (Choy, 2012: 42). Kate Hegé from La Raza Centro Legal concurred “Building community together is actually part of the tactic...The process is the tactic: the demand of inclusion; the demand of non-hierarchy—of really caring for each other” (Hursley, 2012).

Sylvia Federici described the value of the working groups concerned with daily coexistence to the reclaiming of the commons (Haiven and Federici, 2012). She favourably compared the provision of free food distribution, and the organization of cleaning and medical teams to the “ethics of care and sisterhood of the feminist movement”, part of an increased attention to the need for collective reproduction and mutual support...which is that you cannot separate political militancy from the reproduction of your everyday life” (no page). She noted that the feelings of solidarity, inside and outside the encampments, had not been shared in such large numbers in the U.S. since the uprisings of the 1970s. The “tolerance and

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<sup>8</sup> See especially Federici (2010).



patience people demonstrate to one another in the general assemblies [are] a great achievement in comparison with the often truculent forms of behavior that were typical in the movements of the '60s" (no page).

The collective activity and solidarity is especially wanting in the contemporary entrepreneurial city, in which individual and groups are forced to compete with one another for resources in places of work, education, housing, recreation and media. As Media Alliance's Tracy Rosenberg commented, the #Occupy umbrella acted against the tendency of most non-profit organizations, funded by foundations, to focus narrowly on very specific time-limited projects for very particular constituencies. In contrast, #Occupy took "people out of their own silos, forcing more cooperation. A whole lot of cross-fertilization happened" (2012).

After the encampment phase, other initiatives such as *#Occupy the Farm*, and *#Occupy the School*, took up this political practice, collectively challenging the enclosure of public space with their physical bodies, and then cooperatively mobilizing production and social reproduction. On May, about 200 people occupied 14 acres of agricultural land on the Berkeley campus, immediately seeding plants and setting up collective activities. They utilized the commons framework:

This idea that we need to fundamentally change the tenure relationship to land and housing in this country, to take soil out of the market, to restore the commons – all of these ideas share a common history. What's interesting for us right now is that there is an opportunity to take the tactic of claiming space and connecting it with real political projects that can transform people's relationship to place. (cited in Choy, 2012)

Their vision, according to Ashoka Finley, a program assistant with Urban Tilth, which supports the teaching of organic farming with students, was to "create a sort of sovereignty and allow a space for larger political expression where people can articulate their demand for a more egalitarian, just society through work done with their own hands" (Wu, 2012). "This is the new moment of #Occupy" said Gopal Dayaneni, "not tit for tat, not cat-and-mouse games with cops, but full-scale intervention. #Occupy the Farm is one of the first to-scale interventions" (Wu, 2012).

On June 15<sup>th</sup>, a group of teachers, parents, students and supporters occupied Lakeview Elementary School in Oakland, to protest against the closure of five elementary schools. Locally based, they raise the scope of school closures as a national problem of systemic discrimination against African American and Latino communities. Supported by the #Occupy Oakland Education Committee, their political demands address the immediate problem in the language of #Occupy. For example, they not only demand the reinstatement of the schools, and more systemic support for "quality public education" rather than private charter schools. They also demand: "Bail out Schools, Not Banks" and "Repudiate the State Debt" (Save Oakland Schools, 2012). The group also started a People's School for Public Education, in addition to the sit-in that provides education in sports, arts, music gardening and social justice. As one of the volunteers said, they did not want to wait for other people to make a change. They would "build the world we want in the shadow of the old."

## Counter-public spheres

Just as "direct action" needs to be complicated, so does the practice of lobbying and legislative change, particularly as it is practiced by the existing urban justice groups which are members of the Right to the City Alliance. Drawing from Nancy Fraser (1991) and Sziarto

and Leitner (2010), I suggest that they better fit the political praxis of *subaltern counter-publics*, which intervene with new social, cultural and political claims with the dominant spheres of the commercial market, and state policy-making. Fraser identified two moments of distinct, communications-centered practices, the ‘politics of *recognition*’ in which subaltern groups come together to create shared identity, articulate group interests and demand recognition; and the ‘politics of *redistribution*’, in which claims to resource redistribution are made to the dominant public spheres (Fraser and Honneth, 2003: 1-5). Sziarto and Leitner further spelled out the importance of negotiation across difference, within alliances, with spatial-temporal and emotional dimensions (Sziarto and Leitner, 2010: 382).

Subaltern counter-publics are “not merely spaces for the marginalized and/or oppressed to speak in their ‘own’ voices and be heard, but places for developing oppositional or alternative politics, with active participation in economic and political decision-making and social change as larger goals” (Sziarto and Leitner, 2010: 383). #Occupy was the spark for a winter and spring of education and knowledge development. Regular forums and teach-ins at community organizations and educational institutions, and on the radio, have provided a wealth of knowledge about the operations of the capitalist system, and particularly the workings of banking, housing and educational finance, and history of social justice movements in the U.S. and internationally. They invited elders to speak, and life-long activists such as Angela Davis, Grace Lee Boggs, and the Reverend James Lawson, have shared their experiences and their strategic lessons for strategy. The community-based organizations also held forums; one of which featured a discussion with Causa Justa/Common Cause, Chinese Progressive Association and EBASE and underscored the need for spontaneous uprisings such as #Occupy, and longer term electoral and policy reforms; for innovation from young leaders and elders, for umbrella style convergences and more focused actions (Poblet, Liu and Anderson, 2012). The labour movement, in collaboration with MoveOn, sponsored a series of April trainings for organizers.

The #Occupy encampments, and the continuing encounters within the squares and plazas, bus caravans, and street actions, as well as social media and other digital spaces, provided long-lasting opportunities for the collective production of knowledge. The extended time and space allowed multiple counter-publics to speak and listen to each other, with relative insulation from the noise, if not the surveillance of the police and dominant media. It allowed for expression about very difficult problems that have affected individuals, and social groups, and crucially, for the articulation of these private problems as collective and public issues, making them public matters (Sziarto and Leitner, 2010: 383).

The attention to using moments of convergence for transformation drew on earlier movements such as the African American and Chicano civil rights and women’s movements, which had also used music and testimonials to great effect. #Occupy re-energized their use. #Occupy provided a platform for members from the existing community-based groups to explain the difficult issues facing the 99% – such as joblessness, the decimation of the social safety net, the lack of democracy and of power to control one’s own communities – from the perspective of their communities (Poblet, Liu and Andersen, 2012).

The mutual emotions that were unleashed, “creates space for new identifications to emerge” (Sziarto and Leitner, 2010: 384). Brooke Anderson, from the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBase) works with independent truck drivers at the port of Oakland, and said that #Occupy had values to share with the labour movement and vice versa:

It’s taken some of the shame and the stigma that so many folks have felt. The truck drivers I work with so many times are being evicted, foreclosed, in massive amounts of debt, having to leave their homes and whole multiple families moving into one apartment and were afraid to speak about that in public. I didn’t

work hard enough. I must have been doing something wrong; and framing it as the 99% has given us an opportunity to say “no, this is a problem of the banks and the financial institutions, right?” (Poblet, Liu and Andersen, 2012: no page)

The encounters in the encampments, and in the #Occupy-inflected actions, did not remove the divisions of power in the movement. As Sziarto and Leitner point out, the politicising of “private” issues is only possible with what Coles called “receptive generosity;” “listening with an openness to engagement that creates space for new identifications to emerge” (2010: 384). There have been constant clashes over differences of tactics and strategies, of class, race and ethnicity, and especially between those stigmatized for their homelessness, and those with secure employment and housing.

Nevertheless, the #Occupy focus on the exchange of personal/political narratives provided some legitimation and amplification for the message of the existing urban justice groups (Hursley, 2012). These organizations had long been educating their members and engaging in public action to show the deep systemic connections between capitalism and the exploitation of workers in low-waged jobs, of tenants by landlords, and home-owners by the banks. #Occupy provided a platform to bring those issues to light, and to scale up their significance. As María Poblet said, we were able to connect

the dots for the privileged layers of society that are losing some of those privileges that our communities never enjoyed in the first place... In my perspective what has happened in the United States is the failure of the neoliberal economic model coming home to roost. The United States 1% created the playbook and they farmed it out to a lot of other countries. (Poblet, Liu and Andersen, 2012: no page)

The focus on testimonies, and individual story-telling, provided an opening for members of the residual community organizations. Shaw San Liu of the Chinese Progressive Association said:

Suddenly the moment exploded and we weren't just talking about income inequality and how taxes have been dropping on corporations and the rich, but we were able to show pictures and slides of protests and tumblr photos of everyday people who were putting their stories up. This was to an audience, our members, who are very wary of putting out their individual stories, and really not wanting to lose face over the fact that they're unemployed or they're poor. We got our members involved in writing their own stories, and taking their photos and uploading them as well and getting a different perspective into the mix. (Poblet, Liu and Andersen, 2012: no page)

The emphasis on articulation and recognition of different subaltern counter-public spheres, utilized by #Occupy and allied groups, strengthened the public mobilizations in their interface with the dominant public spheres. For example, I attended a demonstration in November 2011 against cuts in education, together with #Occupy San Francisco, and several different students' organizations throughout the bay at the Federal Building in downtown San Francisco. As buses brought people in from all over the bay area, the marchers arrived from the #Occupy encampment. A temporary stage was assembled. Rather than the conventional speeches, from official representatives, individuals were encouraged to get up and speak to the crowd. The organizers began by modeling the practice, selecting a diversity of speakers who began with short biographical statements that connected their life experience, or that of their community, to either the current crisis, or the future impact on education. Speakers talked of being the first from their immigrant communities to attend university, of the impact of debt on their families, or of the growing class and race inequalities in California institutions. It was a very cold day, but people stayed; providing this platform engaged many more people, from those who volunteered their stories, to those for whom the stories

resonated among the crowd. Overall, the discursive message provided a much wider horizon of experience, of those affected by the educational cuts, of the communities that were mobilizing, and of the larger societal impact on education, and our collective future.

## Representational interventions: Self-generated and controlled media

#Occupy also represented a watershed in self-generated and controlled media production. Any challenge to corporations and nation states must involve building effective communications to communicate horizontally with members and allied organizations, circulate alternative knowledge and disrupt or change the dominant frame. These complex practices cannot be reduced to technology, such as twitter or facebook, but involve a whole new set of tactical repertoires. Like most other organizational aspects of #Occupy, the media working groups were seeded by media-savvy activists from previous cycles of struggle. In San Francisco, the greater role in the DIY media efforts was played by individuals from the anti-poverty, housing rights, and other community organizations with media training (Kidd and Barker-Plummer, 2009); in Oakland by the police brutality activists and to some degree the “decolonize” movement (Rosenberg, 2012).

#Occupy nimbly used social media to mobilize people. They produced a wide range of self-representation, which they were then able to circulate to a scope and scale much greater than any earlier movements. Live coverage of the local and most of all the other #Occupy activities were made available 24/7 through the web stream, first initiated in New York. Daily images, reports and analyses were also linked to a wide decentralized net of web-based sites, thus circulating them around the world. Independent and alternative media, with platforms in television, radio, and print, then re-assembled the reports and stories for audiences off the web.

#Occupy was able to transcend the long-standing monopoly practices of U.S. corporate, public service and independent media. Instead of bargaining for media coverage and then passively waiting for the mediation of their story by the dominant media, the #Occupiers reported it themselves. As Media Alliance’s Tracy Rosenberg (2012) told me:

The #Occupy media beat everyone else out in speed and accuracy. I think the major issue about weight and perspectives that was interesting was the consistency from occupiers that there were no leaders and everyone speaks for themselves...it represented a rejection of the ethos that the media reinforces the power dynamics in any structural system it encounters and it largely made #Occupy impenetrable to journalists unable to accept the frame.

Rather than complain about media coverage, a preoccupation of most social movement groups, the *Occupiers* were more concerned with a new set of problems of which “alternative voices were credible” among the bloggers, citizen journalists and social justice groups (Rosenberg, 2012).

#Occupy’s success in circulating their own media messages, and garnering independent and dominant media reportage, changed the scope and scale of the message. In the San Francisco bay area, the corporate media covered #Occupy extensively. They put an individual face and story to the people affected by the mortgage crisis. This attention has carried over to the protest cycle in the spring, with much more reporting about the deeper issues such as the widespread foreclosure crisis, the impact of the fiscal crisis of the state of California on education, and employment. There have also been more stories on the role of community organizations in remedying these injustices. The attention of the corporate media to issues

that they had been raising in their organizations in turn helped organizations raise their profiles in their own communities (Poblet, Liu and Andersen, 2012).

Although much of the dominant reporting continued to focus on incidents of violence, the relative #Occupy media autonomy meant that another narrative, which spotlighted the problems of police brutality in low-income communities, was circulated. “That much got established in the public imagination”, said Tracy Rosenberg (2012): “That means injustice, inequality, homelessness is not invisible and can’t be swept away. The police can attack with flash grenades but we all have to see that. That makes a difference.”

## Interventions into the cityscape

The combination of political praxes, of commoners and counter-publics, has changed the face of the city and of who protests. During the encampment phase, and ever since, the downtown core has seen ongoing demonstrations. This kind of disruption is not all that rare in San Francisco. However, the post-#Occupy protests were different. The targeting of financial institutions in the financial district disrupted the taken-for-grantedness of the grey-suited daytime scene. As journalist Rose Aguilar told me, the professional workers in the financial district no longer could be sure when there might be a protest in very close proximity that focused attention on their work right (Aguilar, 2012).

The actions continued the long-standing “reclaim the streets” subculture that has long thrived in arts and culture movements, and also in San Francisco gamer culture, according to Tracy Rosenberg of Media Alliance (2012):

It represents the good fusion of cultural critiques with street politics where each makes the other more potent. Occupiers #Occupy. That much got established in the public imagination, which means that social justice concerns now manifest in a direct physical impact on the physical environment in a concrete way you can see, smell and hear – whatever is being occupied in whichever way.

The broad representation of the protests has complicated the image of city contention. The demonstrations, such as the one in front of Wells Fargo, on April 24<sup>th</sup>, included the purple jackets of the members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the janitors and other workers who inhabit the city at night-time, and who have been all but invisible in the city imaginary. The picture also included other members of working class community organizations, faith-based leaders assembled to speak and listen, as well as drummers and musicians.

## #Occupy everything

As I finish this account, #Occupy continues to resonate throughout the bay area. A week does not go by without a protest about the impact of austerity on health and education, a demonstration against police brutality in the city as well as the suburbs, an occupation of housing or land, or a march to the state legislature to enact reform. Local governments have shown a new willingness to challenge financial institutions, in concert with the national government (Said, 2012). Two city level politicians, in San Francisco and Oakland, have proposed different measures asking their councils to divest from the major banks. And some would argue, that the support for a new California state tax may partly be due to the 99% meme resonating with the public (Arnold, 2012). And the City of San Francisco has followed up on the pressure from groups such as the Chinese Progressive Association and announced the formation of a wage-theft task force.

All of these events have recast the imaginary, and provided a guide to alternative practices of inclusion, mobilization and intervention. The infusion of #Occupy into already existing urban justice groups has helped many groups sharpen and make their messages more effective, and has scaled up work that had already been going on. The conflicts between groups continue; however, the vision remains – of a mass of people in movement, disrupting the taken for granted narratives, and demonstrating alternative ways of knowing and of living in the city. As Sheila Tully said to me, #Occupy allowed “people to think beyond money and themselves, and to consider the “question of where *we* are going as a society. #Occupy provided a vision of a community who cares for one another.”

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## Occupy Wall Street: A Counter Discourse

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**Abstract:** Preliminary research on the Occupy Wall Street movement (OWS), in particular Occupy NYC, indicates that the movement is generating a particular discourse that has effectively drawn increasing attention to social inequality. The occupation of urban spaces generated a spatial forum for further articulating the message of the movement. The chant, “We are the 99%,” the occupation of Zuccotti Park in Manhattan’s financial district, and the International Day of Direct Action in which 35,000 flooded the streets of lower Manhattan describe some key themes and moments in the Occupy NYC movement. An important question, however, is to what extent the movement is a significant challenge to the dominant paradigm in which a market ideology discourse (or neoliberal discourse) prevails. Based on data gathered from interviews, participant observation, and archival research, this paper maps and engages the emerging discourse of the Occupy NYC movement in light of this critical framework. Concepts such as culture jamming and environmental justice are further employed to bring richness and depth to the analysis.

**Keywords:** Occupy movement, discourse, environmental justice, culture jamming

### Introduction

When asked about the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement in New York City on November 17, 2011, many participants simply responded, “It’s about time!” On that particular International Day of Action to commemorate the two-month anniversary of the Occupy Wall Street movement, an estimated 35,000 people crowded the streets of lower Manhattan calling for social justice and equality. Similar demonstrations were being organized in many cities across the globe. What exactly was it about time for?

Social inequality in the United States had been rising for some time, making it home to some of the top wealthiest people in the world and having one of the largest gaps between the rich and the poor. Banks, bailed out by the federal government, have been evicting people from their homes. Middle to lower income family households have been finding it increasingly difficult if not impossible to sustain their livelihoods. One Occupier said in an interview, “I disagree with the class war. It’s impossible to get a job. People are fed up.” And it was time to do something about it. But, when people said “It’s about time!”, they were referring to the masses of people around them saying the same things as themselves. The evidence had been considered, and people were affirming their own ideas about social reality.

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The manifestation of this shift to a collective public role in a public forum is noted in one participant's point that, "It's not about 'rising up', it's about standing together." Some of the early messages of the movement also allude to how participants affirm that it is they who either keep things as they are or change them. Consider the following quotes from signs that were displayed during OWS demonstrations in New York City,

"The experience we live is of our making."  
"Here to be the change."  
"If not us, who?"

It was "about time" for people to get together and openly and collectively express their experiences and thoughts. An occupier put it like this, "...jobs are gone, people have lost their homes, you send them into a state of despair and then you gonna cause a mayhem if you get people with that same despair all around the country. It's just gonna be a downward spiral. So, it's time now to stand up now and voice opinions about it and make it be known where people's mentalities are." People were waiting for each other to speak up, loud and openly, about how the usual talk about the free market wasn't living up to all that it promised. The trickle down theory proved to be false. The freedom promised through individualism only served to alienate and disempower. Everything was becoming a commodity that could be bought or sold on the market. Through commodification, values could be applied to everything. Consumerism began to thrive in a context in which the access to cheap goods and necessities from around the world flourished, but it also created insurmountable credit card debt, promoted a brutal global labor regime, negatively impacted the environment, and slowly turned social opportunities for meaningful engagement into shopping sprees. In this paper, I analyze the emerging discourse of the Occupy Movement with particular attention to the Occupy Wall Street movement in New York City (OWS).

In analyzing the discourse of OWS and the Occupy Movement in general, an important question is to what extent the words and phrases used and publicly shared by participants challenge the dominant paradigm; in what ways, if any, is the status quo maintained? Many argue that we now live a world in which a market ideology discourse (or neoliberal discourse) prevails. A summary of this discourse is provided, and based on communication data gathered from interviews; conversations with participants during gatherings, protests, and workshops; and signs, chants, general assembly meeting notes and other OWS related documentation, this paper maps and engages the emerging discourse of the Occupy Wall Street movement in light of this critical framework. However, before a discussion of the discourse, an understanding of the movement in general is helpful. In this next section a summary overview of how the movement emerged, its general structure, participants and supporters, and core theme is provided.

## Summary of the movement

The purpose of summarizing the OWS movement here is to give readers a general sense of the movement in terms of how it might have come about, its general structure, and core theme, particularly by considering some of the details of the OWS movement in New York City and the United States context where social inequality is exceptionally high. It is important to note that several key aspects surrounding the movement will not be expanded upon here in this paper. Some of those issues, however, deserve mention here in the form of questions raised about the movement such as:

- “Does the movement have any concrete demands?”
- “What has it or will it accomplish?”
- “Will it last and grow? Or, wither and disappear without a trace?”
- “How will it translate from a political perspective in terms of party politics and policymaking?”

That said, however, this paper may lead the reader to conclude that some of these questions already had answers that were not shared through the mainstream media or that some do not fit within the answer schema of the inquirer, and some of the questions are perhaps just not the right questions.

## OWS emerges in New York City

The Occupy Wall Street movement is a leaderless movement that started in New York City in September 2011 that eventually asserted solidarity across similar independent, non-hierarchical groups located throughout the world. The movement generally uses consensus, direct non-violent action, and internet resources to organize and protest for social justice. A prominent characteristic of the movement has been to set up camp in various spaces, particularly public urban space. In the case of OWS in New York City, tents were put up not just for sleeping but also for food service (“kitchen”), comfort provisions such as socks, coats, gloves, etc., information sharing and learning (“library”), medical supplies and services, media activity, etc.

The first initial public communication to occupy space with tents in New York City on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 came from a blog and a poster associated with a Canadian-based magazine, edited by an Estonian named Kalle Lasn, called *Adbusters*. *Adbusters* describes itself as “a global network of culture jammers and creatives [and mental environmentalists] working to change the way information flows, the way corporations wield power, and the way meaning is produced in our society” (*Adbusters*, 2011). The *Adbusters* blog started, “Alright you 90,000 redeemers, rebels, and radicals out there ...On September 17, we want to see 20,000 people flood into lower Manhattan.” (*Adbusters*, 2011). The poster with a woman in a ballet pose on top of the Bull statue located near the New York City Stock Exchange read, “What is our one demand? Occupy Wall Street. September 17<sup>th</sup>. Bring tent.”

Other influences on the movement, according to OWS participants and supporters, include the revolutions in the Arab region, namely in Tunisia and Egypt, and the Indignants in Spain and Greece. In 2010, protesters hit the streets in Tunisia. In the winter and spring of 2011, people set up Spain respectively. By the late summer of 2011, people were organizing in New York City. It is important to note, however, that these aforementioned events are not the only influential protest events that influenced OWS.

The leaderless hackactivist collective known as, “Anonymous” whose signature is listed below was also a prominent element of the movements’ inspiration, if not support and participation. One way to describe Anonymous is a global network of independent entities with a generally common, yet locally defined agenda to promote free access to information (“knowledge is free”), especially through the internet. At the same time, Anonymous uses hacking to identify violations of fundamental principles as well as to assert its influence. Protesters in the OWS movement can be seen wearing the symbolic Guy Fawkes face mask associated now with the Anonymous group and having roots in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 in London and the movie, “V for Vendetta” as a symbol against tyranny.

Other influential aspects of the OWS movement in the United States include specific individuals and organizations. David Graeber, for example, author of *Debt: The First 5000*

*Years*, published by Melville House in 2011, was present the day of the first occupation on September 17 in New York City. The non-governmental organization known as New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts: Students, Labor, Communities United is also attributed with facilitating the emergence of the movement.

## General structure, participants and supporters

Attempts to document the number of Occupy initiatives around the world by different sources revealed that there are probably somewhere between 750 and 950 Occupy events and/or sites around the world in as much as 82 countries.<sup>2</sup> The structural organization of the movement is non-hierarchical involving general assembly meetings in which decisions are made by consensus. The Occupy movement in New York City held general assemblies and, at a later date, established a Spokes Council in which the working groups that had been formed could be mutually engaged and mutually informative. This approach, in many ways, reflects an experiment in radical democracy.

According to a survey conducted on the OccupyWallSt.org web page using survey monkey, the profile of an average Occupier is young, has some college education, is employed, and claims to be politically independent (Occupywallst.org, 2011). However, participation in the demonstrations and visual and other data on the internet suggest that supporters of OWS can be quite diverse in age and social background.<sup>3</sup>

I will not go into detail on the vast network (including celebrities, the Lawyers Guild, etc.) and other structural aspects of the OWS movement here (e.g., social organization within Zuccotti Park), as the focus of this particular paper is the discourse of the movement which is ultimately linked to these aspects, but simply out of the scope of this particular paper.

## Core theme

A core slogan of the Occupy Movement is: “We are the 99%!” which refers generally to social inequality, and the distribution of wealth in the United States wherein the chant asserts that about 99% of the population make significantly less than the top 1%. Interestingly enough, this includes those that earn approximately 350,000 dollars a year. Wealth distribution through income gains over time in the United States shows that the rich are getting a lot richer. The U.S. has a very high level of social inequality compared to other countries according to the OECD. The U.S. Congressional Budget Office offers a similar result with the same visual impact (see <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3220>). Inequality.org sums this up: “The richest Americans are making more than ever before” (Inequality.org). Additionally, the movement garners legitimacy and power from the fact that 1<99.

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<sup>2</sup> These figures are complicated in that it could be different at any point in time, some data are based on specific occupy events and self-reported by the organizers; other sources include a DataBlog by the *Guardian*.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the Pew Research Center survey results (<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/2011/1101/Who-is-Occupy-Wall-Street-After-six-weeks-a-profile-finally-emerges/%28page%29/2>) and the *Christian Science Monitor* breakdown (<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/2011/1101/Who-is-Occupy-Wall-Street-After-six-weeks-a-profile-finally-emerges/%28page%29/2>).

Throughout the movement, certain calls for specific action have been made. For example, initially in *Adbusters*, the demand was that President Obama should form a Commission to deal with the corporate influence on government; subsequent calls for action were simply to, “Join us” by getting together in your community to identify issues and work on them.

In the case of the latter, many of the Occupy initiatives have written declarations that were developed through a consensual process involving those attending general assemblies organized in each location. A summary of the key points in many of the declarations is provided here:

- Global equality and environmental sustainability.
- People: Global solidarity, organize to assert your collective power to define problems and generate solutions.
- Government: change tax system; provide health services, education, welfare, and employment; stop wars and arms dealings; no corruption: reduce intimate links between corporations and the rich and government.
- Corporations: no bail outs, reduce salary gap, assert and respect employees and employee benefits; independent regulation.

A more specific analysis of the communication within and by the movement reveals that this was not the usual way of talking about things. On the contrary, things were different. First, the words and phrases of the movement became a collective understanding, both maintaining and transcending interpersonal levels of communication. No longer were individuals simply talking about how they lost their jobs or their homes in the company of their friends and families or other community members. They began communicating this in public to the public, as if they had woken up from a very long night’s sleep. Second, the usual way of explaining their predicaments didn’t hold and hence were challenged, for example, through cultural jams. A discourse was unfolding in the light of day.

## Discourse analysis

Why look at the discourse of the Occupy movement? Does it really matter what people say or write, or how people talk? Discourse has been defined as, “an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being” (Phillips and Hardy, 2002, referring to Parker, 1992). Our assumptions about the world and ourselves emerge through discourses (Phillips and Hardy, 2002). Ideological frameworks, such as the market ideology for example, exercise and maintain social power through discourse (Van Dijk, 1989). We can understand both the status quo and change through the maintenance or challenging of discourses.

The Occupy Movement was a process through which a particular kind of talk shifted from an interpersonal realm to a public collective sphere. The very nature of discourse is social. Without meaning to be tautological, this shift was fundamental to the emergence of the movement in several ways. The public communication of the movement, furthermore, allowed the movement to grow. A camper at Zuccotti Park said, “I came here because I believed in the message of Occupy Wall Street...” This “public communication” countered prevailing assumptions about the nature of and reign of the free market, specifically: individualism, commodification, consumerism, and competition and brought the movement into being.

Critical to public communication is a public forum. In the case of OWS, there were two prominent public forums: geographical space and internet space. Social power is manifested and further accentuated in the manipulation of public space; and public space is radical democracy (Springer, 2011). As one occupy camper at Zuccotti Park noted about camping outside in a park in the city, “We never go inside so you know it’s cool but, the movement is cool cause everyone’s showin participation and everyone helping each other.” The occupation of urban and remote open spaces generated a spatial forum for further articulating the messages of the movement. In the case of OWS in New York City (NYC), the space that eventually became occupied was based on a private/public partnership which meant that unlike most public spaces in NYC, this one was not closed at a certain time of night, rather it was open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

While many have been evicted from their Occupy sites, the slogan that emerged in NYC was that, “you cannot evict an idea.” However, a lot of discussion at the General Assembly of the Occupy NYC movement emphasizes the importance of public space for “having a voice,” organizing, offering services, etc. After the eviction from Zuccotti Park, one demonstrator’s sign read, “Our voices need space.”

Discourse in the context of power is about who gets to say what when and where. Words and phrases have meanings that assert power structures and relationships (Foucault, 1969). Speaking up not only felt good to participants in OWS, it was power. When asked to describe the movement, one person from Brooklyn who had been camping out in Zuccotti Park for five days said, “If I could describe this movement right here, I would describe it as powerful. In one word, powerful.” He then adds, “I think eventually we will accomplish something if not even if it is just the fact that the people got to voice their opinion.”

The Occupy movement itself demonstrates that there is a strong relationship between power and communication. Participants, for example, raised questions, in particular, about the relationship between speech and wealth. Participants and supporters felt increasingly that those who had money had the ear of Washington (and this was true of the Tea Party movement too). Protester’s signs raised questions about this link:

“Is \$\$\$ Speech?”

“I could lose my job for having a voice.”

“No Money, No Voice”

To demonstrate that money determines who talks and what can be said or that “money talks,” participants put dollars or tape over their mouths. In either case, it is because of money that the 99% are silenced. From an OWS perspective, the 99% has been neither heard nor valued; and their interests have not represented. Politicians are accused of being bought. This then translates for OWS as money and profit being more important than people. Another camper at Zuccotti Park who had been camping at the park from the start said, “... the message of Occupy Wall Street ... [is] having people value each other more than money.”

Likewise, if you want to speak up and be heard, then you need to “Occupy Wall Street.” The Occupy movement structurally and procedurally challenges the prevailing assumptions about who gets to speak and what is said by using various strategies including:

- Speaking over others or disrupting speech using the human microphone
- Bypassing traditional media guards by using internet, facebook, twitter, etc.
- Using culture jamming

Occupiers disrupt or prevent speech from government authorities and others who they consider to represent the 1%. For example, participants prevented a speech from the Governor

of Wisconsin, Scott Walker, at a breakfast event.<sup>4</sup> On another occasion, OWS activists in solidarity with the art handler's union disrupted the usual flow of auctioneering at a Sotheby's Art Auction by preventing the auctioneer from speaking due to constant interruptions.<sup>5</sup> The technique used was the "human mic" in which one person makes a statement and others repeat it in a collective voice that prevents participants' talk from being sidelined and at the same time allows them to override the talk of others. Basically, occupiers have applied various strategies to dominate the conversation or interrupt assumed speakers.

## Countering the neoliberal discourse

The Occupy discourse counters the dominance of a neoliberal discourse based on a market ideology manifested as deregulation, privatization, and the commodification of everything organized into a framework based on competition. What has been referred to as neoliberal globalization furthermore is associated with hyper-individualism and an emphasis on personal responsibility in which "there is no society" (Thatcher, 1987). People are reduced to consumers competing for scarce resources. In the case of the Occupy movement, we find a particular discourse that challenges the dominance of this particular ideology and its corresponding discourse. Additionally, a positive discourse is generated to override the dominant discourse of fear that especially gained strength after September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Harvey claims that a market mentality has transgressed its economic boundaries and infiltrated political and social spheres of life (Harvey, 2005). What does a free market ideology mean for political and social life? First, it defined the state, not as mediator/regulator of powerful economic interests, but as guarantor of a sufficient policy and legal framework for the free market to function properly, for example, opening up markets where they do not exist, such as in the realm of environmental goods. It has meant severe austerity measures and a roll back of Keynesian welfare economies resulting in a reduction in social welfare and a corresponding noteworthy rise in the use of the prison system (Wacquant, 2009).

A proliferated free market ideology has had the impact of what Birchfield would call, "depoliticization, atomization and commodification endemic" (Birchfield, 1999: 29). This particular paradigm, furthermore, claims that there is no alternative. Fundamental to the market ideological framework is a discourse that asserts, "there is no other way." A general summary of some of the counter-discourse can be seen in Table 1.

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<sup>4</sup> See [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=1oHRdikITIU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=1oHRdikITIU)

<sup>5</sup> See [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwjR\\_UrzWw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwjR_UrzWw)

**Table 1. Brief summary of discourses**

<b>STATUS QUO: Market Ideology</b>	<b>COUNTER: Occupy Movement</b>
Fear “War on Terrorism”	Love “Do not be afraid.”
Structure: Hierarchical, elite, competitive	Structure: horizontal, consensus-based
Profit and free market rules	People rule; 99% matters “Power to the people!”
Government austerity	Government: provide social protection (e.g., shelter, food, education, health care, employment, etc.)
Unemployed: reserve labor force	Unemployment: crisis
No alternative	“Another world is possible.”

Also fundamental to the neoliberal discourse is the role of individualism and the subsequent link to the notion of freedom. While I will not go into the political theory on freedom here, I will discuss very briefly the concept of individualism. For, I believe that this notion has had a noteworthy impact on participation in the Occupy Movement.

## Individualism

Through the notion of individualism, the market ideology attempts to make the goodness of being together irrelevant. It idealizes the individual as free to choose in the vast market of goods and services, free from community oppression or someone imposing their will upon another, and ever fearful that someone might take what you have or threaten your freedom or safety. It hides the choice framework and the real perpetrator(s), which is not actually your neighbor, but rather those who have power in structuring the choice framework; providing the guidelines for the operation of the “free” market, and ultimately dominating the discourse, if you will. Rather it organizes relationships in a competitive framework. Lazzarato affirms the problem, “The generalization of the logic of the market intensifies the need for social and political integration, since competition is a destructive rather than a unifying principle, systematically undoing the cohesion that society constructs” (Lazzarato, 2009: 130). Mass mobilizations are often also very much about connecting with other people and having fun.

Ultimately, the emphasis on the individual has the impact of marginalizing issues of social justice. Justice is public, and it is social. In economies where the market ideology dominates, however, social justice is not a big part of the social discourse (Birchfield, 1999). Individualism as a social-political construct has the impact of denying a fundamental human need, the need for social interaction and a sense of belonging. Lazzarato notes this impact of the free market ideology, In some ways, the Occupy Movement is a reaction to this construct. This reaction can be considered at different levels. One it is seen in the signs and slogans that emphasize the “we” and togetherness: “We are all in this together” “United we stand” “Let’s figure this shit out TOGETHER.”

## Commodification, consumerism and privatization

Lazzarato (2009) calls it the “enterprise society”. Commodification is the concept that everything can be brought into the market, and bought and sold; and that in cases where there is no market for a particular good, one should be created by the state. This mentality is



depicted in the context of an OWS comic strip that depicts a business man amongst demonstrators and he is saying that there should now be investment in pepper spray. Scholars write about the commodification of everything from education and health-care to environmental goods and services. Harvey referred to this as “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey, 2005) in which “states colludes with capital to pillage nature and the commons” (Liverman, 2004: 734).

Along with commodification is the simultaneous trend toward privatization in which the government has increasingly sold off public goods to the private sector including what were once considered public goods, like water. Interestingly enough, Zuccotti Park is one such sale that benefited occupiers in that due to the fact that Zuccotti Park became a private/public enterprise after September 11th, it could stay open 24 hours, seven days a week unlike public parks which all closed in the evening. This allowed occupiers to stay in the park.

The commodification theme is both used and challenged by the Occupy Movement in their discourse. On the one hand, participants hold signs that read, “I can’t afford my own politician, so I made this sign.” “I can’t afford a lobbyist,” and “Wall Street should buy stocks, not politicians.” Hence, while politicians and lobbyists are bought; human beings should not be considered commodities and are more important than money. One participant’s sign read, “I am a human being not a commodity.” In the end, the movement advocates for bringing people and life back to the center, a place that profit and greed hold in a market-based world: “Life over profit” and “People over profit.”

There is an anti-consumerist element to OWS. Shopping is seen as a distraction or diversion from political action. Signs that read, “Ignore me, Go Shopping” and “Everything is ok. Please continue shopping.”

An important part of the movement is its environmental sustainability tenet which is expressed in a number of ways from how people lived in the park including recycling, bicycle-generated energy, composting, and vegetarian meals to the issues raised and working groups that were established. There have been worldwide “Buy Nothing Days” and several participants have brought attention to anti-fracking (fracking is a process used to extract shale gas and is associated with water contamination) which is now increasingly relevant as energy supplies are harder to extract and require more complicated and intrusive methods. Also, climate change is one of the issues raised by participants.

The concept of greed is frequently invoked by the movement, especially while referencing the planet or earth as a whole. Signs by participants read, “Greed Kills,” “Are we really going to let a bunch of greedy selfish fools do in this whole planet?” “Stop Greed” “There’s enough on this planet for everyone’s need, but not for everyone’s greed.” While under a market ideology, greed was admired in popular culture (Consider, for example, the movie “Wall Street” with Michael Douglas; the movement applies the word greed as negatively impacting the planet and people and that it needs to be stopped.

And, in the end, this movement is not to be commodified, privatized, or “propertied.” People at Zuccotti Park participating in the movement could be seen wearing a ripped-up piece of paper that read, “We are the 99%” pinned with a safety pin to their shirt. A sign from the movement reads, “This revolution will not be privatized. We are the 99%.”

The movement also participates in what is known as “culture jamming” to confront the principles of the market ideology. “The term “culture jamming” is based on the CB slang word “jamming” in which one disrupts existing transmissions. It usually implies an interruption, a sabotage, hoax, prank, banditry, or blockage of what are seen as the monolithic power structures governing cultural life” (Harold, 2004: 189).

Some “culture jamming” was used to challenge the “trickle down theory” that had grown especially prominent in politics during the Reagan presidency when neoliberal policies were increasingly taking hold. Trickle Down economics generated legitimacy for special government treatment for companies and investors by promising that such treatment would ultimately profit the society as a whole. Subsidies and tax breaks at the top, for example, would mean that benefits, in the form of jobs and salary would “trickle down” to the lower socio-economic strata of society.

And, several signs challenge additional market ideology assumptions such as the trickle down theory such as “That stuff trickling down on you isn’t money” and “The only thing that trickled down was your Bull\*\*t”. Another sign reads,

Q: Do you think trickle down economics works?

A: (laughs) Yes, I am making a fortune. – Banker

## Conclusion

Analyzing the discourse of the Occupy Movement reveals that a counter discourse is emerging. This counter discourse generated by the collectivity of movement participants in open spaces challenges the fundamentals of a market ideology which has gained prominence and entrenchment through a global neoliberalist agenda that emphasizes: individualism, commodification, consumerism, and privatization (and deregulation) and legitimized by the trickle down theory. The movement particularly addresses how this dominant discourse has failed them. It has in fact been associated with rising social inequality and the depletion of social support mechanisms. The movement both challenges and uses the market discourse to assert its message, for example, noting that the movement will not be privatized, government has been bought and they have been sold out. Through culture jamming, the movement challenges, for example, the validity of the Trickle Down theory. This challenge to the prevailing discourse is one of the movement’s most profound achievements. With time, the extent of the power of this challenging discourse will be revealed.

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## Policies of Inclusion?

# Some Thoughts on the ‘Los Indignados’ Movement, the Emerging of the Neoliberal Penal State and the Criminalization of ‘Being Young’ in Southern Europe

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**Abstract:** A growing reactivity of young people against dominant classes has emerged over recent years in post-industrial cities. This text explores how the so-called ‘European Spring’ is related to the downward mobility suffered by young middle classes from Europe that have been accompanied, at the same time, by the criminalization of ‘being young’ as response of political and financial elites (the ‘Old’) facing the collapse of financial capitalism in Europe.

**Keywords:** ‘Los Indignados’ Movement, ‘European Spring’, social unrest, youth protests, criminalization of being young

## Introduction

Youth movements have usually played a key role in the contemporary social and political evolution of several countries. Youth revolts in French suburbs in November 2005, the so-called ‘Arab Spring’, the ‘Geração à Rasca Movement’ in Portugal, youth riots that occurred this last summer 2011 in some British working-class neighborhoods, and the ‘Los Indignados’ Movement in Spain may be seen as recent episodes of the history of Europe that would situate youth as agents of social and historical change. Moreover, it would corroborate what Karl Mannheim (1928) and José Ortega y Gasset (1935) suggested about generational succession

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overcoming class struggle as the main paradigm of political and social change in capitalist countries.

However such pseudo-utopian suggestions have not been taken place over the twentieth century. From the late nineteenth century, social and labor movements in Western countries have progressively converged into the struggle for the creation of a new socioeconomic and political order that should mainly benefits working classes. This fact has influenced many scholars who have studied social movements emerged after the World War II by considering them as a collective effort that would seek to promote changes in any direction and by any means. For authors as Anthony Oberschall or Manuel Castells, several social conflicts, including class, race and community conflicts, rebellions, insurrections, revolutions, riots, unrests, strikes, etc. have played a key role in fuelling social movements in Western countries from their process of industrialization (Wilkison, 1971; Oberschall, 1973; Castells, 1977; Álvarez and Escobar, 1992). According to these authors, the success of an urban social movement largely depended on two factors: firstly, the kind of objectives targeted by the movement itself; and secondly, the process of how social basis became an active political force (Castells, 1977; Bettin, 1979). Anthony Oberschall (1973) argued that any social movement must show a very active participation of its members in order to be defined itself as social movement. In parallel, Manuel Castells (1977) defined “urban social movement” as the system of practices born under a certain context that aims to transform – or substantially modify – a certain urban system in structural terms. Castells also pointed out that the strength of such urban struggles as agents of social and political change was conditioned by an interclass-based nature of urban social movements.

From the beginning of the 1980s, urban social struggles began to cover new claims, such as issues on collective identity and space-time quotidianities (Melucci, 1985). Facing the emerging of a post-industrial society in Western countries, Anthony Giddens (1985) identified four kind of new social movements: 1) democratic movements; 2) labor movements; 3) ecological movements, and 4) peace movements. Following Giddens’ suggestions, Brands (1987) defined ‘new social movements’ as those ones which were mostly composed by young middle classes who aimed at influencing public opinion in the continuing search for improving individual, collective life (Klandermans, 1986; Russell *et al.*, 1992). However, the progressive *carnivalization* of public demonstrations and performances played by these new social movements have involved a certain weakness of their social power, losing influence on public opinion. Together with this fact, their legitimacy is often violently denied by the State authorities.

Today’s social protests in Europe have a new face, because a new politicized global generation has arisen over these last years. Such global generation is mainly composed by young people aged between 20 and 35 (Feixa *et al.*, 2002) this so-called *Outraged Generation* is (re)produced largely thanks to virtual social networks, blogging (wordpress®, blogspot®) and microblogging (Twitter®) technologies, constituting the today’s most efficient tools for social and political struggles for NGOs, new social political and cultural associations, neighbors’ associations, informal groups for social justice, ecologists and solidarity groups, etc. (Feixa *et al.*, 2002; Stein, 2009; Reygadas *et al.*, 2009 ; Feixa *et al.*, 2009; Sánchez, 2011). However most works published on this current global youth revolt tend to overlook a very significant issue: the criminalization of ‘being young’ (Castells, 2011) as part of the ‘city securitization’ politics to socially sanitize the competitive city and thus ensure the process of city branding.

Fortunately, the socioeconomical approach to today’s youth protests has not been marginalized at all. The U.K. newspaper *The Guardian* together with the London School of

Economics has recently published *Reading the Riots. Investigating England's Summer of Disorder* (2011). This book constitutes an outstanding analysis of the recent riots that occurred in August 2011 in several British cities like London, Birmingham, Manchester, Salford, Nottingham, and Liverpool, among others. Its authors strongly underline the fact that the 59% of the arrested people after disturbances occurred in these aforementioned cities came from the 20% most deprived of areas in the United Kingdom. Authors also argue that such disturbances would express a widespread anger and frustration at everyday treatment at the hands of police – this is because of the increase in tuition fees, the closure of youth services and the scrapping of the education maintenance allowance. Furthermore, many complained about perceived social and economic injustices (Rusbridger and Rees, 2011). But, which ones? Unfortunately, very few works have provided some sort of explanation about the evident downward mobility mainly suffered by not only Western middle classes but especially their descendant generation. This process has been pretty significant in the European-Mediterranean countries over latter years (Navarro, 2006; López and Rodríguez, 2010, 2011). This paper explores how the so-called ‘European Spring’ would be related to downward mobility suffered by young middle classes from Europe that have been accompanied, at the same time, by a parallel process: the criminalization of ‘being young’ as response of political and financial elites (the ‘Old’) faced with the collapse of financial capitalism in Europe.

A first exploration on the criminalization of ‘being young’ in post-Fordist societies allows us to suggest that it mainly operates by means of five processes: labor precarization, housing insecurity, financial insecurity, health consequences regarding the criminalization of ‘being young’, and the ‘hyper-securization’ of youth leisure activities. On one hand, the fact of ‘being young’ means that most of young middle and lower classes of Western countries are doomed to accept ‘junk jobs’ which are devoid of any social or labor rights previously conquered by trade unions over the last century. The case of a highly skilled 24-year-old girl reported by Reuters on October 17, 2011, is paradigmatic:

With a masters' degree in publicity, the 24-year-old has been working for more than two years, full-time, in an internship that is starting to feel like it will never end. Paid 300 Euros a month for the same work as the salaried public relations professionals who sit next to her, she doesn't earn enough to move out of her parents' house and her bus pass and lunch expenses eat up most of her pay. But despite feeling her multinational employer is flouting rules that limit the use of worker contracts with no benefits, she's not about to complain to the labor office since she considers herself blessed to have a job at all. ‘Since I was little my parents urged me to get a university degree to find good work. But I'm lucky to have any work at all. There were 30 of us in my graduating class and I'm one of the ones who is doing the best with their career’, Silvia said. She did not want her last name used in case of repercussions at work. (Ortiz and Tisera, 2011)

Furthermore, a labor market featured by high rates in ‘junk jobs’ has hard consequences on the balance of the social security systems in Southern European countries. Moreover, the continuation (still today) of the real-estate bubble in Southern European countries – besides the moderate decreasing of prices occurred over these two last years – together with junk salaries are dooming young people to postpone their individual emancipation. The temporality of their labor life is also reflected in an extreme volatility of their housing

conditions, involving radical changes on the development of a family project. This fact leads to decreasing pension replacement rates for full-career workers, which are fundamental in consolidating a long-termed Welfare State in Southern European countries.<sup>3</sup>

Together with housing precarization and housing insecurity, a significant number of young middle and working classes must face quasi-everyday financial insecurity: many financial companies tend to associate the fact ‘of being young’ with a high risk of becoming defaulters. For that very reason, financial entities obligate them to be guaranteed by their parent’s capital. This provokes a very low rate of entrepreneurship among young people in Southern European countries, which then contributes to lower rates of national productivity (Zalevski and Swiszcowski, 2009). Furthermore, housing, labor and financial insecurity lead to the emergence of mental diseases among young middle and lower classes. As Murali and Oyebo (2004) point out:

It is not just infectious diseases that demonstrate the powerful social-epidemiological correlation; it is also psychiatric conditions, which not only occur at higher rates in the poorest areas, but also cluster together, usually in disintegrating inner-city communities. Money is not a guarantor of mental health, nor does its absence necessarily lead to mental illness. However, it is generally conceded that poverty can be both a determinant and a consequence of poor mental health. (p. 216)

Therefore it should not be dismissed the role that the everyday criminalization of ‘being young’ would play in the emerging of emotional, anxiety, depressive, panic, phobia, obsessive-compulsive disorders, among others. Finally, many authors have warned about an excessive ‘securitization’ of nightlife in Western cities. Video vigilance, aggressive ads including sexualized images of girls and violence between young customers and bouncers feature a nightlife rapidly criminalized by all colours of mass media (Recasens *et al.*, 2008).

Many scholars have avoided deepening on the nature of social and economic injustices fueling recent youth protests in Europe. However some others authors – which are pejoratively labeled as *leftists* – suggest that some reasons would play a key role in fueling today’s social protests (López and Rodríguez, 2010, 2011; Navarro *et al.*, 2011): a) the progressive loss of social rights conquered a few decades ago in a then-favorable macro-economic context; b) the lack of a certain socioeconomic stability which would eventually permit young individuals to plan a family project; c) the privatization, elitization and commodification of public education; d) the precarization of the labor market; and e) the increasing ‘disciplining’ of workforce, obligated to accept either high rates of unemployment or junk jobs (Feixa *et al.*, 2002; Navarro, 2006; López and Rodríguez, 2010, 2011; Navarro *et al.*, 2011).

## **The collapse of the Post-Fordist society: Insecurity, fear, and the response of the ‘young’**

The Outraged Generation dreamt once to be like their parents – in the case that the family union had run successfully – or, in the contrary case, like their parental generation who

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<sup>3</sup> The new strategy adopted by the neoliberal governments of most Southern European countries like Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece is to postpone retirement age in order to safeguard public pension funds.

participated in the transformation of a society of proletarians into a society of owners, which occurred over the second half of the twentieth century in most Western countries. Following what the capitalist production system requires, every North needs its South: Mittle Europe and the Mediterranean area. In that sense, a welfarian social pact emerged after the Second World War in Western countries, except in those under fascist dictatorships (namely, Spain and Portugal). In these two, a fictional pax populis was constructed under conditions of minimum labor incomes, much lower than those in Protestant European countries, which had already begun to register progressive increases of labor income, especially from the beginning of the 1960s.

In the case of Spain, some factors helped to ensure such fictional social peace: decreasing the length of the working day, increasing free time, the institutionalization of holidays for working-classes, and their motorization thanks to mass-production of automobiles manufactured by national automotive industries (SEAT), numerous initiatives of social housing sponsored by the most ‘charitable’ factions of the fascist dictatorship together with the Catholic Church after the Eucharistic Congress held in Barcelona (1952), etc. But such pax populi came especially by the inclusion of proletarians and their families in the then-newly created national system of social security in 1963.<sup>4</sup> The so-called Spanish economic miracle (achieved thanks to low wages and few social rights) was largely based on the State’s advertising campaigns, which promoted holiday apartments in coastal villages. It actually responded to Franco’s fascist government strategy in transforming ‘Spain, a country of proletarians’ into a modern ‘Spain, a country of owners’.<sup>5</sup> Housing, work, public health system and social security, public education, family, descendants, automobile, holiday properties... and time to hang out to dance on Saturday evenings over these last three decades and half. And cinema (or football) on Sundays... and for the richest, the Casita Blanca.<sup>6</sup> Who does not want a life like this? However, for the first time in the contemporary history of Spain, middle classes – especially their descendant generation – have begun to suffer problems traditionally associated with the everyday life of working classes. Hence, three terms have recently entered into the quotidianity of the middle classes: Housing, financial, labor, emotional, mental, health insecurity and fear regarding the perception of a no-future scenario for oneself.

Undoubtedly, working classes have circumvented daily insecurities from the industrial revolution, in spite of some difficulties. Different strategies related to housing, the informal economy, family and friendship networks structured in bars, taverns and sports and leisure clubs, etc. have usually helped to working classes to overcome such traditional insecurities determined by the everyday (re)production of class inequalities and social injustice in the industrial city. In Foucaultian terms, it seems that that knowledge has come progressively, being inserted in the bodies of descendant generations of working classes, although it can also be seen as a technique for achieving social and political control and subjugation to the State. In that sense, a first key question to better understand recent youth protests in Europe arises: What kind of knowledge have descendant generation of middle classes for urban survival in

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<sup>4</sup> In the original, Ley de Bases de la Seguridad Social (1963) and Ley General de la Seguridad Social (1966).

<sup>5</sup> This was precisely the main aim of the National Economic Stabilization Plan of 1959 previously cited.

<sup>6</sup> Casita Blanca was the most famous upper class-led whorehouse in Barcelona over the twentieth century. After more than one hundred years offering its services, it closed in February 2011.



times of deep economic difficulties? The great fear of not having an individual answer to this situation made young middle classes take the squares in several cities around the world.

In the third week of May 2011, many young people took plazas in 219 Spanish cities. Besides its urban nature (Nofre, 2012), a common thought blows in the air: nobody can explain why it had not happened before. Many scholars have recently wondered how it is possible that frugality and rebellion – which have fueled numerous popular uprisings throughout the contemporary history of Spain – have been canceled by the desire to return to those days of hedonistic consumption guaranteed by family bank credit. That was precisely one of the first instructions of the Spanish government to bank institutions in the early stages of the current economic and financial crisis: they must avoid, as far as possible, the massive withdrawal of credit cards for families.

The precarization of everyday life, not only of Western young working classes but also middle classes, must be seen as one of the main causes of the ‘European Spring’ and the later movement – beyond the Atlantic Ocean – called #OccupyWallStreet. Faced with these recent youth protests, the State deployed a rhetoric discourse on ‘city-securitization’, ‘zero-tolerance’ politics to socially and politically control the re-emerging of class consciousness in youth after its apparent de-politicization occurred after the youth revolution of May 1968 (Mauger, 2007; Garnier, 2010). This ‘again-politicized’ (and ‘criminalized’) global youth tend to express their demands at central, symbolic spaces of the inner city often affected by urban renewal or gentrification, which would lead one to wonder about the existence of a hypothetical relationship between the renewal of some central ‘spectacle-oriented’ urban spaces – in terms of Guy Debord (1967) – and the ‘zero-tolerance politics’ against youth protesters, who are highly criminalized because they do not fit into the image of a secure, competitive global city (Dangschat, 2001; Zinganel, 2003; Nofre, 2009; Edthofer, 2011).

Facing such a daily scenario, Manuel Castells (2011) warns about the rupture between citizens and politicians. In line with him, Michel Wierkova (2011) points out that “the old way to do politics is gone. It arises a new way, subordinated to individual as well as collective demands crying out for human rights, respect and the recognition of particular identities while not calling universal values into question. Those political parties that do not understand such demands are doomed to disintegration” (no page). He also adds: “Up to now, new social and cultural actors have had more success in questioning politicians rather than weakening dominant economic logics. The social is now placed above the cultural” (no page).

### **French banlieues and the ‘European Spring’: A first simulation of the criminalization of ‘being young’**

A growing reactivity of young people against dominant classes of the inner city has emerged over recent years (Mauger, 2007; Garnier, 2010; Feixa, 2011). Although mass media have drawn some parallels between the French *banlieues*’ revolt in November 2005 (Jaurreau, 2005; Lagrange, 2005; Brossat, 2006; Mauger, 2007) and some episodes of the ‘European Spring’, many scholars tends to avoid drawing parallelisms between both episodes of youth protests. This can be linked to the latest de-politicization of youth studies and the consolidation of the neoconservative research agenda in the Academy and thus the disappearance of concepts such as class struggle or social conflict, which have been gradually replaced by others much more de-politicized such as ‘negotiation’, ‘hybridization’ or even ‘neo-tribalism’ (Maffesoli, 1988). Maybe such ‘decorative sociology’ – in the terms of Rojek and Turner (2000) – has to do with some kind of incapacity to propose a research agenda that

should intend to decode the *nature* of this global youth revolution. The reasons of such incapacity would be clear: without taking ‘social class’ into account as one of the main category of scientific category, no relationships could be established between the youth revolt in French *banlieues* in mid-autumn 2005 and the ‘European Spring’, apparently disconnected. However one of the facts that would allow to establish a common nexus is, precisely, a class-based analysis of the aforementioned criminalization of ‘being young’. But besides the criminalization of ‘being young’ has not been much explored up to now, today’s criminalization of spaces of protest emerges as one of the most visible faces of the neoliberal Penal State (Castells, 2011).

In that sense, youth revolt in several French *banlieues* – when immigrant adolescents and teenagers violently clashed with police in November 2005 (Jarreau, 2005; Lagrange, 2005; Mauger, 2007) – may be considered as the first simulation of such aforementioned strategy of securization of the inner city by means of the ‘zero-tolerance politics’. Moreover, the consolidation of the neoliberal urban governance occurred over this last two decades in many cities around the entire world (Leitner et al., 2007) has involved a transition from a ‘low intensity politics’ of social sanitization of the inner city and its working-class suburbs (Nofre, 2009; Garnier, 2010) to the establishment of a ‘violent politics’ to eradicate perilous ‘social noise’ in the process of urban branding of the elite’s city (Garnier, 2010). This fact would allow us to better understand the key reasons of violent evictions of occupiers occurred in several ‘occupied cities’ like, among others, Madrid (16 May 2011), Barcelona (27 May 2011), New York (19 November 2011) and London (28 February 2012). Such violent evictions constitute the most visible sequel of the *banlieues*’ simulation in criminalizing youth. Or, maybe, has such simulation turned into a real everyday scenario in our post-Fordist cities?

It seems to be so in most Southern European countries, like Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. But what mass media and politicians usually hide – the political meaning of spaces of protest or, in other words, the political power of places (Lefebvre, 1974; DeCerteau, 1984; Agnew, 1989; Hershkovitz, 1993) – should not be overlooked. In such places, those who have neither power nor economic capital and those who sympathize with them create ‘spatiotemporal utopias’ (Harvey, 2000) challenging the exercise of hegemony in central, becoming symbolic spaces where political dissidence is visibilized (DeCerteau, 1984: 36-37). In the case of Spain, the ‘Los Indignados’ Movement occupied central squares where political, social, religious and economic power still today are located. In other words, the Young Generation expresses its contestation against the fact of being doomed to accept a new individual as well as collective ‘No-Future’ scenario. However, how is ‘the Old Generation’ responding to the demands of radical democracy and a better social equity expressed by the Young today?

## **The response of the (old) dominant classes of the inner city against youth protests: A global perspective**

Undoubtedly, police violence has been linked to unrests in working-class neighborhoods of capitalist cities (Davis, 1990). Actually police repression usually provokes protests by increasing solidarity between members of the same – or even different – social groups as in Egypt:

On June 6, 2010, Khaled Said, a 28-year-old upper class youth, had been dragged from a cyber café, and died in police custody. Angry demonstrations had followed, and several youth created a Facebook page

‘We are all Khaled Said’. On November 7, 2010, two 19-year-olds were arrested, and the disfigured body of one, Ahmed Shaaba, was later found in a canal near Alexandria. New rallies to protest police violence were held. (...) When January 25 arrived, tens of thousands of young Egyptians flooded Tahrir Square, spilling out onto Cairo’s streets. In dozens of towns throughout Egypt protestors defied police. ‘It was the happiest moment of our lives. It was the first time we felt it was our country, we were taking it back,’ recalls the Egyptian blogger Mahmoud Salem aka ‘Sandmonkey.’ (Schneider, 2011: 3)

As largely expected, institutional reactions to protests have consisted of systematically abusing those who were voicing their discontent. Unarmed protesters were killed in Tunis and Egypt, tear-gassed in Chile and in the U.S.A. and severely beaten up in Spain, among many other countries as England, Italy, Greece and France, for example. For protesters, it is about reclaiming a better social justice and a better social equity as well. For many neoliberal political leaders, it is about threatening social, economical and political established order, as the today’s Chilean President argues about students marches reclaiming a better distribution of wealth and improvement of the public education system: “So that’s why we spend a lot of energy to make these radicals understand their behavior is anti-democratic” (Sebastián Piñera, in “Chile Rising”, 2012). In line with President Piñera, the U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron asserted – concerning unrests occurred in some England suburbs in the second week of August 2011 – that “gangs were at the heart of the protests and have been behind the coordinated attacks” (in Rusbridger and Rees, 2011). However, the 59% of the England ‘unresters’ came from the most deprived 20% of areas in the United Kingdom, as previously noted in this text (Rusbridger and Rees, 2011).



Police repressing young protesters in Athens (top left), Santiago de Chile (top right), New York (bottom left) and Barcelona (bottom right). Source (1 and 2): “Chile Rising”, Fault Lines, Al Jazeera, January 2, 2012 at 22:30 GMT  
 Source (image 3): Photo by Louise Macabitas, <http://juansantiso.blogspot.com/2011/12/blog-post.html>  
 Source (image 4): <http://carlesdomenec.wordpress.com/2011/05/27/indignats-15-m-barcelona/>

What has been told up to now in this text would suggest the existence of some incompatibility between the social, political and spatial needs for capitalist production and the so-termed ‘the right to the city’ (Lefebvre, 1968). Actually, the anarchist geographer Mark Purcell has recently underlined that the right to the city should be also seen as ‘the right to the participation and mobilization’ and ‘the right to the appropriation’ as well (Purcell, 2003). Such considerations permit us to begin socially, politically and generationally contextualizing clashes between (young) protesters and (old) police.<sup>7</sup> In parallel, Jean-Pierre Garnier (2010) warns about the fact that neoliberal urban governance aims to eradicate the physical, active presence of popular classes in central urban spaces, whereas young working classes as those who do not want consume the ‘ludic city’ (Baptista, 2005) are displaced by means of institutional violence. Hence, the criminalization of protesters occupying central spaces of local power would respond to the strategy of local elites to socially and politically sanitize the inner city according to global competitiveness needs of urban global territories (Harvey, 2008) that are mainly based on the promotion of a ludic, cultural production/consumption, quinary activities and upper classes-led tourism. Hence what does not fit in the sanitized city is violently displaced. As Jean-Pierre Garnier suggests,

Faut-il, comme le font tant de chercheurs soucieux d’élaborer une alternative à la gestion pénale de la nouvelle question social posée par la rébellion d’une jeunesse populaire privée d’un avenir autre que de déréliction, ne discerner, dans l’obsession sécuritaire qui taraude la société française – pour ne parler que d’elle – depuis queleque temps déjà, que le produit d’une manipulation idéologique des governants? Considérer que la focalisation sur l’insécurité, au sens policier du terme, ne vise qu’à dissimuler son origine sociale tout en détournant l’attention des autres formes d’insécurité (financière, professionnelle, résidentielle, alimentaire, sanitaire, existentielle...) dont pâtissent les couches populaires atteintes de plein fouet par les effets dévastateurs d’un néolibéralisme effréné? En déduire que la priorité accordée à la lutte contre l’insécurité ne serait que le corollaire de l’abandon de la lutte contre les inégalités et l’alibi servant à légitimer, en criminalisant la pauvreté, le renforcement constant des mécanismes de contrôle et de répression des nouvelles classes dangereuses? (Garnier, 2010: 223-224)

## Final remarks: Beyond protests

Spain is still today situated in the last positions in investment in social policies among all the EU-27 countries (Navarro, 2006), with the deficiencies of the Welfare State in Spain traditionally being covered by what is commonly known as the ‘family mattress’. The transformation of that former Spain seen as a ‘country of proletarians’ into a modern Spain seen as a ‘country of owners’ certainly permitted an accumulation of capital which has helped descendant generations access public university, complete master's degrees or doctorates, buy their first car, carry out some Erasmus year in Rotterdam, and acquire (unconsciously) a 40-year mortgage. That is to say, their parents have therefore become their guarantors: Are they The Outraged Generation or maybe The Mortgaged Generation?

Today, such family mattresses have almost disappeared. Greece – seen today as an urban and social laboratory which represents the construction of a neoliberal society with junk

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<sup>7</sup> What occurred in Oakland (California, U.S.A.) in the evening of January 28 could allow us to better understand this association, when hundreds of young protesters were arrested: [http://www.insidebayarea.com/oakland-tribune/ci\\_19843263](http://www.insidebayarea.com/oakland-tribune/ci_19843263) (29 January 2012, 4:34 p.m.).

salaries, devoid of welfare state and under the supervision of financial and industrial elites of Mittle Europe for its commercial exploitation – has failed. They did not expect that it was so difficult to manage a defaulted country from the geographical, political, social and cultural ignorance about the cradle of Western democracy. In fact, social unrest and new uprisings appear as critical issues to be addressed by public security policies of Western cities, as NATO's Urban Operations in the Year 2020 reports, suggesting militarization of public space as a response to assure the governance of the neoliberal city.

Undoubtedly, elites of several worldwide countries have begun to express some fear. Actually, the great revolutions in Western countries that have occurred over the contemporary age have been usually launched by intellectual factions of middle classes because they had sufficient means to carry them out. Hence, mass media editors from Spain are not focusing their attention on the response to the crisis offered by working classes – no longer oppressed, but resigned and resilient. Their main concerns lies with the hypothetical contestation the descendants of middle classes, often better educated than elites themselves, could make facing a non-future scenario imposed by their previous generation. Here, the most worrisome of all of what has been treated up to now: since the #1215M protest (or celebration) day was a failure, is the 'Los Indignados' Movement a simulation of critics as Jean-Pierre Garnier (2010: 66) suggested for May'68 in Paris? In short, which are the real channels through which youth unrest will be channeled in a mid-term scenario?

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## Occupying Democracy

**Assembleia Popular de Coimbra,<sup>1</sup> Coimbra, Portugal  
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**Abstract:** Since the Arab Spring, public spaces in several cities around the world have started to be recovered back by the people. Places that were taken away from the citizens and turned into passageways for anonymous, resigned and depoliticized passers alienated from their lives in every aspect: leisure, work and political action. People gathered together there: making assemblies, thinking, deciding, living the experience of taking control of their lives. The main goal of this paper is to share our experiences as the ‘Assembleia Popular de Coimbra’, an ongoing project committed to social change based on consensus meetings in public places. We want to share our history, our views over the crisis, our goals and expectations. Finally, we expect to raise some questions to which we do not have an answer as a starting point for debate and as a form of developing new tools for social transformation.

**Keywords:** democracy, occupy, capitalism, community, alternatives

### Capitalism and crisis: Two sides of the same coin

The current crisis is a structural part of the way capitalism actually works. This so called ‘crisis’, the current crisis, is the product of a process which goes back to the 1970s and presupposes the concatenation of a series of factors which, with greater or smaller intensity, still persist today: reduction of the rate of profit, dismantling of the so called ‘Welfare State’ (*welfare*, which, in reality, it is more a *workfare*), rising of oil prices, States’ fiscal deficit, simultaneous inflation and stagnation, salary reduction, structural unemployment and erosion of wage forms of labour (Sen, 1997).

Since then, the system produces an exodus of capital through multinational companies who colonize internal markets. On the other hand, foreign commerce gains weight in economic growth, barriers to free circulation of goods are reduced, which produces a strategic

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<sup>1</sup> Assembleia Popular de Coimbra (APC) is an horizontal collective deliberation structure open to the entire community and based on a consensus decision making process. Since 2011, we have been organizing non-partisan, secular and peaceful actions aiming at the recovery of the sense of community and citizens’ participation through the use of public spaces in Coimbra. The following people proposed themselves to co-write the article related to the experience of APC related to the occupation of public space in Coimbra: Pedro Alípio, Francisco Norega, Oriana Brás, Tiago Gomes, and Esther Moya.

<sup>2</sup> Revised by Melanie Rideout.

conversion of these multinationals into transnationals. Because in this model growth depends on exports, it requires a liberalization of goods exchanges and capital circulation, which, linked to the imperative of competitiveness, leads to the globalization of economy. This process implies that political space and economic space no longer coincide, meaning the end of economic nationalism, and producing the divorce between the interests of the nation-state and the interests of capital. Transnational companies will make their transactions and will deposit their profits where they pay fewer taxes, therefore reinforcing the role of tax havens.

This allows capitalism to reach a status of supra-nationality orchestrated by economic institutions (IMF, WB, WTO, respectively, International Monetary Bank, World Bank, World Trade Organization) that propagate and impose the neoliberal belief without establishing themselves in a determined political space (Montero, 2010). In this context, capitalist globalization legitimates the reduction of real wages and the generalized loss of social rights. All of this is done under the discourse of necessity and inevitability of austerity measures (due to the crisis or the threat of it). From that point on, financial power acquires the power to impose its performance standards on both companies and states.

Another historical fundamental strategy of capitalism is the “accumulation by dispossession”, in charge of eliminating common goods and collective forms of organization to convert them/us in labour servitude through indebtedness and commoditization/privatization of common goods (Arrighi, 2007; Harvey, 2004; Federici, 2010). As Harvey notes, influenced by Marxist thesis and by the intellectuals of Latin American dependence theory, accumulation by dispossession is a strategy followed by capitalism since its beginnings as a form of survival.

Although this spoliation has been more evident in peripheral countries, in the current capitalist crisis, accumulation by dispossession is affecting central countries. This is due to the need capitalism has of continual accumulation and growth, and it does not hesitate to consume its own social basis, privatizing public services, provoking high levels of unemployment, etc. Against the concept of temporary crisis and the discourse of recovery of lost well being through economic recovery (recurring to financial rescue and austerity measures), this is certain: modern/colonial capitalism does not produce, nor will it produce, higher wages or more employment (other than ‘precarious’ and ‘flexible’), or more public services, or more civil liberties. However, the opposite is being created: slavery and servitude are currently in full re-expansion (Quijano, 2007: 32).

To take these processes forward, capitalism has created and imposed meta-narratives through which it naturalizes and justifies itself. Meta-narratives forming the world of capitalism are built on the basis of paradoxes. They present themselves as a natural reality (political theology) and, at the same time, as a human work (the invisible hand is everybody). Capitalism, even if it presents itself as such, is not an economic construction – it is a political construction. Neoliberalism, with its “end of history” (Fukuyama, 1992), eliminates the historical subject by eliminating history itself, creating a way of seeing and living the world in which the past is unique, universal and it reconstructs itself continuously at the service of the present interests of capital. By naturalizing historical elements such as the market (which is no longer treated as a social fact) and the neoliberal economic vision as the only economy, they impose their predesigned future. As a consequence, it does not matter who governs because the neoliberal project was converted in a State project. The political alternation substituted political alternative (Roitman, 2007). Politics appears as a form of technical management and this is when economic experts acquire a fundamental role (the market gurus).

For this, it is declared the need to make an ‘effort’ – under the discourse of “we will take these tough measures to get out of the crisis and achieve an economic recovery” – to direct us to the desirable and possible future (the recovery of the economic system). This way, it is intended to avoid falling into a probable but undesirable future (to capitalism). That is to say, a future which destroys current capitalism under new ways of alternative economic and social organization which only because they are new, are projected as chaotic and non viable. Put in this way, alternatives for the future are projected like utopias: human rights in a critical perspective, wealth and employment distribution, creating basic income etc. Such goals are considered desirable but improbable or impossible, to attempt eventually ‘in better times’. They expand their predesigned future and contract the present (Benjamin, 1989; Santos, 2005) converting the neoliberal project as the only possible horizon.

This logic makes the past disappear. The future is constructed without taking the past into account. No matter that historically the countries that follow the rules of IMF and WB sunk (see Argentina as a recent and paradigmatic case), this is part of a past made invisible and excluded from history. For this reason, hegemonic media try to convince us to ‘look forward’ and trust that ‘this time we will do it right, with the effort of everyone’, attributing shared responsibility to citizenship for a crisis which is a consequence of “casino capitalism” (Strange, 1997). Power does not wear out capitalism, it wears it out not to have it. So, from the 1970s onwards, ‘empire’ dominates without hegemony (Arrighi, 2007) and, in its intent to recover it, imposes a neoliberal economic analysis (Orozco, 2010) that has silenced even in the left discourses, preventing the articulation of ethical subjects to construct the future. In sum, this logic colonizes time, telling us that we have to take the present to a future previously designed, through a political effort of management, since alternatives are made impossible. This leads to the destruction of historical subjects and the homogenization of thinking and the political demobilization of citizenship.

### *Public space and urban control*

Public space is submitted mainly to two goals: capital gains and control. Capital gains presuppose the commoditization of public space in all its forms; see the so-called civil ordinances as an example of the two ways of domination: control of bodies in their becoming in the public space through the installation of surveillance systems and regulation of sanctions for the ‘uncivil’. This way, being in a square is allowed if in the form of consumption, that is to say, you cannot be in the square without establishing a normative consumption relation. The system only considers normative what it considers existent. This way a group of persons of the Assembleia Popular de Coimbra who went to inform local authorities about cultural activities to be performed from May 12 to 15, 2012, in the Parque Manuel Braga in Coimbra, were submitted to the regulation of economic activities in public spaces, that is, 16 euros for each m<sup>2</sup> of public space. Reciprocity relationships do not exist, because they are not ‘possible’ in capitalism.

In this sense, the occupation of abandoned buildings or the liberation of space of the market sphere, such as Escola da Fontinha in Porto where different ways of living (ways that are inexistent and impossible to systematize by the capitalist system) were practiced, presuppose a challenge to which violence is the only capable answer, a defence strategy to a power of dominance without hegemony.

Control forms are established also by regulating behaviour in public spaces presupposing a system to control the most intimate of bodies and subjectivities. This is why the distribution of public spaces in cities is designed to fragment bodies. We are passers, we are passing by:

we are individuals. Architecture of surveillance is justified by a discourse of terror reclaiming personal security and social isolation and provoking the naturalization of distrust relationships (Davis, 2001).

But why does capitalism have a special interest in these surveillance architectures and the generation of profit? Because capitalism is possible also due to the exacerbated individualization of subjects, to allow public spaces to be spaces of socialization and meeting is to let precarious bodies in common places, where the necessary affinities can emerge to collectively reconstruct the common. The recovery of public spaces is one of the main causes and tools of indignados movements, occupy movements, etc. because the collective only becomes possible through the possibility of meeting.

On the other hand, cyberspace is a new socialization space to a “community without proximity” (Weber, 1976). Some authors (Wellman, 2001) prefer the concept of *cyberplace* to underline the corporeality and continuity between physical and virtual spaces. Like Zapatists say, in assembly when we are together, on the net when we are far away.

We consider that virtual communities do not substitute physical spaces of socialization. But the delocalization of the Internet has allowed the creation of communities of interest constituted around affinity criteria independently of geographical situation. Communities in which disperse or physically isolated individuals have the opportunity of meeting each other and work together, generating enough critical mass to boost and animate collective action and generate collective intelligence (Bennet, 2003).

## Contesting global governance

In this context, where processes of accumulation by dispossession were installed in the centre of the empire, forms of contestation and protest quickly appeared. Following the unexpected Arab Spring, movements such as Popular Assemblies and Acampadas in Portugal, Indignados in Spain, and the Occupy movement in the U.S. represent part of the diversity of new forms of contestation that have emerged in the last years.

On this point, we intend to reflect on the innovations in the forms of collective organization and on the goals of these social movements in the contemporaneous historical context. We will see these movements from a perspective of process and history and not as if they represent a disruption with other earlier forms of organization and in different geopolitical contexts.

Undoubtedly, one of the characteristics of these movements is their use of communication tools and technologies, such as the Internet, to organize social networks and protests. In this sense, we want to mention the Zapatist movement as one of the first ones to use international social networks to turn their fight visible and to create alliances with other movements. Since the armed resurgence of EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional) in 1994 and the different sides of the Zapatist movement, it becomes a reference, innovating in many aspects, mainly because it abandoned the strategic essentialism of indigenous movements of the 1970s and adopted a more diverse and heterogeneous movement in their fights and in the actors involved.

To account for this heterogeneity, we consider the speech of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, a bridge between different realities, cultures, languages and fights incorporated in a contemporaneous Mexico submerged in the neoliberal hegemony of Capitalism. A bridge that is available to the ones who wish to be a part of this transit to ‘another politics’.

Besides this internal heterogeneity of actors and fights, poetically announced in the Zapatist saying “a world where other worlds have a place”, the concept of power of Zapatists

has served as a reference to horizontal and direct participation structures of the movements we are analyzing. Dussel comments about the concept of power of Zapatism:

El poder reside en la comunidad, que es la soberana y última instancia de toda representación. El que ‘manda mandando’ ha fetichizado el ejercicio del poder en alguna institución, a la que ha investido de ser el sujeto auto-referente del poder (por ejemplo, el Estado). Desde dicha instancia fetichizada el dominador ejerce el poder en primera persona mandando. Es dominación, corrupción del poder. Mientras que el que ejerce delegadamente el poder institucional obedeciendo al poder originario de la comunidad es un “servidor”; es el que manda obedeciendo. El poder de la comunidad es servido en el ejercicio delegado del poder de la autoridad obediente. Es una inversión de la definición del poder desde el origen de la Modernidad en su totalidad y hasta el presente – incluyendo la filosofía política burguesa dominante hasta hoy en día – es otro origen ontológico y metafísico del poder. (Dussel, 2007: 503)

This way these are much more inclusive movements, connected with other collectives through new collective action networks brought to life through the Internet, and they are internally diverse, that is to say, they answer to a diversity of fights without prioritizing none of them. This last characteristic has made easier the inclusion of different people and collectives in their goals, forms of internal organization, and even of persons who had never actively participated in this kind of movements.

In the current context of civilization crisis we consider that, despite the prominence of economical consequences, it affects all dimensions of social existence. The expansion of neoliberal capitalist policies worldwide has made exile impossible, and innovative forms of contestation emerge inside capitalist space itself as “lines of flight”. We follow Deleuze and Guattari (1988) when defining “lines of flight” as collective emancipating strategies which are inside the colonial-modern world-system and that are capable of formulating true alternative collective projects.

On the other hand, the concept of *rizoma* proposed by the same authors can serve us as an analytical tool to analyze the organization structure of movements such as Occupy, Indignados, and Assembleia Popular de Coimbra. One of the innovations of these movements is that they act as a rizoma. The contra-position to a rizomatic structure is a tree structure. The tree organizational model has the following characteristics:

1. it is hierarchical and works under a centralized chain of command;
2. this centralized structure has a trunk through which the information flows run; and
3. it is based and constructed through a binary logic of contra-position and hierarchy.

In contra-position to the tree structure, rizomatic structures emerge. These are characterized by:

1. *Connection and heterogeneity*. “Any point of the rizoma can be contacted by any other, and should be” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 13). The structures of the assemblies that emerged from these movements work like rizomas in their capacity to interconnect without a central node.
2. *Multiplicity*. There is no central axis, only multiple unities. They contemplate complexity as a rizomatic expansion. An example of this is the decentralization of *acampadas* to neighbourhood assemblies that work as interdependent nuclei.
3. *Insignificant rupture*. The multiplicity provoked by the assemblies can be interrupted and regenerate itself in another place, forming other flight lines.

On the other hand, we are conscious that there are many questionings that need to happen urgently inside these movements. One of the main questions is to avoid falling into

Eurocentric formulations to create global designs. Instead, we should be able to bring up common places, starting from our historical experience, from reciprocity and horizontality, and from a reflexive process on the four main axis of action: capitalism, patriarchy, imperialism, and colonialism. This reflexive process should take place starting from the diversity of historical experiences around us, breaking through the capitalist strategy of “wasting experience” and bringing up flight lines with “south epistemologies” (Santos and Meneses, 2009).

Finally, we also want to highlight how the central role of a shared ideological identity has been replaced by the importance of common goals to fight for (Bennet, 2003). This loss of centrality of a shared ideological identity is one of the characteristics that has allowed the diversity of people involved in these movements to amplify. The capacity to include these differences has led to a collective intelligence that has as a main goal: to contest the politics of global governance and to collectively create comprehensive flight lines.

## Contemporary history of Portugal

This section presents a critical analysis of the social and political history of Portugal from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present. It is important to understand the contemporary history of Portugal in order to understand the present. In spite of the present features of social communication that do not allow people to think too much about the past, we find a lot of references of the past events in social movements, for instance, the constant references to Salazar’s dictatorship. The expression “April values” appears all the time in public spheres and the last revolution in Western Europe left a complex imaginarium that is persistently invoking collective action.

In the old regime, the Catholic Church and nobles were the owners of territory. After the civil war between liberals and absolutists (1828-34), there was a redefinition about how to administer the territory. The absolute monarchy fell due to losing the civil war and the bourgeoisie took the power in decision-making. Subsequent to this change, a *coup d’état* allowed the consolidation of liberalism in the power because it was conciliatory with the interests of high bourgeoisie, in 1851. Oliveira Martins called this period *regeneração*, the Portuguese name for a capitalist regime (Cabral, 1976: 8). About the control of lands, the catholic properties were seized by state and then sold to the bourgeoisie, allowing this class to supplant the nobles in privileges and wealth while the people kept extremely poor and without access to any kind of power. The property owners changed, but that did not change the condition of the people because the only purpose in the burgess’ vision about the lower class was to force them to pay taxes (Cascão and Vaquinhas, 1993: 443). Portugal back then was a nation of barefoot peasants, accused by the bourgeoisie as being the “evils that do not allow the rural development of agriculture” (Vaquinhas, 1993: 479). As a result, this golden era of liberalism was not so golden for the underprivileged classes because the lands were not equally shared with the peasants, the Foral was not abolished, and the common lands were converted into private property (Sá, 1988: 251).

The railway lines allowed for the diffusion of knowledge among the cities and, consequently, the urban centres became the medium of the diffusion of ideas, especially for republicans and socialists. On October 5, 1910 a republican *coup d’état* occurred, led by the Republican Party, and the first Portuguese republic was finally proclaimed. Although the republicans shared many progressive views, a true progressive democracy was never consolidated. In fact, there were two dictatorships during the first Portuguese republic led by

General Pimenta de Castro (January-May 1915) and Sidónio Pais (December 1917-December 1918).

Portugal in the 1920s, after the First World War, was socially, economically and politically unstable. Government after government, bloody night after bloody night, bourgeoisie mixed the thirst for power with their own interests and the first republic failed to put democracy and social justice in practice. The Portuguese society was split between the wealthiest Portuguese families, the monarchists, the Catholic Church and the nationalists on the one side, and the working class organized by anarcho-syndicalists and radical socialists on the other. Rural Portugal did not change and bourgeois feudalism, illiteracy, poverty and oppression was rife. In the cities, the working class was violently repressed.

In the last century, for 41 years (1933-1974), Portugal was governed by a state corporatist regime with fascist inspiration that left deep wounds in the Portuguese society. It was difficult to avoid the military dictatorship because “the Portuguese bourgeoisie needed a strong new power for controlling the state and the working class were yet to have sufficient strength to do it” (Ferraz, 1975: 469). So, after March 28, 1926, a military anti-parliamentary revolution came to fruition that drove Portugal to the National Dictatorship, which later on, by the approval of constitution of 1933, gave birth to the New State (Estado Novo). After the victorious march from Braga to Lisbon by Gomes da Costa in June 1926, the regime became more repressive, year after year. Gomes da Costa dissolved the parliament, considering that it represented the failures of the republic. Due to the difficult Portuguese economical and financial situation, António Oliveira Salazar, a professor at the University of Coimbra, was invited to be the new minister of finance, supported by conservative catholics, integralists and objectors to parliamentary democracy (Rosas *et al.*, 1994). Salazar announced a financial ‘miracle’ balancing public finances, curiously like the current European austerity policies, and stabilizing the Portuguese coin, the *escudo*. He gradually became more powerful and, in 1932, he was nominated for the presidency of the council of ministers, with a huge power, bigger than that of the republic president.

But the ‘economic miracle’ was not enough. Salazar needed another miracle to gain massive support and Cardinal Cerejeira, his friend, gave him one: Fátima. Fátima was used as a miraculous spectacle to legitimate sociological order in the New State (Cruz, 2001: 499). Besides Fátima, Salazar supported other two important propaganda spectacles, Futebol and Fado: the ‘holy trinity’ that kept the people with hope, ‘peace protection’, entertainment, and nationalist nostalgia. Furthermore, the misery, ignorance and resignation prevailed by enforcing nationalist and Roman Catholic values on the Portuguese population across an education system focused toward the exaltation of the Portuguese nation and its five-century-old overseas territories (the Ultramar). The motto “Deus, Pátria e Família” (“God, Homeland, and Family”) replaced the French Revolution’s “Liberté, égalité, fraternité” of the first Portuguese Republic.

In 1968, Salazar suffered a brain haemorrhage. As he was severely injured, President Américo Thomaz replaced him with Marcello Caetano. The changes from the ‘Marcelist Spring’ did not go far enough for large elements of the population who expected far more freedom and civil rights. In fact, Caetano was still an authoritarian himself and he never intended to turn the regime into a democracy.

Finally, on April 25, 1974, a *coup d’état* organized by the MFA (Movimento das Forças Armadas) definitely put an end to the New State. Despite MFA’s advice to the people to stay at home, people came to the street and tried to occupy some state buildings. This revolution happened almost without any blood spilt. The people strongly supported the MFA when they

figured out the intentions of the MFA program, summarised in the three D's: democracy, development and decolonization (Cruzeiro, 1989).

In 1975, Portugal was in a revolutionary process called the PREC (Processo Revolucionário em Curso [Revolutionary Process in Progress]), which resisted until November. In a more strict sense, it means the actions taken by political parties, left- and right-wing groups, and popular collective actions typify these social movements as the “widest and deepest in European post-war history” (Santos, 1990: 27). Despite ideological differences, there was a strong cohesion around April values and principles and a strong commitment with social justice, especially in the first months after the Carnation revolution. Besides the land occupation, the agrarian reform, the establishment of minimum wage, and the improvement of housing conditions through the SAAL project (Serviço de Apoio Ambulatório Local), the process led to the dismantlement of the economic groups that held most of the Portuguese wealth and production control and the nationalization of several companies considered to be of public interest in sectors such as banking, insurance, transport, communications, steel, cement, and chemicals, which were restricted to general politicians and bourgeoisie until the April 25 *coup d'état*.

In a document elaborated in a popular assembly of MFA, we can find a proposal for a popular constitution of power in several different categories – base organizations such as neighbourhood committees and workers committees, popular local assemblies, popular municipal assemblies, popular district assemblies, popular regional assemblies and popular national assemblies (MFA, 1975).

On November 25, 1975, “troops of paratroops who took some air bases expected the support of COPCON” (Comando Operacional do Continente [Continental Operations Command]), led by Otelio Saraiva de Carvalho, which was unsuccessful because a group of operational militaries, under the command of Ramalho Eanes, liquidated the uprising at its beginning, replacing the PREC (Revolutionary Process in Course) by ‘Process Constitutional in Course’ (Cruzeiro, 2005). As a result, the centre and right obtained influence in society with socialism finally being “put in the drawer”, as Mário Soares and his U.S. friends wished. The following governments gave economic power back to the capitalist and feudal families in exile upon returning to Portugal as heroes.

Since the revolutionary process that took place from 1974 to 1975, the elected socialist party (PS) and then the social democratic party (PSD) and the democratic social centre (CDS) drove the country in the direction of a so-called ‘modern democracy’. Although there were several political changes in Portugal, the economic elite remained almost untouched and they have always been the true rulers since the bourgeois ascension in the second half of the nineteenth century. The privileged wealthy class has always kept the politicians under their control except for during the short period of the revolutionary process, 1974-1975. Democracy, thereafter, was kept as a farce and it was used as an instrument to legitimize the status quo and to carry out the neoliberal agenda. They were able to change people’s mind by using wide-spread propaganda and by taking control of the media, thereby creating political ignorance and a cultural change towards consumerism and individualism.

Recently, due to unemployment and precarious employment, the degradation of the welfare state and generalized corruption, several small groups of activists have organized themselves in order to take action for social and political change. These groups are not as ideological as those of the PREC, and they are diverse in their proposals and strategies. On March 12, 2011, the biggest demonstration since the PREC (300,000 people nationwide) took place. The demonstration was mostly motivated by the erosion of the Socrates government and by a popular parody called “Homens da luta” (Men of Struggle). A movement called



M12M (*Movimento 12 de Março* [March 12th Movement]) – also called “Geração à rasca”, an expression that emerged following the 1993 protests against the privatization and rise of fees in higher education – claimed that they were the real organization and thus responsible for the success of this demonstration. This movement is not radical in the sense that they do not demand a social revolution. Instead of radical political change, they demand more popular participation in the political decisions that are keeping the system unchanged.

Reform after reform, the country lost the April values. Liberty, Equality and Fraternity lost their meaning as foundational values, and have been replaced by new ones. Liberty is now freedom to choose, Equality is now equal opportunity to do business in rhetoric, which in fact does not exist, and Fraternity is now the market. The carnation-revolution-socialist-utopian-dream was lost and forgotten. April became November, and November was the end of the dream. The end of the dream replaced the dream as if it was the dream itself. Democracy was not lost because it never truly existed. But even the apparent democracy in which we live is fading away right now and it is being replaced by a fascist-like neoliberal regime. There will never be a real democracy without the people’s control. The parliamentary regimes failed to represent the people’s will because governments legitimise themselves by changing the people’s freedom into the freedom of servitude. To serve the bosses, serve the state, serve the country’s development plan, which is none, and giving up all the rights conquered at the social struggles and submit to the austerity and exploitation by the wealthiest class once more. The people kept their faith in the government due to the fear of political instability promoted both by the failures of the first republic and the fascist and post-fascist propaganda against social change.

### **Assembleia Popular de Coimbra: Social reflections**

The 15M movement started on May 15, 2011, when some people decided to permanently occupy the squares in several cities of Spain, after the big demonstrations that were called by the platform Democracia Real Ya. Soon after, its echoes were felt in Portugal, which was in the middle of an electoral campaign, and just after the former Prime Minister asked for a bailout to the Troika – IMF, ECB (European Central Bank) and CE (European Commission).

The Assembleia Popular de Coimbra began on May 20, but under a different name. On that day, nearly a hundred people gathered in Praça 8 de Maio, in Coimbra, inspired by and in solidarity with those who were camping in dozens of cities throughout Spain. After a while, those of us present spontaneously decided to form a popular assembly to discuss why we were there. It didn’t take long for us to understand that we were there not only because we were sympathetic with our brothers and sisters struggling in Spain, but also because we wanted to fight for a real democracy, a democracy different from that which is reduced to a vote every 4 or 5 years, a democracy that is authentically by the people and for the people. Just like our brothers and sisters in Spain, we were there to bring democracy back to the streets and the squares, its primordial spaces. Moreover, we decided not to camp right away, but to meet every afternoon on that same square, one of the most important ones in the downtown of our city. The name came naturally – *AcampadaCoimbra*.

On the next day, people gathered again in Praça 8 de Maio and, after a long discussion in a popular assembly, it was decided to set up a camp. On May 22, it was decided to decamp but the daily activities continued and, as the days passed by, things became more and more organized. On the 24<sup>th</sup>, there was a theatre play and a debate with the sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos about Solidarity Economy, attended by more than 60 people. During the

evening, a video connection was set up with Barcelona. In the popular assembly, it was decided to set a permanent camp the next day and the activities were prepared.

Since the first assembly on May 20, all the decisions were made by consensus according to the idea of building an inclusive space of democratic participation where everyone's ideas and opinions are taken into account. That is one of the basic principles of the Assembleia Popular de Coimbra but, of course, it can make the discussions longer and more difficult for certain decisions, on the most divisive topics, to be made. That's what happened on May 25, when the proposal of Manifesto, drafted by the Commission of Contents on that same afternoon, was taken to the popular assembly. Only after long hours of discussion, namely on which position should we have concerning the debt, the Manifesto was approved.

Starting with: "We are common people. We are just like you" (AcampadaCoimbra, 2011), the Manifesto made clear that those participating in that moment had no will at all to be the 'owners' of that space, because the space itself was not intended to have owners or leaders, but rather to be fully horizontal, inclusive and open to the participation of everyone, in order to render possible "a debate which allows the voices of everyone to be heard" (AcampadaCoimbra, 2011). The Manifesto also systematized the main principles of the AcampadaCoimbra: direct participation in the process of decision-making; rejection of all representation, whether it comes from "parties, unions" or "other representatives that want to do it [decide] on our behalf" (AcampadaCoimbra, 2011); consensus; and self-management.

From May 25 to June 5, Praça 8 de Maio was permanently occupied and many activities were held. From the beginning, one of the biggest concerns was to create spaces of free debate and free speech – for that, besides the popular assemblies, there were daily times of free tribune and there were often debates and workshops on, for example, responsible consumption and portable vegetable gardens. There were also panels around the square for people to write their opinions freely.

But much more than a space of free speech, debate and democratic participation, AcampadaCoimbra was also a place where an alternate society was being built. As observed by Arun Gupta, co-founder of *The Independent* and *The Occupied Wall Street Journal*, unlike the popular assemblies which may disintegrate without the space to anchor the democratic practice, the occupation of public space makes it possible to glue "the various tendencies together" and to focus on "the alternate society growing up around them" (Gupta, 2012).

In fact, during those days, this "alternate society" grew in Praça 8 de Maio, based on the communitarian spirit inherent to this kind of occupation. A 'society' which was and still is completely autonomous from (although coordinated with) other similar groups in the region, and decentralized (all decisions are made locally); in which the capitalist logic of profit is rejected and replaced by solidarity and mutual help; and where there was and is no discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity or nationality, sexual orientation, employment condition, age, or whatever other distinctions. It is open to everyone.

In less than two weeks, this 'alternate society' grew in size and complexity. In a few days, there were several infrastructures – a studying space with a popular library, an area for children, a kitchen and a sleeping place. The principle of solidarity was especially evident in the communitarian or popular meals in which everyone was welcome and invited to bring, within their possibilities, food for them and for somebody else, and where everything was shared, even with those who could not contribute.

During those days, from the youngest children to the eldest people, from students to workers, from unemployed to retired people, hundreds of people participated, in some way, on the AcampadaCoimbra and the several activities in Praça 8 de Maio.

Besides those many dozens of people actively involved maintaining the occupation, hundreds of people supported it orally and by subscribing to the Manifesto; messages from uncountable people were written on the free expression panels displaced around the square; during the day, people would bring water and food to the camp; some of the *Repúblicas* of the city contributed to popular dinners; and dozens of children drew, painted and played on the children's space. The involvement of homeless people and gypsies (especially the children) also made it possible to break down some prejudices still too present within the Portuguese society.

Still, although it was a successful experience, rich in participation and community dynamics, it was not sustainable for long. From the several dozens to a hundred people at each activity until the end of May, as AcampadaCoimbra entered in June, the participation started to decrease.

By July 5, it was almost impossible to sustain the occupation and so it was decided to decamp and to reorganize the struggle by focusing our efforts in the popular assemblies and other activities. On the next day, it was decided to change the frequency of the popular assemblies from daily to weekly. This marked the beginning of another phase of what, in mid-February, would be named Assembleia Popular de Coimbra (APC), as it is known today.

During this last year, the actions and positions of the APC have been focusing on three main levels of concern: the international, the regional and the local. From the beginning, the APC's main goal has never been the demand for anything to those who rein power, but rather to demand and build a change from the base, a different way of organizing society. However, just after the end of the occupation of Praça 8 de Maio, problems on a local and regional or state-wide level were discussed, and then, on the popular assembly of June 19, seven practical demands were approved, including: free public health and education services, of quality and of universal access; the immediate conversion of the false 'green receipts' into employment contracts; the restitution of the access to public transportation for the populations who have lost it because of the Metro Mondego; the preservation of the Mata Nacional do Choupal (Choupal National Forest); among others. As we can see on the fourth demand, the issues concerning public spaces and property remained central even after the end of the occupation: "We demand the right of people and collectivities to occupy, inhabit, recover, remodel, use and manage the abandoned spaces and infrastructures, whether they are public or private" (AcampadaCoimbra, 2011).

Furthermore, the last actions can be divided in four distinct fields, according to four different goals and concerns of APC. The first concern and probably the one that supports all the others is the creation of spaces for the population's self-organization, namely the weekly Popular Assemblies and several Users of Public Transportation Plenaries, which were launched by the APC but started functioning autonomously from the beginning.

The second concern is about the promotion of debates, which we want to be open to the entire society, and in which the different perspectives can be confronted without restrictions, unlike what happens in the mainstream media. The subjects of the debates held during the last year were highly diversified: Human Rights, National Health System, Euro Pact, violence and cultures towards peace, full employment and precarious labour, debt, environment, Es.Co.L.A. (Espaço Colectivo Autogestionado), and occupations.

The third concern is the organization of actions where the people can show their outrage over this system – a system that places the economical interests above human dignity. With that intent, we have organized demonstrations in the general strikes of November 24 and March 22, as well as in the international mobilizations of June 19 (against the Euro Pact) and October 15 (15O – United for a Global Change), having participated in the latter around 1,000

people, which probably made the 150 one of the biggest demonstrations in our city in the last years. We also participated in the Global Spring, which in our city lasted from May 12 to 17. On May 12, we took the streets once again to make the people's voice heard – around 150 people participated. But the Global Spring was much more than that – starting right after the demonstration and during the following days, we camped and maintained a permanent presence in Parque Dr. Manuel Braga, near the Coreto, holding a couple dozen initiatives with one main goal in mind – to build alternatives and a whole new society. That's what the Global Spring was about, not just in Coimbra but in the 400 participating cities.

This brings us to the fourth concern of the APC – the promotion of the communitarian spirit as the first step towards the building of a new world, a world where human dignity is fully respected, a world of and for everyone, despite their nationality, ethnic group, gender, sexual orientation, age and social condition. Since the Global Spring, we are focusing more of our efforts on activities in which, through the recovery of public spaces as spaces for getting together and sharing, open to everyone, we intend to nurture the creation and strengthening of bonds between people and to provide experiences of communitarian living. The activities organized by the APC fortnightly, in the same place that fostered the Global Spring, are an example of that.

## Conclusions

In each uprising, *coup d'état*, revolution, military coup and political collective action, the streets and the urban or rural spaces contributed to change the social organization, although people's participation in those actions were conditioned to their status in society. Since the old regime breakdown until the present day, we find more people involved in social organization but not everyone. In other words, democracy in its strict sense does not arrive in a wonderful spring morning ... or autumn.

Can we imagine public space without persons? No, because the public space is a place for meeting, sharing knowledge and creating networks of mutual support and reciprocity, it is the basis to have the possibility for meeting, and the way to collectively create a worthy life.

This crisis is a reflection of an unfair definition of space, public and private. Although we meet in public spaces, we have a lot of setbacks. But we know, as Zapatists say, that “*vamos lento porque vamos lejos*”. We need to continue meeting in public spaces to create the conditions for collective action. Therefore, we will continue to think together and to create new forms of organization and participation that allow other possible worlds to emerge.

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## Living Spaces in Public View: Contested Space in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, Canada

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**Abstract:** Vancouver is known as the most progressive city in North America for harm reduction advancements and practices. The theories of Henri Lefebvre and Armand Mattelart when pertaining to how space is represented or produced, and how subjects and objects are perceived in certain places, will be a guide to illuminate some of the key issues and problems of how the homeless and precariously housed in the DTES of Vancouver are viewed, represented, conceptualized, controlled and contained. By examining the history of this neighbourhood from many frameworks of thought such as environmental justice, political economy, architectural theory and moral models that influence public opinion, the goal herein will be to promote a more meaningful conceptualization of all the inherent factors that influence and continue to dictate, in part, how this neighbourhood and its inhabitants live, and what future may be ahead, given its current trajectory.

**Keywords:** environmental justice, poverty, homelessness, gentrification, activism

The importance of researching and engaging with oppressive practices of exclusion need to be viewed and acted on in an interdisciplinary lens, incorporating numerous approaches to social change from urban planning, activism and academic theories from numerous specializations. As stated by Alexis Crabtree and Jeffery Masuda, “We increasingly need to target social and institutional forces that discriminate against inner-city populations with more systematic analysis and action against structural determinants of inequity as opposed to studying populations from merely a distributional conflict with the wealthy and poor” (Crabtree and Masuda, 2010: 656). This discussion will give an overview of the history of encampments and certain acts of contestation in the downtown eastside (DTES) of Vancouver in an attempt

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<sup>1</sup> Re-authoring my own narrative allowed me to move past the debilitating complex multiple barriers that come along with the stigmatization of being involved in sex-work with a drug dependency. At 26 years old I returned to academics. I completed an undergraduate degree at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, a Masters degree in fine arts at the University of Calgary, and am currently in the process of obtaining a PhD in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia. My community work for the last 12 years in the downtown eastside of Vancouver has been with Raincity Housing, including supervising ‘The Vivian’ for 4 years (a transitional rooming house supporting sex-trade workers in the DTES) and my current position as community service worker at Triage Emergency Services shelter. I worked for a year with Arts & Culture, City of Calgary, to team-lead a homeless arts initiative to create large-scale collaborative art projects at numerous shelters and resource centres throughout the city. Current projects include the development of a creative production space in the DTES for those living in hotels with no access to studios or space for individual creative production and collaborative engagement. Ongoing research addresses modes of communication and activism that support the harm reduction movement in Western Canada fighting for social justice in the areas of fair housing, drug users support and rights for those working in the sex-trade.

to dispel the myth that the city is an apolitical resort metropolis (currently ideologically constructed and sold internationally by real-estate, political and business minded bodies invested in attracting foreign wealth and land development). I also plan to show how activism, academics, community workers, politicians and health professionals can work in conjunction to effect social change.

Before a discussion of the history and current climate of Vancouver's contested space in the downtown eastside DTES can proceed it should be acknowledged that indigenous Coast Salish peoples of the Squamish, Burrard and Musqueam nations originally inhabited this geographic location. These first inhabitants of present day Vancouver never ceded their land or rights over to the government despite centuries of colonial oppression (Crabtree and Masuda, 2010: 658). The European occupation of Vancouver and its transformation from a mill town in the late nineteenth century to the inner city DTES neighbourhood that exists now is the greatest influence that has shaped the community as we know it today. Only 9% of its current residents are registered as Status Indians under the federal government Indian Act (Statistics Canada, 2006; Crabtree and Masuda, 2010: 658).

The theories of Henri Lefebvre and Armand Mattelart when pertaining to how space is represented or produced, and how subjects and objects are perceived in certain places, will be a guide to illuminate some of the key issues and problems of how the homeless and precariously housed in the DTES of Vancouver are viewed, represented, conceptualized, controlled and contained. By examining the history of this neighbourhood from many frameworks of thought such as environmental justice, political economy, architectural theory and moral models that influence public opinion, the goal herein will be to promote a more meaningful conceptualization of all the inherent factors that influence and continue to dictate, in part, how this neighbourhood and its inhabitants live, and what future may be ahead, given its current trajectory. The history of encampments and the acts of individuals contesting the use of 'public' space has existed since the beginning of colonial settlement in Vancouver and it has almost always been tied to the conflicting issues of economic class. How the contradictory use of 'public' space has been perceived by the more financially affluent will be investigated from a contemporary and a historical lens with the hope of changing the dominant perception that destroying and reconstructing key public spaces to force those spaces and the inhabitants residing in them to coincide with cultural and social norms is not the only way to address contestations of space. Hopefully this discussion can lead to a fuller range of perspectives in acknowledging local identities and experiences within the DTES community with a realization of the aspirations and preferences identified by some within the community.

### *Encampments, transience and the occupation of 'public' space*

The history of Vancouver's DTES from the colonial settlement perspective is barely 150 years old. Its early inception as a port city with logging and fishing industries found many male migrant workers attracted to the west coast for its temperate climate and the possibility of financial gains. Along with these workers came rooming houses, hotels, brothels and drinking establishments to entertain the mainly single population of men flooding in to Vancouver at the end of the nineteenth century (Crabtree and Masuda, 2010: 659). As late as 1911, the workforce in British Columbia was 8% women compared to 25% women in Ontario and it was not until 1971 that the numerical discrepancies in gender disappeared (Johnston, 2006: 67). Along with European migration came Japanese and Chinese migrant workers who started settling in the DTES as it was the most affordable neighbourhood for working classes



once the downtown core relocated westward (Johnston, 2006: 67). Much racial tension existed and not just toward Asian, Aboriginal and East Indian settlers. As discussed by Todd McCallum in his in-depth research article, “The Reverend and the Tramp, Vancouver 1931: Andrew Roddan’s God in the Jungles,” many European immigrants were deemed ‘not-yet-white ethnics’ such as Jews, Italians, Norwegians and others. McCallum effectively shows how race issues were as much a “...mixture of nativity, occupation, and politics as it was physical appearance and scientific discourse” (McCallum, 2005: 51).

Armand Mattelart’s chapter on “The Hierarchization of the World” for his book, *The Invention of Communication*, points to the desires, motives and justifications of Western Europe to colonize new territories. Mattelart shows how economic hegemony reached its peak between 1884 and 1900 by expansion and colonization. France, Britain and Germany collectively expanded their empire by 97.5 million inhabitants and took over approximately 13 million square kilometers of new land to exploit (Mattelart, 1994: 165). Railways in all the colonized nations were not built to facilitate social integration or national integration and the CP Rail was no exception. They were built, in large part, to facilitate the production, management and harvesting of natural resources for financial gains. Mattelart quotes Michel Chevalier in his quest to convince France and Britain to unite in the effort to dig the inter-oceanic telegraph route in 1844 in the following way: “Europe is now in an expansionist movement, by which she and her laws are ranging over the entire planet. She wants to be sovereign in the world but she intends to be so with magnanimity, so as to raise other men to the level of her own children. Nothing is more natural than to overturn the barriers that arrest her in her dominating thrust, in her great civilizing enterprise” (in Mattelart, 1994: 173). From this type of righteous entitlement to world domination, it is no surprise that the average Anglo-Canadian felt entitled to racist sentiments and the right to live in domination and control over other races and their land and resources.

Henri Lefebvre’s theory on the production of space also relates to McCallum’s articulation of the multi-faceted nature of racist thought and may be useful to introduce at this point in connection with those who would soon have to resort to living communally in contested public spaces. ‘Social space’ is defined by Lefebvre as having a part to play in the ‘forces of production’, that it can be deceptive in having a ‘singular character’, and that social space can be ‘politically instrumental’ in controlling society in the way that it is developed. He goes on to state that social space also dictates property relations, and is part and parcel embedded in ‘ideological and institutional superstructures’ that create a false sense of neutrality while actually overloaded with ‘systems of meaning’. His last point on social space, (most important to this discussion) is that it “contains potentialities – of works and of reappropriation – existing to begin with in the artistic sphere but responding above all to the demands of a body ‘transported’ outside itself in space, a body which by putting up resistance inaugurates the project of a different space (either the space of a counter-culture, or a counter-space in the sense of an initially utopian alternative to actually existing real space)” (Lefebvre, 1974: 349). To connect this last point to the discussion at hand, Lefebvre is referring to social space that is contested by the body through the resistance of following accepted political, cultural and productive norms and therefore inserts the physicality of a new ‘space’ that contests ‘existing’ space defined by societal norms and ideologies of entitlement (i.e., unsanctioned public encampments). Lefebvre is quick to point out that his theory goes beyond the strictly conceptual ‘spaces’ defined by theorists influenced by semiotic theory and that all of the above factors in his framework must be considered when discussing how space is produced and lived in, not just represented or conceptualized (Lefebvre, 1974: 16). This discussion will attempt to factor in all of Lefebvre’s points about the influences on how space

is produced, maintained, represented and experienced, especially in relation to spaces of contestation.

The financial crash of 1929 left at least 10,000 unemployed workers in Vancouver with more men floating in and out of the city in the years following. McCallum states that

Along with the network of hotels, restaurants, flophouses and pool rooms geared to serving working men during the traditional winter off-season, the city was also home to numerous unemployed organizations offering political support and sociability. In that first year (1929), tens of thousands of transients passed through the city – police constables reported 75 to 100 men arriving via train each day – prompting City Council to warn Prime Minister R.B. Bennett that ‘the situation in Vancouver is beyond our control’. (2005: 52)

By the spring of 1931 there were major cuts to relief funds such as bed and meal tickets and many of the out of work population were stranded without funds or continuing to flood into the city from other parts of B.C. where work opportunities had also disappeared. By June of 1931 there were four distinct ‘jungles’ in Vancouver. McCallum gives statistics and locations in his article about these makeshift outdoor communities.

An average of 150 lived in temporary shelters built along the shore of Burrard Inlet on property administered by the Harbour Board. Two hundred lived on the False Creek flats near the Great Northern Railway Terminal, while another 250, most of them at least forty years old, lived in a temporary structure built under the Georgia Viaduct. The fourth jungle, located adjacent to Prior Street, housed approximately 450, most of them of Swedish and Finnish descent. By the end of the summer, another jungle would appear, this one at the southeastern end of the railway yards. Unknown numbers squatted in Stanley Park, on Deadman’s Island, and on the former Kitsilano reserve (now the site of Vanier Park). (McCallum, 2005: 56)

Minister Andrew Roddan and First United Church were one of only two non-government organizations that were assisting in the crisis to help those living in the ‘jungles’ and as a result, his fame and notoriety grew immensely in that period. Andrew Roddan’s book, *God in the Jungles*, was first published in December of 1931 and sold more than 2,000 copies in its first month. McCallum states that this publication included photos of the jungles and starts off with a Marxist-like radical sentiment to support the poor and a call to the political and financial power-holders to change capitalist policies for the good of all ‘mankind’ (McCallum, 2005: 52). However, McCallum makes clear that the tone of the book quickly changes a third of the way in to one that encompasses harsh judgment of the lives and actions of the jungle residents and contradicts his first sentiments by placing personal responsibility and blame on the individuals for their failed situations and lack of Christian principles. McCallum states, “Roddan draws from a report from the Life Insurance Sales Research Bureau that calculated the relative odds of root causes for individual failures”:

Out of 100 men:  
37 fail for lack of industry.  
37 fail because discouraged.  
12 fail by not following instructions.  
8 fail for lack of knowledge.  
4 fail through dishonesty.  
2 fail because of ill-luck. (McCallum, 2005: 57)

The use of this statistic shows that Roddan believed – in most part – that despite the economic downturn, it was a question of individual character as to why men fail.

Armand Mattelart points to the historical use and invention of mathematical statistics to assess risks in populations and the creative impetus for the universal insurance of welfare

states in his chapter “The Portrayal of Crowds”, in his book *The Invention of Communication* (Mattelart, 1994: 228-233). This analytical, scientific and political way of structuring social risk is identified by Mattelart as being conceived initially by Adolph Quetelet, a Belgian astronomer and mathematician, in 1835. He is credited by Mattelart as inventing ‘social physics’ with his first demographic study on birth and mortality laws in Brussels with a desire to “establish a moral statistics and to deduce ‘useful consequences’ from it” (p. 228). Francois Ewald, who wrote *The Welfare State*, credits Quetelet’s social physics on the emergence of a new type of governing: “Quetelet’s importance is to have been a crossroads, a place of intersection, a point of precipitation. Things still isolated, dispersed, and separated were thanks to him, placed in contact with each other and took on a new form, new developments, a new future. Quetelet was the man who universalized probability calculus – which is the universal converter” (Mattelart, 1994: 229). Mattelart states: “In this trajectory toward calculated solidarity and interdependence can be perceived the emergence of the welfare state that socializes responsibilities; there is not only a proliferation of insurance institutions, but also the progression of a new kind of rationality associated with them” (p. 229). This was deemed a great move forward in a new form of social justice and has been instrumental in changing how societies function and has been the impetus of programs like healthcare insurance, which was implemented in Germany as early as 1883 (Mattelart, 1994: 232).

Do ‘social physics’ and the implementation of social insurance programs work with capital and production in all cases? As pointed out by McCallum, these types of social programs are contingent on the success of capital production and economic security. In 1931 the city of Vancouver had to cut social programs for the unemployed, which contributed to the amount and size of the jungles of shantytowns in Vancouver (McCallum, 2005: 76). Does the ‘biomorphic’ notion of interdependence and government social responsibility from an analytical and political standpoint ‘for all’ clear away the moral implications attached with personal responsibility when there are not enough means to support all members of society? How else can a society make calls on who is deserving of support when there is not enough for all?

### *Historical government controlled encampments*

British Columbians felt they had to solve this ugly rash of jungles that were portrayed by Roddan and others as dens of immorality and sin where ‘rummy stiffs, bleeding derelicts and wolfish predators’ were in desperate need of Christian salvation. When the jungles of 1931 were torn down due to a death from typhoid, over a thousand men were quickly dispatched to labour camps that Conservative Premier, Simon Fraser Tolmie, had implemented. Roddan did not fight this government strategy (McCallum believes) because in the end, he supported an older belief in individual sin and personal responsibility that had to lead to spiritual transformation rooted in the belief that God could save them from moral degradation and economic exploitation. In the end, First United Church stopped feeding the homeless en masse and instead raised funds to send educational magazines to the labour camps (McCallum, 2005: 88).

The government work camps of the early 1930s were not financially sustainable and many homeless men refused to go as they did not want to be displaced to a new region of the province. Jungles cropped up in Vancouver again and the ‘transient question’ remained a burning topic in B.C. politics. There were over 100 strikes by the Relief Camp Workers Unions and large masses walked on Hunger Marches in 1932 and 1933, a mass strike in 1935, and a post-office sit-in in 1938. All of these acts of social outcry were met with police

violence and attested, on some level with an understanding of the ‘hoboes’ plight (McCallum, 2005: 88).

Military events across the pacific heated up in World War Two and as a result, another type of encampment was created: the enforced internment camp. Japantown, which ran along Powell St. between Main St. and Heatley St. had been a long established community in the DTES, with the first Japanese settlers residing and running businesses there before the turn of the twentieth century. As mentioned in this discussion earlier, the pre-existing racial tensions paved the way for the implementation of racially motivated policies that displaced all of the Japanese families in the DTES to internment camps with forced forfeiture of all their property and land-holding titles, never to be returned, despite the fact that many of these families were already second generation Canadians (Crabtree and Masuda, 2010: 659).

These historical examples of government created encampments as well as the publicly created encampments (ironically given the bestial term ‘jungles’) are good examples of Lefebvre’s theory that physical space is not an empty or inert entity but rather something that is influenced by ever-changing social interrelationships impacted and affected by politics, race, morality, production, capital, religion, the gendered body, work ethics and symbolic meaning (Lefebvre, 1974: 21, 73).

### *Current contested space in Vancouver’s DTES*

This discussion must drastically leap forward and neglect to address in detail many acts of contestation and conflicts of physical and public space in the DTES of Vancouver. A quick mention must be made about the World’s Exposition of 1986 and the effect it had on low-income residents of the DTES. The single room occupancy (SRO) hotels and rooming houses built mainly before the 1950s for migrant workers and naval men during the second world war had become long term residences for single individuals who could not afford to live in other parts of the city. Some of these individuals also had been stigmatized or evicted from other neighbourhoods due to drug and alcohol dependencies. These SROs were never designed to be long-term housing options for people. They mostly consist of shared bathrooms, many with no cooking facilities, and usually run about 200 square feet in size. Years of long-term residency had taken its toll on most of these buildings and numerous landlords became excited about the notion of evicting their long-term monthly tenants, doing minimal renovations, and cashing in on visitors during EXPO 86. Some residents were displaced during this time but most hotels in the area returned to renting at an on-going monthly basis once EXPO ended.

In 2002 an act of resistance took place around the old Woodward’s building located at Abbott and Hastings St. It had been closed for many years but was seen as a potential site by many DTES residents and community organizations for new social housing to be built, and improve the living conditions of those living in SROs or on the street. The Coalition of Woodward’s Squatters and Supporters wrote an impassioned letter to City Hall when their hand was forced to remove their street encampment that stretched three city blocks around the perimeter of the building. Over 150 people had been squatting on this site for months (Supporters..., 2003: 1). A quote from this letter shows how bleak the squatters felt about their potential for finding housing in 2002:

It is estimated by city reports that the average rent in a one-bedroom apartment in the city is 142% of the monthly income of a person receiving regular welfare benefits. City reports show that while 25% of the population of Vancouver qualifies for social housing by income allowances, only 8% of the housing stock is social housing. Approximately 85 residential hotels are lost to tourist conversion and demolition every

year and there is no social housing being built to replenish this stock of low-income housing. (Supporters..., 2003: 1)

The coalition goes on to state:

Living conditions in the residential hotels in the DTES are terrible. People who can find housing in hotels are almost certainly doomed to harassment and sexual abuse by corrupt landlords, dangerous and filthy living conditions and terrific isolation and depression. SROs further complicate and escalate vulnerable people's mental health concerns and introduce alcohol and drug dependencies that people develop to cope with poverty and inhumane living conditions. City Hall considers SRO tenants to be "transitional homeless" due to the desperate conditions they are forced to endure. You cannot, in good faith, abandon people to this. (Supporters..., 2003: 1)

This letter and the act of production (the production of living), on contested and contradictory space forced the hand of government officials to promise a mixed model of housing be developed at the site and as a result, 125 bachelor units for low-income singles were built and 75 non-market family dwellings were added to the 536 market units that were developed.

This contestation of public space was not just an encampment out of necessity for all those squatting. It was an act of political resistance in contested public space and it coincided with other assurances from the B.C. government to upgrade, purchase and properly staff 10 of the existing SRO buildings located in the DTES. There were other guarantees to build more social housing that the city and the B.C. government would follow through on, partly due to the huge influx of federal funds coming in to clean up the city for the 2010 Olympics hosted in Vancouver.

Those purchased and renovated SRO buildings have now all been filled and the B.C. Housing Supportive Housing Registry (SHR, a form that a homeless individual in the DTES can fill out to wait for an SRO room to come available in one of B.C. housing's supported and staffed hotels) can now take up to a month to be processed and the wait times can be anywhere from 4 months to a year. Trevor Boddy also reports on housing issues in Vancouver. He highlights that the average cost of a home in Vancouver is 11.2 times the city's median household income of \$63,000, which forbids many young families from living or working in the city (Boddy, 2009). Boddy, who is a former architecture critic for the *Vancouver Sun*, believes that the lack of a healthy debate around the use of public space has led to many missed opportunities and is as a result of media concentration ownership. To quote Boddy: "Vancouver has a very mild, polite and ineffectual mainstream media..." "Part of that is because just one company, Postmedia, owns all the major newspapers" (Boddy, 2009). Boddy also suggests a more integrated city-housing model where there is a mix of low-income and wealthy housing in every neighbourhood in the city. There are conflicting studies that despite the deplorable living conditions of many DTES SROs, the residents themselves would not want to leave their community for a place on the west side and do not need 'saving' from their wayward lives in what are viewed as the worst 'slums' in Canada.

Jeffrey Masuda and Alexis Crabtree wrote an article in 2010 entitled, "Environmental Justice in the Therapeutic Inner City". As stated in their article,

Resolving the stubborn growth of health disparities in Canadian cities continues to evade urban planners and public health practitioners as air pollution, toxic hotspots, traffic hazards, low-income housing conditions, and myriad other environmental conditions continue to worsen over time, even when the overall trend is toward improved quality of life for better off urban dwellers. Some commentators have suggested that such problems are no longer simply a result of misinformed urban planning and environmental management policies, but have become symptomatic of an impending social breakdown

exacerbated by a systematic loss of faith in our governing institutions. It is believed that there is a widening gulf between mainstream political priorities and the concerns of the DTES community and its sympathizers. (Masuda and Crabtree, 2010: 656)

Placing this statement in the context of the history of the DTES just given, when applied to Lefebvre and Mattelart's theories on producing space and capitalist agendas, it seems as if the containment, negative representations and demoralizing oppression through religious and political ideologies of the great march forward into neo-capitalist gains, has always been there. To rally against those dominating and forceful powers in acts of resistance through the physical embodiment of the contestation of hierarchized space, supported with mathematical and analytical social physics and the deconstruction of conceptual semiotic messages, has also continued with forceful trajectories. Masuda and Crabtree's statement supports Lefebvre's claim that one or two forms or theories (such as urban planning and environmental management) that relate to the production of space can not effectively account for the mass of conflicting and interrelating factors that inform, influence and produce how space is conceived, lived in and controlled.

Masuda and Crabtree (2010) propose that environmental justice proponents "have increasingly targeted those social and institutional forces that have been found to discriminate against inner city populations, as this literature has evolved toward more systematic analysis and action against the structural determinants of inequity as opposed to a mere distributional conflict" (p. 656). They state that the more critical and culturally contextualized interrogations of the complex dynamics between place and the social determinants that affect the well-being and livelihood of vulnerable populations is not taken as seriously as the more traditional forms of geographies of health (i.e., GIS mapping). If the same is true in other academic and professional fields of research; that more interdisciplinary approaches are not as widely recognized due to their lack of specialization in one discipline, how can Lefebvre's vision of multifaceted considerations in the production of space become effective in creating change?

Why do Vancouver residents and the authorities struggle with the fact that the hundred block of Hastings St. has become a giant communal living room? Most low-income residents of the DTES have to live in 200 square foot rooms that are intolerably cramped, some having restrictions on guests, and poor sanitation and pest control. All of these housing factors foster a sense of community outdoors, but again this contests the notion of the normative roles of public space and authorities continually try to maintain what is deemed as *public order* by removing the visual threats of perceived criminality while holding up policies of human sanitization. Authorities contain public space by giving out fines for loitering and other petty crimes. The DTES of Vancouver also has many beautiful points of contested space that should not threaten the 'moral' fiber of Canadian values. There are numerous 'guerilla' gardens planted in abandoned lots and local residents paint street art on privately and government owned buildings. At some point Vancouverites will have to come to terms with the fact that the so-called 'transient' population of the DTES is not an encampment that can be removed or sanitized, dismantled or reconstructed to coincide with social and cultural norms. The contestation of public space by permanent DTES residents will most likely continue until their housing conditions rise above what the UN-HABITAT defines as 'slums'.

By not becoming dislocated from the world, and all its inherent lack of equality, there can be power to invest in social justice in a way that is meaningful, transformative and, even sometimes, measurable (as in the case of the Woodward's squatters).

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## Security Policies in a Multicultural Area of Milan: Power and Resistance

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**Abstract:** On 13 February 2010, in Via Padova, a multicultural area of Milan, a young Egyptian was stabbed and killed by native of the Dominican Republic. After the murder, several members of the city's North African community exploded in a running street riot. The events were followed by a harsh political debate, leading to two bylaws issued by the Mayor of Milan, which sought to impose severe restrictions on life in the area. Drawing on both a Foucauldian and "Critical Discourse Analysis" approach to discourse analysis, this paper aims to investigate how power relationships struggle to shape the concepts of security, urban decay, immigration and integration and how these discourses, led by the media and the political debate, have been linked to specific urban policies on one side and practices of resistance, on the other. The analysis focuses on the role played by immigration in this context.

**Keywords:** security policies, immigration, Power/Resistance, Italy

### Living in Via Padova

This first chapter sets out to depict the territory covered by my research, an area that has been a crossroads of migrations, melting pots and cultures since the advent of heavy industry in the 1950s. The purpose of this introduction is to present my study's geographical and social context. The first paragraph provides some recent immigration statistics, which were collected in a questionnaire-based research conducted by the "Villa Pallavicini" association. The second paragraph describes the events of 2010, which led to the local bylaws issued by the Milan City Council. The second chapter gives a brief introduction to the methodology used for the analysis of the material, a methodology focused on a critical approach towards "discourse". The third chapter investigates the discursive vicious circle existing between the media, security policies and political statements, focusing on the role played by immigration in this context. Finally, it uses semi-structured interviews to investigate the different perspectives of two social organisations working in Via Padova.

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## *Focus on immigration in Via Padova*

In 2010, the “Villa Pallavicini” association conducted research entitled *Uno sguardo ravvicinato sulla Via Padova* (A focus on Via Padova). The researchers reported that “The research aims to improve knowledge about the area, so as to prepare some concrete proposals that could meet emerging needs and help fight social fragmentation” (Villa Pallavicini association, 2010).

Via Padova is located in Milan’s “Area 2”. It is interesting to note that, while immigrants account for 20.6% of the population in this area as a whole area, the figure increases to 69.1% in the specific triangle enclosed by Via Padova, Via Palmanova and Viale Monza.<sup>2</sup> In particular, the Milan City Council data compiled by the Villa Pallavicini association show that there were 23,500 Italian citizens and 10,182 immigrants in Via Padova. The immigrants were younger, with a mean age of between 20 and 40, while the Italians’ mean was between 20 and 60. In terms of nationalities, the research showed that the biggest single immigrant community was that of the Philippines (20.3%), followed by the Egyptians (12.8%) and the Chinese (9.8%). Another important element was the immigrants’ legal status: 59% of them had a residence permit, which allows them to stay in Italy legally for a given period and has to be renewed, while 38% had no legal document. These statistics provided a fundamental basis for any discourse, study, research or even only partial conclusions, as they provide a yardstick for comparing the language used in political, normative and social discourses against actual reality, enabling the scholar to evaluate whether and to what extent such discourses truly reflect the situation, change it or are neutral – ultimately, how political debates work and what aims are pursued by political and social actors in this process.

## *The Via Padova riots*

On 13 February 2010, a young Egyptian called Abdel Aziz, aged 19, was stabbed and killed at a bus-stop in Via Padova. A witness later testified that members of the Latin American “Chicago” gang had chased Aziz and two other North Africans before the murder. A cousin of Abdel Aziz testified that the fight had started after some South Americans had made rude comments on a bus about Aziz’s Italian girlfriend and that, after getting off the bus, Aziz and his two friends had been chased along several streets in the Via Padova area before being caught. Aziz was then stabbed (*Corriere della Sera* online, 14 February 2010).

Twenty minutes after the murder, anger exploded among Abdel Aziz’ friends and the North African community of Via Padova. Some 100-150 people gathered around the victim’s body and started arguing with the police who had arrived shortly before (*Corriere della Sera* online, 13 February 2010). These demonstrators then triggered a riot in Via Padova and surrounding streets, destroying cars and smashing shops, mostly belonging to Latin Americans. It was some time before calm returned.

As I was not present at the moment the events described occurred, I have tried to report the situation as neutrally as possible. An analysis on how the media depicted the “riots” will follow in the third section.

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<sup>2</sup> Data from Milan City Council (Statistics Office) at 31.12.2008, collected by the Villa Pallavicini association.

## A critical approach to discourse: Foucault and “critical discourse analysis”

The next paragraphs will describe the approaches chosen for analysing the material available. A mixed approach was adopted: the Foucauldian theory on the relationships between discourse, practice and knowledge, and the CDA method (Critical Discourse Analysis). As the following pages will illustrate, the two approaches are not at odds with each other, but the latter can be considered a more politically committed and radical method constructed on a Foucauldian basis.

### *Power, discourse and knowledge*

In the author’s opinion, it would be impossible to achieve a complete understanding of the discursive progression of newspaper articles, political declarations and the normative reaction of municipal bylaws, on the one hand, and the ‘resistance discourse’ adopted by the social organisations working in Via Padova, on the other, without a Foucauldian approach that enables the close relationships between discourses, systems of dominance/resistance and the construction of subjects/knowledge to be clarified.

Michel Foucault’s analysis of power helps conceive of it as more than just a repressive force:

If power had no other function than being repressive, if it did not work without censorship, exclusion, limitation and elimination, [...] if it were only exerted negatively, it would be very fragile. If it is strong, that is because it generates positive effects in terms of desires [...] and in terms of knowledge. Instead of preventing knowledge, power produces it. (Foucault, 2001: 152)

Foucault marks the difference between language and discourse, as he is interested in the rules and practices that regulate discourses in different historical periods: “By discourse, Foucault meant a group of statements which provide a language [...] Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. [...] since all social practices entail meaning, and meanings shape and influence what we do – our conduct – all practices have a discursive aspect” (Hall, 1997: 44).

As in the case of the relationship between power and knowledge, discourses can also be considered to be productive (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 34), in the sense that, far from being purely a linguistic term, they are always connected with practices. What does this mean in practice?

Kendall and Wickham (1999: 43) suggest that understanding the rules of statements in a discourse by following Foucault’s approach entails remembering that discourses involve not only words, but also “things”: “A practice is material and discursive at the same time” (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 42).

An analysis of newspapers, bylaws and political declarations will thus be used to identify how many times and how often certain words are repeated in them, with which adjectives they are paired. An attempt will also be made to show how the discourses on security, safety, immigration and urban decay are strictly connected with a particular normative control practice in Via Padova (cf. Milan Bylaws No. 14 and 15, 2010). Moreover, attention will be

drawn to how different words are constructed as homogeneous concepts and, at the same time, how they create a specific knowledge/truth by means of the specific meanings given them by social actors. Then, echoing Foucault's words – “A principle of exclusion [...] a *partage* and a rejection do exist in our society [...]” (Foucault, 1978: 93)<sup>3</sup> – the study seeks to see how this separation and exclusion is reproduced in the discourse on immigration and urban decay in Via Padova and also, at the same time, how a discursive and practical resistance is practised in the area by the non-institutional associations interviewed.

### *The CDA approach*

“The 1970s saw the emergence of a form of discourse and text analysis that recognised the role of language in structuring power relations in society” (Wodak, 2001: 5). The connection between power relations and language, one of the most important of Foucault's contributions, is also the basis of what has been called Critical Discourse Analysis. This approach sees language as a social phenomenon where individuals, institutions and social groupings “have specific meanings and values, that are expressed in language in systematic ways” (Kress, 1989, cited in Wodak, 2001: 6). If we consider discourses as ways of reproducing ideology and asymmetrical social power relations, the final outcome is a system of domination reproduced in the discourse itself. “In claiming that a discursive event works ideologically, one is not in the first instance claiming that it is false, or claiming a privileged position from which judgements of truth or falsity can be made. One is claiming that it contributes to the reproduction of relations of power” (Fairclough, 1995: 18).

As Van Dijk (2001: 303) explains: “Power and dominance are usually organised and institutionalised. The social dominance of groups is thus not merely enacted, individually, by its group members [...] it may also be supported or condoned by other group members, sanctioned by the courts, legitimated by laws, enforced by the police, and ideologically sustained and reproduced by the media or textbooks”.

This type of dominant discourse also produces effects of counter-power, different discursive strategies and resistance practices. As Richardson underlines (2007: 2) “Such an approach inevitably means that CDA takes an overt moral and political position to the social problem analysed”.

With regard to texts, the first fundamental priority is to identify their salient characteristics, as well as the ones that might have been there but are not. The presence or the absence of an element/fact/adjective... is “the result of a choice” (Richardson, 2007: 38). As Van Dijk says (Van Dijk, 1999, cited in Richardson, 2007: 39): “Discourse should be analysed at various levels [...] each of these may be involved directly or indirectly in discriminatory interaction or biased discourse against disempowered individuals and groups”.

The second strategy provided by CDA is the analysis of the discursive practices, i.e. the way in which the receiver of the message/the consumer/the reader decodes and constructs his/her own belief or version of the facts described. The aim was to identify and disentangle the different meanings that the interviewees gave to the concepts used in the context of the

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<sup>3</sup> My translation.

institutional and political discourse, as well as the opinions they expressed about such discourses and practices.

## Power, inequality and dominance in the events in Via Padova

In this chapter, an attempt will first be made to apply the Foucauldian and CDA analysis to the media reaction to the murder and to the turmoil that took place, as well as to the use made of language by journalists. Secondly, the same approach will then be used to analyse the two most relevant bylaws issued by the Milan City Council as its normative response. Finally, in the same manner, the political discourse emerging from the statements made by the more representative political actors will be analysed, paying attention to whether and how the questions of separation, exclusion and bias are present and evident in the media-policy circuit.

Light will be thrown on the values underpinning these measures by analysing the discourse used by the newspapers, in the text of the bylaws and by leading politicians in the Milan city council. Newspapers were chosen from all the media as the focus for this analysis for two main reasons: firstly, newspapers' archives are more broadly available than TV news; secondly, this approach aims to avoid the risk of overstressing the research by including too wide a spectrum of media discourses and maybe overlooking other kinds of discourse, such as normative, political and social, which in fact lay at the heart of this study.

### *The discourse of newspapers*

“Journalistic discourse, in particular, is one active element in bringing [...] change through shaping understandings, influencing audience attitudes and beliefs [...] and transforming the consciousness of those who read and consume it” (Richardson, 2007: 29). The following analysis is therefore based on a comparison between three leading Italian newspapers: *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Repubblica* and *Il Giornale*, chosen for their importance and because they express different political sympathies.

a) *Il Corriere della Sera*. It is interesting to note that this newspaper, which has always been the voice of the Italian establishment, immediately referred to the nationalities of the people involved, mentioning them 13 times in the first article (*Corriere della Sera* online, 14 February 2010) and 16 times in the second article (“Latinos”, “Arabs”, “North Africans”, “Ivoriens”) (*Corriere della Sera* online, 13 February 2010), specifying that the victim's girlfriend was Italian. Moreover, it mentioned “urban guerrilla warfare” and started the first article by writing: “groups of *North Africans* destroyed cars and shops owned by *South Americans*”, “Saturday night brought *interethnic revolt* to Milan's Via Padova, one of the local “*casbahs*”, as the *North African community* rioted and launched attacks”.

The system of *partage* identified by Foucault in his works as a particular system of exclusion and separation surfaces in these articles. The actors involved are identified as groups *exclusively characterised by their ethnicity*: the North Africans on one side and the South Americans on the other. The article mentions the victim's Italian girlfriend as an outside element in this context. Moreover, it defines the area as “one of the local *casbahs*”: here the term used refers clearly to the district's supposed Arab character. The ironic tone used shows a clearly biased attitude, generating specific knowledge about what can be considered as “the other” Hall (2001).

b) *La Repubblica*. In its turn, *La Repubblica* (13 February 2010) the most influential voice of Italy's intellectual centre-left, described the murder as “the product of a *racial* fight in a Milan suburb with a *high rate of immigration*” and says “a young man *from Egypt* was

murdered in the *area with the highest density of foreigners* and Milan was subjected to a night of *interethnic* revolt. After the homicide, the *North African community* launched a real urban guerrilla war, hunting down *South Americans* [...], overturning cars and mopeds and smashing shop windows, as groups of 20-30 *Africans* searched for *Peruvians* and *Ecuadorians*".

The nationalities of the people involved were mentioned 10 times in this report: the collective terms already used in the articles in *Il Corriere della Sera* as a strategy to identify people on the basis of their ethnic backgrounds were once again at the heart of the article. The use of the term "hunting down" in itself recalls a relationship between a human and an animal. A hyperbole – predicted in a point made by Van Dijk (1991) – was also used whereby ethnic minorities involved in the disturbances were described as not provoking "riots" but "guerrilla war".

c) *Il Giornale*. The headline carried by this newspaper, the voice of Italy's centre-right government and the personal voice of its leader, was "Guerrilla warfare between immigrants, Milan in flames" (Silvestri, *Il Giornale*, 14 February 2010). Once again, the protagonists' non-Italian identity was underlined, while hyperbole was again in evidence in the use of the term "guerrilla warfare". Moreover, when describing the Via Padova area, the reporter wrote: "The transformation began in the 1990s [...] the presence of immigrants, mainly Africans and South Americans, increased. Social conditions faltered and the few Italians left are always witnessing fights and drug-dealing". The equivalence between crime and immigration is explicit and the mechanism of separation between the Italians ("us") and the immigrants ("them") is marked. Furthermore, the reporter was even more explicit in her conclusions: "Clandestine immigration plays a fundamental role. Whenever we hear talk of 'opening doors to everyone', we should take such consequences into account".

### *Some remarks*

Despite the fact they belong to different owners and have different political sympathies, the message conveyed by these newspapers is an evident focus on the non-European nationality of the people involved in the battle of Via Padova. In addition to those directly involved, journalists also described the entire neighbourhood on the basis of its interethnic character. The Italians themselves were described mostly as insiders/outsideers of the process, as in the case of the victim's Italian girlfriend.

How is it possible that the racial element is so strong in the media discourse? The Italian sociologist Alessandro Dal Lago (2008) has analysed how the circuit among common sense, media generalisations and political initiatives always "builds and re-builds the foreigner as an enemy" (2008: 71). Moreover: "immigration is not only a problem or a specific sociological topic, but a wonderful catalytic of material and symbolic conflicts, of national and local rhetoric and communication campaigns". Again, as he says: "The birth of the mass media has offered new strategies to professional politicians: they have discovered that they can conquer the citizens' consent by making them think that their point of view is adopted by politicians" (2008: 50).

## *The normative response to the riots: The Milan bylaws*

Almost one month after the events described,<sup>4</sup> the then-Mayor of Milan, Letizia Moratti, issued municipal Bylaws N° 14/2010 and N° 15/2010, introducing a new series of security measures for the area of Via Padova and neighbouring streets.

The first Bylaw is entitled “Measures aimed at preventing and fighting urban decay and protecting urban security and public safety in the area of Padova-Trotter”.<sup>5</sup> Referring to its title, the bylaw states that “since urban decay in the area [...] and the danger for public safety is concrete and real, [...] it is important to fight situations of decay that encourage criminal phenomena such as drug trafficking, gatherings, fights and damage as in the recent events [...] brought to the attention of the main mass media and a reason of social alarm among the population [...]”.

Milan’s local government acknowledged that part of the problem derived from the housing system in the area, which had run out of control: “This situation derives in part from the phenomenon of illegal letting in the area, which causes overcrowding and the illegal presence of people [...]”. These situations are against “public decency [...] and peaceful common life”.

The measures provided by this first bylaw to control the housing process are the duty for all landlords to declare the number of people living there and to supply a copy of the contract to the local authority. The fine for infringement was set at €450.

One of the aims of this bylaw was to cater for the need to establish control over the housing market in an area where one room capable of accommodating two people is frequently shared by as many as six: this is the case of the many immigrants who live in old, very run-down buildings (53.7% of the immigrants who answered the above-mentioned questionnaire) (Villa Pallavicini association, 2010) “Illegal letting is more frequent in areas with housing that is severely run-down or in breach of the housing regulations: in such cases, the landlords’ desire to make a profit coincides with the low level of requirements and financial potential of the majority of immigrants, especially those who only arrived recently and plan to go back home. These people are more interested in saving money to send home than in improving their living conditions” (Menonna, 2009, cited in Villa Pallavicini association, 2010: 136). Other data<sup>6</sup> also show that the average number of immigrants per room in the whole region of Lombardy (whose capital city is Milan) varies with their kind of accommodation: owner-occupied apartment (1.2 people), living with relatives/alone with a contract (1.3 people), living with relatives/alone without a contract (1.5 people), living with other immigrants with a contract (1.6 people) or without contract (1.8 people), squatting (2.6 people), makeshift accommodation (3.1 people).

The bylaw reflects this duality in that, while on the one hand, as already said, it claims to counteract urban decay and also to support the right to safe housing and legal rents, it is at the same time evident that any illegal immigrant detected in the contract declaration will suffer the consequences of the Italian immigration laws (deportation to his/her home country or

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<sup>4</sup> 18 March 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Municipal Bylaw N° 14/2010.

<sup>6</sup> ISMU-ORIM, *L’immigrazione straniera in Lombardia – ottava indagine regionale – Rapporto 2008*, Region of Lombardy, Milan 2009, N° 2, p. 134.

imprisonment in the detention centre in via Corelli)<sup>7</sup>. Any such declaration will therefore have mainly negative consequences for the immigrant, who will always be the final victim. It is interesting to analyse how the language employed in the bylaw uses such expressions as “urban decay”, “danger for public safety is concrete and real” and “public decency”. The role of the mass media is so important that it is mentioned clearly in the text of the bylaw: “Events [...] attracting the attention of the main mass media” that are “causes of social alarm in the population”. As the next chapter will clarify, the first bylaw’s dual character left it less open to criticism from some of the organisations approached for the interviews, which acknowledged its not exclusively repressive character.

The second bylaw, N° 15/2010, is the one that has come in for most criticism, earning the epithet of the “*ordinanza coprifuoco*” (curfew bylaw)<sup>8</sup>, since it set special closing times for various commercial services in Via Padova, obliging them to close their doors earlier than in the rest of Milan. The bylaw deals with “measures regarding economic activities for the purpose of preventing and contrasting urban decay, as well as protecting urban security and public safety in the area known as Padova-Trotter”.<sup>9</sup> The remarks about language made with regard to the first bylaw can be repeated here: such terms as “urban decay”, “urban security” and “public safety” occupy centre stage in the message. The situation was now described as “problematic”, since “the high number of economic activities present in the area [...] attracts numerous clients who linger to drink or eat until late in the night and who cause damage and noise in the area with behaviour of this kind”<sup>10</sup>.

These are the consequences of late opening times, according to the Mayor:

- “Episodes of violence, some of them very serious, such as the recent ones that caused high social alarm” are the effect of heavy consumption of alcoholic drinks;
- the tranquillity of residents is disturbed;
- a spread of antisocial behaviour that breaks the rules of civil cohabitation;
- infringement of the rules governing correct refuse collection.

Expressions such as “antisocial behaviour” and “the rules of civil cohabitation” are vague. Such ambiguity/inaccuracy and vague, polysemic expressions do nothing to help create a clear idea of how serious the situation in Via Padova really is, if it is assumed that the area is pervaded by serious criminal and social problems, as the local government appears to do.

The “curfew” applies to retail shops, bars, discos and night clubs, hairdressers and beauty salons, food shops, pizza restaurants, kebabs and takeaways, “massage” centres and phone centres. Moreover, no drink may be sold in glass bottles and all itinerant selling is prohibited.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> According to Art. 12 of the Turco-Napolitano Act, the purpose of the CIE (Identification and Expulsion Centres) is to host foreigners “subject to an expulsion order with potential accompaniment to the border”.

<sup>8</sup> Used by leading newspapers and Internet blogs.

<sup>9</sup> Municipal Bylaw N° 15/2010, dated 18 March 2010.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Municipal Bylaw N° 15/2010 p. 4.

The curfew was imposed “with due consideration for the different nature of the economic activities involved”, while the Mayor considered that “the measures help fight the phenomena and help the police to patrol the area effectively”. The fine for infringement was set at up to €450.<sup>12</sup>

Statistics gathered by the Milan Chamber of Commerce’s Lab Mim<sup>13</sup> indicate that, although Municipal Bylaw N° 15 does not focus explicitly on immigrants, they are the ones who will feel its impact most. According to these data, business enterprises owned by non-Europeans increased by 13.2% in just one year in Milan as a whole;<sup>14</sup> in 2011, Italian-owned businesses were in a minority in seventy-six streets in Milan. The number of these “ethnic” streets has almost doubled in two years.<sup>15</sup> Via Padova ranks first among these streets, with 336 business enterprises (2.4% of the total) accounting for 59% of the total individual business in the street. At 33% of all businesses owned by non-Europeans in Via Padova, the lion’s share of these belongs to Egyptians, followed by Chinese with 20%.

### *The political reaction*

This paragraph will analyse how leading figures on the Milan’s political scene reacted to the events in Via Padova and backed the municipal bylaws. Many online and printed newspapers reported these politicians’ statements after the turmoil in Via Padova and the municipal bylaws that followed one month later.

The then-Mayor of Milan, Letizia Moratti, adopted a clear approach in her statements about the events and the subsequent bylaws. She immediately adopted a purely repressive attitude: “I have called Prime Minister Berlusconi personally to urge him to go ahead with what we had already agreed upon, i.e. a marked increase in the police in Milan. And Maroni<sup>16</sup> has guaranteed that the first contingent will arrive in the next few days”(IGN ADNkronos, 15 February 2010). The first response to the situation in the area was the arrival of an extraordinary influx of police to patrol the area (*Informazione.it*, 15 February 2010), while the bylaws followed one month later. Moreover, the mayor stated that “immigrants without legal identity documents who come here and do not have a job usually commit crimes”, then stressed: “As we have seen in Via Padova, eight crimes out of ten are committed by immigrants and specifically by clandestine immigrants. We call for the power to expel also those illegal immigrants whose judicial proceedings are still under way, since as things stand now they cannot be expelled until the proceedings have been completed”(TG24/SkyTV, 11 May 2010). As these statements referred directly to the events in Via Padova, she constructed a link between the turmoil and the problem of immigration, creating a dangerous parallel between immigrants without legal identity documents and criminals, drawing a distinction between legal and illegal immigrants based on the latter’s purported tendency to commit crimes. Letizia Moratti then also stated that “The Milan City Council is involved in a policy of integration, solidarity and help for those immigrants who have decided to live in our country legally”(TG24/SkyTV, 11 May 2010). What this means is that the then-mayor only

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Available at <http://www.migrantitorino.it/?>, p. 16661.

<sup>14</sup> Shopkeepers from Egypt, 24%; from China, 20%; and from Morocco, 7%.

<sup>15</sup> They were 32 streets in 2009 (+138%) and 51 in 2010 (+49%).

<sup>16</sup> Roberto Maroni, the Italian Minister of Internal Affairs.



conceived of solutions of a kind that focus more on social aid than on law and order measures for legally resident immigrants.

Discussing the bylaws, the then-Deputy Mayor of Milan, Riccardo De Corato, said: “Our aim is to improve the *quality of life* in the boroughs and to restore *legality*”.<sup>17</sup> He thus also linked legality and the quality of life closely to urban control policies, construing the notion of legality as something directly connected to the curfew imposed on all the commercial businesses in Via Padova. This still implicit focus on immigration came across more clearly from De Corato’s statements to the press in “Violence in Milan speaks a foreign language”:

Suffice to say that 1745 crimes have been committed since the beginning of the year, mostly by *non-Europeans*, causing social alarm. The ‘recipes’ for the Via Padova area proposed time ago by the left wing and by those who espouse so-called ‘solidarity’ are ultimately like sand castles [...]: it is an illusion<sup>18</sup> to believe that less control and more solidarity can magically solve *the problems brought about by such incredible immigration*. Without the police and the bylaws [...] the situation would be out of control. (*Affariitaliani.it*, 23 August 2010)

Moreover, he notes:

I think that the best description of the situation in Via Padova is Far West between *gangs of North Africans and South Americans*. But *the price is paid by the inhabitants of Milan*: smashed cars and shops, dozens of policemen working for almost two hours [...] This murder shows that *when the rate of immigration is too high it is difficult to govern*. (*Corriere della Sera* online, 13 February 2010)

## Conclusion

These statements illustrate how the Via Padova riots were discussed in the broader framework of the problem of immigration. The equivalence drawn between immigration and delinquency is explicit and evident. Discrimination and bias were not hidden, as the political discourse showed its most repressive face. Moreover, the Foucauldian mechanism of partage is self-evident: on the one hand there are the immigrants who commit crimes, act with violence and fight, whereas on the other there are the citizens of Milan who “pay the price” for this situation: immigrants were not treated as inhabitants of Via Padova on a par with the Italians, but as a world apart that “shows no respect for Milan and Lombardy” (*Affariitaliani.it*, 23 August 2010). In this sense, Via Padova, as an area “at risk”, was at the focus of a political debate about immigration and the bylaws were treated as a normative tool for security and urban control. As Kelling and Wilson wrote while theorising “Zero Tolerance” (1982: 1-2), “we tend to overlook or forget another source of fear – the fear of being bothered by disorderly people. Not violent people, nor, necessarily, criminals, but disreputable or obstreperous or unpredictable people: panhandlers, drunks, addicts, rowdy teenagers, prostitutes, loiterers, the mentally disturbed.”

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<sup>17</sup> Milan City Council website:

[http://www.comune.milano.it/portale/wps/portal/CDM?WCM\\_GLOBAL\\_CONTEXT=/wps/wcm/connect/contentlibrary/Giornale/Giornale/Tutte+le+notizie/Sindaco/SINDACO\\_via+padova\\_+da+1+1+1\\_5+km&sizeStyle=defaultSize&colorStyle=defaultColor](http://www.comune.milano.it/portale/wps/portal/CDM?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/wps/wcm/connect/contentlibrary/Giornale/Giornale/Tutte+le+notizie/Sindaco/SINDACO_via+padova_+da+1+1+1_5+km&sizeStyle=defaultSize&colorStyle=defaultColor)

<sup>18</sup> He was referring to the policies he supposed would be espoused by left wing political opposition.

As Rossella Selmini (2011: 163) has pointed out,

The development of security policies, as we currently understand them, is a recent phenomenon in Italy. [...] the keyword in this new vocabulary is, paradoxically, an old one in the Italian context i.e. the term ‘security’ (sicurezza), although it is now used without its traditional adjective of ‘public’ (pubblica)[...]. Since it was separated from its usual adjective of ‘public’ (which has immediate connotations of the criminal justice apparatus) and placed in the political arena, ‘security’ has become an all-inclusive term, whose content is defined from time to time, according to the different interests of the actors involved.

In conclusion, as a product of the ideology and values of the actors involved, the term ‘security’ is clearly both discursive and practical, a basis for policies and for political claims. The next chapter will offer a series of different perspectives, in which security and legality are not linked to immigration control.

### Marking the difference: Building social perspectives of security

This fourth chapter will focus on investigating the role played by two social organisations working in Via Padova, in order to identify their activities, how they relate to the area and the immigrants who live there, how they evaluate political statements and municipal bylaws and, finally, what meaning they attribute to the concepts of ‘security’ and ‘integration’.

#### *The work and approach of the “Ambulatorio Popolare”*

The “Ambulatorio Popolare” (People’s Surgery) is a cost-free health clinic established in 1994 by a heterogeneous group of people which came from a variety of different progressive political backgrounds to fight for the right to public health. At that time, the immigrants had no guaranteed access to public health.<sup>19</sup>

When the members of “Ambulatorio Popolare” were asked what they think of the political statements that followed the March 2010 events, their answer was clear: “Words are like cultural borders: when you say a word, you enter into a well-defined space [...] it is only by virtue of an ‘Orwellian strategy’ that the concept of security can be reduced to what *these people* say”.

They perceive of discourses and concepts as empty spaces whose contents are defined by the actors involved. Furthermore, the use of such terms as “*these people*”, when discussing members of the Milan City Council, draws a clear distinction between the institutions and this social organisation. Referring again to political statements about Via Padova, the clinic’s doctor said: “This is a political use of racism: they create this ‘social alarm’ as a way of sidestepping real problems”. One example of such ‘real problems’ is “the incredible rate of people who die in accidents at work, mainly immigrants who work *without any security*”. Here, the organisation defines the concept of security as a broader notion that also includes issues “that these people [again referring to the Milan City Council] prefer to ignore: safety at work, the security of having an income and the right to health”. The members of the “Ambulatorio Popolare” are definitely critical of the municipal bylaws: “If *these people* keep on saying that immigrants are all criminals, why do they care about their housing conditions

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<sup>19</sup> Martelli Act, N° 39, 28 February 1990.

(Bylaw N° 14)? Political mystification is obviously at work between the politically correct discourse in the first bylaw and the repressive approach of the second”. Moreover: “Now, since the ‘curfew’ ordinance, Via Padova is empty at night, there is nobody. [...] to me, security means a city full of life with people around, bars and shops open. [...] with their statements, they are fuelling racial hatred”.

The conflict between this notion of security and the meaning given to the word in the bylaws and political statements is drastic. When asked about the meaning of ‘integration’, the Association said it sees it as a word that can be understood in two basically different ways: as synonymous with ‘conformity’, or as the need for an immigrant to share the living conditions of Italian citizens, the latter being the only notion that the “Ambulatorio Popolare” accepts.

Also when asked about Via Padova’s supposed ‘urban decay’, the answer was:

Firstly, Via Padova is not a suburban area as they [the City Council, Ed.] have said. We are very close to the city centre and we think that they have let things go badly, because they want to transform this territory. [...] if they keep saying that this is a dangerous area, people will start selling their houses at low prices and speculators will buy them up and start a ‘gentrification’ process. [...] Via Padova is an area where a problem has been *constructed*: you find the same problems in many other areas of Milan. [...] what we need are investments in schools and social centres, not the police, the army or bylaws and racism.

In conclusion, Milan’s political institutions and the “Ambulatorio Popolare” agree on one thing: the solution should be found at the political level. From the local government’s viewpoint, as we have seen, the problem is that there are too many immigrants, so more restrictive laws on immigration should be enacted, while the “Ambulatorio Popolare” says that “if the problem is immigration, let’s give all the immigrants a legal residence permit (*permesso di soggiorno*), then they will be the first to come out and claim safe housing and boroughs; [...] for the time being, immigrants have no chance to enter Italy and stay here legally, because of the Italian immigration policy”.

### *The “Casa del Sole-Amici del Parco Trotter” Association*

The Trotter Park is located in the middle of Via Padova, not far from the place where Abdel Aziz was murdered. The “Casa del Sole-Amici del Parco Trotter” association was established and started working in 1995.

This association runs a number of activities involving children, education and integration. In the words of Alberto Proietti, an important member of the association and father of two children who attend the school: “We assume that a lot of children in the school are not Italian. [...] this school is not separate from its context: the spaces influence each other”.

The question of immigration is thus central to the association’s discourse, although it is not perceived in problematic terms, but as an enriching element. In this context, school and education are “a social structure [...] where all are equal, there is no racism and the possibility to share daily life experiences and difficulties is concrete and real”.

It has already been mentioned that both the media and Milan’s political institutions have described Via Padova as an example of ‘urban decay’ or as an area in need. But Alberto says:

What I like about Via Padova is that it is multicultural [...], there is no decay and there are no problems in everyday life. [...] Via Padova is not a ghetto, because there are a lot of different ethnic groups: there is no single community that prevails over the others and there is no racism when we all need each other and live concretely in this area. [...] *they* cannot talk of decay when *they* have been in office for fifteen years and have completely abandoned the area; [...] *we* as associations have been the only ones working for the district’s cultural and social development for all these years.

Once again, as in the discourse adopted by the “Ambulatorio Popolare”, ‘security’ is redefined as a term but disconnected from a discourse on immigration control. Talking about the municipal bylaws, Alberto says:

When the only answer given by the institutions is to send the police and the army into the area [referring to the bylaws, Ed.], it means that they have not been building any project in the area”. Moreover, “security is based on social relationships, building these relationships during daily living together in the place we live in: if the streets belong to everyone, then everyone participates, because we all care [...] when the streets are empty, like after the 'curfew' bylaw. I am scared.

Once again, the association does not have a high opinion of the discourse and definitions of security and legality promoted by the Milan City Council. On the one hand, it acknowledges that the situation is challenging, but this is seen as a responsibility of the political institutions that have abandoned the area and then only answered with “militarisation and racist discourses about immigration, used for political purposes: fuel has been cast on the fire of Via Padova’s problems to hide their ineptitude in dealing positively with the area”.

### *Conclusion*

In both approaches analysed here, there are discursive and practical power relationships at work in the Via Padova area. On the one hand, the political institutions mentioned by the social organisations are seen as something negative and alien to the area (“*they*”, “*these people*”...), while on the other, instead of reproducing the institutional discourse, the organisations propose new meanings for the same terms used by the Milan City Council. Although the two mentioned organisations differ in terms of activities, legal status, political attitude and their chosen focus (respectively on health and on education), both consider the political institutions’ discourse about immigration to be biased and a tool for achieving political interests. The “resistance” proposed by these organisations is evident, both in their activities and in their discourses. In this sense, the concept of security is deprived of its character of control and is construed as a development of social relationships in everyday life in the area, the bylaws are seen to be a cause of the militarisation of the streets and the fact that they are now empty of people, while the political institutions that issued the bylaws are looked at as the opposition in a struggle. Moreover, integration is considered sceptically to be a powerful discursive tool whose purpose is to oblige immigrants to assimilate into Italian national culture.

### **General conclusions**

The study described here set out to explore the power relationships reflected in the discourses that followed the riots in Via Padova in 2010 and how they were connected to specific security policies practised in the area. Drawing on Michel Foucault's analysis of discourse and the CDA approach, the focus was placed on both the “dominant” discourse practised by the Milanese institutions and newspapers and the discursive and practical “resistance” practised by two social organisations.

In the first chapter, a brief description was provided of the social and ethnic structure of Via Padova: the aim was to draw a picture of the real situation in which the municipal bylaws were implemented and of the political and social debate that took place, so as to understand context where these processes were applied. In the second chapter, an explanation was given of the approach used to analyse newspaper articles, political statements, official policies and

the discourse of social organisations. A mixed Foucauldian-CDA approach was adopted to focus on the power relationships shaping practices and discourses, in order not only to underline the discriminatory and repressive uses of language (the CDA approach), but also to shed light on the counter-resisting powers that act in different ways to shape concepts and strategies in the area.

The third chapter provided an analysis of newspaper articles, bylaws and political statements, so as to test the role played by immigration and the discriminatory uses of language that followed. Specific meanings were shaped for the terms “security”, “immigration”, “urban decay” and “integration” in this process: their ambiguity and critical aspects were underlined.

Discursive strategies do not only come “from the top”, however, but are continuously transformed and re-designed by “resistant” forces that provide different perspectives of the same concepts. That is why the last chapter of this research focuses on the meanings and the values underpinning the social organisations' discourses.

In the Via Padova area, different groups make different uses of discourse and practices as symbols of the values they accept: power relationships are subjected to a continuous struggle. Moreover, immigration is conceived of as a practical and symbolic tool, both for the construction of specific knowledge and truth about the concepts of security/insecurity and as a basis for specific control policies.

This study does not consider any element of these discourses to be determinant *per se*, but treats each one as an attempt to prove the circular character to be found between policies and discursive strategies. Notwithstanding its limits, it is hoped that this research could make a fruitful contribution to the analysis of security policies implied in different metropolitan contexts and of the role that immigration plays in these normative decisions. If discourse is crucial in building and shaping power relationships, a struggle to change its structure in a critical way is needed.

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## Taking Up Space in the Vacant City: The Politics of Inclusion in Philadelphia

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**Abstract:** Urban social movements have long struggled with creating successful strategies for establishing rights to the city. Central to this project, though, is our uncommonly held definition of success: At what time and in what place have we actually taken back the city? What new strategies are used to enact these urban interventions? Philadelphia's Campaign to Take Back Vacant Land is already navigating the uneasy terrain of urban inclusion through working to establish a municipal land bank with the power to distribute many of the city's 40,000 vacant parcels to neighborhood run community land trusts (CLTs). The Campaign's strategy is two-fold: create a burgeoning network of CLTs in Philadelphia and include itself in urban governance structures through a proposed municipal land bank. The movement employs this "two-track" strategy to build an alternative economy of land tenure and push its inclusion into the decision-making practices that define the frontiers of urban development. My aim is to collaboratively trace and theorize the processes that make and un-make this "two-track" urban intervention. Mapping the assemblage of things that constitute the movement provides necessary insight into the blockages and flows that create or constrain an urban politics beyond the right to the city.

**Keywords:** right to the city, vacant land, community land trust, urban politics, politics of inclusion

### Enunciating a "two-track" urban strategy

Urban politics is at an impasse. Social movements in cities have long struggled with a crisis of urban representation. Social movements develop out of a lack of representation in municipal governance, urban employment, or even the material infrastructure of the city. The subway doesn't stop in this neighborhood, these new homes weren't built for me, diesel trucks clog traffic congestion on our small streets, there are no jobs for the old factory workers' children: it is as if the city was designed for someone else. Highway development is a regular anchor in the narratives of failures of urban representation. Mid-century urban governments in the United States laid sprawling infrastructures of automotive transport regardless of the social cost for many urban neighborhoods. Residents were relocated, homes were demolished, and thousands of pounds of hulking concrete highway crashed straight

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through life in the city. All in an effort to build a life *outside* the city, a detached suburban space that demands connections to an urban center.

Jane Jacobs' opposition to Robert Moses stands strong in the inspirational archives of the progressive planner, and her legacy has been parsed out into many circuits of planning influence. Eyes on the street, new urbanism, walkable neighborhoods, participatory planning, civil society, local economic development: Jane Jacobs' voice can still be heard in the spaces of North American urban planning. Representation and participation, when included in the programmatic mission of municipal planning agencies, bears the legacy of Jacobs' inclusionary politics. Jacobs has been swallowed piecemeal into American planning, incorporated more or less into much of the everyday practice of planning the city.

At the same time, others are still working at the urban margins. Right to the City movements are making general demands on the inequalities of urban areas. David Harvey (2012) has suggested this urban politics is a general demand for marginalized movements to make claims on the City. Akin to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's "empty signifier" (1987), the right to the city is the politics of urban heterotopia, a diverse politics never fully pinned down to a singular social movement. If Jacobs' urban strategies have become commonplace, the Right to the City is trying to make visible the multiple people and places of the city still excluded from the urban common. Transportation access inequity, uneven environmental burdens, the lack of affordable housing, participation in urban development: there are many claims to urban life wrapped up in establishing new rights and new representations of the city.

The urban impasse is the inability to find success in re-building urban lives. At what point – despite the many gestures towards a different urbanism – have social movements actually taken back the city? When and where have we actually arrived at equal representation? When does success not look like co-optation? What does it look like to build a politics out of our immanent matters of concern (Latour, 2005)? Thinking the end of politics pushes success away from the here and now, away from the real effects that social movements have on urban life, away from the everyday strategies of making it work in the city. This does not require throwing away a representational politics of rights, but instead experimenting with the different terrain of urban inclusion (Roy, 2009).

Philadelphia's Campaign to Take Back Vacant Land is already navigating the uneasy terrain of urban inclusion through working to establish a municipal land bank with the power to distribute many of the city's 40,000 vacant parcels to neighborhood run community land trusts (CLTs). The Campaign's strategy is two-fold: create a network of CLTs in Philadelphia, and include itself in urban governance structures through the municipal land bank. This inclusionary strategy sits at the margins of urban politics and administration. This is not solely inclusion as representation, a political project that demands marginalized voices be heard in the planning process. The end of this political organizing is not incorporation. The movement will not be swallowed whole into the existing infrastructure of vacant land redevelopment by holding back or redirecting redevelopment. Instead, the movement is a dual politics of developing an alternative infrastructure of land tenure and vacant land disposition, with varying degrees of inclusion in both private redevelopment and municipal administration.

Drawing on interviews with Campaign organizers and participation in various events, actions, meetings, and workshops, I suggest that the movement is working to define their own inclusionary strategy through at least two distinct tactics. This inclusionary strategy is comprised of both developing a community land trust and organizing a city-wide coalition aimed at creating a municipal land bank. Within this strategy, then, the movement employs

two distinct tactics: (1) using the City of Philadelphia’s rhetoric of fiscal responsibility to advocate for their two proposed organizations, and (2) actually building a new organizational structure – the CLT – in the material space of the city.

In my conversations with Jessica, one of the movement’s organizers, she described their strategy as a “two-track” project, referring to building the land trust on the one hand and advocating for creating a municipal land bank on the other. The movement employs this “two-track” strategy to build an alternative economy of land tenure and push its inclusion into the decision making practices that define the frontiers of urban development. The land trust stands separate from the grass-roots organizing of the Campaign, but it is the burgeoning institutional ground for making a new urban politics in the city. Aiming at both municipal representation and actually developing space in the city, the movement sits at the margins of both politics and development. The various interlocutors, activists, vacant lots, meetings, actions, abandoned buildings, workshops, and land trusts in Philadelphia are making an urban strategy of inclusion grounded in the material space of the city, the rhetoric of municipal politics, and the maintenance of land-tenure difference.

## Managing inclusion through difference

### *Defining the land trust*

On a cool, humid April evening in Philadelphia the Campaign to Take Back Vacant Land held one of its many educational workshops on community land trusts. Buried deep in a maze of elevators, back hallways, and large push-handle doors inside a downtown office building in central Philadelphia, the meeting started shortly after 7:00, allowing enough time for everyone to grab a couple plain slices and a soft-drink. The conversations hummed along smoothly until the workshop facilitator, Jennifer, announced that the meeting would be beginning shortly. As the last murmurings of conversation faded away, Jessica promptly welcomed everyone, scrawling out the proposed minutes for the evening out on a large note-pad at the front of the room. Introductions, a video screening, a group discussion of the land trust model and how it might work in Philadelphia, questions from workshop participants: the evening was aimed at familiarizing everyone in the room with the idea of a community land trust.

The Campaign had been working in the city only for a couple of years, tirelessly pulling more and more supporting organizations from the Philadelphia area on board. Unions, disability advocacy organizations, community development corporations, low-income housing associations, neighborhood organizations, civic associations: the Campaign had certainly assembled a diverse cast of organizations to address the city-wide issue of vacant land. Already on the Municipal government’s radar, abandoned buildings and vacant land have plagued the revenue-starved government with a continuous drain on municipal resources, a regular front page issue in a city working to re-establish its footing in the wake of industrial decline. Abandoned factories often catch fire in the old industrial neighborhoods, and the flat remnants of previous demolition programs litter the entire landscape of the city, a difficult emotional hurdle for residents working to rebuild the physical infrastructure of their neighborhoods.

Municipal finance and abandoned landscapes, however, are not the topic of conversation for the evening. Instead, the workshop is aimed at elaborating a common understanding of the land trust as a housing model and its connection to the vacant land problem in Philadelphia. The room is full of committed activists, neighborhood organizers, and long-term residents frustrated and familiar with the persistence of urban landscape decay, but who are only

beginning their relationship with a land trust. It is an unfamiliar model, an alternative form of housing tenure that has been slowly emerging in the United States since the early 1970s and one that, in terms of sheer practice and familiarity, pales in comparison to the expansive practice of debt-financed market-rate home ownership. A well-known community land trust advocate, John, is on hand to work through the model with workshop participants.

He begins by asking our large room of participants what they already know about the land trust as a model. An older woman in the audience, a north Philadelphia resident and long-time activist, promptly raises her hand exclaiming that, “the land trust means *we* control the land.” John emphatically agrees, moving on to the next raised hand in the audience. “The land trust keeps housing affordable forever,” another participant suggests, “and it can’t be resold at market value. The land trust decides what the resale value is.” Again, John concurs, and moves along through the sea of hands, pushing participants to think about different aspects of the land trust model, until the group elaborated a clear picture of the organizational structure of a land trust.

The CLT re-thinks two important parts of urban land-use development: (1) shifting the locus of decision-making power over land to a community run board of directors, and (2) preventing speculative investment and securing affordable housing by limiting the resale value on structures located on the CLT. While this serves as a ground to connect disparate CLT structures, they often do not share, say, a uniform resale policy, make-up of the board of directors, or even the type of organization in which CLT itself is housed. What resonates strongly with the members of the Campaign to Take Back Vacant Land, however, is “community control of vacant land”, a slogan scrawled prominently across much of their outreach material and repeated regularly at meetings and events. The goal for this early evening organizational workshop is connecting the demand for community control of urban redevelopment with concrete institutional structure of the CLT.

### *Fiscal responsibility and the rhetoric of inclusion*

Outside the workshop, the Campaign and the trust are working their “two-track” strategy to address the vacant land problem. The movement is not an exclusionary project, developing an alternate form of land tenure outside of both the space of the city and the formal bureaucratic structures of the municipal government. Instead, the movement is working to include itself in both. Land trust development is taking place in the heart of the city and the land bank is working community control into a new bureaucratic structure. To include itself in the municipal shift towards vacant land redevelopment, however, the Campaign must also include itself in the existing language of redevelopment. In addition, to actively maintain the trust as viable *alternative* – as a different, community-based way to perform urban development – the movement must also actively cultivate a language of difference.

Often left to impromptu re-use by frustrated neighborhood residents – urban gardens, guerilla tree plantings, squatting settlements, haunted houses, the occasional condo renovation – or the widespread demolition of decaying housing stock, there has been no successful coordinated response to re-making the vacant city. Nor, in the case of Philadelphia, is there a clear understanding of the extent of vacancy or developing any uniform, formal mechanisms for facilitating, if not directing, its redevelopment. Currently, vacant land disposition is run by an “alphabet soup” of city agencies that have no clear mechanisms for divesting themselves of vacant land holdings, nor do they have a strong bureaucratic infrastructure to take absentee property owners to task for allowing buildings to decay and properties to go unused (Kerkstra, 2011, 2012). As a recent report aptly points out, “In Philadelphia, no single entity is

responsible for acquiring, assembling, and disposing of vacant parcels, or for thinking about the entire inventory of parcels and making strategic land use decisions” (Econsult, 2010: 15). Previous redevelopment schemes often succeeded in demolishing vacant buildings, with little funds put towards assembling vacant land data or building new structures (McGovern, 2006). Building a municipal response to vacant land requires remedying the inherited disorganization of the city-owned land acquisition process.

Policy reports and press releases constantly make reference to the need for frugality in municipal budget management. This context is used as a backbone for justifying the efficient use of data to guide municipal decision-making. The recent report carried out by Econsult (2010), commissioned by the Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations, further cements this trope of emaciated fiscal reserves. The report highlights three striking statistics on vacant land in the City of Philadelphia. First, that over \$3.6 billion has been lost in household wealth alone due to proximity to vacant land. Second, vacant land accrues an estimated \$2 million in uncollected property taxes each year, owing a total of \$70 million to the City of Philadelphia and its school districts. This number annually accrues an additional \$2 million for every year of inaction on the city’s code enforcement and redevelopment. Third, there are over \$20 million in maintenance costs for vacant properties each year. The City of Philadelphia owns only 25% of the total stock of vacant land in the city, and police, fire, animal control, and myriad other services require this massive annual investment. It is difficult to dispute that vacant land is draining the municipal government of much needed fiscal resources.

This staggering report provides the ground for nearly every article, policy paper, or public statement to reference vacant land’s drain on municipal reserves. As councilperson Quiñones-Sánchez points out in her press release for the Land Bank bill, “In addition to the tax dollars spent on upkeep and the lack of taxes paid in return, there is a profound effect on the value of city homes. Philadelphia’s blighted properties drag down the total value of city real estate by \$3.6 billion, or about \$8,000 per household” (2012). Vacancy is hurting the private investments of Philadelphia’s residents at the same time that it reduces the much needed municipal tax-base to provide public services. The mounting cost to Philadelphia’s residents was highlighted by the recent factory fire in Kensington that claimed not only a large vacant building and the costs for putting out the fire, but also the lives of two local firefighters (Graham and Hill, 2012; Walters, 2012).

This language has traveled, at the very least, through online professional planning organizations (FixitPhilly Vacant Land Subcommittee, 2011), the local news (Lin, 2010), and Philadelphia 2035, the City’s comprehensive visioning document (City of Philadelphia, 2011). Large-scale urban visioning projects construct new ideals of the urban future and provide openings for remaking the material conditions of the city (Robinson, 2011). Appropriating the language and concerns of such documents is the movement’s rhetorical work of inclusion. Using the fiscally responsible CLT model and remedying the lack of vacant land organization through the municipal land bank, the movement is including itself into the popular narratives of vacant land redevelopment. In fact, the movement has played a large part in crafting this public narrative alongside City officials themselves.

The CLT model is no stranger to such practices of rhetorical and administrative inclusion. In the decade after 1995 the number of land trusts in the United States doubled, reaching around 200 incorporated trusts with at least a dozen being added every year since (Davis, 2010). While this number is still small, it is a significant increase for a movement that has been struggling to “go to scale” since the late 1970s. Indeed, a large part of the recent expansion of the CLT in the United States is due to municipal support. Aided by a burgeoning

network of land trust professionals and an increasing pool of expertise and familiarity with the CLT as a land tenure model, municipal governments have begun putting their support behind urban land trusts (Davis, 2010).

Support from municipal governments came in at least two ways: first, by providing the much needed and often scarce financial support for CLT projects, and second, by actually housing and staffing a CLT from within the municipal government. The CLT structure varies, and with an increasing level of municipal support comes the possibility for models such as Chicago, a CLT housed within and directed by the City of Chicago itself (Jacobus and Brown, 2010). Municipal support for CLT projects is not a concerted plan to expand the scope of municipal governments, though previous research has shown this a distinct unintended consequence of development projects (Ferguson, 1996). Instead, municipal governments are aimed at the preservation of public subsidies and the long-term stewardship of housing (Davis and Jacobus, 2008). Affordable housing policy in the United States has changed drastically over the past half-century, producing the current decentralized network of public housing providers and a near explicit focus on subsidized market-rate rental housing (Erickson, 2009). These subsidies are public funds immediately lost to the revenues of private landlords, ephemeral investments in reducing the cost of rent. The CLT, on the other hand, retains these subsidies in the form of perpetually affordable housing, making a permanently affordable space held separate from the traditional housing market.

The Philadelphia CLT is not part of the municipal government's strategy for providing affordable housing. Instead, it is a separate tactic by a coalition of activists and progressive organizations connected to the city government through the proposed land bank. Should the land bank be established, it would then direct a proportion of city-owned vacant land to neighborhood community land trusts. This structure is far from the general process of municipalization typical of the CLT today, and instead distances municipal control from the everyday functioning of the land trust. Nationally, the CLT model is indeed being included in the formal affordable housing tool-kit, but the Philadelphia movement stands at arm's length, including itself in the rhetoric of fiscal responsibility in an effort to take over pieces of urban redevelopment on its own terms.

For the movement, this requires acknowledging the drain vacant land has had on municipal revenues and using it as a strategic argument for both a land bank and a land trust. Similarly, the movement is capitalizing on the language of municipal disorganization in vacant land disposition. Many of the organizers I have spoken with point out that "community control of vacant land" is the central unifying ethic that pulls together both the Campaign and the CLT. One north Philadelphia resident and member from the CLT advisory committee pointed out that her support for the trust rested in "the idea of keeping the control of that land in the hands of the people whose home it has been." Similarly, a report issued by the Campaign laid out the vacant land problem, situating the community land trust and land bank as necessary solutions. The report points to both the half-century legacy of inefficient bureaucracy and the drain on household wealth and municipal tax-base caused by vacant land in the city (Campaign to Take Back Vacant Land, 2011).

The Campaign, though, is not narrowly focused on recouping lost investments in affordable housing. Community well-being, equitable development, and justice are all central tenets in the Campaign's advocacy ethos. In early 2011, the City of Philadelphia was electing a new City Council. A community meeting in a predominantly Puerto-Rican neighborhood in north Philadelphia – the same area to be served by the CLT – brought elected officials in to speak with their potential constituents. They fielded questions ranging from the City's ability to install more public trashcans, to the need for increased police surveillance on some well-

known drug corners in the area. Members of the Campaign filled rows of seats in the small auditorium, ready for their turn to pose a question to the candidates.

The land trust representative gave a concise description of the campaign and its goals, followed by a blunt request: Will you, as a new councilperson in Philadelphia, support the Campaign to Take Back Vacant Land? Andrew Toy, candidate for councilmember at large, answered in solemn and measured restatements of the recent report on the loss of city revenues due to vacant land. He planned to endorse any project that helped the city retain these lost revenues. Maria Quiñones-Sánchez, co-sponsor of the land bank bill itself, reasserted the importance and need to rethink the existing municipal land acquisition process. However, she was less explicitly supportive of the Campaign's call for community control of the land disposition process. She made open ended statements on what to actually do with vacant land once the bank had been established, evading the Campaign's central point of contention with the vacant land issue: Who is this land to be redeveloped for?

Quiñones-Sánchez and Toy's statements clearly represent the tensions between the land trust movement and City officials. The campaign's two part organizational structure – a land bank to distribute land into community land trusts – is, on the one hand, fully embraced as a bureaucratic fix to the city's distributional issues with vacant land and, on the other, city officials are weary of a movement whose slogan prominently reads “community control of vacant land”. Toy's perfunctory appeal to preventing accounting losses in the municipal budget and Quiñones-Sánchez's support of fixing a broken administrative process both leave out the call for rethinking the form of decision making in land-use and urban development in Philadelphia. This is a key moment in the movement's inclusionary strategy: enveloping a grass-roots call for new, community-based tools for land-use decision making within a generally accepted push to resolve the city's vacant land problem. In this forum, both council members dodged this link and worked to sever the campaign's cohesive strategy for CLT development. The Campaign is working against delimiting the problem as either strictly an issue of accounting or administration, a political rhetoric devoid of consideration for justice, equality, and fairness.

### *Maintaining land tenure difference*

At the same time that the Campaign advocates for political inclusion through municipal politics, it also maintains the land trust as a space of difference. The land trust model is unfamiliar to many, operating outside the traditional housing market and containing radically different administrative processes. But while the Campaign is pushing up against the municipal government, demanding representation and civic inclusion, the CLT is presented simply as a viable alternative that exists alongside more familiar forms of land tenure. This is not necessarily an oppositional difference. Instead, advocates of the trust suggest it is simply one type of land tenure among many different ones, an alternative to traditional home-ownership that is useful to some, but not to others. Land trust activists are building a language of difference in an effort to make visible an alternative economy of land as a viable alternative to dominant practices (Gibson-Graham, 2006a, 2006b).

Many of the members of the CLT advisory committee and staff of the member organizations were not familiar with the CLT model until having begun working with the movement. All were concerned with vacant land, affordable housing, and displacement, but only learned of the CLT as the group began strategizing solutions. Talking with Jessica about the work of carrying out CLT education workshops, she recalled that a co-worker, once unfamiliar and skeptical of the CLT model, had since become one of its best advocates. At

first, her co-worker felt the model too complicated, with too many layers of administration and organization, and was reluctant to support the project. Attending meetings, participating in workshops, and spending time with the movement organizers, though, significantly changed her mind. She now vehemently defended the CLT model, though with the same measure of open difference that the rest of the organizers often displayed. When confronted with sharp criticism, she came back with a simple, “That’s fine. You don’t have to like it. It isn’t for everyone. You do you, and I can do me.” Jessica felt this story represented the type of affect the CLT movement aimed at cultivating, a small success in the field of urban advocacy.

An open, democratic dialog and the acceptance of difference pervades the movement’s workshops, meetings, and the general language of its organizers. Eva, a member of the advisory committee, recalled a story that echoed Jessica’s sentiment of open difference. Eva is a resident of north Philadelphia and a long-term area activist, heading up a prominent community organization in the city’s largest Puerto Rican neighborhood. In a recent neighborhood meeting, another resident expressed her frustration with the idea of a land trust, as she was skeptical of a large independent organization holding land in the neighborhood. Eva responded both as a taxpayer and as a neighborhood resident. First, she pointed out the subsidy retention to affordable housing, suggesting that the permanent affordability doesn’t waste their money as citizens. Second, she framed the land trust as a form of housing tenure that was not for everyone, as one possibility among many, but one that promoted affordable housing and the community control of vacant land. Here, Eva speaks of the CLT as both open difference and fiscal responsibility, combining the language of inclusion and difference.

Both stories relate strategies for dealing with confrontation, for encountering difference and advocating for an unfamiliar and alternative form of land tenure. As they relate stories to me, Jessica and Eva are both speaking to a relative outsider looking to finish a project on the community land trust in north Philadelphia. Describing these confrontations and the tactics used in overcoming them are small windows into the everyday politics of creating an inclusionary language of difference. The movement has expanded quickly – Jessica noted the advisory committee’s recent shift from her office’s small boardroom to a much larger one – but the ethics of expansion are carefully managed, delimiting the difference of the trust as it faces the prospect of municipal inclusion. The land trusts differences as a form of land tenure and urban development are openly recognized. In fact, they are the impetus for choosing this model as a development tool. The CLT is positioned as a simple alternative that meets particular community and city-wide needs. As the City continually deploys a rhetoric of fiscal responsibility, the movement must include itself in this language as a tactic for political representation.

## **Building the space of inclusion**

Two old bank buildings stand vacant at a desolate intersection in north Philadelphia. Directly beneath the elevated segment of Philadelphia’s light rail service, the bank buildings haven’t seen any foot traffic since at least the late eighties. The trains scream by every ten minutes or so, rattling the broken glass and disheveled window panes that sit unattended in the crumbling old building. It has a beautiful facade, reminiscent of much of the historic architecture in Philadelphia, and a cavernous domed ceiling that recalls the inside of a gothic cathedral. The buildings were both established in the mid-nineteenth century, nestled in the heart of Philadelphia’s booming industrial neighborhood. Located directly adjacent to the rail depot and myriad manufacturing plants, both banks were socially and physically at the heart of the

growing manufacturing and textile industry. The city is no stranger to sites such as this, with neighborhoods struggling to cope with the remnants of the city's latent industrial past.

As the bank buildings fade into ruins, though, neighborhood organizations are working to reclaim them as community-based alternative to redevelopment as one of the future sites of the Community Justice Land Trust. Indeed, this is much of the *raison d'être* for the Campaign to Take Back Vacant Land: coordinating a grass-roots response to the vacancy and abandonment left in the wake of industrial decline. The campaign is at the forefront of the rhetorical maneuvering needed to navigate the representational politics with the City, a much needed project in asserting legitimacy and promoting a different, more inclusive urban decision making. Being at the forefront of the disposition process is key to putting the movement in this crucial bureaucratic space; it is a politics that ensures representation. But the campaign is not simply urging the municipal government to do urban development differently, it is attempting to redirect development projects into the progressive, locally accountable organization of the community land trust. This means that the actual space of the trust – the real material of urban development – is a crucial part of the movement's political strategy. There must be a physical infrastructure present in the city, a viable alternative to existing forms of development. The CLT quietly, yet politically, takes up space in the city.

The land trust is continually assembling itself, working to build up an advisory committee that consists of equal parts residents, neighborhood organizations, and professionals. Continually building up this organizational infrastructure is a precursor to managing the material end of political organizing in the city. The Community Justice Land Trust and the Campaign are two separate projects, the former carrying out urban land development projects and the latter waging a representational campaign through formal municipal politics. An inclusive politics abounds in the tactics of the Campaign, from using the language of fiscal austerity to managing the incorporation of land-tenure difference. These tactics, though, are part of a broader inclusionary strategy, employing both a representational politics and the active development of urban space.

Jessica's theory of a "two-track" strategy for urban organizing is reflected in the dual focus on representational politics and urban development (i.e., the Campaign and the land trust, respectively). Throughout this entire politics, though, there is a recurring reference to space, not only as the central tenet of an organizing campaign but also as the material that incites, inhibits, and facilitates urban action. Vacant land, an extremely prominent matter of urban concern in Philadelphia, has clearly incited multiple responses from a variety of different actors, from municipal agencies, to neighborhood organizations, to guerrilla gardeners. In many ways, the vacancy and dilapidation itself prompted an entire urban politics over who controls the redevelopment of the decaying physical infrastructure in the city, the Campaign to Take Back Vacant Land being a central actor in this new spatial politics.

The Campaign grew out of a north Philadelphia neighborhood's concern with the vast problem of abandonment in the area. A local housing and women's advocacy organization coordinated a listening project, spending months interviewing residents and holding neighborhood meetings in an effort to elaborate a common set of neighborhood needs and assets. As one organizer pointed out, "the interviews and meetings kept returning to the issue of vacant land. People were tired of the abandonment in their neighborhoods and wanted to do something about it." Central to this problem was the inability of residents to navigate the murky and circuitous vacant land acquisition process. This meant that even those intent on redeveloping or rehabbing vacant lots on their own had very little assistance in securing ownership over the land. One neighborhood resident, Emily, encountered this bureaucratic obstacle early in her attempts to turn a vacant lot into a community garden. Energized by the



passion and support of her church congregation, she set out to learn how to acquire rights over the land. “It turns out the entire plot was divided into 4 different parcels,” she pointed out, “and we could only figure out who owned one of them. And it turns out he probably doesn’t even know he owns the thing.” Vacant land certainly incites a vigor for crafting new urban futures, but those urban imaginaries are often blunted by organizational and bureaucratic obstacles.

The land bank is aimed at clearing up the bureaucratic obstacle of the current process of municipal land disposition. It is a proposed form of administration that responds to the current organizational inadequacies of the city that does not aim at directly redeveloping vacant parcels. The land bank opens up a new form of facilitation, but it may only require limited material space in the city: some municipal office space, some data storage in the City’s internal server, and the rooms required to hold regular meetings. Should the proposed bill pass, these spaces could be conjured within months, birthing a fledgling land bank ready to begin distributing land. A representational politics aimed at creating such a new agency moves quickly: the Campaign has aggressively pursued City officials, negotiating the terms of the land bank bill and its process of land disposition. The movement is filled with actions, events, setbacks, protests, heated meetings with city officials, and distinct spaces to organize against competing demands on municipal policy. Organizing a CLT and constructing permanently affordable housing in the city, however, is a comparatively glacial process.

“A CLT can’t be built over night,” John coolly explains at one of the regular land trust meetings, “and takes years of work to get off the ground. Acquiring land, finding financing, educating residents, talking with councilpersons, receiving the correct permits and licenses, actually building a house: all these things take time.” The CLT has considerable obstacles to development. As an unfamiliar and under-practiced form of housing tenure, both new residents and lending agencies struggle with understanding how the land trust operates. Opposing the fleeting nature of real-estate finance and speculation, the CLT counters with rhetoric of stability, certainty and perpetuity. The CLT model’s difference from existing forms of housing tenure resides in the ability of real-estate to make landscapes from elsewhere, pricing out residents from their own neighborhoods and bursting devastating speculative bubbles. Far from ephemeral, the CLT is meant to be the lasting, community-controlled alternative to housing tenure and finance: it counters the fluidity of finance with perpetuity of affordability.

Permanence, however, has not been a simple task for the CLT movement to achieve. While there has been a recent resurgence of CLTs in the United States over the past two decades, previous experiments lacked staying power. A renewed focus on CLT stewardship by practitioners and researchers (Davis, 2011; Davis and Jacobus, 2008; Libby, 2011) is aimed at remedying the movement’s previous failures at perpetuity. CLTs must practice a holistic approach to stewardship, focusing on the material upkeep of the housing itself, as well as the legal and educational needs of residents choosing to live in housing on CLT property (Libby, 2011). Indeed, the language of “stewardship” itself implies the need of a renewed focus on the long-term need for care in response to the demand for perpetuity. That the CLT is meant to be a solid and stable alternative to the vagaries of the normative housing market, requires that its material infrastructure be maintained. If the building is lost to resale and the lack of enforcement for deed covenants, or if the structure itself simply adds to the decaying housing stock of urban areas, the material linkage that grounds the CLTs alternative politics is lost.

Speaking with John before a CLT meeting in North Philadelphia, our conversation turned to stewardship and what a lack thereof has mean for the broader CLT movement. John

suggested that the CLT advocate must wear at least two different hats: she must be both an effective community organizer and have a clear understanding of how to carry out housing development. CLTs, he suggested, have often placed too much emphasis on one or the other. The most successful developers placed too little emphasis on education, outreach and community participation, while skilled organizers lacked the ability to sustain the actual material of the land. John's insight mirrors the organizational structure and strategy of the CLT movement. As the Campaign mounts a representational politics through city hall the CLT slowly works through acquiring and developing land, filling in the dual focus on organizing and development. The reconstruction of urban space into the CLT requires concerted long-term organizational and material maintenance as well as the necessary engagement of advocacy politics.

Building and maintaining perpetuity, though, are the long-term threads that prove difficult to maintain at the same pace as an active organizing campaign. Jessica, when referring to her "two-track" model of organizing, noted the differing speeds of development: "Actually building a house and putting together a CLT takes so much time, you know? It is difficult to keep all our community members excited and involved when it feels the process is going so slowly." Mary, a neighborhood resident and member of the CLTs advisory committee, echoed Jessica's frustration with the speed of development: "It's a little frustrating, like it's not moving very quickly. But, I mean, I understand that. That you have to work up to those sort of things. You can't just, like, have a land trust. You have to write all the rules and do everything else, and I want to get my hands on something and just make something. But when I get there I realize, oh, I don't know how to do that. It is a slow process, but that's okay." Jessica and Mary both find frustration in the pace of building the CLT, whether in the need to keep community members involved or the desire to be more involved and active in the development process. These organizations are creating a new form of housing tenure in the city from scratch. While there are organizational precursors to be found elsewhere in the United States, there is little local inspiration from which to draw, nor is there an existing formal process for vacant land redevelopment. Constructing from scratch slows the organizing process, expressed by these two activists with some measure of both frustration and hope.

The slowness of such urban politics and the disagreements on Philadelphia's legacy of abandonment are significant obstacles to the movement. Building structures in the shared space of the city through the efforts of a hereto unfamiliar form of land tenure in the United States moves at what feels a tortoise-like speed. The board must be assembled, the land must be acquired, the funds must be raised, and the land trust must be accountable to the community it serves. There are no existing circuits of administration to manage the land trust, nor is there existing and easily accessible structures to incorporate into the trust. This politics is certainly part of the campaign's organizing strategy, but it does not stand alone. Instead, it stands firmly linked, arm in arm, with the slow, arduous process of reconstructing the city, house by house, vacant lot by vacant lot, and placing them in the new organizational structure of the CLT. Building a vacant land politics in Philadelphia is a work of assembling from the ground up, a labor that rests on the contentious politics of urban space. The space of the city helped produce this politics, vacant land inciting anger and frustration in the residents forced to live alongside the crumbling remnants of an absentee home-owner's public failures. In a similar motion, taking up this abandoned space stands as a crucial pillar in constructing an urban politics of vacancy, a load-bearing wall in the political architecture of alternatives to urban development.

## Beyond representation?

It is too early and too ambitious to suggest that the Campaign to Take Back Vacant Land's inclusionary strategy can out-manuever this impasse of urban politics. Rights-based organizing, representational politics, and participatory planning have all made significant gains in experimenting with methods for making more inclusive, equitable, and fair cities. Their success is uneven, sometimes reinforcing the existing inequalities of power and sometimes redistributing much needed urban resources. But they have yet to successfully build progressive urban futures for the city's most marginalized people and places. I suggest that this failure to succeed has less to do with the dominance of the status quo, than with the over-imagined end of urban politics. When will the city be an immigrant city? When will it be a feminist city? When will it be a non-capitalist one? These questions can only be answered in the distance, too far from the vacant lots we stand in today.

The Campaign is experimenting by not asking these questions, and is instead pursuing an inclusionary strategy aimed at taking up space in the city. Their rhetoric and tactics are formed by chance, at the whim of political usefulness, grounded in the real concerns of the city's marginalized citizens. Drawing on Lefebvre, Andy Merrifield (2011) echoes this stance by suggesting the possibility of moving beyond the right to the city, towards an active politics of encounter that forgoes the abstraction of success:

A politics of the encounter is potentially more empowering because it is politically and geographically more inclusive. Let's forget about asking for our rights, for the rights of man, the right to the city, human rights. A politics of the encounter utters no rights, voices no claims. It doesn't even speak: rather, it just does, just acts, affirms, takes, takes back. It doesn't ask, doesn't plead for anything abstract. It has little expectation of any rights, and doesn't want any rights granted, because it doesn't agree upon any accepted rules, isn't in the mood for acceptance by anyone in power. If it says anything, the politics of the encounter talks a language that the group has only just collectively invented. (Merrifield, 2011: 497)

Maintaining a language of difference and inclusion, and creating new organizational structures for re-making urban spaces, the Campaign resonates with Merrifield's politics of encounter: taking up space, inventing languages, building coalitions, and forging new rules instead of amending old ones. The movement's "two-track" strategy of urban inclusion urges us to think urban politics in a new way, outside of but in concert with our well-known forms of rights-based and representational organizing. While still aiming, in part, at representation, the movement is broadly experimenting with a non-representational politics, one that simply takes back land without demanding their right to do so first.

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## The Production of Governmentality in the Postcolonial Megalopolis of Delhi

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**Abstract:** Neo-liberalism undoubtedly engenders a splintering of power conduits in the urban landscape. But as far as scholarship on the sociological implications of a neo-liberal order in the Global South goes, there has been an overwhelming tendency to straitjacket contestations in urban space through a neo-Gramscian 'civil society vs political society' framework. The present paper on its part therefore attempts to critique the relevance of a class-centred analysis, which often predicates the role played by Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) in participatory urban governance programmes like that of Bhagidari in Delhi. The central research questions are three-fold: (a) To argue the case against an economic class-based straitjacketing of contestations in an urban space, (b) To identify, if any, the new tensions that arise amongst the political class due to the entrenched performance of 'civil society' in the management of the city's civic affairs and (c) To analyse the challenges of authenticity and differentiation of representation that parallel models of participatory urban governance could throw up for the citizenry. It is in this context that the present paper forms a crucial part of my current Doctoral project which attempts to squint at the quotidian politics of participatory urban governance in the Indian megalopolis of Delhi. More specifically, it takes recourse to both archival and ethnographic data so as to offer a critical analysis of the recently concluded 2012 Municipal Council of Delhi Elections in the light of developments in the Delhi Government's civil society partnership projects such as 'Bhagidari', which in English means partnership. However, in so doing it situates the analysis within the wider firmament of the New Urban Politics thesis and thereby contends that urban managerialism is very germane to the praxis of political engineering in postcolonial urban settings.

**Keywords:** participation, urban governance, civil society, new urban politics

The amphitheater of electoral democracy does put an incredible premium on the net inertia that civil society exerts on the socio-political calculus. However the juncture of neo-liberal democracy where most postcolonial polities like India are precariously placed today does invariably warrant a prognosis of its socio-spatial trajectory. The decline of the manufacturing sector along with the quantum jump of the services sector in a post-industrial era has brought

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about a tectonic shift in ‘urban demographics’. The fact that the Information Technology/Information Technology Enabled Services (IT/ITES) sector which contributes to India’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) guarantees well-being to only a miniscule of the Indian populace does point to the rift between the city and countryside. However the fact that cities in India act as circuits through which both economic restructuring and neo-bourgeoisie mobilization is systemically executed does merit a thoughtful introspection. It is in this context that the present paper attempts to explore the ways in which the New Urban Politics (NUP) thesis so precariously predicates the role of multiple stakeholders in the city as engineered in the case of Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) in Delhi. For in the heart of the NUP thesis lies Harvey’s classic formulation in his 1989 *Geografiska Annaler* paper that an era of urban managerialism has given way to a new era marked by urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989; see also Cox, 1993). But the moment we shift the NUP spotlight on spatial practices in Cities of the Global South like that of Delhi, the debate takes a new camouflage. More specifically questions like how does one access and accrue to one’s claims to his/her Right to the City (RTTC) in a fast liberalizing set-up? In the wake of rampant urbanization, how does one cognize to entities like that of ‘urban villages’? What happens when the visibility of the informal labourer in shanties comes in conflict with its utility to the bourgeoisie?

### The promise of new urban politics

In an effort to probe into questions of such a tenor, one could at the very outset, willy-nilly accept the ontology of the Right to the City (RTTC) discourse. In other words, one can invariably cognize the urban as the site of a competitive inter-play between the social and the spatial. It is herein then that civic citizenship and legal sovereignty seem to emerge as coterminous coordinates. The mutations hereby effectuated hence leads to a reconfiguration of the modes of production viz., land, labour and capital, as critical urban assemblages. I tend to use the term ‘assemblage’ in a heuristic sense which professes a methodological openness that can well-accommodate the tensions between calibrated city projects on one hand and the impromptu reactions that hence erupt (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011). To elaborate, on one hand, land, labour and capital for instance, are imbricated through exercises like that of Urban Renewal, Resettlement Colonies and High Rise Architecture on the spatial front. Whereas on the social front such scalar interventions do effectuate changes in the constitution of the social through the emergence of a new *communitas* that concomitantly flourishes in Gated Enclaves, Shanty Towns and Satellite townships. Attendant to this development is the embourgeoisement of the cityscape which is undoubtedly contingent upon the involutions that processes of gentrification facilitate. In such a scenario the city as the site of the social becomes a springboard on which the contestations over propriety, the crisis of the public sphere and the flow of fictitious capital are creatively played out (Berman, 1983).

It is in this context, that the technology of power or ‘governmentality’, as Foucault (2008) would have termed it, acts as an epistemological logic of political rationality through which the spaces of participation are perceptively accommodated. The techniques of calculating territory, measuring spatial coordinates and modeling city development plans, for instance, shall act as key manifestations of such a regime of governmentalization of the cityscape. But the clichéd use of such a Foucauldian discourse to the holistic mandate of neo-liberal urbanism is a bit troubling. Because such an attempt threatens to conflate the dual tendencies of, what I would prefer to term as (i) the macro-politics of regulatory governmentality on one hand and (ii) the micro-politics of accommodative governmentality.

To elaborate, it is indeed true that Foucault's conceptualization of power does provide us a clue about the styles of reasoning that are deployed in complex ensembles of governance, which can better be designated as neo-liberal. But this is what one would better say is a hint of the macro-politics of regulatory governmentality. One would therefore invariably wonder as to if at all the governmentality schema is an one-size-fits all framework, then how are we expected to cognize the differentials of access to technologies of power? It is herein that one does make sense of the need for a better post-structural formulation that offers the necessary flexibility to appreciate the micro-politics of accommodative governmentality. The intertwined 'smooth' and 'striated' spaces of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) seem to offer us that scope of negotiation whereby the fuzziness of the power/participation matrix is problematized. According to Deleuze and Guattari, smooth space is occupied by intensities and events. It is a vectorial space rather than a metrical one. The sea and the desert are examples of smooth spaces that became striated with reference to manipulation by the instrument of clock and the maneuvers of navigation. Striated spaces, thereby seems to be, at least in part, the effects of technological mediation resulting in mathematical quantities as opposed to qualities. To develop on Deleuze and Guattari, one needs to force in a topological or context-specific analysis which brings to light a heterogeneous space, that is though constitutive of multiple determinants, yet not reducible to a teleological formulation like that of a knowledge-power discourse.

It is in this pretext that the present paper attempts to explore the concurrence of 'smooth' and 'striated' spaces in the city of Delhi through a critical appreciation of the New Urban Politics (NUP) thesis which so precariously predicates the role of multiple stakeholders in the city (i.e., Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) in this case). What lies in the heart of the NUP thesis is Harvey's classic formulation in his 1989 *Geografiska Annaler* paper that an era of urban managerialism has given way to a new era marked by urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey 1989; see also Cox 1993). But the moment we shift the NUP spotlight on spatial practices in Cities of the Global South like that of Delhi, the debate takes a new camouflage. More specifically questions like how does one access and accrue to one's claims to his/her Right to the City (RTTC) in a fast liberalizing set-up? In the wake of rampant urbanization, how does one cognize to entities like that of 'urban villages'? What happens when the visibility of the informal labourer in shanties comes in conflict with its utility to the bourgeoisie? To rephrase it within the framework of Deleuze and Guattari, what are the convulsions that surface when the smooth spaces of urban villages and shanties as sites of habitation tend to get striated as contested terrains for real estate development? How does the striated vocabulary of the lack of land tile possession by slum dwellers, for instance, threaten the veracity of their claims to smooth spaces of their substantive rights to habitation in that site over a *longue durée*? Unfortunately scholarship on the role of urban politics in addressing these problems seem to have read the entire labyrinth of power structures involved herein as that of one which operates through three magic bullets, viz., bourgeoisie citizenship, middle class activism and aesthetic cleansing of the cityscape. The present paper therefore on the contrary makes an attempt to move beyond such a homogenizing power-knowledge schemata. It proposes to do so by a critical examination of the emergent dialectics between civil and political society as portended in the backdrop of the rituals of power churning, viz. elections, in the postcolonial setting of Delhi.



## State, civil society and the puzzle of democracy in Delhi

To begin with, recent studies by scholars like Lama-Rewal (2007), Ghertner (2011) and Kundu (2011) on the state of politics in the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) have well documented the subtle webbing that civil society (herein through its RWAs avatar) has entrenched on neo-liberal urban spaces. The three hypotheses that these writings indicate to are: (a) the preponderance of class in determining the life-chances of political careers in an urban space, (b) the elitist hegemony or pro-middle class dimension of RWAs in influencing modes of collective bargaining and hence (c) the emergent tensions between representatives of decentralized governance, viz., councilors and spokespersons of participatory governance, viz., RWA representatives. On a larger theoretical level however scholars like Chatterjee (2004) and Harris (2007) have gone on to essentialize such a rupture in representational democracy by a neat mapping of modes of negotiation with the State as ones that fall within the ambit of either ‘civil society’ or ‘political society’. To put it briefly, ‘civil society’ herein is presumed to be a legalist appendage that unfolds itself through the praxis of civic governance in contrast to the ‘political society’ that is deemed to be the preserve of a populist state apparatus. In other words, civil society is one which is seen to be the realm of voluntary associations and advocacy groups which would, say for example, use law courts, civil suits and the Right to Information (RTI) to move ahead their agendas. On the other hand political society, in contrast, envelops the efforts made by the relatively poor like agitating protestors, workers on strike and social movement activists who try to work their way out through the rubric of patronage politics. Such a formulation hence compels us to presume a non-porosity of representational democracy. But an analysis of three key set of events in Delhi in the past decade or so does indicate to the ways in which such a preposterous proposition tends to harp on the very sterility of political agency.

### Set of three key events

However an elaborate discussion on these set of three key events needs to be contextualized with a brief *de tour* to the ways in which RWAs have been roped into processes of urban governance through *Bhagidari*, the flagship programme of the Congress-ruled State Government of Delhi, which was launched in 2000. Under this scheme, RWAs were invited to district-level meetings presided by the Divisional Commissioner(s) where they could interact with civic agencies and put forth their concerns related to electricity, water, roads and so on. Sometimes the Chief Minister, Smt Sheila Dixit, herself presided over such meetings. It is believed that the *Bhagidari* scheme thus catapulted the Chief Minister's popularity and was an important reason for the Congress party's repeated return to power in Delhi's State legislature. Since 2001 however one has witnessed a spatial growth of RWAs from being discrete civic associations that sprang up in middle class and posh colonies to the form of large Federations of RWAs that served as shibboleths of democratic representation. The socio-political metamorphosis however was witnessed in the form of two large formations – the Delhi Resident Welfare Associations Joint Front (DRWAJF), which is perceived as pro-Congress, and the Urban Residents Joint Action (URJA), a partner of People's Action, an NGO which is headed by Sanjay Kaul, a member of the BJP. Consequently therefore the concomitant developments on Delhi's socio-political spectrum in the past decade or so hence have been immensely tailored by, what can better be termed as the progressive ‘enchantment of RWAs’.

Firstly let's take a look at the recently constituted Resident Ward Committees (RWCs), an innovative move taken by the MCD in 2011. The key thrust of such an initiative was that repeated complaints were being received from the citizens that there was no doubt that *Bhagidari* did offer a platform for RWAs to participate in processes of urban governance. But the basic design of the programme that attempted to connect 'civil society' forums like RWAs to the bureaucracy but sans any involvement of the 'political society' representatives, i.e., the Municipal Councillors, did offset all gains thus made. Because not only did *Bhagidari* breed animosities between the RWAs and Councillors, but it also often de-railed numerous developmental programmes in a certain area for the latter were far more callous now to seek the opinion of RWAs about the ways in which they proposed to spend their Local Area Development Funds. Therefore these newly constituted RWCs now consist of the councillor, a junior engineer, sanitary inspector, section officer (horticulture) and one member of each registered RWA in the ward. These para-statal entities hence promise to catalyze the efficacy of 'civil society' by plugging in the gaps that it had with its 'political society' counterpart viz., the classic RWA versus Councillor fiasco. It needs to be reiterated here that URJA-People's Action did sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the BJP-ruled MCD in 2011 to pedal the RWC scheme, which has its own logo, website and a slogan called 'Citizens make a city.' To get it off the ground, an RWC Management Cell was set up under the Mayor's office. The MCD has even approved an allocation of Rs. 12,000 per year in its budget for every RWA registered with the RWC Scheme, asserted the Mayor, in an interview to the researcher conducted on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2012. People's Action was entrusted with the task of getting the RWAs registered, coordinate between the councillors, Mayor and RWAs and even carrying out capacity building programmes for the RWAs and councillors.

In almost a corollary development of power-participation dialectics which spiraled out in the RWA vs. RWC battle outlined above, was the boomerang effect that RWAs have provided to maneuvers in shaping the contours of 'political society'. This second set of critical events can be said to have heralded with certain contradictory electoral results that has emerged in the last three results of the Delhi Municipal Elections. Since the very inception of *Bhagidari* in the year 2001 and the institutionalization of RWAs therein, the Congress party had been successful to wield power in the MCD elections held in 2002. Anti-incumbency, the leitmotif of the Indian electorate, could well be considered as a reason for this change of guard from the BJP in 1997 to that of the Congress in 2002. In the 2007 elections to an undivided MCD however, the BJP had won 144 wards against the Congress' 59. But in 2012, the BJP has won 138 of the 272 wards and the Congress has won 78. It thus raises many an eye-brow that the BJP's return to power in the 2007 MCD elections could not be nullified by a second string of anti-incumbency induced revival of the Congress' fortunes in the 2012 MCD elections. In this context it is not to be contested that in the wake of the 2011 Commonwealth Games Scam, things indeed seem to have fell apart for the Congress, but the fact that the Congress party's seat-share has increased from 67 to 78 in a 272-ward MCD is but a silver lining. However at the same time it would be relevant to mention that there was a 55% voter turn-out, the highest recorded in all the three municipal elections of 2002, 2007 and 2012 of the last decade. It is herein that the emergent role of NUPs seems to have crept in into the electoral spaces of Delhi. To elaborate, it was observed that RWAs, which were envisaged to act as forums of participatory governance through the Congress party dominated State Government of Delhi pioneered the *Bhagidari* programme, were now being transformed into breeding grounds for political socialization. Because the BJP dominated MCD that created the RWC platform did nevertheless provide such an entrepreneurial fillip to the political activism of RWAs. The new-found currency that RWAs hence garnered, in such a

‘new state space’, as Brenner (2004) would have termed it, turned a new leaf in the ‘technologies of rule’ which were hitherto deployed in Delhi’s spaces of power. The latter has been reported to be enthusiastically involved in both a) appealing the citizens of Delhi for a better electoral participation and b) insisting upon councilors to publicly sign pledge forms (Pandey, 2012). This does ring a bell about the discrete potential of the State-Civil Society symbiosis in swinging the indices of Psephology. In other words, it is not always necessary that electoral politics can only be worked out on the basis of a *mai-baap sarkar* syndrome of patron-client relations. Instead an ounce of pro-civic activism on the part of the electorate can add on a nuanced twist to the entire discourse of political engineering.

Finally one ought to critically mull over the third and final set of critical events that meandered off in the aftermath of the creation of RWCs. To begin with, there were frantic attempts on the part of the Delhi Government to revamp the Delhi Master Plan 2021 because the BJP-ruled MCD cried foul over the way in which sealing drives were carried out in late 2011. Interestingly while RWAs in mixed land use colonies took recourse to law courts to protest the sealing drives. They clamored as to why did the government not cry foul for all these years when this so-called morass of unauthorized constructions stood their ground firmly with the tacit consent of greasy palms of officials in the MCD? The MCD on its part tried to take opportunity of this situation by raising the decibels of the blame-game hysteria. It accused the State Government of Delhi of bypassing the MCD’s involvement in its proposed plans of regularization of unauthorized colonies. To make matters worse, the exposure of the role played by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) in granting provisional regularization certificates to petitions made by RWAs of non-existent colonies (Bhatnagar, 2012) further exacerbated the matter. While the orchestra of micro-politics was on, the State Government of Delhi was frantically trying to materialize a hasty trifurcation of an already cash-strapped MCD. In fact such developments are symptomatic of the ways in which the tectonics of macro-power asymmetry lurks within. To elaborate, in an attempt to off-set the presumed territorial gains that the creation of RWCs might have had inflicted on the political fortunes of the Congress, the State Government of Delhi fought tooth and nail with all its detractors and hastily negotiated with the Central Government to get its nod for a trifurcation of the MCD into three zones. This is exactly what one could well-remark is an endeavor through which the politics of territory played out by the creation of RWCs by the BJP-led MCD was being nullified by the politics of scale played out by redrawing the territorial jurisdiction of the Congress-led State Government of Delhi. To put it briefly, given the clout that the Congress-led State Government of Delhi has in the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Coalition in the Central Government, the latter was compelled to give the go-ahead although all sanity did suggest that such a measure would compound the blame-game fiasco which is already in vogue in between the MCD and the State Government of Delhi. The plurality of three MCDs and the consequent overlapping of civic functions coupled with the financial inequity between the North, South and East Zones of the MCD are inevitable impediments to ‘good governance’. In an interview to the researcher on the 05<sup>th</sup> of March 2012, an anonymous senior official of the Ministry of Urban Development of the Central Government of India, indicated to the additional burden levied on the public exchequer when he stated that owing to the MCD trifurcation, the former had to dispense off two special packages – the first of Rs 1,000 crore allocated for the existing undivided MCD to pay to contractors and loan installments and the second of Rs 100 crore for the creation of new posts and office paraphernalia – so as to ensure a hassle free transition. However the Central Government in its bid to concede to the demands of the State Government of Delhi, did fork in a rider that the coordinating agency of the three municipal zones shall rest with the Ministry of Home Affairs

of the Central Government (Bhatnagar, 2011). Thus the State Government of Delhi now witnesses the sordid saga of strangulated decentralized governance at the altar of, what political pundits would call, as the 'Federal Frankenstein'!

### **In conclusion: Emergent torque of civil society**

Hence the present discussion does succeed to explore the ways in which actors in the power matrix differentially apply permutations and combinations of their socio-economic and political capital. It's indeed a pity that the juggernaut of electoral politics presumes that it can either bypass or necessarily needs to subvert the resurgence of civil society. In doing so, it somehow or the other misses the train of progressive power devolution. In other words, what the MCD, for instance requires, is a functional re-engineering and not a structural makeover. Departments like education and hospitals need to be taken out of the corporation's purview. The MCD constantly complains of revenue shortages but it barely bothers to collect its taxes efficiently. Out of around 5,500,000 houses in Delhi, only 1,000,000 pay house tax. Let the RWAs be made to come to its rescue. Why not toy with the idea of employing RWAs as vigilante tax collection squads? The city already has multiple agencies like MCD, New Delhi Municipal Council, Cantonment Board, Delhi Urban Arts Commission and of course the notorious Delhi Development Authority (DDA), that operate in myriad configurations of the federal polity. It takes three departments of the MCD to sanitize a drain or construct a footpath. Since basic infrastructure like roads, drains, water pipes and sewage facilities, do not pay any heed to jurisdiction and run through several colonies, having three councils would merely exacerbate problems of red-tapism. Citizens shall have to deal with more officials, councillors and mayors. MCD 2012 shall now witness the spectre of more palms that would have to be greased in a corporation, which anyways has a huge surfeit of wishy-washy people. Thus in the changed scenario, where the application of the levers of NUP seem to be an inevitable condition, the challenge that confronts us today is the question of degree if not that of kind. Given the dyslexia that the 'macro-politics of regulatory governmentality' tends to envelop actors in a neo-liberal set-up, what is the degree of autonomy that the 'micro-politics of accommodative governmentality' offers us? In other words, what needs to be contemplated is as to what is the optimal scale of localization that can guarantee effective representational democracy? Thus it is in this context that one may well conclude with the idea that within the contested spaces of postcolonial settings like Delhi, avatars of civil society like that of RWAs, can be optimistically expected to act as a torque through which both the State and the Citizenry bargain their respective axial positions. For it can hardly be denied that State sovereignty and Democratic citizenship are but co-terminus in contouring urban political ecology within the regimes of neo-liberal urbanism. The sooner we learn the lesson, the better! Thus it is in this context that one may well conclude with the idea that within the contested spaces of postcolonial settings like Delhi, avatars of civil society like that of RWAs, can be optimistically expected to act as a torque through which both the State and the Citizenry bargain their respective axial positions. In other words, Civil Society in such a scenario is seen to operate neither in conjunction nor in disjunction with the State. Rather it acts as a *differentiated torque* through which both the State and the Citizenry negotiate within, what one could well-remark as, the '*symbiotic spaces of neo-populist sovereignty*'.

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## Another Brick in the Wall: Ghettos, Spatial Segregation and the Roma Ethnic Minority in Central and Eastern Europe

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**Abstract:** Walls may be tangible or intangible. They may be made of brick, concrete, or just a perceived line. Those segregating Roma ethnic minority in Central and Eastern European countries are increasingly solid and palpable. They are a visible illustration of much deeper and ongoing social processes in the cities and villages, where construction of a brick or concrete wall is just the peak of the iceberg. The question arises: What lies beneath the surface? The past 20 years have seen transformation, raising social inequalities, and growing unemployment, accompanied recently by austerity measures to keep our (?) new system running. As usual, the deteriorating macro level economic/social situation is reflected by impacts at the local level. Based on the examples of the walls that were recently constructed, we analyze and discuss the economic and social processes leading to their construction. Reflecting on the works of Loic Wacquant (and his constituent elements of ghetto), we analyze the walls as yet another step in gradual exclusion. The economic and social transformation has had profound impacts on the local economies of cities and villages. We discuss how the Roma have gradually ceased to be of economic value to the dominant group and how these trends have led to their further segregation and encapsulation.

**Keywords:** Roma ethnic minority, social exclusion, spatial segregation

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## Introduction

There is perhaps no better visual symbol of stigma, segregation, or exclusion than a wall. We find remains of them in many European cities. They separated Jews in 16<sup>th</sup> century Venice. From medieval times, the Prague ghetto was shut off from the outside world by fortified walls with gates. In the 1940s a concrete wall was built in Detroit, Michigan, to separate the black and white neighbourhoods.<sup>3</sup>

These were neither the first nor the last attempts to segregate those of different ethnic origin, class or culture. They are vivid illustrations of the perspective of the majority (i.e., decision makers), that cement and bricks may solve social and economic problems. Nowadays we find increasing numbers of followers of this idea in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Those who should stay behind the wall are members of the Roma ethnic minority.

On May 18, 1998, the mayor of the Czech city Ústí nad Labem announced to the inhabitants: “we will build a wall four meters high, which will protect you from those who do not pay their rents (i.e., Roma ethnic minority).”<sup>4</sup> Soon after, construction started at Maticni Street and a brick wall to segregate the Roma ethnic minority was constructed.

Reactions were strong. The European Commissioner for enlargement, Gunter Verheugen, issued a statement that the wall is a symbol of separation, which was greatly harming the country’s image among the international community.<sup>5</sup> The Czech Republic was in those times in the process of the negotiations to the EU, and the case became a serious blow to its declaration about fulfilment of the so-called Copenhagen Criteria (Agenda 2000).<sup>6</sup> President Václav Havel publicly denounced the wall and requested its deconstruction. So did the prime minister and human rights activists. On November 24, 1999, city council approved the immediate pull-down of the wall.

Ten years later, the municipal council in Ostrovany, Slovak Republic decided that in order to “protect properties and health of its inhabitants,”<sup>7</sup> a wall would be erected separating the Roma and non-Roma parts of the village. As in 2012, the wall is there and divides the village.

In 2010 as many as 56 non-Roma families from the city of Michalovce (Slovakia) made donations and put together approximately 3000 EUR to build the wall separating them from Roma settlements in Angi Mill. The city leased them land for the wall construction practically for free, under the official justification that the tenants will build there a green area and an “aesthetic fence” to improve well-being and life quality.<sup>8</sup> In reality, a 3 meters high and 100 meters long concrete wall was built to segregate the Roma part of the town and its 1800 inhabitants from their non-Roma neighbors.

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<sup>3</sup> The remains of the so-called 8-mile wall are visible to these days, even though neighbourhoods on both sides of the wall are now uniformly African-American. The “whites” moved to suburbia.

<sup>4</sup> Czech daily MF Dnes, 13.10.2009: *Maticní po deseti letech: ulice, z níž pomalu mizí život (Maticní ten years after: The street where life disappears slowly)*. [http://zpravy.idnes.cz/maticni-po-deseti-letech-ulice-z-niz-pomalu-mizi-zivot-pp2-domaci.aspx?c=A091013\\_133641\\_domaci\\_itu](http://zpravy.idnes.cz/maticni-po-deseti-letech-ulice-z-niz-pomalu-mizi-zivot-pp2-domaci.aspx?c=A091013_133641_domaci_itu) [08.05.2012].

<sup>5</sup> Gunter Verheugen on the Maticni street wall, 12.11.1999, <http://romove.radio.cz/en/clanek/3566> [08.05.2012].

<sup>6</sup> Political criteria that an aspiring county must fulfil as the basic condition for becoming a member state of the EU – they call for stable institutions to guarantee democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, particularly for those of minorities.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with the municipality mayor.

<sup>8</sup> Official justification of the city council.



In 2011 a wall about 2 meters high and 110 meters long was built in Baia Mare, Romania, as a “safety measure to save Roma children who live in two apartment blocks housing 180 mainly Roma families from a busy street next door.”<sup>9</sup>

There was no reaction from the EU in the Slovak or Romanian cases and no protests from the local politicians (if we do not mention the mild protest of the office of the plenipotentiary for Roma communities in Slovakia and several reactions of NGO activists).

There is no wall anymore in Ústí nad Labem. Yet, some 13 years later (in 2012), where Roma families used to live one now finds empty houses in Maticni Street. The municipality simply stopped with contract prolongation and, step-by-step, pushed the tenants out from the public houses. As soon as they are all gone, they plan to pull down the buildings and use the space for commercial developments. Among other projects, car show rooms are planned here.

Walls may be visible or invisible. Made of brick, concrete, or just a perceived line. Visible or invisible, those segregating Roma are in place in many Central and Eastern European cities where exclusion is an increasing problem. Cases from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, or Romania are a visible illustration of much deeper social processes going on in the cities and villages, where brick or concrete wall construction is just the peak of the iceberg. The question arises: Why this peak in the form of the wall? And what lies beneath the surface?

In the first part of the article, we build a theoretical framework of the segregation processes analyses and discuss, based on the literature, the spatial segregation trends. Besides the fundamental question *why* the segregation, there is the closely interlinked question *where* are the marginalised people located. We then follow with a description of the situation in the settlements with Roma ethnic minority and discuss the broader context of the economic and social transition and how it effects segregation *vs.* integration tendencies. We see the walls as the outcome of deep social and economic interests reflected in segregation and exclusion. In the concluding part, we discuss factors such as EU enlargement and the economic crisis, i.e., How do they influence current situation? And what are the trends we may anticipate here?

## **The walls: Searching for the roots and foundations**

The walls are the most visible signs of segregation and exclusion. Yet, why the exclusion? And what are the reasons behind it? One of the early interests in the city and its class and ethnic segregation we see in the Chicago School of Sociology. Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess and Louis Wirth proposed understanding cities similar to environments like those found in the nature. Park and Burgess (1921) claimed that cities are basically governed by the same forces of Darwinian evolution that happens in ecosystems and experience a natural evolution through developmental stages. The internal “eco-systems” are slums as well as wealthy residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, or industrial zones. In the same time, belonging to an eco-system determines behavior. Similar to the natural eco-systems, the competition is seen as the most significant force. Different social groups create this competition with the aim to get more resources. The most important resource is land and its division leads to partition of the space into ecological niches (Park, 1952). Gradually, there is

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<sup>9</sup> <http://aj-rromale.tumblr.com/post/8461868116/wall-highlights-divide-between-romanians-roma>

a concentration of people with similar social characteristics into the individual niches. Park and Burgess (1921) further describe how increases in social status lead to resettlement, which they see similar to succession in biology.

Contrary to this and other research in this vein (studying the settlements and its space division in rather mechanistic ways), we see a gradual shift in the understanding of the phenomena. There is increasingly more focus on understanding the social processes forming the different zones. Segregated settlements of the poor and/or ethnic minority are more and more understood as an outcome of complicated economic and social forces leading to exclusion and control (Clark, 1965; Wilson, 1987; Mingione, 1996).

According to Loïc Wacquant (2004: 2), concentration of the poor and/or ethnic minorities into separated areas (or ghettos) may have four main constituent elements: stigma, constraint, spatial confinement, and institutional encasement. In this understanding, the segregations serve as a device that employs space to reconcile two antinomic purposes: to maximize the material profits extracted out of a group deemed defiled and defiling; and to minimize intimate contact with its members so as to avert the threat of symbolic corrosion and contagion they carry (ibid.).

Besides the fundamental question ‘*Why the segregation?*’, there is a closely interlinked question ‘*Where are the marginalised people located?*’. As Davis (2004: 5) points out, “The urban poor ... are everywhere forced to settle on hazardous and otherwise unbuildable terrains – over steep hill slopes, riverbanks and floodplains. Likewise they squat in the deadly shadows of refineries, chemical factories, toxic dumps, or in the margins of railroads and highways.”

Many (if not most) Roma settlements in CEE are located at the outskirts of villages, separated from the majority of the population by artificial obstacles (e.g., walls, roads, railways) or natural barriers (e.g., river, belt of forest). Many of the settlements can be found disconnected from water pipelines and sewage treatment, close to landfills or in regularly flooded areas. The location of these settlements confirms experience that access to natural resources and exposure to social and environmental risks are not equally distributed and class and/or ethnic affiliation play an important role (Bullard, 1990; Bryant and Mohai, 1998; Bullard and Johnson, 2000; Pellow, 2002; Walker *et al.*, 2003; Schosberg, 2004). In other words, risks and the distribution of adverse effects have a tendency to be imposed more on those who do not possess adequate resources for their own protection and/or are disempowered, socially marginalized and discriminated against.

From this perspective, we see in the case of the Roma ethnic minority a long-lasting trend where exclusion from broader society (influenced and propelled by constituent elements like stigma, constraint, spatial confinement, and institutional encasement)<sup>10</sup> is combined with economic interest. This combination inevitably leads to spatial segregation and construction of tangible or intangible walls. In the same time, social and economic factors strongly influence the selection of places for the excluded minority (i.e., the situation where the people are concentrated in environmentally problematic spaces). Before we analyse and discuss the constitutional elements and social and economic factors in more detail, we briefly describe the history of the Roma ethnic minority and the context of the present situation.

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<sup>10</sup> See Wacquant (2004, 2008).

## Drivers leading to social and territorial exclusion of the Roma ethnic minority

The Roma minority is probably the most distinctive ethnic group in Central and Eastern Europe. Different from their neighbors in culture, language, demographic structure, history, and education level, the Roma face racial discrimination, unemployment, and health problems (Guy, 1975, 2001; Barany, 1994, 2000; United Nations Development Programme, 2002; Džambarovic and Jurášková, 2002; Schiffel, 2005; Varmeersch, 2010).

There are various estimates of the size of the Roma population in Europe, varying between nine and twelve million (European Commission, 2004; European Roma Rights Center, 1999; Griening, 2010). The different estimates and numbers may result from the hesitance of minority members to label themselves as “Roma” due to fear of oppression or stigma.

There are 107,210 people declaring Roma nationality in Slovakia according to the 2010 census,<sup>11</sup> but these data are considered unreliable because many people do not declare their nationality or ethnic affiliation. The 2004 survey carried out for the Office of the Cabinet’s Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities is the most complex approach taken since the collapse of state socialism in the country. It indicates that 320,000 Roma live in Slovakia. This is approximately 6 percent of the total population, which makes Roma the second largest minority in the Slovak Republic after Hungarians.<sup>12</sup>

The last precise information on Roma population in the Czech Republic is from 1989, when there were 145,000 Roma registered on the territory of what is today the Czech Republic. The most recent estimates quantify the number at around 300,000 people.<sup>13</sup> In Romania, estimates are that 1.8 million Roma lives there, making it the largest Roma population in Europe (about 8 percent of the country’s total population).<sup>14</sup>

The arrival of the Roma to the region of Central and Eastern Europe is dated to about the fourteenth century (Guy, 1975, 2001; Jurová 2002a, 2002b). Although the popular image of the ethnic minority is that they lead a nomadic life, in reality most of them settled down a long time ago. For instance, an 1893 census revealed that out of the 36,000 Roma in Slovakia less than 2 percent were nomads. What is very important, already in those times they formed separated and segregated settlements (Dž žambazovič, 2001; Mann, 1992, 2002). Although we may be sceptical about the ability of 18<sup>th</sup> century administrations to properly calculate the number of nomadic people, it is safe to assume that some Roma settlements date back a hundred (or more) years. Many others were established in the 20th century or after World War II.

In most of the CEE countries, the Roma were usually allowed to settle down when they were needed as a workforce in agriculture, as musicians, or as craftsmen. They lived on the

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<sup>11</sup> The Slovak Statistical Bureau (Census 2010): <http://px-web.statistics.sk/PXWebSlovak/>.

<sup>12</sup> The Slovak Statistical Bureau estimates the number of inhabitants in Slovakia to be 5,424,925 (Census 2010), <http://px-web.statistics.sk/PXWebSlovak/>.

<sup>13</sup> See, for instance, “Situation of Roma in Czech Republic” at <http://www.visegradinclusion.org/page/situation-of-roma-in-czech-republic:72/> [accessed 05.06.2012].

<sup>14</sup> For estimates of the Center for Documentation and Information on Minorities in Europe – Southeast Europe (CEDIME-SE), see: [http://www.edrc.ro/resurse/rapoarte/Roma\\_of\\_Romania.pdf](http://www.edrc.ro/resurse/rapoarte/Roma_of_Romania.pdf) [accessed 05.06.2012].

land owned by nobility, towns, and municipalities. What these settlements had in common was the established symbiosis between the majority population and Roma, with the latter possessing a certain role in the local economy.<sup>15</sup>

There are two milestones in the economic and social transformation of the twentieth century, and both had significant impact on the Roma population. After 1948, the centrally planned economy and rapid modernization ended the previous outdated economic model of cooperation and relationship that had been present in the villages. Then, the 1989 return to a free market economy destroyed Roma coping strategies developed during the centrally planned socialism, while a return to the pre-1948 economic model of collaboration was impossible due to structural changes introduced with modernization of the region in the second half of the twentieth century.

Industrialization and collectivization of the land after WWII supported mass-scale production and provided low-profile jobs in companies and cooperative farms. It allowed Roma to find enough employment opportunities that replaced those they lost in the local economies. Never before in the national history was there such a high demand for unskilled workers, while salaries were relatively high. Policies of the communist regimes were built on the ethos of work and employment. To be unemployed was a stigma and legal offence and people were actively pushed to work. The other side of the coin was very often over-employment in factories resulting in economic stagnation and suppression of the political opposition.

In the past 20 years we have seen transformation leading to rising social inequalities and growing unemployment, accompanied recently by austerity measures to keep our (?) new system running. An important economic trend, closely related to the overall development of local production and consumption patterns, is a shift in demand for labour. Roma are basically not needed in the local economy. There are two main reasons for this. First, the decrease in agricultural production and mining, new technologies and machines in agriculture and forestry have been gradually making unskilled labour redundant. The second one is discrimination: as the Roma were among the first to lose their jobs (due to the discrimination factor), the non-Roma focused on protecting the remaining opportunities. The Roma thus lost one of the very few reasons for which the majority tolerated them. It is expressed in spatial exclusion: This “unwanted” minority is, through different mechanisms, gradually being forced to leave, moving further out to the outskirts of the cities or villages. Where it is not possible to move them, we see various approaches on how to keep them segregated.

Besides economic reasons, there are social factors, especially ethnic prejudices and discrimination, playing very important roles. Segregation tendencies lead to the location of the weaker ethnic and/or social groups into places allocated by those in control of entitlements over the land. The problem is that the land, being commercially unattractive and as far as possible from the village, may also be the land with comparatively worse conditions leading to further discrimination and additional economic, social and health burdens. In this way, Roma from Prešov/Slovakia were moved in the 1950s to Ostrovany because the land they occupied was needed for construction of a factory. In their new place, they received land at the outskirts of the village and were used as cheap labour in local enterprises. After the

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<sup>15</sup> This does not mean that the relationships were free of conflicts and clashes.

collapse of the former regime, they did not find many work opportunities and stay mostly “locked” in the ghetto. The latest step in their expulsion is the concrete wall built to segregate them from the main village.

Segregation, walls, lack of opportunities, and enforced isolation lead to the development of two parallel worlds – of those outside and those inside the confinement. Inevitably, this further deepens problems of excluded communities. In the absence of external opportunities they intensify networks within the spaces, which more and more bear all characteristics of a ghetto. Yet, a ghetto as such does not provide many economic opportunities. The outcome is almost universal dependency on social welfare, which in turn further justifies segregation by creating a spoiled image of the people as “black passengers” in the society. Roma are an increasingly popular target of extremists, who blame them for worsening the overall economic situation by misusing the social system.<sup>16</sup> It is this atmosphere, and deteriorating social and economic trends, that enables the construction of the walls.

As newcomers to the towns and villages, with practically no resources to buy land, Roma were allowed to settle in places allocated initially by nobility and landlords, and later by the non-Roma majority and local municipalities. The location of the settlements is thus result of complicated social processes shaped by economic power, social exclusion, discrimination, and group interests. In many cases these settlements were segregated from the villages and towns by different natural (e.g., stream) or man-made barriers (e.g., road or railway).

Going back to Loïc Wacquant (2004) and constituent elements contributing to the emergence of a ghetto, we may see stigma, constraint, spatial confinement, and institutional encasement as strong drivers in the exclusion of the Roma communities. At the same time, it is important to focus on the economic relationship between the excluded and excluding social groups and analyse the walls also from the perspective of what is profitable and for whom.

According to a survey by the Public Opinion Research Institute, as many as 66 percent of the respondents in Slovakia agreed that Roma should live in separate settlements.<sup>17</sup> Almost four-fifths of the general population would object to Roma moving into their neighborhood.<sup>18</sup> Prejudices together with open and latent racism play important roles in stigmatization of the minority and are reflected in decision-making concerning Roma settlements. Visible and invisible barriers practically constrain the stigmatized people in their places. From this perspective the newly build concrete walls are only a continuation of the long-term phenomena of Roma ghettos and exclusion. Yet what has been changing over time is the economic relationship between the majority and minority and it is the economic framework that we need to understand as the main driver in the deteriorating relationships and further efforts to segregate already segregated communities.

Roma were historically tolerated and even recruited to settle down because their unskilled (and cheap) labour was indispensable in agriculture, forestry and, later on in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in industry. From the beginning we see here a trend to generate profit from the group but at

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<sup>16</sup> Symptomatically, all transfers to these people are only a little fraction of the overall social system. According to the 2012 Social Insurance Bureau and World Bank survey, only about 3% of the total social spending in Slovakia goes to the Roma minority, while the rest is allocated for non-Roma. <http://www.sme.sk/c/6282260/davku-beru-najma-mladi-nie-romovia.html> [accessed 07.06.2012].

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Vagáč and Haulikova (2003).

<sup>18</sup> European Values Studies, a large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal research program conducted by Tilburg University, available at <http://www.jdsurvey.net/web/evs1.htm>.

the same time to segregate them from the majority (Jurová, 2002a; Filčák, 2012). The situation changed with the end of World War II and the start of centrally planned socialism and its collectivization and industrialization.

Traditional work opportunities in agriculture, based on long-term relations with small farmers, disappeared with collectivization of the land. Roma found employment in cooperative farms and booming industry. Although there were no official quotas for Roma employment, the minority was purposely pushed to accept newly created jobs. Yet even if they worked in the factories, the assimilation process proceeded very slowly (or not at all). For instance, Roma in many industrial hubs working in local mines and metal processing factories were integrated in the work, but still lived in segregated houses at the outskirts of the villages. Despite forced assimilation policies and integration in the former socialist regime, the majority of the population remained segregated, and usually it was only Roma with education or particular labor skills (e.g., educated professionals, performers and businessmen) who were assimilated. Although discrimination was partially suppressed (especially in the job market and to some extent in the school system) it existed and persisted in the daily life of the declaratively new regime of unity and equity.

The 1989 fall of the communist party in Czechoslovakia and the following rapid transformation of the economy have had ambiguous impacts. The new regime of liberal democracy provided formal opportunities for minorities to develop their own organizations, fight legally as an ethnic group for their interests, and take place in decision-making processes. However, the beginning of the transition also meant rapid deterioration of social and economic conditions, which were already worse for the Roma in comparison to the non-Roma majority.

Their situation in Slovakia illustrates how marginalized groups may become victims of economic and social transformation. Often policies that work on the state level may turn out to be disastrous on the local one, only partly mitigated by new opportunities for political mobilization. Internally fragmented, poorly educated, lacking leaders and resources, the minority fell outside the interest of political parties and did not participate in the new power games. The old social measures and protection, including subsidized job opportunities, were lost and the new ones were not created. As Mann (2002) specifies:

Restructuring of the economy [in the beginning of the 1990s] meant especially release of low-qualified workforce from employment, which impacted most Roma. Other aspects contributing to the Roma unemployment have been decrease in amount of construction works, limited highway construction [due to recession], but also split of Czechoslovakia, because Czech lands traditionally provided job opportunities for Roma.

An additional factor accelerating the problems has been discrimination of the Roma on the job market. The question that arises is why do some social or ethnic groups (i.e., Roma) experience weaker economic potentials? Lin (2000) suggests that these types of inequalities occur when a certain group clusters around relatively disadvantageous socioeconomic positions, and the general tendency is for individuals to associate with those of a similar group or socioeconomic characteristics. In other words, depending on the process of historical and institutional constructions, opportunities have been unequally distributed to different groups defined by race, origin, class, or religion. The general tendency for individuals is to interact and group with others with similar characteristics. This is the case especially when boundaries between groups are clearly defined and difficult to cross.

To be clustered around disadvantageous economic situations is a very vulnerable position, especially in the times of economic crises or rapid changes. Economic

transformation after the WWII embodied in collectivization and industrialization broke traditional economic networks, but it provided work opportunities elsewhere. This was not the case of the post-1989 transformation and breaking of the economic system that dominated the space for some 40 years. Roma, who traditionally worked as seasonal workers on cooperative farms, miners, or lumberjacks, are not needed anymore in the labor force.

The Slovak Forest Company had 36,000 employees prior to 1990. By 2005 it was down to 13,000 and is pressured to decrease the number even further down. Prior to 1989 Slovak agriculture provided more than 370,000 job opportunities, most of them in the rural areas and for people with lower skills. In the 2007 the number stood at 41,723 – most of them are machine operators and people with higher technical education. Mines in the Slovenske Rudohorie region operating from medieval times were practically closed in the early 1990s. Metal processing factories work on limited scale and all of them massively invested into technology modernization, which means sophisticated computer programmed technologies with a decreased demand for human labor. This trend is similar to that described by Alan Schnaiberg (1980) in his theory of the *treadmill of production* typical for developing countries: gradual increase of work productivity and resources consumption, with a decreased demand for labor, which is more and more replaced by mechanization.

A decrease in agricultural production and mining, outsourcing, new technologies and machines in agriculture and forestry have been gradually reducing the demand for unskilled workers. These changes have also greatly affected non-Roma inhabitants. As the Roma were among the first who lost their jobs, the non-Roma focused on protecting the remaining opportunities (e.g., in service sector).

The Roma thus lost one of the very few reasons the majority tolerated them. As Asad (2002) points out, landlords do not need to worry about how to make themselves indispensable to the landless; it is the latter who must worry about making themselves acceptable to the landlords. Because Roma are no longer needed for the village economy, there is no reason – from the majority perspective – to have them in the village. Or, as Wacquant (2004: 6) points out, in cases where its residents cease to be of economic value to the dominant group, ethno-racial encapsulation can escalate to the point where the ghetto serves as an apparatus merely to warehouse the spoiled group.<sup>19</sup>

The majority sees Roma as an inferior group, with very limited economic potential and, at the same time, competitors for scarce resources (e.g., certain types of jobs, but also welfare). Outside pressure to increase expenditures on infrastructure in Roma shantytowns or positive affirmation is often interpreted by non-Roma as measures to enhance the position of Roma on their account. Roma communities are perceived as an obstacle to the development of economic activities (e.g., the tourist industry), security, or to social cohesion of the village. Roma shantytowns are often mentioned by non-Roma as the reason why the village has no future and why young people from the majority leave, looking for life opportunities outside the place. These factors contribute to further efforts to segregate Roma from the villages and strengthen the walls separating them.

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<sup>19</sup> Or, in extreme cases, to prepare it for the ultimate form of ostracization, i.e., physical annihilation.

## The wall as a symbol of encasement

It is rather typical for our times that the walls are popularly interpreted by the majority using politically correct language: an aesthetic fence to improve well-being and life quality of life (Michalovce/Slovak Republic), a measure to protect Roma children from a busy street (Baia Mare/Romania), or innocent construction meant to push people to use the road instead of short cuts through gardens (Ostrovany/Slovakia).

Yet a very different picture arises when we analyse interviews with local stakeholders. Here we see walls as a clear protective measure to keep Roma out because of the perceived minority misbehaviour, justified often as an “inherited behaviour” or even “bad genes.”<sup>20</sup> Broader economic and social frameworks are ignored and the problems are seen as individual, rather than structural. The widespread approach is to operate with the concept of “culture”.

The traditional culture of the Roma is thus often alternated with the concept of “culture of poverty”. The term seems to have been first coined by Oscar Lewis (1959) and it suggests that the poor not only lack resources, but also possess special values. The subculture (of the poor) develops mechanisms that tend to perpetuate it, especially because of what happens to the world view, aspirations, and character of the children who grow up in it (Lewis, 1959). In other words, poverty is a culture, where a learned set of behaviors, passed down through generations and it somehow exists independently of economic and other structural factors.

This approach is based on assumptions that the poor bear some specific cultural pattern, developed in the processes of adaptation to long-term poverty, social and spatial deprivation, and this pattern is reproduced from generation to generation and creates a specific system.<sup>21</sup> In a way, this perspective goes back to the previously mentioned Chicago School where places were seen to be governed by the same forces of Darwinian evolution that happens in ecosystems and to experience a natural evolution through developmental stages. “Culture of poverty” then actually justifies the position of a group on the social scale and it may be interpreted as something “natural” or “inevitable.”

We look critically at the perspectives building on these approaches. These concepts do not have sufficient analytical validity. First of all, because individual characteristics justified by the culture of poverty are antagonistic. Structural problems (i.e., unemployment) are mixed here with social-pathological deviations (e.g., drugs and alcoholism) as well as with temporary responses to the situation, e.g., work migration (Abu Ghosh, 2008). It is confusing that attributes of this concept are at the same time based on observed empirical facts of material situation, e.g., lack of property ownership as well cognitive-pathological characterises such as “focus on the present” or “inability to save money and plan for the future” (ibid.).

In the conceptual level, we see here a mixing of means with ends. Or as Ann Swidler (1986: 273) points out, culture influences action not by providing the ultimate values towards which action is oriented, but by shaping a repertoire or toolkit of habits, skills, and styles from which people construct strategies of action.

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<sup>20</sup> As an illustration, a non-Roma mayor of a Slovak village with a Roma minority said in an interview that Roma are simply “children of the garbage.” Other interviewed stakeholders thought that laziness and careless management of waste or resource is something these people inherit in their “genetic possession” [interviews conducted in May 2012].

<sup>21</sup> See, for instance, the theoretical appendix in Jakoubek and Hirt (2008).



We agree that the culture of poverty and traditional culture of Roma – however accurate in the empirical level and in the assessment of the present situation of the marginalised Roma communities – have in fact only limited analytical value and contribution to public policies. In fact, it contributes to stigmatisation of the people and justification of their exclusion.

The outcome is that there are two separate durable networks of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition, which compete with each other for resources and recognition, yet where one is considered as “inferior” and thus stigmatised as “dirty”, “lazy”, or not worthy of any investment. Building walls then represents a “natural” protective measure of those labelled as “good” from those identified as “bad.”

At the same time, the walls stimulate development of alternative responses and strategies of those who are segregated. Or, as Loïc Wacquant (2000: 383) calls it, *institutional encasement*, where the resulting formation is a distinct space, containing an ethnically homogeneous population, which finds itself forced to develop within it a set of interlinked institutions that duplicates the organizational framework of the broader society from which that group is banished and supplies the scaffolding for the construction of its specific ‘style of life’ and social strategies.

This formation provides the people with some degree of protection, yet it also locks the people in the space and makes them dependent on the majority. And, as we discussed in the previous section, the combination of social and economic interests of the majority are often in harmony with the segregation (actually the segregation is their direct outcome). Deteriorating social and economic situations further increase pressures for replacement and segregation of the marginalised communities. This occurs especially in cases where local democratic participation mechanisms are not respected, or are applied in a very “formalist” way, resulting in a new choreography of elite power (Swyngedouw *et al.*, 2002).

### **Mobilisation and intervention: Pull down the walls?**

When one of the first walls segregating the Roma was built in 1998 in the Czech Republic, there was a wave of protests and public denunciations, which led to its deconstruction. When a similar wall appears a decade later, there is practically silence. Why these differences? There are at least two factors. First, the EU enlargement is not so important anymore. In the 1990s, the Roma issues in the process of the EU accession gradually climbed relatively high on the public’s agenda, partly because of the EU pressure combined with the long work record of NGOs, public advocacy groups, and Roma themselves. Roma problems were (to some extent) brought to the spotlight. This happened partly because the situation of the marginalized people was indeed in discrepancy with human rights and the policy framework embedded in the *acquis communautaire*. However, it is important not to underestimate concerns from the EU states that the opening of borders in the EU will bring mass migrations of people. The government responded by putting money into development projects (co-financed heavily by the EU). Municipalities were under pressure to solve the problems of access to water or housing. Many development projects were initiated that focused on Roma education and employment.

A decade later we are running out of steam. In the situation of a limited budget, a heightened understanding of the complexity, and a long-term perspective to address the problems of marginalized people, the state, municipalities and other social actors face a problem with keeping the ball rolling. The outside environment has changed with decreased pressure from the EU and later with the global economic crisis. Although the financial support of the EU structural programs provides some opportunities, there is generally a lack

of political will for substantial measures. It is also a big question whether such structural problems as unemployment, poverty and discrimination may be solved by (time- and money-wise) limited projects instead of structural changes. Public concerns and prejudices are reflected in populist public policies where the main approach is focused on repression through decreasing and limiting welfare transfers.

Second, it is strength of the civil society that makes the difference. In the Czech case we saw involvement of many NGOs and intellectuals, the issue become part of the political agenda, and the municipality was forced to cancel this decision. We do not see such pressure in the Slovak or Romanian cases. Yet what we may also learn from the Czech example is that pulling down the wall at the end did not lead to integration and inclusion. Decision-makers just realised that there are softer, less problematic and visible techniques to segregate and eventually even expel an unwanted minority. This “invisible” approach is based on stopping prolongation of residence contracts for social houses. It leads to gradual abandonment of the space. The problem is not solved, just moved somewhere else. The policies and approaches of exclusion and segregation are short sighted and dangerous in the longer term. Given the situation, what we may expect is more and bigger ghettos and growing social tension.

How to avert these adverse trends is not an easy question. There is often a legal framework in place prohibiting segregation, but it is rather difficult to implement it. Especially the state must actively step in and strengthen its enforcement. General development policies and programs need to focus on proactive approaches to the involvement of the disadvantaged groups in society by providing job opportunities and social stability for underdeveloped regions and marginalized people and communities. The situation can be improved only through extensive outside assistance from governmental and nongovernmental agencies.

The key challenge however is that the social, economic, and environmental conditions in the Roma settlements may improve only if the general social situation in towns and villages gets better for all its inhabitants. Meanwhile, with the ongoing crisis, austerity measures, growing unemployment and insecurity we see rather the reverse trend.

Development in the past two decades of reforms is strongly influenced by the neo-liberal development paradigm at both the nation-state and local scales. It is adopted at the central level and promoted by business, main think tanks, public intellectuals and the media. It is a paradigm of privatization, deregulation and transfer of control of the economy from the public to the private sector, reducing social welfare spending and, where possible, shifting welfare from public to private projects (Peet and Hartwick, 1999; Garcia, 2006; Hartwich, 2009).

Accepting this paradigm has led to several factors impacting the vulnerability (in one way or another) of marginalized people. The first is privatization of state and municipal assets. Selling land, enterprises or services has been a vital source of income. Transformation of the agricultural sector from the cooperative and state-owned farms to private farms has gradually led to selling of the land to private owners and ownership concentration.

A side effect of this privatization and transfer of ownership from public to private entities has been ownership concentration and stronger property right regimes. The shift gradually enhances entitlements-based ownership and leads to improved law enforcement as the new owners have more power and interests to control their properties. It is especially important when the location of semi-legal or illegal settlements crosses with upcoming economic opportunities. It is very likely that we will see more and more forced evictions and resettlement of people to places where entitlements control is weaker (e.g., worthless or environmentally problematic spots). Different tools and policies (e.g., social housing

construction in remote areas) are used for further segregation of the Roma communities and for moving them out of the space inhabited by the non-Roma.

It is also important to see all these trends in the framework of growing economic and social disparities and mainstream public discourse in society. Problems of the poor or marginalized are increasingly framed as personal, rather than systemic, failure where structural causes are neglected. There are long-lasting and historical prejudices against the Roma, but the past 20 years of the transformation have enhanced them significantly.

Widening stigmatization enables the walls. There are growing attempts to stigmatize the ethnic minority as “black passengers on our social system” and “trouble-makers” in all possible perspectives. To a substantial degree it originates from the creation of a false target for popular dissatisfaction with the deteriorating social and economic situation. It may be understood as a collective answer of part of the majority to the problems of economic transformation impacts. Instead of blaming the system and structural reasons for the trends, there is a clearly defined source of the troubles – the Roma. Since they often live in communities, it means that they are easily identifiable. What is even better, if you blame them for the problems, the state, police and media are usually on your side. It is easier than to blame the current system, the capitalistic model of accumulation with its social impacts. It is safer to demonstrate against Roma than to protest against your employer.<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusions

The concrete or brick walls built recently to segregate Roma ethnic minority in the towns and villages of the Central and Eastern Europe are visible indicators of social polarization and segregation. They show us that instead of integration of the ethnic minority, we face an increasing problem of segregation and new ghettos.

In the general framework of changing social and welfare policies, what becomes clear is what Pierre Bourdieu (1998: 8) calls the conflict between the right and left hand of the state. On one hand, the state saves money on social protection, incentives, community workers, and development approaches. On the other hand, the state needs to invest into police and repression, which at the end may cost even more. In other words, the right hand of the state is being enhanced with oppressive apparatus and tools, while its left hand is being weakened in its proven development potential. In this vein, we provide generations of the Roma with the perspective of living behind the wall, while we are not able to provide them with the perspective of economic and social opportunities.

The question arising is: If the economic system of the present liberal capitalism is not able to generate enough employment opportunities, and economic trends enhance tendencies for social exclusion, what should be the aim of our cohesion policies, which are nowadays too weak to narrow the gap between different social groups? The Roma are increasingly perceived by the majority as a group consuming resources without generating them, people who do not deserve any help and are lost for any meaningful development. In a way, they serve as an artificial target for many non-Roma who are in rather similar deteriorating economic and social situations. It is easier to blame Roma for social and economic problems

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<sup>22</sup> Demonstrations against the Roma are on the increase. They often occur in the most impoverished regions hard affected by deindustrialisation and unemployment (e.g., Šluknov in the Czech Republic in 2012, Krompachy in Slovakia in 2011).

than to search for structural and complicated reasons behind these problems. It is easier to build a wall than to knock down the wall.

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## Towards a Cosmopolitan Notion of Human Rights: Social Movements and Local Governments – Two Different Actors Spearheading the Right to the City

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**Abstract:** The world is facing a growing process of urbanization and, along with it, the urbanization of poverty. Cities are facing today new problems of inequality and social exclusion that are causing a growing social injustice and the violation of human rights, mainly affecting the most vulnerable segments of society. In this context, it has emerged an important debate about the need to foster the fulfillment of human rights at local level. This is how the movement on “the right to the city” arose, inspired by the philosophical contribution of Henri Lefebvre and spearheaded by social movements and local governments, who have drawn up several charters aiming to enhance the fulfillment of human rights at local level. This paper will analyze whether the conceptualization of this new human right could be considered a cosmopolitan human right, in the light of Boaventura de Sousa Santos’ work.

**Keywords:** cosmopolitanism, human rights, right to the city, social movements, local authorities

### Cosmopolitanism and human rights

This first section attempts to present the critical approach of Boaventura de Sousa Santos with regards to human rights. The author undertakes an archeological work addressed to analyze the historical, social and political context, that of Western modernity, where human rights emerged (Santos, 2009: 509-541). As a result of this analysis, Santos shows to what extent the socio-cultural paradigm of Western modernity is today trapped in several structural tensions, which have affected the notion of law in general and that of human rights in particular. On the one hand, these tensions explain why human rights are still an unfulfilled promise, albeit the existence of a human rights regime created more than fifty years ago. And on the other hand, they give us some clues about how to rethink human rights so that they become a real emancipatory tool. Santos further argues that since human rights are a Western product, they

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are influenced by some values that other cultures might not share (Santos, 2002). As a consequence of this, it is necessary to rebuild human rights by undertaking intercultural dialogues so that other cultures feel represented by them. Santos articulates his critical analysis around the concept of cosmopolitanism, which he conceives as a way of action and reflection aimed at fighting the suffering of the most vulnerable groups of population that have traditionally been excluded and ignored. Understanding cosmopolitanism this way means giving to these groups a leading and decisive role in the process of reconstruction of human rights.

I will now focus on the most relevant elements stemming from Santos' critique to the paradigm of Western modernity that impede human rights from being really emancipatory, namely (i) the simplification of law as state law; (ii) the tension between the nation-state and globalization; (iii) human rights as a globalized localism; (iv) human rights' imperialist approach. Along with their description, I will present the alternatives put forward by Santos to unthink human rights from a cosmopolitan perspective (Santos, 2009: 409-453).

*The simplification of law as state law.* One of the tensions affecting the paradigm of Western modernity is the simplification of law as state law, that is to say, conceiving the state as the only legitimate source of legality. However, the truth is that the state legal system coexists with other legal regimes, both at supranational and infranational level. As a matter of fact, at supranational level there are specific regulations that have precedence over national law. And at infranational level, research undertaken from a critical legal sociology standpoint has shown there are infranational forms of legality, with or without territorial basis, that regulate specific types of social relations which are out of reach of the state (see, for instance, the conclusions of the research undertaken by Santos in Rio de Janeiro's favelas in Santos, 2009: 131-253). These infranational legal orders have always been rejected by state law as if they did not exist. One of the most important effects of reducing law to state law has been the drastic elimination or minimization of the emancipatory potential of law. In the field of human rights, this fact has had particular consequences. The international human rights regime has been built around the notion of state sovereignty. From the very beginning, it was understood that the development of these norms and the establishment of monitoring and protection mechanisms were nation-state's exclusive responsibility. However, as some reports and critical analyses show, the violation of human rights too often has its origin – directly or indirectly; actively or passively – in state acts or omissions which are justified on the pretext of budgetary shortages or national security reasons. In some cases, this is just an excuse for subordinating the respect of human rights to state political interests. This dependence of the international human rights regime on the initiative and political will of individual nation-states and the fact that they are too often at the origin of human rights violations partly explains why effective monitoring and protection mechanisms to prevent or punish human rights violations have not yet been established. The state-centric approach and the primacy of state sovereignty in the international human rights regime is thus one of the structural factors that have jeopardized the human rights system. Giving continuity to this logic will indeed hinder human rights from being really effective. Therefore, cosmopolitan human rights must go beyond this logic and advocate for the legitimacy of other types of actors as key pillars of a new human rights regime (Santos, 2009: 412-424).

*The tension between the nation-state and globalization.* The former aspect of the paradigm of Western modernity is highly linked to the tension between the nation-state and globalization, as they both refer to collapse of the principle of state sovereignty. The scale of regulation and emancipation of Western modernity has traditionally been the state, particularly since the emergence of constitutionalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Santos, 2003: 192-



211). The current globalization of transnational interactions during the last three decades has enormously eroded the primacy of the nation-state and is questioning the need to maintain the national scale for regulation and emancipation processes. Today's worst human rights violations are related to a high extent to growing inequalities existing in the world-system and to activities of transnational corporations. This phenomenon has enormously influenced the effectiveness and protection of human rights because their exigibility has remained an exclusive competence of nation-states, while they have gradually lost power due to globalization. The lack of transnational monitoring and protection mechanisms has worsened the situation. The transnational dimension of today's human rights violations render them a localized globalism (Santos: 2009: 433): they are violations that impact locally, while they are caused on a transnational level. States are not in a position to effectively deal with this situation as their territorial influence is too small to prevent these transnational causes from happening. In Santos' cosmopolitan notion of human rights, fostering transnational activities aimed at promoting and protecting human rights will be critical in order to provide a new scale, that of the world-system, to human rights advocacy. New global actors representing the most vulnerable groups of population will have to play a leading role in this process, namely transnational civil organizations, social movements and NGOs. Their articulation in transnational networks of actors and social practices will be of great importance for cosmopolitan human rights to emerge and consolidate.

*Human rights as a globalized localism.* Santos argues that human rights are a globalized localism because they are a product of a specific local context (the Western culture) that has been globalized as a consequence of the political and economic hegemony of this culture in the world during centuries (Santos, 2002). From this standpoint, the author highlights it will be necessary to develop intercultural dialogues in order to universalize human rights, or in other words, in order to base them in truly shared values, accepted and acknowledged by other cultures. Intercultural human rights will be forged through translation processes and diatopical hermeneutics, a methodology Santos takes from Panikkar (Panikkar and Sharma, 2007). Unthinking human rights by using such an intercultural approach not only means producing another type of knowledge (cosmopolitan human rights), but also changing the process of creating this knowledge by turning it collective, interactive and a result of wide networking. An important condition of possibility of intercultural dialogues is recognizing that cultures have always been intercultural, but exchanges and interpenetrations among them have traditionally been extremely unequal. For cosmopolitan human rights to be based in real hybridism, they will have to be the product of intercultural dialogues in which all cultures stand on an equal basis. Finally, a real intercultural dialogue is a local bottom-up process, which has to be made intelligible translocally so that the result of these dialogues can have transnational impact. Cosmopolitan human rights are thus rights based on translocal and mutually intelligible concerns shared by all cultures. The seed for translocal intelligibility is to be found in the character of human rights violations as localized globalisms. As mentioned before, neoliberal globalization is causing on the global level some problems that are taking place at local level. These problems, though they are experienced in different ways according to the specific local context, they share the same roots and thus contain the seeds for translocal intelligibility and cosmopolitan transnational coalitions (Santos, 2009: 431-436).

*Human rights' imperialist approach.* Another important feature stemming from the fact hegemonic human rights are embedded in Western values is their imperialist approach (Santos, 2009: 525-541). According to Santos, a post-imperialist notion of human rights implies recovering the notion of *jus humanitatis* as an inspiring principle. This concept derives from the doctrine of the common heritage of humankind and is very much linked to

the notion of cosmopolitanism that Santos advocates for. While the latter refers to the fight of oppressed social groups for a decent life under new conditions of contrahegemonic globalization, the former means that this fight will only be fully successful if it establishes a new development and social pattern that will necessarily include a new social contract with the Earth, nature and future generations. Five principles define the doctrine of the common heritage of humankind: no appropriation, administration by all peoples, international participation in the benefits obtained from the exploitation of natural resources, pacific use (including freedom of scientific research in the benefit of all peoples) and conservation for future generations. From a legal point of view, up until now *jus humanitatis* and the notion of common heritage of humankind have only been taken into account in international instruments referring to the seabed, the Moon and the Antarctic region. But the truth is that they have been developed very differently: while they have been firmly recognized in Maritime Law (where it even exists a protection international regime to make sure the law is respected), they have been articulated in a more limited way in the Moon Treaty and are not formally applied in the Antarctic region (though the agreement related to the Antarctica does have some elements of these principles). The influence and pressure of industrialized countries, which have the technological capacity and financial resources to exploit these three entities, has jeopardized the establishment of *jus humanitatis* in international law.

Rethinking human rights by emphasizing the notion of the common heritage of humankind would imply giving primacy to the principle of sustainability rather than to capitalist expansionism; the principle of shared administration of resources rather than private property and national appropriation of resources; the principle of trusteeship (the administration of certain resources by the international community for the good of humankind), rather than the notion of state sovereignty; the principle of peaceful use of resources, rather than the excessive ambition to obtain them, which too often derives in wars; and finally the principle of equal distribution of the world's wealth, rather than the current economic policy. Enhancing these principles would make possible taking forward the concept of *jus humanitatis* and the idea of mutualistic (and not dualistic) interaction with nature. Conceived this way, the cosmopolitan notion of human rights proposed by Santos collides with several basic premises of state and international law, such as (i) property, the pillar of the capitalist society; (ii) the primacy of state sovereignty, a key element of the current inter-state system; (iii) the concept of reciprocity between rights and duties; and finally (iv) a conception of space articulated around three levels: local, national and international. In this regard, cosmopolitan human rights take humankind as a whole as the bearer of rights and embody a panoramic approach to space by introducing the idea of intergenerational responsibility (Santos, 2009: 436-453).

To sum up, the cosmopolitan notion of human rights proposed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos implies two main elements. On the one hand, it requires going beyond the state-centric approach by giving legitimacy to new actors that operate transnationally and voice concerns of traditionally silenced and marginalized groups. And on the other hand, it entails undertaking intercultural dialogues and a critical analysis of the imperialist dimension of the Western conception of human rights. As a consequence of this, the key premises of cosmopolitan human rights are: (i) local roots to human rights advocacy and the lead of grassroots movements; (ii) translocal intelligibility of shared concerns; (iii) transnational articulation and impact of action; (iv) critical and analytical skills to deeply understand Western modernity and its imperialist aspects; (v) the emergence of new global subjects in the form of transnational networks of cosmopolitan social practices that represent a new global civil society. Unthinking human rights from a cosmopolitan perspective would indeed

contribute building a new interaction (today too weakened) between the law as an emancipatory tool and a new (transnational) political community (Santos, 2009: 409-453).

## The urban revolution and the emergence of right to the city: State of the art

It is estimated that, in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, only 3 out of 10 people lived in urban areas. According to the last 2011/2011 *State of the World's Cities* report published by UN HABITAT, today more than half of the world's population live in urban areas (in Europe, this percentage goes up to 80%). And it is foreseen that in the year 2030, two thirds of the world population will be concentrated in cities. The regions which are undergoing a higher rate of urbanization today are Latin America and the Caribbean. While Africa, mainly the Sub-Saharan and Eastern region, has the lower level of people living in cities (UN HABITAT, 2010/2011: viii-xx). In this context, the dimensions of existing urban areas can no longer be described in terms of mega-cities (more than 10 million inhabitants), or even meta-cities (more than 20 million inhabitants). Nowadays, it is necessary to speak of mega-regions, urban corridors and city-regions, which constitute new urban areas that diverge from previous urban patterns. Mega-regions are created by the spatial expansion of metropolitan areas geographically connected. In Asia, for instance, the cities of Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Guangzhou make up a mega-region of 120 million inhabitants. In Brazil, the region comprised between the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro has a population of 43 million inhabitants. Urban corridors are lineal axes created by the interaction of cities of different dimensions (though they usually include a mega-region) which are connected by transport routes. In Africa, the urban corridor composed by Ibadan–Lagos–Accra connects 4 countries (Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana) and it is the economic engine of Western Africa. In Asia, there is an urban corridor of 1,500 km which connects four megalopolis: Beijing (China), Pyongyang (North Korea), Seoul (South Korea) and Tokyo (Japan) and it comprises 77 more cities of smaller dimensions. A total of 97 million people live in this urban corridor. Finally, city-regions are created by a dynamic and strategic city absorbing a semi-urban or rural area located at its zone of influence. In Brazil, São Paulo's metropolitan region has an extension of 8,000 km and a population of 16.4 million inhabitants (UN HABITAT, 2010/2011: 8-11). As it can be seen, the world is becoming more and more urban. As a matter of fact, today the human species has started to be described as *homo sapiens urbanus* (UN HABITAT, 2010/2011: viii). But it should be noted that this growing urban process is creating a great unbalance between rural and urban areas which is endangering rural ecosystems. Some other problems have to be added to this first consequence.

Cities are the cradle of civilizations and the space where democracy and citizen values were born. They are at the centre of today's economic, social, political and cultural transformations of contemporary societies. From an economic point of view, cities play a key role in fostering development and the growth of countries. It is calculated that 95% of these processes are taking place in urban areas (especially in peripheral countries), as the GDP of some cities show, which equals or, in some cases, exceeds the GDP of some countries. The GDP of Tokyo and New York, for instance, equals Canada's GDP; the GDP of London is higher than that of Sweden or Switzerland (UN HABITAT, 2010/2011: 18-29). However, cities are also full of contradictions. While, on the one hand, they are sources of innovation and progress, on the other hand, they are responsible for high levels of social and spatial segregation, inequalities and concentration of poverty: 32% of people living in cities, particularly in Southern countries, are concentrated in slums without basic infrastructure. The global tendency towards urbanization is thus implying the urbanization of poverty and social

exclusion, meaning different level of income among urban groups, inexistent or poor public services in some areas, difficult living conditions in terms of food, housing, health and education, and so on. Notwithstanding this, cities also offer big opportunities that turn them into spaces from where it is possible to transform modernity and criticize hegemonic paradigms. From this creative capacity of cities stems the current international debate on the right to the city. The right to the city is today a widespread concept that is being used by very different actors, such as social movements, local governments and multilateral organizations, particularly the United Nations. However, the political agenda of these three actors differ considerably and makes relevant analyzing how they understand this concept.

### *Transnational civil society*

The fight of social movements and civil society organizations for the right to the city is directly inspired by the work of the French urban sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1969, 1976). In Latin America, his writings became the political foundation of the urban reform movement, particularly important in the 1980s. A decade later, this movement would articulate with other actors, such a human rights activists, environmentalists, NGOs, urban popular movements, local and national governments and international organizations, on the occasion of several international conferences organized by the United Nations. This is how the concept of the right to the city started to disseminate among other international stakeholders (Saulé Júnior, 2008: 44-46). Brazil is the first country in the world where the right to the city has been institutionalized after strong mobilizations of social movements that started in the 1980s. Thirty years later, in 2001, Brazil's government passed the "City Statute", a national law that explicitly refers to the "right to the city" and defines the goal of the Statute as follows: to fight social inequalities by transforming cities in humanized places and by expanding access to housing, water, waste management, and public transportation. This national law is being implemented since 2005 by a whole national ministry, the Ministry of Cities.

The same year the City Statute was passed, social movements from different regions of the world gathered at the 1<sup>st</sup> World Social Forum (WSF) held in Porto Alegre and drafted the *World Charter for the Right to the City*, which would be discussed and further developed in following meetings of the WSF. From a substantive point of view, the *World Charter for the Right to the City* defines the right to the city as a collective right consisting of the egalitarian usufruct of the city by all its inhabitants according to the principles of sustainability, democracy, equity and social justice (art. 1.2). It is about putting the human being at the centre of the political urban agenda, and not the other way around. The right to the city involves regarding the city as a space where people can live decently and where it is possible to distribute resources on a equitable basis, i.e. work, health, education, housing, symbolic resources, political participation, access to information, and so on. It is thus a vast right referring to other internationally recognized civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, which strongly advocates for all of them by emphasizing its indivisibility and interdependence. The right to the city is twofold. On the one hand, it contains the right to use (and thus to access) urban space in order to live, to work, to enjoy the city, to characterize or imagine it. And on the other hand, it contains the right of appropriation of (and thus participation in) the city, that is to say, the right to play a key role in decision-making processes aiming at producing urban space (Purcell, 2003). Besides this, the *World Charter for the Right to the City* conceives this right as an "emergent human right" that goes beyond traditional legal boundaries, both in terms of rights holders and duty bearers. Firstly, from the perspective of rights holders, the right to the city is a collective right to which all city

inhabitants (permanent or in transit) are entitled, regardless of their nationality and of any other consideration. Secondly, from the perspective of duty bearers, States are no longer exclusively responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling this new right: the right to the city also calls for local authorities to implement it. As a consequence of this, both the States and municipalities will have to take all necessary steps, to the maximum of their available resources, in order to comply with their obligation to progressively fulfill economic, social and cultural rights embodied in the right to the city (art. 1.6). Cities will also have to pass all necessary regulations (legislative or otherwise) so that the Charter's civil and political rights are rendered effective (art. 17). In a context where the nation-state has the exclusive monopoly of the law, the right to the city aims at widening the protection of human rights by transferring more political competences and legal obligations to local authorities.

### *City networks*

In the 1980s, local governments started to be acknowledged by European institutions as key pillars of national democratic quality. The local level, where citizens live and develop their daily lives, is where democracy can achieve its highest expression. This political recognition of local authorities was soon embodied in different legal instruments produced by the Council of Europe through its Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, who would adopt several legal instruments in this regard: the *European Charter for Local Self-Government* (1985); the *Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level* (1992) and the *European Urban Charter I and II* (1992 and 2008). With this political and legal background, it emerged the movement “Cities for Human Rights”, that would adopt in the year 2000 the *European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City* under the initiative of several European cities. By signing this charter, more than 300 European mayors have committed to build human rights policies in their cities. This movement and human rights charter inspired, some years later, two other charters: the *Montreal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities*, adopted in 2006 under the initiative of civil society; and the *Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City*, adopted by the world association of cities, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in 2011 under the initiative of the “Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion and Participatory Democracy”. This city network emerged in Porto Alegre in 2001 as the voice of local authorities in the World Social Forum (WSF). Both the *European Charter* and the *Global Charter* refer to the right to the city in article 1, but their political emphasis is slightly different, being stronger in the latter. The following quotations will show it:

#### *European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City*

##### Article 1. The Right to the City

1. The city is a collective space belonging to all who live in it. These have the right to conditions which allow their own political, social and ecological development but at the same time accepting a commitment to solidarity.
2. The municipal authorities encourage, by all available means, respect for the dignity of all and quality of life of the inhabitants.

*Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City*<sup>24</sup>

Article 1. The Right to the City

1. a) All city inhabitants have the right to a city constituted as a local political community that ensures adequate living conditions for all the people, and provides good coexistence among all its inhabitants, and between them and the local authority.

b) Every man and woman benefit from all rights enunciated in the present Charter-Agenda and are full-fledged actors of the life of the city.

c) All city inhabitants have the right to participate in the configuration and coordination of territory as a basic space and foundation for peaceful life and coexistence.

d) All city inhabitants have the right to available spaces and resources allowing them to be active citizens. The working and common spaces shall be respectful of everyone else's values and of the value of pluralism.

2. The city offers its inhabitants all available means to exercise their rights.

The signatories of the charter are encouraged to develop contact with neighboring cities and territories with the aim of building caring communities and regional capitals.

As a framework and summary of all rights provided for in this Charter-Agenda, the above right will be satisfied to the degree in which each and every one of the rights described therein are fully effective and guaranteed domestically.

3. City inhabitants have the duty to respect the rights and dignity of others.

However, if we compare these definitions with the definition given by social movements to the right to the city, the difference is highly eloquent.

*World Charter for the Right to the City*<sup>25</sup>

Article 1. The Right to the City

1. All persons have the Right to the City free of discrimination based on gender, age, health status, income, nationality, ethnicity, migratory condition, or political, religious or sexual orientation, and to preserve cultural memory and identity in conformity with the principles and norms established in this Charter.

2. The Right to the City is defined as the equitable usufruct of cities within the principles of sustainability, democracy, equity, and social justice. It is the collective right of the inhabitants of cities, in particular of the vulnerable and marginalized groups, that confers upon them legitimacy of action and organization, based on their uses and customs, with the objective to achieve full exercise of the right to free self-determination and an adequate standard of living. The Right to the City is interdependent of all internationally recognized and integrally conceived human rights, and therefore includes all the civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights which are already regulated in the international human rights treaties.

This assumes the inclusion of the rights to work in equitable and satisfactory conditions; to establish and affiliate with unions; to social security, public health, clean drinking water, energy, public transportation, and other social services; to food, clothing, and adequate shelter; to quality public education and to culture; to information, political participation, peaceful coexistence, and access to justice; and the right to organize, gather, and manifest ones opinion. It also includes respect for minorities; ethnic, racial, sexual and cultural plurality; and respect for migrants.

Urban territories and their rural surroundings are also spaces and locations of the exercise and fulfillment of collective rights as a way of assuring equitable, universal, just, democratic, and sustainable

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<sup>24</sup> Both charters are available in the website of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG): [www.uclg.org/cisdg](http://www.uclg.org/cisdg) (consulted on 5 June 2012).

<sup>25</sup> See [www.hic-net.org/document.php?pid=2422](http://www.hic-net.org/document.php?pid=2422) (consulted on 5 June 2012).

distribution and enjoyment of the resources, wealth, services, goods, and opportunities that cities offer. The Right to the City therefore also includes the right to development, to a healthy environment, to the enjoyment and preservation of natural resources, to participation in urban planning and management, and to historical and cultural heritage.

3. The city is a culturally rich and diversified collective space that pertains to all of its inhabitants.
4. (...)

### *The United Nations*

In the 1990s, the United Nations started to advocate for the importance of implementing human rights at local level. However, while the Council of Europe adopted normative measures, the UN has focused in promoting debates and research, networking among relevant actors and exchange of best practices on local public policies. This task has been mainly undertaken by UN HABITAT and UNESCO. However, the notion of the right to the city used by the UN has a weaker content and is almost equivalent to “citizen participation”. For the UN, the right to the city is a driving force for urban transformation due to the fact that it grants the citizenship status to all urban dwellers and thus it allows all city inhabitants to participate in the definition of their needs. According to the UN, the principles of the right to the city are: freedom and possibility to enjoy the benefits of living in the city; transparency, equity and efficiency of local administrations; participation in the local decision-making processes; recognition of diversity in economic, social and cultural life; reduction of poverty, social exclusion and urban violence (Brown and Kristiansen, 2009: 17, 36).

### **Social movements and local governments spearheading the right to the city**

Stemming from the above analysis, it can be stated that both social movements and local authorities have highly contributed to introducing the human rights discourse in the field of local public policies. Cities, mainly in Europe, soon networked and claimed for the recognition of their key role in the implementation of human rights. This is the main political message of the *European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City* and the *World Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City*. However, these Charters advocate for the safeguarding of “human rights in the city” and not for “the right to the city”. Even if they both mention this right in article 1 (with different emphasis), the vision they have of human rights is considerably close to the hegemonic notion of human rights that emerged from the European tradition. Human rights are understood by both texts as “proximity-based human rights”, that is to say, rights that the level of government closer to the citizen (local authorities) commit to respect, protect and fulfill. The notion of “proximity-based human rights” is strongly linked to the gradual recognition of decentralization in the Old Continent and to the increasing importance given to the promotion of political participation at local level. The fact that this human rights agenda has mainly been spearheaded by governmental institutions might also explains why the scope of its emancipatory potential is more moderate than in the *World Charter for the Right to the City*. Notwithstanding this, it has been acknowledged that the emergence of the European city network “Cities for Human Rights” and the adoption of the *European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City* in 2001 highly contributed to take forward the idea that local governments are key actors in the protection of human rights. With the *World Charter-Agenda of Human Rights in the City* this discourse was disseminated world over. Both initiatives succeeded in transgressing the

state-centric approach to human rights, but did not attempt to rebuild the concept of human rights by challenging their hegemonic (and Western) notion.

In a very different context, the concept of the “right to the city” elaborated by Lefebvre in the 1970s would be recovered in the 1980s by Latin American urban reform movements representing the most vulnerable urban groups (Saule Júnior, 2008). The debate would later internationalize and articulate with other social movements and civil society organizations, having as a result the drafting of the *World Charter for the Right to the City* in the first World Social Forum (Porto Alegre, 2001). The *European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City* partly inspired this drafting process, but social movements went beyond the traditional notion of human rights and advocated for a more transformative and emancipatory approach. They adopted the notion of “the right to the city” and not “human rights in the city” because they conceived this new right as a plural right containing previously recognized human rights (civil, political, economic, social and cultural) from a strong universal, interdependent and indivisible point of view (Marcuse, 2010: 91-103). The right to the city claims for the fulfillment of all human rights at city level, considering them as equally important, but partial, as they are only single pieces of a wider human rights ecosystem. In this regard, fulfilling the right to the city involves guaranteeing all human rights. Besides this, by stressing the social function of the city and of property (article 2.2), the right to the city clearly challenges some capitalist values that led to put the city in the service of the market and not in the service of people. Indeed, the ultimate goal of the right to the city could be synthesized in the indigenous expression of “buen vivir” or “good life”. The right to the city is about reinventing this concept of “good life” at city level, so that every urban dweller can have a decent life and own its own future in harmony with other people, with other communities and with the environment (Sugranyes and Mathivet, 2010: 14). Sharing this ultimate goal made possible connecting different social movements under the umbrella of a right that represents all their (different) struggles. Each struggle is linked to a specific human right; hence the importance of conceiving a wide right that could embrace all human rights on an equal basis, and that could represent the different local struggles that social movements which participated in this process advocated for. This dimension of transnational articulation of social movements around the idea of the right to the city has been of capital importance. As they explicitly put it, advocating for the right to the city implies seeking articulations with social struggles taking place locally in other regions of the world. Getting to know them and capitalizing the diversity of ideas and practices embedded in them is central for the movement, as well as understanding these struggles within their local contexts and giving support to local movements without attempting to talk on their behalf (Sugranyes and Mathivet, 2010: 16-19). However, forging synergies among them is not an easy task. It involves embarking on intercultural dialogues and translation processes with movements that have varied political agendas, visions and values. There are moderate and radical views, reformist and revolutionary approaches. The geographical unbalance is also to be taken into account, since the right to the city is still alien within some groups from Africa, Asia or the Middle East. Even so, the negative impacts of neoliberal urban policies (or localized globalisms, as Santos would put it) are being experienced in many cities of the world, no matter what the contextual and cultural differences are. One of the effects of these policies has been the eviction of vulnerable groups from some urban areas, which are being experienced the same way by families living in Brooklyn (New York), East End (London), Kreuzberg (Berlin), Old Fadama (Accra) or in several other critical quarters in Lagos, Johannesburg and Kigali (Caruso, 2010: 105-118). This transnational and shared suffering has triggered the



emergence and development of global resistance networks that have enhanced the advocacy for the right to the city in the international scene, while being rooted in local struggles.

### **Conclusion: Is the right to the city a cosmopolitan human right?**

At this stage, it can be concluded that the way transnational social movements and civil society organizations have conceptualized the right to the city has several common elements with the concept of cosmopolitan human rights developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos. As mentioned in section 1, the key elements of cosmopolitan human rights can be summarized as follows: (i) defying the state-centric approach to human rights; (ii) re-conceptualizing human rights through intercultural dialogues; (iii) giving prominence to post-imperialist values; (iv) fostering local roots to human rights activism and the leadership of grassroots movements; (v) promoting translocal intelligibility of shared concerns; (vi) boosting transnational articulation and impact of action of these movements; and (vii) considering these emerging transnational networks of cosmopolitan social practices a new human rights global subjects (Santos, 2009: 409-453). To what extent the right to the city shares these features?

*First*, the right to the city clearly transgresses the traditional state-centric approach to human rights by placing local authorities at the centre of the human rights safeguarding system. This new right aims at completing the obligations of nation-states with regard to the respect, protection and fulfillment of human rights by urging the level of government closer to citizens, local authorities, to take responsibilities in this regard. The right to the city calls for local governments to commit to build humanized cities, in dialogue with all urban dwellers, so that everyone can live a decent life and enjoy a level of autonomy that ensures that all urban dwellers can decide upon their own future.

*Second*, the right to the city can be partly seen as the result of intercultural dialogues. This right was conceptualized within the European tradition, although not at its centre (the liberal tradition), but at its margins (the Marxist tradition). The concept was later appropriated and revisited by Latin American urban reform movements and other social movements, as well as transnational civil society organizations and NGOs. The concept of the right to the city, as it is advocated today, stems from the *World Charter for the Right to the City*, drafted in 2001 in the 1<sup>st</sup> World Social Forum (Porto Alegre) and further discussed with a considerable number of activists and social movements for several years. In this process, the right to the city was conceptualized as a sort of “umbrella right”, which embraced the concerns and struggles of a big number of social movements and civil society organizations coming from different parts of the world. From this point of view, this right is the result of intercultural dialogues, although it has to be acknowledged that it is not yet a finished process, considering that for some African, Asian or Middle East groups the notion is still felt as alien.

*Third*, the right to the city encompasses post-imperialist values as it gives primacy to the principles of “good life”, solidarity, sustainability and participatory democracy. As mentioned before, the ultimate goal of the right to the city is to ensure all urban dwellers can live a decent life in the city, that is, a life in harmony with other people, with other communities and with the environment. Solidarity is a second value very much emphasized in the right to the city by stressing the social function of both the city and property. All urban dwellers have the right to enjoy all the opportunities (economic, social, cultural and political) that a city can provide and that are too often only accessible to some sectors of society. From the point of view of sustainability, the *World Charter of the Right to the City* announces in its preamble that the right to the city means building a sustainable model of society and urban life, as well as ensuring equilibrium between the urban and the rural. Political participation of all urban

dwellers is another key principle. The right to the city means not only giving access to all urban spaces and public services, but also ensuring the right to play a key role in all decision-making processes related to the production of urban space.

*Fourth*, the right to the city is not an abstract right. On the contrary, it is a right deeply rooted in local struggles that take place in the city everyday, when resisting evictions, when fighting for the right to have rights of “pavement dwellers” or homeless people, or when demanding basic services (i.e., water, waste management or public lightening) in slums or critical neighborhoods.

*Five*, some of these local struggles have succeeded in finding shared concerns and a common language that represents all of them. This common language is the right to the city.

*Six*, grassroots movements and civil society organizations that spearhead these local struggles have strategically come together to unite their voice, while respecting their respective idiosyncrasy. This has been possible by using a comprehensive concept where all local struggles could feel represented. For this reason, the right to the city has been conceptualized as a wide right that advocates for the fulfillment of all human rights (civil, political, economic, social and cultural) by emphasizing their indivisibility and interdependence.

*Seven*, as a result of all this, a new global subject has emerged in representation of a new political community organized transnationally. This new global subject is represented by a constellation of transnational networks of cosmopolitan social practices that give voice to the most vulnerable urban dwellers and fight together to make the right to the city a reality.

In conclusion, the right to the city presents interesting features that show that the concept of cosmopolitan human rights developed by Santos is not utopia, but rather a possible horizon of reflection and action. The right to the city stems from another way of producing shared values and knowledges that has a wider emancipatory potential than traditional human rights. The challenge is, however, if these values can also be shared in some regions of the world where the right to the city might not be yet an intelligible language.

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### **Relevant websites**

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). [www.cities-localgovernments.org](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org)

UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights. [www.cities-localgovernments.org/CISDP](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/CISDP)

Habitat International Coalition (HIC). [www.hic-net.org](http://www.hic-net.org)

Council of Europe (CoE). [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

CoE's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. [www.coe.int/t/congress](http://www.coe.int/t/congress)

Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion and Participatory Democracy. [www.redfal.org](http://www.redfal.org)

Ministry of Cities, Brazil. [www.cidades.gov.br](http://www.cidades.gov.br)

United Nations. [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

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UN Human Settlements Programme (UN HABITAT). [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)

## Waste Pickers Movement and Right to the City: The Impacts in the Homeless Lives in Brazil

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**Abstract:** This paper analysis the formation of the National Movement of Recyclable Waste Pickers (Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis: MNCR) in Brazil and of its impacts on the right of cities to the homeless people. We use the categories of analysis offered by the theory of frames, mixing this approach with critical theories in social analysis about public sphere, discussions about urban space and political culture in Brazil, trying to offer new insights to understand the citizenship of homeless people in the Brazilian cities. Qualitative research based on documentary analysis, observation and in-depth interviews was carried out. Empirical research aimed to identify the main actors involved, describing their constitution, how and why they were engaged in the construction of the rights. The main results show that the formation of MNCR identity passes through the affirmation of their social identity as citizens and workers by assigning a value to the solid waste, as they spontaneous created a “waste picking economy” in the urban space. This also led to direct their actions to the government seeking to ensure public policies aimed at their integration into the economic and social scenario. An amplification of frames occurred, connecting their struggles with the environmental concerns of civil society and some market actors.

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**Keywords:** waste pickers, recycling, public policies, social movement, public sphere in the cities

## Introduction

Despite recent advances in the Brazilian economy and the increasing inclusion of significant portions of low-income population in extracts of average income in the country is still very present in daily life in large Brazilian cities a significant number of people living in the streets and subjected to considerable social vulnerability in the urban context. Prior to the Brazilian economic growth in recent years, a portion of the homeless is organized around the activity of collecting recyclable materials and built experiences, especially cooperative organizations but also movements of advocacy, who became an international reference in the field of social inclusion within the urban dynamics. These actions are now recognized as important alternatives to combat environmental problems that affect the cities around the world, especially the great metropolis of the peripheral countries or the so-called emerging economies, such as Brazil. The speech and the practices of old actors (cooperatives of waste pickers, social movements and State) and new actors (transnational corporations and national middle level industries) in the field of collecting and recycling materials discarded in the garbage of big cities, has changed in the last decades. All these changes have brought changes to the conditions for living in the urban space and to the right to the city of homeless population in the Brazilian context. This article aims to discuss these changes from the analysis of the (*Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis*: MNCR).

In most Brazilian cities it is common to find recyclable waste pickers who collect, select, separate, compress and commercialize material that is mixed with organic waste. Amongst these waste pickers are current and ex-street dwellers who find themselves obliged to collect recyclable material and commercialize it as a form of survival (Santos, 2003). These waste pickers sell, either autonomously or through cooperative systems or associations, this collected material to intermediaries, who, in turn, re-sell it to pre-processing industries and subsequently to the country's large recycling industries, forming an informal and spontaneous economy of "waste picking".

Most studies about Latin American social movements do not address the movements' internal dynamics, concentrating instead on discussions about the implications of these movements' activities on themes such as improving citizenship, consolidating participative democracy and the construction of the public sphere (Gohn, 2008; Scherer-Warren, 2006). In terms of the waste pickers' movement, research has concentrated on analyses of their modes of organization, their living conditions and the social interactions of workers who survive on waste (Cardoso, 2003; Jacobi and Viveiros, 2006; Silva, 2006; Leal *et al.*, 2002; Santos, 2003). Other studies consider the movement of waste pickers as a side issue, focusing on an analysis of the international and national solid waste sector. A technical and administrative approach to the management of urban waste predominates within this study area, where the hygienist vision dominates as a guiding principle of activities. What prevails is the treatment of the issue of waste solely in its technological aspects, leaving aside the implications of the modernization processes on this sector, most notably of the mechanization of work processes and the dynamics of the privatization of waste. Within this dynamic one can often find greater exclusion arising from new ways of improving the dynamics of recycling and of introducing the waste pickers into recycling and citizenship construction (Dias, 2007).

Studies that seek to discuss the organizational dynamics of the recycling cooperatives of the National Movement of Recyclable Waste Pickers (*Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de*

*Materiais Recicláveis*: MNCR) are less frequent (Silva, 2006; Dias, 2007). This movement, which has been formally constituted in Brazil for approximately ten years, seeks to set up action fronts for networking, mobilization and dialogue with actors from the government and business in defence of the pickers' interests. It is understood that the organization of these workers through the MNCR occurs within a complex dynamic, including internal struggles and groups that influence the strategy development of the movement as a whole. It is thus also important to study the social movements' organizational dynamics and institutional context, since strategies and tactics emerge from their interaction actors' tactics.

In this context, this article addresses the MNCR's organizational dynamics, analyzing the emergence of what Hunt, Benford and Snow (1994) call "identity fields". Located within the body of social movement cultural studies, such works are based on frame theory (Snow and Benford, 1992). Frames are mechanisms for mediation between the structures and movements of collective action (Benford and Snow, 2000; Della Porta and Diane, 2006). The use of frames is an essential mediating element in defining and positioning social problems in order to influence the widest and most varied audience. In order to access policy spaces social movements usually need to use indirect strategies, often relying on strategies from 'outside' to gain the attention of both the public and decision makers (McCarthy, Smith and Zald, 1996).

A central aspect of this process is the attribution of characteristics to a set of relevant actors at the heart of the movement and to their external relationships. This process leads to the definition of what Hunt, Benford and Snow (1994) call identity fields, which incorporate both the movement's collective identities and other categories, such as opponents of the movement and its external audience. In order to capture and understand these struggles and strategies one needs to contextualize the problem around which the struggles are structured, principally by analysing the waste pickers' relationships with other groups, be they from the government sphere, from the market or from civil society, such as those non-governmental organizations that support waste picker cooperatives.

In this context, increasing amounts of solid waste is being recycled, despite the complete absence of regulation. It suggests the need for a better understanding of the processes involved in its collection and processing and in the work dynamics of the waste pickers and their struggles for social inclusion. The main actors involved in this process are: the waste pickers; the organizations that support them; industry (public and private) involved in the collection and disposal of waste; intermediaries in the collection, treatment and recycling of material; the recycling and production industries; as well as the State, with its regulation and public policies that affect both the production sector and the waste pickers. With such a diversity of groups engaged in activities related to the waste pickers' movement, it is not surprising to discover conflicting positions and consequent tactics and strategies within the differentiated struggles of these various actors, many of whom are involved in social movements.

The aim of this work therefore was to map out the formation of the MNCR's identity field and discuss questions as: How the homeless people access the citizenship in the Brazilian cities? How we could understand of the development of the action strategies by the Movement of Recyclable Waste Pickers in Brazil? How this Social Movement creates spaces to discuss the right to the city in the Brazilian context? Which relationships are built among MNCR, Government and corporations in the field of citizenship and rights in the cities?

In order to do this, we used the categories of analysis provided by frame theory in an attempt to identify the frames of diagnosis, prognosis and motivation used by these groups. Such a reading aims for a better understanding of the development of the MNCR's action

strategies. From this, a qualitative research was conducted based on document analysis, observation and in-depth interviews, in order to identify and position the main actors involved, describing the different groups, their constitutions, how and why they engage in matters regarding production, consumption and disposal, and seeking to understand the symbolic resources and materials utilized in waste pickers' organization. Empirical data was prepared using electronic, print and audiovisual documents on this topic; the authors' participation in events organized by waste pickers; reports from newspapers and magazines; and material posted on the MNCR site<sup>5</sup>. Sixteen interviews were conducted with actors from this organizational field. Data collection and interviews took place in the cities of Belo Horizonte and São Paulo between 2005 and 2010.

An analysis of the MNCR using frame theory not only recognizes the importance of producing studies capable of communicating with theoretical-methodological contributions that are unusual in academic productions about social movements in Latin America, but also sheds new light on the waste pickers' complex situation regarding their processes of economic, social and political inclusion within the Brazilian cities.

### **Towards an interpretative model about government, civil society and market in the cities**

To analyze the contemporary urban dynamics we can use different interpretative models of urban life (Souza, Galant, Batel and Hespanha, 2003). By detecting and analyzing the different actors and social fields that appear in the urban context, we highlight governmental organizations, civil society movements and private business enterprises of different sizes and capacities (Arantes, Vainer and Maricato, 2000). One of the possibilities to the analysis of urban dynamics lies in the coming discussions of political philosophy and political science, conceiving the city space, or rather, the polis, as a space to build relationships of rights, whether political, economic, social, cultural and even environmental.

Analyzes very usual in this field are those who advocate a central role in building the public sphere of democratic spaces, such as Habermas understands it, or else those who conceive an agonist of the public sphere in the contemporary world, with a lot of references from this discussion the work of Hanna Arendt. However, the complexity and multiplicity of actors and dynamics present in contemporary cities seems to require comprehensive models that go beyond dichotomies that operate with concepts and analytical spheres of construction of urban sociability that fail to account for phenomena that are built between different spheres in the urban life, whether in the private meeting with the public, the government with civil society or markets with governments and the issues of public interest. This seems to be one of the constitutive features of the issues surrounding the recycling and the waste pickers movements.

An interesting alternative in relation to theory of Habermas and Arendt is the model proposed by Janoski's (1998). This approach it is important to problematize the social spheres in the cities, characterized by the action of government actors, civil society and market

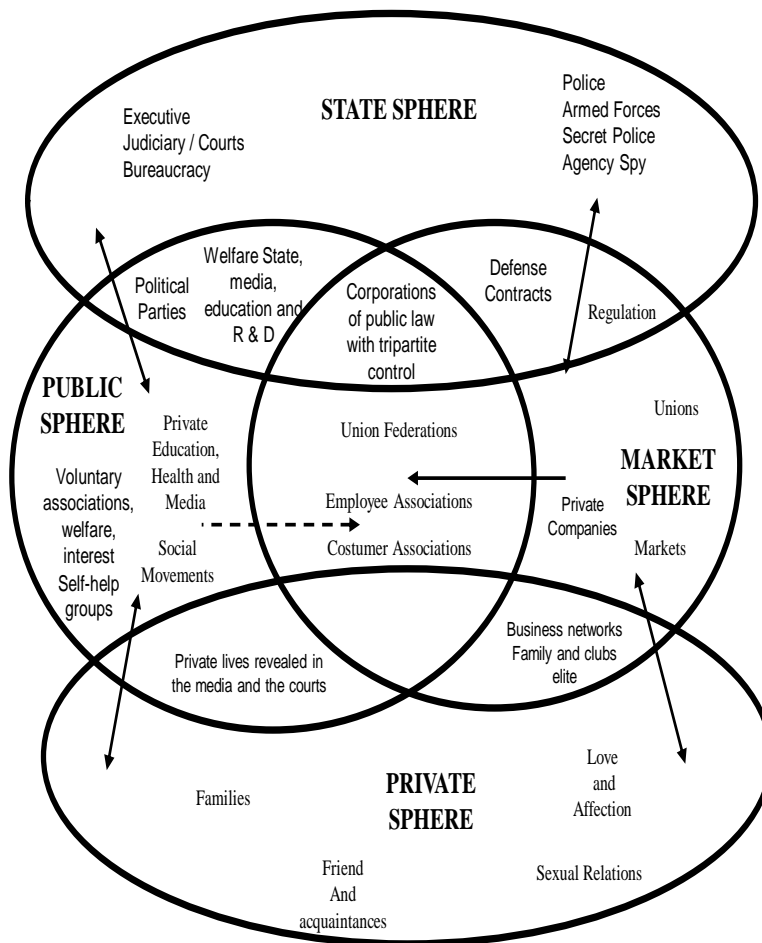
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<sup>5</sup> Available at: <http://www.mnccr.org.br>.



organizations and the individuals, presents great contributions to the understanding the relationship of this actors and the movement inside and between this spheres. This author divides society in four interactive components: the State sphere, the public sphere, the market sphere and the private sphere. Instead of separated, as it is commonly defended, according to the author, at the Habermasian perspective, there is a juxtaposition among the spheres of civil society (Vieira, 2001: 65).

**Fig. 1 - CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAM OF PUBLIC SPHERES**



Source: JANOSKI (1998).

As is possible to notice in Figure 1, Conceptual Diagram of Public Spheres, there are areas of intersection among the spheres. The State sphere involves the Legislative, the Executive and the Judiciary. The private sphere is encompassed by family life, network of friendship and devices of personal property. The existence of a private sphere lies on the right to privacy. However, at modern times, the market and public spheres have invaded the private

sphere. It is precisely what Habermas calls “colonization of the lifeworld”. Regulations by the State in subjects traditionally considered private – child abuse, loss of paternal power, divorce, among others – end up generating processes that bring subjects considered private to public awareness. Although the model does not present an intersection between the State sphere and the private sphere, it is clear for the author that both spheres overlap each other.

The market sphere, in its turn, is constructed by private and some public organizations engaged in producing profit through products and services. It includes the market stock, employees’ federations, professional associations and trade union organizations. The last two members are located generally in areas of juxtaposition, given that they self-regulate themselves and perform negotiating function among groups.

The public sphere, finally, constitute at the same time the most important and the most difficult element to identify. This is because it involves a wide range of organizations. It is possible to classify them in five types: political parties; interest groups; welfare associations; social movements; and religious groups.

It is worth having in mind that the public sphere can also include some private organizations. These organizations get into the public sphere when they intend to mold public opinion or influence the legislative production according to their interests. The same occurs when they threaten the welfare of communities or society. The environment question, for example, brought production and technology to the center of the public arena. In the same way, struggles for racial and gender equality did the same with discrimination. Obviously, the limit between the public and the private spheres constitute a contentious subject.

The public and the private are differently distributed among the four spheres. The private sphere is not the only sphere of privacy. The market organizations are based on private property and trade secret. Even the components of the State work in a fashion essentially private – spying, secret police and foreign negotiations – the same way that voluntary organizations and church meetings are private.

In a way to make this model clearer, two aspects are highlighted. First, the juxtaposition between the public and the private spheres are particularly important. Each one of the other three spheres is juxtaposed to the public sphere to produce important aspects to the development of a comprehensive analysis model of the citizenship in the urban context. An extension of the juxtaposition and the size of each sphere represent comparative elements among diverse societies (Vieira, 2001: 68).

The second aspect refers to the checks and balances theory among the four spheres. Civil society, and specially the public sphere, begins to possess a bigger control over state power. In the same way, the market can also represent a threat to democracy and to welfare; this way, exercising its monitoring role, the public and state spheres can also examine the power of the market (public agencies and specialized state departments). Even the public sphere can become dangerous: antidemocratic social movements arise precisely from this sphere (Ku Klux Klan in United States of America and national-socialism in Germany, for example).

The model proposed by Janoski (1998), besides its aspects that can be criticized, seems to offer undeniable analytical potentialities (Vieira, 2001: 69). It represents, undoubtedly, a contribution to the debate of public space models. It is on that space that several times non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and cooperatives created by waste pickers are situated even though there are grey areas at the interface among civil society, market and State.

One of the characteristics of the public sphere is its extreme heterogeneity, what reverberates on the lack of consensus about the breadth of its concept and the terminologies adopted to refer to the organizations that are part of it (Costa Júnior, 1998). Actually, inside the spectrum of public sphere in the big cities are found organizations of different shades.

There are grey areas of interface among market, state and civil society. It is possible to see that there is a expressive complexity of the concept, given that the public nevertheless private can be several times closer to the private than to public, as it is the case in many social projects tied to big corporations. Instead, the private nevertheless public can be closer to the state, as it is the case in many philanthropic organizations whose resources, methodologies and support originate almost exclusively from the government agencies. Another example is the concept of QUANGOs (Quasi Non-Governmental Organizations). This concept serves to designate the organizations that emerged from the State reform in United Kingdom. The QUANGOs intervene on the social field, especially on areas of health and education, with resources proceeding from the State, in a juridical-contractual relationship.

Authors like Paula (1997) consider that the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), perhaps the civil society organizations with greater media presence in contemporary urban context, are neologisms arisen from the mat of the process of expansion of the neoliberal logic of management of governments of central capitalist economies. Behind this discussion, that is getting more and more intense, in what concerns the importance of NGOs, there would be the implicit idea that social and economic problems of the cities should be solved using the logic of the market, that is, the gathering and action of diverse actors at the space of economic exchanges, being the state responsible for a narrow role at the regulation of this sphere.

Hence, the concept of public sphere includes a multiplicity of actors with differentiated interests, considering that several times the boundaries between the non-governmental with communitarian origin overlap the one with state or market origin. This frame presents itself even more complex when it is realized that, on daily interactions in the cities, such actors appropriate expressions and concepts, trying to reproduce a pretense ideological alignment or convergence towards a political correct approach about urban problem in the contemporary society, specially the social inclusion and the environmental problems. It is not without reason that authors like Landim (2002) and Oliveira (2002) argue about the necessity to rethink meanings surrounding the expression NGO, which, according to them, is a term that includes everything and explicates nothing. The same seems to happen with civil society organizations nowadays.

On this perspective, besides not assuming exclusive identities and roles among the actors that compose the different social spheres in the cities, it is also possible to conceive multiple constructed and operative rationalities in each field, assuming as their base life in urban dynamics. Another relevant aspect is that one can comprehend until what extent the four spheres expand at the expense of the others, superpose or exclude themselves mutually, providing a relevant analytical base to the study of relationships of different shapes of organizations and it does not presuppose unique and excluding rationalities, but unveils ambiguities, contradictions and dilemmas of the actors in each sphere or in its areas of connection and intersection with greater property. It is also important to mention that this model does not provide an idealized vision of what would be the desirable composition of the spheres on life of the cities, sometimes more projected on State, Market, Public or Private spheres.

A relevant analysis of contemporary urban dynamics is that the speech he conceived and organized different social struggles for the right to the city has undergone important changes (Lefebvre, 1991), bringing new idealizations about how the state, private and civil society organizations should relate. In recent decades, for various structural and cyclical factors, the idea of conflict as a structuring element of urban reality has been replaced by the partnership in access to urban rights, speech defended both by certain social and environmental movements, and by government agencies and corporations. This type of action and rationality

is present, as will be discussed later on, in reality the waste pickers movements in Brazilian cities.

### **From conflict to partnership in building the right to the city**

The theme of partnerships in social and environmental programs, projects and actions developed in the cities takes on, in modern days, the status of mobilizing force-idea for different discourses. At the same time, their echoes are reflected on different spheres of society, intensifying, thus, criticism, doubts and debates. Sometimes denounces are raised about taking advantages of actions, pointing at the limits, ambush and inconsistencies connected to the notion and practice of partnerships. Such partnerships ambiguities and paradox are present in everyday actions of practitioners from state, companies and civil society groups, focused on their implementation (Vernis *et al.*, 2007; Selsky and Parker, 2005).

The partnership perspective of policies provision and social-environmental services are marked by their attempt for institutionalization in different national realities and cooperation processes (international, national, regional and local) in the last decades (Prefontaine *et al.*, 2000; Selsky and Parker, 2005; Gordenker and Weiss, 1996) and also for a multiplicity of understanding and assumptions connected to its comprehension (Meirelles, 2005; Selsky and Parker, 2005). Some of these views are located on the opposite sides of the debate about the cities and with the provision and management of policies and social-environmental projects that are defined by them. The allusion and, sometimes, the defense of partnership construction in these projects are found both in discourses for participative democracy as well as in communitarian views and conceptions of the economic and political liberalism that were reflected on the downsizing of the state and on the enlargement of the market sphere in certain urban contexts (Spink, 1999). The result seems to be a real polysemy, the idea of partnership or the elasticity of this concept. (Fisher *et al.*, 2003; Meirelles, 2005; Selsky and Parker, 2005).

Different debates about partnerships involving the state, enterprises and social movements imply not only discussions related to strategies, instruments and mechanisms of urban management, but also involve the relationship of societies, institutions, organizations and individuals with the provision of policies and rights in the cities. As a background, notions arise about essence, coverage and the configuration idealized from the relationship among the state, public sphere, market and private life of contemporary cities, which is another theme inserted in different interpretative currents and relevant debates. Therefore, the studies about partnerships require theoretical and methodological approaches capable to deal with the complexity that mark this phenomenon (Granovetter, 2007; Fligstein, 2001; Vieira, 2001; Selsky, 2005; Burawoy, 1998).

The discussions about partnerships in urban projects present a large variety of focus, indicating the complexity of the phenomenon and the comprehensive limitations from certain analytical perspective. According to Selsky and Parker (2005), three main currents can be numbered in studies on state, corporations and civil society organizations partnerships. The first of them is called Resource Dependence Platform, which refers to the literature that assumes collaboration constituted fundamentally by the attempt to solve problems faced by organizations. Under this perspective, partnerships are conceived as developed strategies by organizations so they can solve their problem of accessing resources and development of competencies and capacities. As Selsky and Parker (2005: 852) argue, the partnerships on this

platform “are conceived in a narrow, instrumental, and short term way; they are viewed as a way to address organizational needs with the added benefit of addressing a social need”.

This first current approach about partnerships is similar to the theory called Mobilization of Resources (MR), which deals with both the emergency and the dynamics of social movements. For Gohn (2000), the Mobilization of Resources Theory refers basically to economical science paradigms, assuming that organizations compete for resources in a negotiable market and they are guided by utilitarian logic, molded on assumptions from rational choice. Even a political dispute takes on the character of the political asset market which considers organizations of the civil society as groups of interest competing for all sorts of resources like Human, Financial, Infrastructure, Communication, and many others in the urban context. In this slope, the conflict is discussed from the assumptions of the collective action of Olson (1999), leading to the construction of typologies, like Zald’s (1996) and McCarthy and Gohn’s (2000) classifying the movements and organizations in two major categories: consensus and conflict. Cohen and Arato (1994) affirm that the concepts of organization and rationality are central on this approach. This seems to be one of the reasons to justify the meaningful presence of groundwork in the MR analysis from many studies on partnerships in social projects, even when they don’t consciously and deliberately assume the adhesion of the perspective centered in resources. Besides, many of these studies seem to offer little contribution to the critical advance of Urban Management field of knowledge (Teodósio and Alves, 2006).

Those assumptions that raise the perspective for mobilization of resources arouse much criticism in the studies about the nature of social action and the rationality of actors, above all when applied to the discussion about partnerships. They operate on other explanatory foundations, more consistent to analyze the praxis of actors in the phenomena of collaboration and do not disregard the relevance of resources like the current factors on this dynamics. On the contrary, resources are relevant, but as relevant as resources are meanings, reframing, institutions and non-linear games of power built in realities that involve resources.

The second current, usually found in studies about partnerships is called Social Issues Platform. Under this perspective, collaboration among state, public sphere organizations and market would come from the convergence around metaproblems socially built and accepted as relevant by actors about the contemporary cities reality. Within that approach, one may find blanks between expectations and performance of organizations facing unexpected turbulences in the environment. According to Selsky and Parker (2005), they can focus afterwards on social issues. As to Social Issues Platform, the organizations aim to face social meta-problems of the cities, and partnerships would appear to be drawn out from this motivation and central perspective.

Along with such approach on the Social Issues Platform, is noticed a larger reference to a voluntary character of partnerships. As previously discussed, the social action developed by actors in collaborative practice is transmitted by valuable notions and interests given by ideas of social transformation, unlike those which are strictly marked by self-interest. However, when themes related to the enlargement of citizenship, participative democracy, ethics in management and social responsibilities are discussed, it is very common to find idealized speeches that reproduce social constructions guided by the consensus around the importance of the enlargement of ethics and democracy. These discursive idealizations can, deliberately or not, disturb the critical perception of collaborative processes in course, as well as disregarding the mosaic of interests; values and rationalities built in a non-linear way in the social action that marks the partnerships in the urban context. Therefore, the relevance in the alignment of actors around metaproblems should not be disregarded, but also go beyond the

limits of this analysis from this dimension, otherwise a considerable advancement might not take place in the analysis of the collaborative processes involving state, civil society and market organizations.

At last, Selsky and Parker (2005) numbered the so-called Societal Sector Platform. The relationships among state, companies and civil society organizations operate under new foundations in the urban context. Besides, the limits among these three sectors are obscure and not well defined. This overlap and understatement of borders occur especially when an organization from a certain sphere uses or captures roles traditionally associated to action and rationality of actors from another sphere. For the authors, such phenomena can lead to the appearance of real processes of hybrid governance and the emergency of hybrid organizations or interorganizations. Among these elements, there are relevant propellants of the partnerships through literature produced by this current of discussion, which refers to the reduction of governmental financing of social projects developed by the civil society organizations, leading them to the collection of resources through commercialization of products and services, also to the weakening capacity to govern the state organization. Such facts force civil society organizations to offer public services at same time that they develop typical business activities to access financial resources for their projects. Another kind of civil society organization makes pressure over business activities in global scale, leading the corporation to insert social issues in the management policies.

The discussion about the borders among public, state and market spheres in the urban dynamic as well as those about roles and rationalities of their organizations allows a series of debates either related to structural phenomena that mark contemporaneity or about micro-foundations of social action from actors, as previously discussed. The approaches of the Societal Sector platform fall into this dimension and allow a series of relevant phenomena that mark partnerships to be troubled, including those connected to the construction of references and meanings shared as for the appearance or not of a new field located on gray areas of intercession and overlap of practice from actors involved in collaboration. Besides, this discussion provide important vectors for analysis about traditional roles of each actor in their own sphere and the tensions and games of power involving a shift and/or permanence of their praxis toward the partnerships with organizations from other spheres, marked by different rationalities and practices.

Therefore, it seems more productive and consistent theoretically not to proceed with the analysis of partnerships from exclusive or dichotomous perspective of analysis, but from three central elements of three lines of approaches such as: *Resource dependence, Social Issues and Societal Sector*. Furthermore, when working with the three perspectives of analysis of partnerships, we can also discuss relations between civil society actors, the state and the market without necessarily take them as partnerships, but also covering conflicts, dissonances and contradictions in these interactions context of contemporary cities. As we shall see later on, this seems to be the reality experienced by the MNCR in its struggle for the right to the city in the Brazilian context.

## **The construction of identity fields**

Political process (PP) theories about social movements developed in order to connect macro historical factors to explanations about the emergence of movements, in response to criticisms of Resource Mobilization (RM), the predominant paradigm in North American academia at that time (Zald and Ash, 1966; McCarthy and Zald, 1973, 1977). Criticized for being excessively utilitarian, with an emphasis on the notion of the rational actor, and for excluding

values, norms, ideologies, culture and identity from its analysis (Cohen, 1995; Tarrow, 1996), the RM paradigm was also attacked for its inability to deal with an analysis of more radical and populist movements, which had little in common with the well-defined and structured model of social movement organizations (SMOs) described by authors central to RM.

PP theories also sought to deal with supposed gaps in European theories about new social movements (NSMs), which concentrated on the macro structural analysis that prompted the emergence of social movements and their bases of solidarity and identity in the context of changes in post-industrial societies (Foweraker, 1995). In general, North America academia sought to respond to issues about *how* social movements organized themselves, while the Europeans sought to respond to *why* they emerged.

The bringing together of these two paradigms gave rise to a fertile field of new studies, which benefited from comparative analyses. It was within this debate that cultural studies of social movements gained ground. One of the most influential areas in this debate is frame theory. Based on the symbolic interactionism of the Chicago school, David Snow and his collaborators reclaimed Goffman's (2006) concept of frames, which are understood as interpretive schema that help actors to reduce the complexity of socio-cultural perceptions.

Frames stress interpretive practices and the contingent nature of the social construction of the meanings that define social mobilizations. Social movements are agents actively engaged in the production and preservation of meanings, both for members of the movement and for antagonists and bystanders (Snow, 2004). In this sense they agree with Touraine (1977) that identity cannot be determined *a priori*, outside of the conflicts and contexts of the struggle – the identity of a social movement is formed within each society's conflict structure.

Snow and Benford (1992) define collective action frames as groups of guided actions and beliefs that inspire and legitimize SMOs' campaigns and activities. These interpretive schemas define certain conditions as unjust, allocate responsibilities for the same, and define and delineate alternative solutions which may be achieved through collective action. Gamson (1992) adds that collective action frames are frames of injustice which form part of the political discourse that struggles against some established hegemony, an important distinction which questions the injustice component of the frames, drawing attention to the contradictions surrounding social movements.

The view that actors from social movements are agents actively engaged in the production and preservation of meanings thus begins to expand, affirming that the construction of meanings occurs for members of the movement itself, antagonists, or bystanders, in a recursive relationship (Snow, 2004). The frame's dual characteristic of producing meanings for individuals from the groups that guide them and providing instruments for the mobilization of other individuals constitutes part of its dynamics of contention and agency. There are moments and situations in which frames are ambiguous or open to question and these are often situations in which social movements emerge (Snow, 2004).

One of the initial problems in the utilization of frame theory is that analysis was often restricted to the construction of collective identities solely from the point of view of the movement. Hunt, Benford and Snow (1994) proposed the addition of new categories subject to the framing process which must be the object of the investigator's analysis: protagonists, antagonists and audience. The authors called these concepts identity fields.

In identity fields, protagonists are constellations of individual or collective identity attributes considered as supporting the movement's causes (Hunt, Benford and Snow, 1994: 193). Individuals and collectives are defined as protagonists in that they share the same values, beliefs, goals and practices, or because they obtain some benefit from these.

On the other hand, people or collectives opposed to the values, beliefs, goals and practices of the movement, or who are affected by its actions in a way that they interpret as negative, are called antagonists. The movement's activists produce antagonistic identities through the identification of practices that are opposed to protagonist causes and identities. Finally, there are people in identity fields who see themselves as neutral or non-interventionist observers, known as the audience.

A process called frame alignment occurs at the level of organizations located in identity fields (Snow *et al.*, 1986). This is a micromobilization through which actors in identity fields seek to influence other actors in the movement in terms of their ideology and goals. Attribution and articulation occurs in this process. Attribution draws attention to an explanation of the protagonists' causes and problems. Alternatives are then articulated, connecting a range of experiences in order to promote the desired change (Benford and Snow, 2000). In other words, attribution processes encompass the diagnostic function of the frames.

Articulation involves the prognostic and motivation functions. Prognostic frames are aimed at proposing solutions to problems or, at least, plans to develop strategies to tackle them. An important issue to note in relation to prognostic frames is that they must interact in multi-organizational fields, with constant challenges from the opposing logic, also known as counter-frames.

Prognostic frames manifest basic differences between organizations inside a movement. Scherer-Warren (2006) stresses that inter-organizational networking features civil society forums, national NGO associations and networks of social movements and organizations that aim to come together for the empowerment of civil society, representing the organization and movement of local partnerships.

It is through these forms of mediation that more institutionalized interaction and partnerships between civil society and the State occur. Frames also have a motivational function that produces certain rationales for engaging in action, including the construction of specific vocabulary, such as a movement's flag, music and artefacts, a stage intrinsically linked to the frame's dimension of agency. Table 1 summarizes the notion of frame alignment proposed by Snow *et al.* (1986) and Benford and Snow (2000).

**Table 1. Some aspects of frame alignment**

Attribution	Articulation	
Diagnostic	Motivation	Prognostic
Explains the causes of protagonist problems.	Gives reasons for engaging in collective action; creation of specific vocabulary, such as the movement's flag, music and artefacts (symbolic resources).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulates proposals to solve the problem.</li> <li>• Reveals basic differences between organizations.</li> <li>• Links experiences to promote specific change.</li> <li>• Interacts in multi-organizational fields where challenges to the opposing logic occur.</li> </ul>

Source: prepared by the authors.

In general, the scope of a collective action frame is not restricted to the interests of its particular group or a series of related problems; some frames are of broader scope, influencing and constraining attitudes and activists from other movements. Collective action



frames with this broad scope, and which are more inclusive and flexible, are known as “master frames” (Snow and Benford, 1994).

This cross-over in the demand for rights involves an expansion of the concept of human rights and an increase in the mobilization base. Scherer-Warren (2006) cites the example of the World Social Forum as an important arena for the articulation of human rights struggles in their various social dimensions. The capacity for the articulation and attribution of these frames is increased due to their greater resonance with other fields. This resonance encompasses the effectiveness or potential of the mobilization of the frame, which varies according to the frame’s or the mobilization object’s relative credibility and importance. For Tarrow (1996), the disputes’ new meanings and repertoire are also the product of struggles within the movement. Internal struggles can also generate new frames and are not only restricted to the generating forms of solidarity processes.

### **The architecture of a movement: The MNCR trajectory**

Despite the fact that recyclable waste pickers have been active on the streets of São Paulo for at least five decades, the first organizational initiatives through associations or cooperatives only emerged at the beginning of the 1980s (Grimberg *et al.*, 2004). At that time a religious group brought together “street dwellers” who sought to subsist on waste discarded by houses, industry and commerce in the central region of the city. They began to hold meetings in the Community Centre for Street Sufferers (*Centro Comunitário dos Sofredores de Rua*) in the Glicério neighbourhood and this became a point of meeting and dialogue for the waste pickers. In 1985 they created the Association of Paper Pickers (*Associação dos Catadores de Papel*), which operated from a rented house in the Glicério neighbourhood where they had industrial scales. Also in 1985, in a political conflict with the municipal administration of the city of São Paulo, the pickers organized by the Community Centre for Street Sufferers marched through the main streets of the city, demanding the right to circulate with their carts in the city centre. This march can be considered one of the high points of the organization of the pickers, which occurred before their conception of a social movement.

In 1989 the Cooperative for Autonomous Waste Pickers of Paper, Cardboard, Scrap and Reusable Material (*Cooperativa de Catadores Autônomos de Papel, Papelão, Aparas e Materiais Reaproveitáveis*: COOPAMARE) was set up, initially with twenty waste pickers, and was the first cooperative of recyclable waste pickers in Brazil. This was initiated through the projects of the Organization of Fraternal Support (*Organização de Auxílio Fraternal*: OAF), set up to support street dwellers. In 1990, the Association for Waste Pickers of Paper, Cardboard and Recyclable Materials (*Associação dos Catadores de Papel, Papelão e Matérias Recicláveis*: ASMARE) emerged in Belo Horizonte<sup>6</sup> as a result of social-educational work developed by the Street Pastoral of the Archdiocese of Belo Horizonte (*Pastoral de Rua da Arquidiocese de Belo Horizonte*). In 1993, the Belo Horizonte Project for Selective Collection (*Projeto de Coleta Seletiva de Belo Horizonte*) was established by the Superintendence of Urban Cleaning (*Superintendência de Limpeza Urbana*: SLU) in

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<sup>6</sup> ASMARE is currently one of Brazil’s largest cooperatives and today is the only one to include a recycling factory run by the waste pickers themselves (Silva, 2006).

partnership with ASMARE and contributed to the “semi-public status” of the work carried out by the waste pickers’ cooperative (Dias, 2007).

Throughout the 1990s, the initial prospects for income generation and autonomy brought about by the organization of the work of these professionals led to the articulation and extension of cooperative work in several cities across Brazil. Lessons learnt from the ASMARE/SLU partnership, for example, were one of the sources of inspiration for the constitution of the Waste and Citizenship Programme (*Programa Lixo e Cidadania*) created through a UNICEF initiative in 1998 (Dias, 2007). Currently the Waste and Citizenship Forum (*Fórum Lixo e Cidadania*) is composed – at national, state and municipal level – of representatives from several sectors within civil society, as well as government and private initiatives, and operates propositionally to coordinate the support and monitoring of integrated solid waste management programmes that include waste pickers.

Seeking the survival, a great contingent of homeless people ended up creating a spontaneous economy out of the solid waste discarded without any separation in the Brazilian cities. Santos (2008) called this a “waste picking economy”, a form of self-employment and self-income generation, sometimes resembling [when organized] to a solidarity economy (Singer, 2002, 2003).

The waste pickers thus integrated into a mode of economic organization and now formally organized in work and income generation cooperatives established the foundations for the National Movement of Recyclable Waste Pickers (*Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis: MNCR*) in September 1999 in a meeting coordinated by NGOs, public authorities and the private sector held in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais. At this event the recyclable waste pickers, in partnership with organizations that work with the adult street population, established the foundations for a national meeting. One can conclude from this that the creation of the MNCR had the optimal participation of NGOs, the Church and other supporters of waste pickers – that which Tilly (2007) calls participation by invitation.

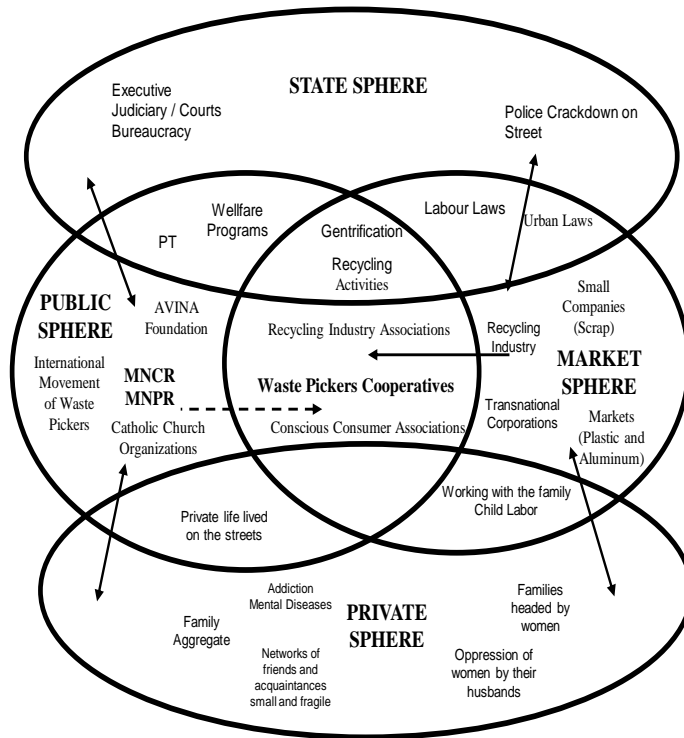
Since its inception the MNCR has achieved important gains in different themed areas. It is significant to note, however, that when referring to the MNCR’s official 1<sup>st</sup> National Waste Pickers’ Meeting, which took place in Brasilia in 2001, the waste pickers focus on overcoming prejudice and challenges to their organization: “The meeting was marked by the breaking down of old prejudices about the waste picker, who, as well as respect from society, is gaining political and social strength” (MNCR, 2006).

There have been major achievements in the history of the movement, such as, for example, the National Policy for Solid Waste (*Política Nacional de Resíduos Sólidos*) (Brasil, 2010), which, after nineteen years pending approval, was made law by President Lula in December 2010 and recommends the incorporation of the waste picker in the recyclable waste collection process. Alongside basic sanitation plans, municipalities must prepare a Plan for the Integrated Management of Solid Waste (*Plano de Gestão Integrada de Resíduos Sólidos*), with a component for the inclusion of recyclable waste pickers.

It can be seen that from the outset the waste pickers have contributed to extending not only the conception of who works or is working on the streets, based on experience and contingency (Reis, 2001) and within tensions about what is right and what is responsibility, but also to the actual networks that the movement has established with a range of collaborating groups, such as the Church and UNICEF, in forming the Waste and Citizenship Forum. These collaboration networks have, in turn, forged new constitutions and, consequently, new forms of regulation for a profession which until then had not been understood by the authorities as work or occupation. Before we move forward with the frame analysis, we need to describe the actors involved in each recycling production chain. Table 2

presents a summary of significant moments in the MNCR's history and their implications for the identity field.

Fig. 2 - Waste Pickers on the Social Spheres in Brazilian Cities



Source: Adapted from JANOSKI (1998).

**Table 2. Main events and implications for the MNCR's identity field**

Year	Event	Implications for the identity field
2001	1 <sup>st</sup> National Meeting of Paper and Reusable Material Pickers held in Brasilia.	Internal organization of the movement, Demand for public policy, Recognition, Creation of specific vocabulary (symbolic resources)
	June - a month of MNCR coordination.	Internal organization of the movement
	7 <sup>th</sup> June – Waste Picker's Day	Recognition
	1 <sup>st</sup> Festival of Waste and Citizenship in Belo Horizonte	Demand for public policy, Recognition, Creation of specific vocabulary (symbolic resources)
2002	Recognition of the profession “recyclable waste picker” in the Brazilian Code of Occupations. <sup>7</sup>	Recognition Impact on public policy
2003	1 <sup>st</sup> Congress of Waste Pickers organized by the MNCR, including waste pickers from Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina and held in Caxias do Sul.	Internal organization of the movement, Demand for public policy, Recognition, Creation of specific vocabulary (symbolic resources), Expansion to environmental issues
	The Inter-ministerial Committee for the Social Inclusion of Recyclable Waste Pickers set up by Presidential Decree	Impact on public policy
	Federal programmes begin to make stipulations about the transfer of funds to municipalities for the eradication of waste and the preparation of Plans for the Integrated Management of Solid Waste, with a component for the inclusion of waste pickers.	Impact on public policy
2005	1 <sup>st</sup> Latin American Congress of Waste Pickers held in São Leopoldo, RS, preceding the World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre.	Internal organization of the movement, Expansion to Latin America, Demand for public policy, Recognition.
2006	The federal government rules that recyclable waste discarded by federal government bodies and organizations must be donated to waste picker associations or cooperatives.	Impact on public policy
2007	Modification of the National Policy of Basic Sanitation: authorization of the contracting of recyclable picker associations or cooperatives, with no bidding requirements, to undertake recyclable solid waste collection activities.	Impact on public policy
2009	1 <sup>st</sup> Expocataadores - International Meeting of Waste Pickers ( <i>Encontro Nacional e Internacional de Catadores</i> ) in São Paulo	Expansion to Latin America, India and Asia, Demand for public policy, Recognition
2010	Sanction and Regulation of the National Solid Waste Policy after 19 years pending approval in congress.	Impact on public policy

Source: prepared by the authors.

## Brazilian recycling industry and waste pickers in the cities

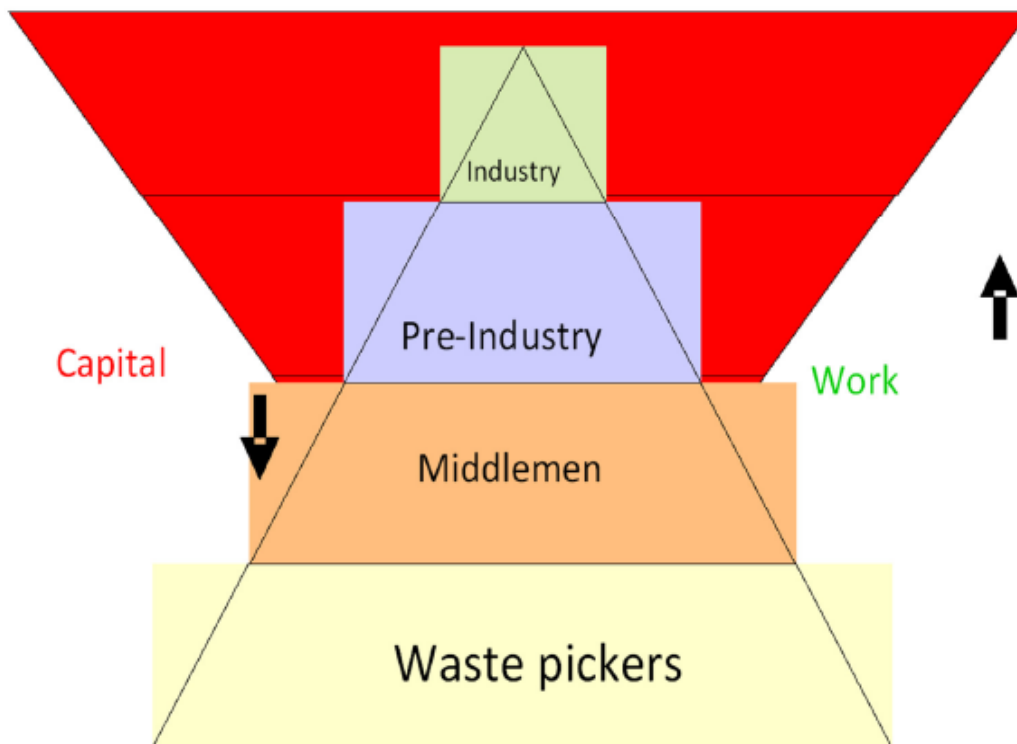
The waste pickers' capacity as agents that reverse consumer products has increased the reach and viability of recycling. Thus a reassessment of things that had been considered useless – waste – led to the creation of an immense circuit, the industrial circuit's *downstream* (Leal *et al.*, 2006). Brazil's recycling production chain encompasses the process of solid waste management from disposal, collection, sorting, bailing, commercialization of material, transport logistics, industry processing and the development of markets for the new product (Gonçalves-Dias, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Brazilian Code of Occupations (*Código Brasileiro de Ocupações*: CBO) 94 – Ordinance 397 of the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2002, Ministry of Work and Employment.

It is important to note that the picking, separating and sorting of useable material taken from waste in Brazilian cities by the hands of the pickers corresponds to 89% of the industrial production circuit for reused raw material, while the remaining 11% of this circuit is undertaken by industry (MNCR, 2009). In an overview of the dynamics and characteristics of the expansion of the recycled production sector in Brazil, one can see that since its inception it has been dependent on a work force crucial to the collection and selection of recyclable material. Given high levels of consumption, poverty and unemployment, this is how the recycling industry has expanded.

When considered from the viewpoint of the recycling production chain, the waste pickers are the weakest link in the field, since they rely on intermediaries due to their need for very short-term working capital and their lack of equipment and technical training to manipulate the material they collect. Figure 3 – The inverse logic of the structure of the field demonstrates the inverse logic of the Brazilian recycling industry.

**Figure 3. The inverse logic of the structure of the field**



Source: MNCR, 2009.

The structure of the recycling chain is shallow and pyramidal. At the bottom of the chain are thousands of waste pickers (Fundação Avina, 2008). Whether autonomous or organized in associations, cooperatives or networks, the waste pickers work informally under precarious and subhuman conditions and do not earn enough to enable them to live with dignity (Gonçalves-Dias, 2009; Leal *et al.*, 2002). At the top of the pyramid we find a small number of recycling industries (Fundação Avina, 2008; MNCR, 2009), which covers pre-processing, processing and the transformation of recyclable materials into new products. The concentration of these industries in the South and South-East regions of Brazil also means that a large contingent of waste pickers does not have access to the purchasing markets (Gonçalves-Dias, 2009).

Below these are the intermediaries, who usually formalize the process, since they contain a broad network of scrap dealers, brokers and middlemen. The intermediary (scrap dealer), in possessing all the necessary infrastructure to work with waste (scales, presses, crushers, trucks, depositories, telephones and financial capital), has the advantage in negotiations with the cooperatives. The scrap dealer collects and purchases small quantities of recycled material from waste pickers and cooperatives which he then takes to his depository, bails appropriately (thus adding value to it) and supplies large volumes to industry (Conceição, 2003). This can be illustrated by the following statement:

We only work with intermediaries because we have no choice. The cooperatives' lack of infrastructure does not enable us to bypass this link in the chain, which benefits us in no way. To produce and sell to industry one needs to operate on an industrial scale and, for the moment, we don't have the capacity to do this. We are struggling to obtain more structure and thus to be better able to negotiate with the industrial sector.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, at the commercialization stage the intermediary becomes the main market player. In fact, the intermediaries' position in interactions with the waste pickers is highly favourable. Their demands range from the type and volume of material acquired to the prices they set.

On the other hand, although they appear capable of taking advantage of market price fluctuations, the intermediaries are also subject to industry demands in their interactions with the processing and transformation industries. The scrap dealers also have complaints. In 2009, according to the representative of the Avina Foundation (*Fundação Avina*), they said:

[...] 'we are a company, we pay, we have employees, I have ten people here in the office, I pay all worker benefits', yet hundreds of waste pickers who are on the streets and bring material to them are not, obviously, on the payroll.

Furthermore, many significant decisions are made outside the waste pickers' group. The adoption of new technology, products and production design, are, as a rule, beyond their governance. Pickers organized into cooperatives contribute as a work force and with services or supplies that are reprocessed by large recycling companies, who maintain control of technical decisions and who enjoy favourable status within the legal and judicial system. There is a certain division between the design of products and the execution of collection and recycling. As Higa (2005) points out, the "division of labour" in this field tends to perpetually disadvantage individual enterprises while benefiting the large companies.

However, the mobilization of thousands of pickers through the MNCR is an attempt to modify the production chain's perverse structure, by insisting on new and better public policies and regulation by the federal government. The MNCR's articulation process proves that the waste pickers' group is the biggest challenge to the organizational field of recycling, which is subject to the recycling production chain's institutionalized vulnerability, as well as its fragile and precarious nature.

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<sup>8</sup> Genivaldo Silva Santos, member of the MNCR's state commission, in an interview with the magazine *Revista Sustentabilidade*.

## MNRC: A view from the collective action

Picker organizations currently exist in all Brazilian states, “where the main requisite is the development of leadership to raise awareness at grassroots level that a movement exists and that this movement is strong and fights for waste pickers’ rights”.<sup>9</sup> Another statement notes that:

the waste pickers’ main struggle today is to organize all those people who still survive off waste, on the streets, in apartment blocks, who are called bag shredders, bin men, to organize them and show their ethical value as human beings and demonstrate all the good that exists within them and how they can become different people.<sup>10</sup>

To this end, in 2005 the National Movement of Recyclable Waste Pickers (*Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis*: MNCR) mapped out the situation of registered cooperatives and associations. Information about registered cooperatives and associations was recorded and can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3. The situation of cooperatives and associations registered by the MNCR in 2005**

Situation	Cooperatives	%
01 Group organized as an association or cooperative with its own waste press, scales, carts and depository, capable of increasing its physical structure and its equipment in order to absorb new pickers and to create the conditions required to install industrial recycling units.	1,381	4%
02 Group organized as an association or cooperative with some equipment, though needing support to acquire other equipment and/or a depository. These groups are in an intermediary phase and need to strengthen their infrastructure in order to increase collection and thus formally include new pickers.	2,753	8%
03 Group under organization, with some, but not a great deal, of its own equipment, needing support to acquire more equipment and/or its own depository.	5,720	16%
04 Disorganized group, on the streets or at landfills, without any equipment and frequently working for intermediaries in precarious conditions.	25,783	72%
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,637</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: National Register of the National Movement of Recyclable Waste Pickers – MNCR, 2006.

The groups outlined in the four situations in Table 3 require technical support and training, varying in content and degree depending on the evolutionary stage of each group, cooperative and/or association. And the movement’s leadership challenge prevails; that is leadership capable of bringing together the non-organized organic grassroots groups that still constitute the majority (72%) of the picker groups documented by the MNCR (2006). Dias (2007) thus stresses that experiences of picker inclusion have distinct forms in the country’s different regions, both in terms of difficulties in obtaining support and partnership with local governments and/or difficulties that the associations/cooperatives encounter in trying to find the balance between the energy spent on socio-organizational processes and activities to publicize their cause (internal and external mobilizations) and the need to strengthen their

<sup>9</sup> Statement made by a waste picker in the documentary ‘These people will go far’ (MNCR, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> *idem*.

economic enterprises in an increasingly competitive recycling market, where the speculative interests of groups along the recycling chain are increasingly prevalent.

The scenario demonstrated by the MNCR demonstrates that, although the complexity and intensity of the picking process varies from location to location, overall, subhuman working conditions, over-exploitation by recycling intermediaries, prejudice from the local population and lack of incentives and support from the public authorities are common elements found in almost all the places in which this activity occurs, as Dias (2007) indicates.

### **Identity fields and the MNCR: A frames analysis**

The attribution processes that result from the formation of the pickers' protagonist identity field takes place through negotiations and interactions between SMOs involved in the diagnosis of the street population's problems and circumstances (Hunt, Benford and Snow, 1994). This diagnosis involves identifying the nature of the problem and is undertaken in parallel with the Church's identification of these actors in its work with street dwellers.

This interaction marks the start of the process of constructing the collective identity of the protagonist group. The identification of the subsistence issue led to a prognosis of the need for an organization that dealt primarily with these issues. A waste picker's statement describes this situation: "People are generally led by need, by lack of employment, right?" So, "picking has become a necessity today, not only pickers, but the unemployed also seek out this route." In relation to the MNCR, Silva's (2006) considerations set out the movement's activities:

In the first instance, the movement's actions were centred on work and income that grew from social inclusion and citizenship projects. This strategy was closely linked to the ways in which the socio-economic arenas and apparatus, which connected and connect the actors in field, were coordinated. (Silva, 2006: 12)

When looking at the history of the MNCR, one can see that, originally, the Church was one of its main partners, as well as a coordinator of waste picker mobilization for work and income. This is clearly related to the progressive history of the Church in working with marginalized populations and its use of popular education methodologies when raising awareness of street dwellers/waste pickers' social circumstances. Its work also formed part of attempts that sought to provide solutions of an economic nature to generate income and subsistence for these populations. It is interesting to note that the model adopted at that time was the creation of cooperatives.

This was certainly not the waste pickers' organizational framework but arose from the Church and from other supporters of the movement. Other (supporters') identity fields were articulated in order to promote a specific mode of organization to deal with the movement's material issues. From this, the protagonists constructed their motivational and prognostic frames, which specified what needed to be done in relation to problems of recognition and subsistence. These frames also involved the emergence of ideologies that would permeate the protagonist identity field.

### **Protagonist identity field and the right to the city**

The initial mobilization in the 1980s had a broad capacity for resonance within the protagonists' field, due to the process of frame alignment with diagnosis and prognosis, in other words, in micromobilizations that sought to internally influence the organization and externally develop the movement's strategies, with an emphasis on its objectives. This



process was supported by an organizational structure that preceded the structuring of the movement itself, through the existence of organizational networks that worked to support street populations in other cities, which were also part of the Catholic Church and UNICEF, through the “Children in the Garbage Dumps: Never Again” campaign to remove children from waste collection work. The creation of the Waste and Citizenship Forum was a large inter-organizational coalition of institutions that worked in issues related to urban waste.

Later on, the waste pickers conducted a new diagnosis of their collective identity within the movement in order to claim recognition as workers. This is a process that clearly includes the material dimensions that occurred at the beginning, but also involves the demarcation of their space, with a view to self-assertion and reinforces the sense of belonging (what it is to be and to feel like a waste picker).

The diagnosis frame extends out beyond a focus on material issues and has progressed a little further into the issue of recognition. How are the waste pickers seen? As one waste picker declares, “Society’s view of the waste picker is still prejudiced”<sup>11</sup>. Other statements<sup>12</sup> enlarge on this theme:

When, as a result of fate, I came to live on the street, even I saw myself as someone constantly under attack, because people didn’t acknowledge me as a waste picker, they saw me as a dustbin, they saw me as dirty, they called me a floor rag.

(...) But now there are a lot of people who accept us well, who greet us, talk to us, treat us well in their homes, but there are a lot of people (...)

Throughout the mobilization process the waste pickers changed their view of themselves, as shown by the following statement:<sup>13</sup>

(...) my image as a waste picker is that I was a picker, today I am aware of this, because there is nothing better than becoming aware of your role in society. I am, yes, I am a waste picker, but now I am much more proud.

It is interesting to note the paradox: the waste pickers claim recognition for inclusion in society as informal workers under precarious working conditions and aim to move away from invisibility to occupy arenas and be recognized, despite remaining on the margins of society. In the articulation of this frame the protagonists propose a re-signification of the value of waste in order to articulate it as a field of work, as noted in the following statement:<sup>14</sup>

Look, before being organized we were used to seeing ourselves as just any old thing, less than a human being. Since getting organized we have recovered from this somewhat, we have reclaimed the importance of being workers, we have lost this shame, this fear, we feel strength in being autonomous, in being able to work in a dignified manner, decently.

The movement’s arena was also a space of social integration in which, in addition to economic issues, the issue of the population’s self-esteem was also emphasized, thus

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<sup>11</sup> idem.

<sup>12</sup> idem.

<sup>13</sup> idem.

<sup>14</sup> idem.

transforming the collective identity that had emerged and the protagonists' identity field. This fact is evidenced by the following waste picker's words:<sup>15</sup>

Today I see myself as a citizen, whereas before I used to see myself as real trash, I had no perspective on things. Before the movement I didn't have this view of struggle, of fighting for our rights. Today I see myself as a citizen.

The need to be seen as workers also gave the movement new legitimacy when taking their demands to the State, since they did not require welfare but public policies that dealt with their issues:

We fight for state policies, right? Not only for policies or problems that construct state policies [sic]. And one of our goals is: That the waste picker should be remunerated for the service provided. Another goal is that we should be valued for our work and recognized.

Our struggle is a hard struggle [...] it is policy, and seeking social policy, inclusion policies, in which we waste pickers have our rights guaranteed.

[...] we seek another sort of inclusion, we seek economic inclusion, a right to work, a right to collect from the street, a right to the street, a right to our right to be able to have rights.

Thus the MNCR's processes of construction and articulation lead us to agree with Burity (2008), in that they were constituted "in the social", from a certain identity or field, and were articulated with other social agencies, generating forms of sociability and organization that transcend these and become "something else". Their functioning was no longer tied to the local logic of agents who helped them to establish themselves as a movement.

### **The antagonist identity field and the right to the city**

Although it forms part of federal level public policy, the integrated management of municipal solid waste with the effective inclusion of waste pickers is permeated by a number of tensions, difficulties and constraints.<sup>16</sup> One can observe here abusive processes, threats to the pickers and a weakening of the working conditions of workers who live off waste. Often, the mode of organizing the movement has been delineated as essentially combative, creating tension with partners and governments whenever it has been necessary to secure waste pickers' rights (Silva, 2006). The issue includes a variety of actors with distinct interests, such as public authorities, the waste pickers, a range of civil society organizations, such as the OAF and the Avina Foundation, and the recycling production chain, in a relationship marked by power asymmetries.

If the work of picking waste is as important as this collective suggests, then why establish laws that prohibit the free circulation of workers? Motives are varied and range from the

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<sup>15</sup> idem.

<sup>16</sup> A number of confrontations have occurred in the city of São Paulo, for example. These activities include attempts to transfer cooperatives operating two sorting centres near the city centre to locations far from their operations, alleging contamination of the area and other arguments. A Bill has also been drafted that provides for the standardization of the waste pickers' carts with their obligatory registration to be undertaken by concessionary companies. The pickers mobilized and protested against this project, which was later vetoed by the mayor (Grimberg, 2007).

prejudice generated by carts – which, having nowhere to operate, compete with cars for space on the streets and avenues – to the economic interests of the large production and recyclable material transformation industries and, more recently, to those of the government, which sees an opportunity for high dividends in the “recycling market”, thus creating tensions between civil society, the MNCR and municipal government bodies (Lima, 2008; Silva, 2006).

Antagonist identity fields feature within this context. According to one member of the MNCR in São Paulo, “I think that the movement’s main struggle is its structure. It is engaged in a struggle against the public authorities. The main adversary that I see today is the public authorities.” For the MNCR representative the greatest difficulty today is still the relationship with the public authorities, which often adopt a combative attitude rather than a supportive one. This historical picture of clashes between the public authorities and the waste pickers is described in the words of the MNCR representative.

And then we really get to the issue of the city of São Paulo, right? Lots of times, principally in the Baixada do Glicério region, persecutions by police inspections, of ... of the Municipal Civil Guard (*Guarda Civil Municipal*: GCM), not letting the waste pickers work, right? And often situations, in fact, of, you know, apprehending the workers’ carts, police repression to take them off the streets and away from the waste. The revitalization of urban centres. So this great history of the issue of the revitalization and sanitation, yes, of the large urban centres, often brings a policy to us like (...) ‘look at the waste picker in the Glicério region, the picker in central São Paulo, it isn’t pretty, no it isn’t, you know’?<sup>17</sup>

[...] our greatest difficulty, um, [...] Not difficulties! Our working relationship has always been with the public authorities, because we really understand that the issue of waste is a public issue. Right? And from there we include ourselves within this public issue. So, we want to discuss it.<sup>18</sup>

The relationship between the public authorities and the cooperatives is very difficult, conflicted and complex, particularly in São Paulo. “In other cities, such as Diadema and those in the Alto Tietê, the cooperatives receive payment for the services they provide, but not here. In the centre it’s that thing about ‘making things look good for the middle class’. They aren’t worried about the waste pickers”.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, the lack of public recognition for the services provided by the waste pickers is illustrated in the way that the municipalities<sup>20</sup> and the population have traditionally treated the pickers, seeing them as enemies of cleaning, as waste “thieves”, criminals and vagrants, as demonstrated by a number of authors (Burzstyn, 2000; Carmo *et al.*, 2004; Conceição, 2006; Dias, 2007). The Caxias do Sul letter reveals their values and attempts to construct an awareness of the inclusion of waste pickers in the throwaway society:

This struggle has not started just now. It’s the fruit of a long history of men and women who, in their work as waste pickers, have guaranteed their survival through the things that society discards and throws away. It is a history through which we have discovered the value and meaning of our work: collecting and recycling discarded material, we are environmental agents and we contribute to the cleaning of our cities.

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<sup>17</sup> Roberto Laureano, MNCR representative, in a talk given on 05.06.2009.

<sup>18</sup> *idem.*

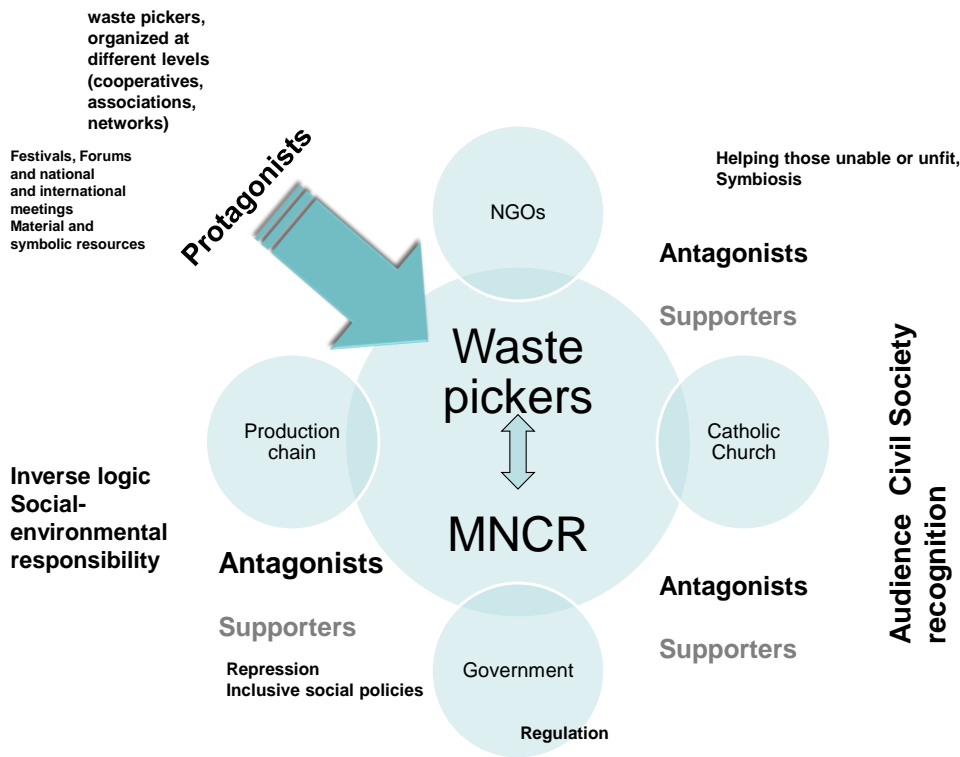
<sup>19</sup> Genivaldo Silva Santos, member of the MNCR’s state commission in an interview with the magazine *Revista Sustentabilidade* (2010).

<sup>20</sup> For a reconstruction of the “clean up operations” in Belo Horizonte see Dias (2002); for São Paulo see Jacobi and Viveiros, 2006; Gonçalves-Dias (2009); and Grimberg *et al.* (2004).

Organization into associations and cooperatives has provided the possibility of work and income to the most excluded sections of society (...) recycling life itself. (MNCR, Caxias do Sul, 2003:1)

The problem of waste picking was historically seen as a matter for the police, in the sense that their activities were always the victim of “clean up operations”, or worse, of the eradication of the waste pickers and their work locations. Contrary to what one might suppose, the pickers have responded to the complex challenge for large cities at the beginning of this century – the management of solid waste. In their statements, the pickers are indeed clear about their role in the current informal economy of waste picking. And this is already a reality, at least for those that are organized within the MNCR. But one should remember that physical repression is not the only way to contain social movements. As Tarrow advises (1996), other forms of social control exist to contain the movement’s progress. Figure 4 presents the mapping of the MNCR’s identity fields.

**Figure 4. Mapping the identity field**



Source: research data.

## Extension of the frames and the construction of new resonances of the MNCR

We should note that throughout the 1990s social-environmentalism launched a strong rallying cry over the issue of recycling, which was also seen as an important environmental problem at that time, particularly in large urban centres. The waste pickers’ struggle has expanded because of the wide publicity given to the notion of sustainable development. In this case, the pickers have been successful in exploiting the connection between the environment and social

issues. Thus picking has stopped being a social problem and has gained status as a social-environmental solution, which has also conferred greater legitimacy on the MNCR's demands. On the other hand, this strategy has also legitimized the increasingly accelerated production-consumption-discard circuit. Because companies need to protect their image, they see recycling as opportunity to improve their reputation (Gonçalves-Dias, 2009). Such a change can be seen in the waste pickers' own discourse.<sup>21</sup>

I recycle; I go out into the street and make house collections door-to-door.

Before the environmentalists talked of selective collection, we – the waste pickers from the street, the dumps and the cooperatives – were already doing it.

In this respect, Santos (2003: 103) emphasizes that:

[...] when they are out with their work instruments, handcarts, carts or picking with their hands, they are working hard, solving the problem on an individual scale and at the level of society, as an important 'agent' of municipal solid waste policies. (...) Environmental issues are part of this dynamic, either as a cause or an effect.

Articulation with the environment also enables progress in prospects for the waste pickers' working conditions, rights and citizenship and demonstrates difficulties with the antagonist field, as described in the following statements:<sup>22</sup>

The waste picker has various roles in society; it's just that he isn't recognized.

The waste picker works for the three levels of government in this case, right, I mean, he takes the rubbish off the street, which is the municipality's job, he educates citizens within their houses, in other words, he provides environmental education within the house, which is the source of the waste, and he also prevents all this material from going into a landfill site.

The ecological discourse lends much greater legitimacy to the waste pickers' proposals, increasing the movement's resonance in coalitions at national and international level (Latin America, Africa and Asia). Recognized as a profession, the "picker" has succeeded in re-signifying the stigmatized "waste picker" into a "priority public cleaning agent" or an "environmental agent". There is room here for a new claim: charging for the service provided, as discussed in statements by the waste pickers themselves:<sup>23</sup>

He is already an environmental partner, a municipal partner. Given that the collections made by the municipalities are never performed correctly and we go there and we clean up the areas, we pick up what's left. That's the reason for charging the municipality for the services provided.

This material that the waste picker collects from the cities through selective collection means that the public authorities don't have to pay for the landfill, and it contributes to the environment, it contributes to public health too, you understand? So the waste picker contributes a lot to this issue and this is still not understood today.

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<sup>21</sup> Statement made by a waste picker in the documentary 'These people will go far' (MNCR, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> *idem.*

<sup>23</sup> *idem.*

We want to be remunerated for our work (...) Why do the municipalities pay the contractors such a lot while we, the waste pickers, do the collecting, separate the materials and correctly send them for recycling, yet we aren't paid for our work? (São Paulo, 2004: 1)

The social-environmental discourse has been appropriated, in different ways, by all the actors in this field, thus conferring legitimacy on each. Companies that establish policies regarding social-environmental responsibility structure their recycling programmes and reverse logistics to include the waste pickers and seek to develop training processes for them. In turn, the MNCR utilizes the environmental agent discourse to pressurize the government. In this new context, the picking phenomenon stops being an *exclusively social problem* (linked to street dwellers) and instead becomes a solution for the management of solid waste in a number of Brazilian cities, thus leading it to be considered an *environmental issue*. In this way it has entered the policy sphere, in that it has become the object of national, state and municipal public policies that favour the inclusion of waste pickers. Table 4 summarizes the various frame alignment phases that the MNCR has passed through since its inception.

With the spread of the concept of recyclable waste there was a change in the meaning of waste. As a result, the waste pickers would become targets of different strategies- for example, gaining support from public policies to get organized into cooperatives. This also started a reframe on the picker's social role, from a marginalized homeless to an environmental agent working for society's sustainability (Lima, 2008).

**Table 4. Summary of the MNCR frame alignment**

Actors	Attribution	Articulation	
	Diagnosis	Motivation	Prognosis
1 <sup>st</sup> phase: Emergence of waste pickers as a protagonist identity field			
Networks of organizations that support street populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Situation of ‘invisibility’ and material privation</li> <li>• Need to survive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition and establishment of solidarity bonds</li> <li>• Mobilization for work and income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements in material conditions through the organization of cooperatives</li> </ul>
2 <sup>nd</sup> phase: Resonance			
Church and UNICEF = Waste and Citizenship Forum		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition as something central to the waste pickers</li> <li>• Movement as an arena for social integration</li> <li>• Creation of specific vocabulary, such as a flag, music, others (symbolic resources)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements in material conditions tied to recognition</li> <li>• Waste as something of value (production)</li> <li>• Waste picker as worker</li> <li>• Demands to the State (public policies)</li> </ul>
3 <sup>rd</sup> phase: Construction of new resonances in the waste pickers’ identity field			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal government</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> <li>• Companies that generate post-consumption waste</li> <li>• Collection companies</li> <li>• Recycling companies (processors and transformers)</li> </ul>	<p>New diagnosis: Expansion of Frame Expansion of Recognition to new audiences (environment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalization of the waste pickers’ social role: important actor on the economic, social and environmental scene.</li> <li>• Coordination at national and international level (Latin America, Asia, Africa) - Networks</li> <li>• Claiming payment for environmental services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of the profession</li> <li>• Government partnership to improve the environment</li> <li>• Re-signification of stigmatized waste picker to priority public cleaning agent</li> <li>• Operating with greater significance in the reverse chain can increase bargaining power</li> <li>• Social and inclusive business</li> </ul>

Source: prepared by the authors

## Final remarks

The main results indicate that the formation of the MNCR identity field passes through an affirmation of the waste pickers’ social identity as legitimate participants in the social and economic life central to Brazilian urban centres. For a long time the pickers were seen as a group of homeless people that was, on a social level, almost invisible, sometimes stigmatized for their situation as street dwellers or for their activities collecting waste, in other words, as social actors surviving on consumer leftovers in the cities. This condition was repeated in the social and economic spheres of the cities. Firstly, because they were not accepted as citizens and secondly because of their work, characterized as the collection of solid waste and not seen as work that was socially recognized or valued. This was a frame of attribution related to a diagnosis of the circumstances of the homeless, the people who occupy a space in the urban scenario of large Brazilian metropolises and who saw their ability to survive as compromised by their social invisibility.

The protagonists thus also constructed the prognosis and motivational frames, which specified what was to be done in relation to problems of recognition and the identification of the sources of their privation. This involved the emergence of ideologies that permeated the protagonists’ identity field, principally mediated by the work of the Church, through the

construction of the notion of human rights and decent work. This activity improved the waste pickers' self-esteem and also provided an organizational structure for them to be able to tackle economic and material issues. This initial articulation, which started in the 1980s, had extensive capacity for resonance within the field, due to the process of frame alignment, which linked the solidarity discourse with social inclusion of homeless people, and also due to the existence of networks of organizations that worked to support street dwellers in large Brazilian urban centres.

With advances in MNCR activities and through initial mobilizations, issues of self-assertion have gained almost the same weight as those ascribed to economic subsistence and material issues. The waste pickers definitively attributed a material value to waste, reintroducing waste into the production cycle, while their own activities in the urban sphere were important to the process of providing public cleaning services, as well as to the symbolic aspects of working with waste, creating the picking economy in the cities. All these elements contributed to the waste pickers being seen as workers on streets. This also led them to direct their activities toward the public authorities, seeking to secure public policies aimed at their integration into more coordinated economic and social dynamics of the cities with greater gains for the pickers themselves. It was not enough, then, to be on the margins of society, as the previous prognosis had considered the homeless people, it was now necessary to fight for recognition and improvements in working conditions of waste pickers. Finally, the third stage of MNCR organization occurs in the expansion of frames, connecting their struggles with the environmental preoccupations of organized civil society and with the social-environmental responsibility activities of business. The capacity of these frames increased due to their greater resonance with social action fields, thus forming a master-frame. In this sense, a new trend undeniably exists in relation to the production of inclusive public policies in terms of solid waste, although these are far from effective or widespread in the generalized practices of Brazilian cities.

It is worth noting that the use of frame theory enables us to undertake an analysis of the organizational context that defines the contours of collective action, in particular of the MNCR. Such an approach reclaims the notion of the waste pickers as subjects who interpret and attribute meanings to their activity context in the cities. As well as having to negotiate the meanings of their actions within the sphere of the movement, they also emphasize that their activities are rooted in the social environment of the cities, whose policy opportunities and action of another civil society and market actors may facilitate or restrict their protests and mobilizations.

This highlights the need to extend research about the waste pickers' identity field, in order to address the multi-dimensionality of the movement's strategies and practices and its relationship with other civil society actors, government agencies and corporations.

Analyses based on the theory of frames, mostly produced by authors and subjects of study from the central countries, notably the United States, have been characterized by not incorporating dimensions dear to Latin American studies on social movements, democratization and expansion of participatory spaces in the cities. We tried with the present study, because we choose as the object of analysis a social movement built on Brazilian political and social environment and also make use of a theoretical apparatus that problematizes the construction of the public sphere in the cities, joint analyses of frames with a critic narrative able to bring new perspectives on the phenomena of democratization, participation and access to rights in cities. We believe that this attempt to understand the social movements in the cities can advance discussions both within the theory based on frames, criticized for its shortcomings regarding the politicization of the discussion, as well as



the literature traditionally produced in Latin American analyses, which often underestimate the organizational dynamics of social movements. Such a venture may bring new perspectives to an analysis of social movements in Brazil and Latin America and produce a richer and more substantive debate with theoretical applications which, although not often seen in studies developed by researchers in this region, contain intrinsic possibilities relevant to an analysis of the dynamic of inclusion and exclusion of homeless people which marks the operations of social movements such as the MNCR in contemporary cities, marked by complex relationships of different actors of the state, market and public spheres.

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## Right to the City and Soccer: Strategies of Mobilization to the Right to Remain in the Place of Residence

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**Abstract:** The Brazilian urban crisis shows a framework of environmental injustice, where the poorest population is subjected to a disproportionate share of the negative effects of the development model, including poor quality of housing and environment. This crisis has been exacerbated with the actions of governments and private investments to reshape cities for the major sporting events to come. Although the urban legislation has been considered advanced, on a local scale, many rights are being violated. This research aims to examine how the community of Lagamar, located in Fortaleza, one of the headquarters of FIFA World Cup 2014, has been organized to claim their right to stay in the place of residence. The aim is to investigate how residents articulate and create mechanisms of mobilization and participation in positions of power to interfere in projects that affect them.

**Keywords:** right to the city, FIFA World Cup 2014, social and environmental injustice

### Introduction

Brazil ends the first decade of this century with more than 84% of its population living in cities.<sup>2</sup> The intense process of urban concentration in the previous decades was disconnected with satisfactory public offer of services, housing, transportation and environmental sanitation. Thus, a significant portion of the population now lives in informal settlements in precarious conditions, such as slums and risk areas.

The territorial exclusion and the democratization process that occurred in the 1980s made urban social movements' important role in the drafting of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution. The inclusion of a chapter of the Urban Policy in that Constitution represents the beginning of a fundamental transformation in the normative conception of urban planning that led to the assertion of the right to the city in national legislation. Currently, there are a number of laws which, apparently, consolidate this conception in a federal level. On a local scale, however, there is great difficulty in realization of the human rights that comprise the right to the city, especially for the poorest people.

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<sup>2</sup> Data obtained from the Census of 2010 conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics.

This unequal cartography of law's enforcement coincides with an unequal distribution mapping of the perverse effects of urban development. Basically, citizenship rights are denied in the same areas that lack public sanitation, health, education and transportation. Or, in other areas where these services are of better quality, the low-income population has been the target of urban interventions that lead to their forced eviction to more distant regions of the city.

In this urban context, Brazil intends to host major sporting events in the coming years, as the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup, the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games. Such events require large investments in mobility, sports equipments and tourism services, causing significant changes in the cities. For this reason, local governments have strong interests in receiving them.

What we have seen in the cities that will host these games, however, is that all investments, most of them public, violate the rights of much of the population. Many projects will affect thousands of families by promoting forced evictions, often associated with police harassments and illegal pressure held by public agents.

In this paper, we analyze the changes occurring in one of the twelve headquarters cities of the FIFA World Cup 2014, Fortaleza, and, more specifically, how one of several communities, Lagamar, has mobilized to remain in place for housing. This will realize how important the right to the city has been stated or denied on several scales and the strategies used by dwellers to ensure their right.

## **Fortaleza and Lagamar ductio**

With a population of over 2.4 million inhabitants,<sup>3</sup> Fortaleza occupies the fifth position among Brazilian cities, second only to São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and Brasília. Whereas according to a survey presented by Silva (1992), this population was 40,902 (forty thousand, nine hundred and two) people in 1890, it can be stated that there was an urban explosion over the last century.

All that population growth is explained by a number of factors combined. At the end of the nineteenth century, the city was the largest center of public and private investments in the state of Ceará because of the emerging commercial trades. At that time, there was a huge demand for workers and, on the other side, people started to believe that the city could offer opportunities for all. Another important element in this equation is the structure of land distribution in Ceará, based on large property. The peasants had no resources to acquire their own land to meet the basic needs of their families, being subjected to the power of oligarchies. Droughts were also crucial for the frame, since a significant portion of the population of the state lived in a semi-arid climate. So, along all of the twentieth century, especially after the 1930s, Fortaleza has received many people from all the state.

The intensification of urban growth from the 1930s is not presented as outstanding on the Brazilian scene. Maricato (2002: 17) points out that while Brazil has presented major cities since the colonial period, "only after the turn of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth century that the process of urbanization of society really begins to take hold, driven

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<sup>3</sup> Data obtained from the Census of 2010 conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics.

by the emergence of free labor, the proclamation of the Republic and a fledgling industry that unfolds in the wake of activities related to coffee and basic needs of the internal market”.<sup>4</sup>

Even with the growth of cities, the Brazilian economy was centered on the agricultural sector until the 1930s, when it begins a period of considerable state investment in infrastructure so that there was the possibility of developing an industry in the country for replacement of imports. Thus, cities have become crucial to the development project that was being planned. They allowed the concentration of the workforce in nearby industries.

Table 1 shows the growth and distribution of the population in Brazil, in the northeast region and in Ceara state after 1940. It is noticed that in this first period, there was a predominance of people in the field at all scales (67.77% in Brazil, 76.58% in the northeast, and 77.28% in Ceara). Over the years, the general trend has been reversing this reality, with an emptying of the countryside and increasing urban population. In Brazil, cities have begun to concentrate more people than the field at the turn of the sixties. In the northeast region and in Ceara state, this phenomenon occurred a decade later. The arrival of the twenty-first century announces that more than 81% of the population lives in cities. In the case of Ceará, this percentage reaches over 71%, most of them in Fortaleza.

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<sup>4</sup> Translation by the author.



**Table 1. Resident population in Brazil, northeast region and Ceara state, according to household situation – 1970 to 2010**

Country, Region and state	Housing situation	YEAR													
		1940		1950		1960		1970		1980		1991		2000	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
<b>Brasil</b>	<b>Total</b>	41.236.315	100,00	51.944.397	100,00	70.070.457	100,00	93.134.846	100,00	119.011.052	100,00	146.825.475	100,00	169.799.170	100,00
	<b>Urban</b>	12.880.182	31,23	18.782.091	36,15	31.303.034	44,67	52.097.260	55,94	80.437.327	67,59	110.990.990	75,59	137.953.959	81,25
	<b>Rural</b>	28.356.133	67,77	33.161.506	63,85	38.767.423	55,33	41.037.586	44,06	38.573.725	32,41	35.834.485	24,41	31.845.211	18,75
	<b>Total</b>	14.434.080	100,00	17.973.413	100,00	22.181.880	100,00	28.111.551	100,00	34.815.439	100,00	42.497.540	100,00	47.741.711	100,00
<b>Nordeste</b>	<b>Urban</b>	3.381.173	23,42	4.744.808	26,39	7.516.500	33,89	11.756.451	41,82	17.568.001	50,46	25.776.279	60,65	32.975.425	69,07
	<b>Rural</b>	11.052.907	76,58	13.278.605	73,61	14.665.380	66,11	16.355.100	58,18	17.247.438	49,54	16.721.261	39,35	14.766.286	30,93
	<b>Total</b>	2.091.032	100,00	2.695.450	100,00	3.296.366	100,00	4.361.603	100,00	5.288.429	100,00	6.366.647	100,00	7.430.661	100,00
<b>Cerá</b>	<b>Urban</b>	475.028	22,72	679.604	25,21	1.098.901	33,34	1.781.068	40,84	2.810.373	53,14	4.162.007	65,37	5.315.318	71,53
	<b>Rural</b>	1.616.004	77,28	2.015.846	74,79	2.197.465	66,66	2.580.535	59,16	2.478.056	46,86	2.204.640	34,63	2.115.343	28,47

Source: IBGE – Census – 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1991 and 2000.

Regarding the increase in population of Fortaleza, Table 2 shows the absolute data and growth between the census periods in the state and its capital. Note that the rates of Fortaleza far outweigh those related to the state, so it is evident that the city grew at the expense of an intense process of migration. In seventy years, Fortaleza received over 2.2 million new residents.

**Table 2. Population growth in Ceara state and Fortaleza – 1940 to 2010**

YEAR	CEARA		FORTALEZA	
	Population	Growth	Population	Growth
1940	2.091.032	-	180.185	-
1950	2.695.450	28,9 %	270.169	49,93 %
1960	3.296.366	22,29 %	514.813	90,55 %
1970	4.361.603	32,31 %	857.980	66,65 %
1980	5.288.429	21,24 %	1.307.608	52,4 %
1991	6.366.647	20,38 %	1.768.637	35,25 %
2000	7.430.661	16,71 %	2.141.402	21,07 %
2010	8.452.381	13,75%	2.452.185	14,51%

Source: IBGE – Census – 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1991, 2000 e 2010.

From the mid-1980s, a new political and economic project for Ceará was developed with the rise of a group of young entrepreneurs to government. Among the proposed changes, Fortaleza was the target of major investments to include it in the international tourism circuit. Thus, the city has undergone several transformations in the intention of becoming a global city. Many of these projects, however, led to the exclusion and eviction of thousands of families. Some communities have resisted these projects and managed to stay in well-located areas, such as Lagamar.

Since 2009, however, with the announcement that Fortaleza would host games of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, several new projects of urban revitalization are being developed. Again, the most affected are the residents of the poorest communities.

The area known as Lagamar, in the city of Fortaleza, had its initial occupation in the 1930s. Since many families that migrated to the city of Fortaleza over the twentieth century did not have economic conditions to buy their houses in places with infrastructure, the solution was to take environmentally fragile areas rejected by the formal land market. Lagamar summarizes this reality. Its first residents made their home in the local floodplain. In the late 1950s, due to a severe period of drought in Ceará, there was a heavy growth of the occupation. From that moment, as evidenced by Oliveira (2003), the residents come to identify themselves as a community.

In 2005, a local foundation conducted a census in the area, concluding that there were 8,420 residents (Mark de Bruin Foundation, 2005). Currently, according to data published in the newspapers, Lagamar has more than 12,000 residents.

Oliveira (2003) divides the political history of Lagamar in three phases. At first, before 1980, the community was seen as a place marked by dirt, the precariousness of housing and

marginality. After 1980, after residents' mobilizations for better living conditions, Lagamar was seen as a place of struggle and organization. Gomes (2012) points out that at that time, the construction of the extension of an avenue and the removal for a housing project has generated intense community mobilization: "In contrast to the threat of removal, residents discussed within the area as not only timely claim, but as an expression of the right to housing as part of a larger set of rights" (Gomes, 2012: 7).

The third moment, in the 1990s, is marked by the theme of violence, marginalization and unemployment. In these last two periods, there was intense activity of nongovernmental organizations and social movements linked to the Catholic Church.

In these steps, we can add a fourth moment, more recent, when residents return to mobilize for urban upgrading and land regularization, claiming its recognition as a Special Zone of Social Interest.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to notice that these phases in the history of Lagamar overlap. One does not surpass the previous one, so that coexist today the elements of the crime, the irregularity, the organization and popular struggle for housing. At one point, based on certain perspective, some of these elements are highlighted. This does not mean that others fail to exist. And the way the community see itself is not uniform and not always coincide with the look that the other inhabitants of the city have on Lagamar.

Throughout all these years, the urban improvements were achieved gradually. The Brazilian political system, especially in cities, stimulates clientelistic practices through which investments are made slowly. Thus, the communities remain constantly dependent on the politicians. In the case of Lagamar, there are several moments of mobilization and assertion of rights, and the community is never fully answered by governments. Currently, claims for land regularization and right to the city become more important due to projects related to 2014 FIFA World Cup.

## **National scale: A new paradigm of legal policy for urban development in Brazil**

In the process of drafting the Brazilian Constitution, the National Constituent Assembly ensured the possibility of popular proposals. Each proposal should be limited to a single subject, but voters could endorse more than one proposal, up to three. Overall, 122 proposals were submitted to amend, gathering more than 12 million signatures, leaving as legacy the largest list of fundamental rights of the Brazilian constitutional history.

Especially on the urban question, the National Movement for Urban Reform presented a proposal with more than 130,000 signatures. It was the embryo of what came to be, at the end of the process, the chapter on urban policy. It was the first time the issue received constitutional treatment in the country.

De Grazia (2002: 16) notes that the popular proposal of urban reform, as well as other actions of the National Forum of Urban Reform (FNRU), had the following fundamental principles:

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<sup>5</sup> In Portuguese, known as ZEIS - Zona Especial de Interesse Social.

“Right to the City and Citizenship”, understood as a new logic to universalize access to urban services and equipment, the conditions of urban life of dignity and the enjoyment of an area culturally rich and diverse and, above all, on a political dimension of participation, the inhabitants of large cities in determining their own destinies.

“Democratic Management of the City”, understood as a way to plan, produce, operate and govern cities subject to the supervision and social participation, emphasizing popular participation as a priority.

“Social Function of the City and property”, understood as the prevalence of common interest on the individual property rights, which implies a socially just and environmentally balanced urban space.

The result symbolized a break, at least at the federal level of legislation, with the hegemonic paradigm of urban planning so far. The prediction of the principles of the social function of property and the city as key elements of urban development policy, as well as the concern for the fight against speculative land holding and the provision of mechanisms for regularization, represented a commitment to social justice. Moreover, in other passages, the Constitution provided citizenship rights, such as mechanisms of democratic participation, which began to influence a less technocratic planning of cities. The next step would then be the adoption of a Federal Law that would regulate the Chapter of the Urban Policy.

Originally presented in 1989, the bill took 12 years to be approved. After the long journey, marked by strong criticism, popular pressure and numerous talks, in July 10, 2001, it was approved as Law 10.257, known as the City Statute.

One of the most significant legal changes that occurred in this process was the emergence of a new fundamental right to guide the urban law, the so-called right to the city. According to article 2 of the Statute, the right to sustainable city can be understood as “the right to urban land, housing, environmental sanitation, the urban infrastructure, transport and public services, work and leisure, for present and future generations”.

Saule Junior (2007: 50) notes that with the City Statute, there is a profound impact on the right to the city, which is no longer a right recognized only in politics and becomes a right recognized in the legal field. With the City Statute, the right to the city becomes a new fundamental right under Brazilian law, integrating the category of collective and diffuse rights.

A more precise delineation of what is meant by this right can be found on the World Charter for the Right to the City, a result of the articulation of social movements in several countries in the editions of the World Social Forum in 2002 and 2005, the Americas Social Forum and the World Urban Forum, both of which occurred in 2004. World Charter for the Right to the City, defines it as “the equitable usufruct of cities within the principles of sustainability, democracy and social justice.” Its guiding principles are: the full exercise of citizenship and democratic management of the city, the social functions of the city and property, the right to equality and non-discrimination, protection of special groups and vulnerable people, the social commitment of the private sector, and impetus for social economy and tax policies and progressive.

When dealing with the content of the right to the city, Osorio (2006: 195) states that

[...] this law seeks to reverse the dominance of economic values on the functions of the city. The right to the city is interdependent of all internationally recognized human rights, fully designed, and includes civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental. It also includes the right to freedom of assembly and organization, the right to citizenship and participation in planning, production and management of the city, the social production of habitat, respect for minorities and the ethnic, racial, sexual and cultural; respect to immigrants and ensuring the preservation and historical and cultural heritage. The right to the

city also includes the right to development, a healthy environment, the enjoyment and preservation of natural resources and participation in urban planning and management.

Harvey (2008: 40), dealing with the challenge of ensuring the right to the city, draws attention to the fact that “the democratization of that right, and the construction of a broad social movement to enforce excellent will is imperative if the dispossessed are to take back the control which they have been denied for so long, and if they are to institute new modes of urbanization. Lefebvre was right to insist that the revolution has to be urban, in the broadest sense of that term, or nothing at all”.

The rupture that set these values in relation to the previous law marked the emergence of what Fernandes (2006) calls a “new legal-urban order.” Old instruments of urban planning gain other significations. Our attention in this research turns to one, the zoning.

The rules of instituting zoning substantially affect the use and occupation of land in that is based on the territorial division proposed by them. Zoning, therefore, establishes limitations on the right to build and condition the right of ownership, conforming to the principle of social and environmental function.

Despite the current constitutional guidelines, one cannot deny that zoning and other regulations for use and occupation of land have historically been used to contribute to the processes of social and territorial exclusion. According to Bullard, government action through exclusionary zoning has been a subtle form of perpetuation of discriminatory practices as they prevent the population from having access to areas with good environmental quality and provided with infrastructure. In Brazil, many urban planning technicians in most of the cities, accustomed to the old paradigm, still reproduce an undemocratic logic, resisting the new instruments of urban policy.

In this sense, the urban crisis in which the country is in the last decades, with high housing deficit, lack of urban services, environmental problems and segregation is a result of a private conception of urban planning. As stressed by Alfonsin (2007: 71), “this legal determination on the ownership of land, later reinforced by the absolute character assumed by property right in the Civil Code of 1916, is a combined urban legislation increasingly sophisticated and that reinforced the partition of the territory of the cities between zones ‘within the law’ and ‘outlaw’ zones, or legal / illegal, formal / informal, regular / irregular”.

Beyond the many expressions of the irregularity produced by the technocratic model of urban planning, mechanisms for secure tenure and urban and social integration have never been properly valued. In response to this chaotic picture of the urban informal occupations resulting from attempts by social movements to avoid the removal of settlements self-produced, appears the figure of the Special Zones of Social Interest (ZEIS).

Originally enacted by city of Recife in the 1980s, the ZEIS are now provided for in federal law as a legal instrument of urban policy (art. 4, V, “f”, the City Statute). In addition, the Law 11.977/2009 (Minha Casa, Minha Vida Program) defines this Zone as “share of the urban area established by the Master Plan or other municipal law, intended predominantly for low-income housing and subject to specific rules for subdivisions, land use and occupation” (Article 47, V).

We can say that are the fundamental goals of ZEIS land regularization, production of social housing, simplification of rules of land use and urban and social integration of irregular settlements, which includes provision of social and cultural equipment, public spaces and services in general. For this reason, Alfonsin (2007: 83) said that these zones “are an innovative tool in the context of urban planning in Brazil because they break with the segregation dynamics of the traditional use zoning, which, before the slum, shows all its impotence.”

Basically, municipal laws have established ZEIS in areas occupied by low-income population in order to facilitate the process of land regularization and urban as well as ensuring its permanence against the pressure from the housing market. In addition to land regularization, Saule Junior highlights that ZEIS are also an important tool to combat speculation. “With the adoption of special rules to constraints to urban real estate projects, we seek to preserve the form of appropriation of space by the occupants and enable the population to stay in central locations and privileged of the city” (Saule Junior, 2004: 366). But there are also several experiences in which ZEIS are used to demarcate areas where there is concentration of empty buildings, unused or underused land with good infrastructure and able to receive housing projects of social interest or popular market. Thus, ZEIS reveal doubly useful to urban policy, since they can serve both to protect the housing rights of occupations consolidated and encouraging new housing.

ZEIS allows you to set special rules for use and occupation of land, more flexible than the rules traditionally used, which allows the promotion of regularization of buildings. In this sense, recognizing that communities are made from different patterns of occupation, should be special rules and unique for each ZEIS. It is the recognition of the right to difference, since it is part of an understanding of historical processes of social and cultural production of place of residence. Moreover, states also have the right to equality, because ZEIS aims to guarantee the right to the city and to decent housing.

These zones provide recognition, in the local scale, of forms of land use of each community. In this sense, they represent the recognition of legal pluralism that Boaventura de Sousa Santos analyzes as the symbolic cartography of law (Santos, 2009). The variety ways to build the house, before ignored by national legislation, are to be protected at a local scale.

### **Municipal scale: Lagamar and the special zones of social interest**

In Brazil, the establishment and demarcation of these special zones should occur through municipal law. In the case of Fortaleza, the Participative Master Plan (PDPFor) – Complementary Law No. 62/2009 – provided the instrument and identified several areas as ZEIS. We emphasize that, in compliance with Resolution No. 25/2005 of the National Council of Cities, the process of preparing the Master Plan had numerous hearings, seminars and meetings called by executive and legislative. Thus, ZEIS was widely discussed with various social and economic sectors, remaining firmly on the final wording of the law.

There are nearly 100 areas demarcated as ZEIS, which means that they deserve priority public investment for regularization and urbanization projects. However, even after more than three years of approval of the Plan, none of these areas received such investments. Many, however, are threatened by the mobility projects aimed at the 2014 FIFA World Cup 2014.

As ZEIS are mechanisms of democratization the urban planning, the first step would be the creation of a management council in each community. This council should be composed of residents and representatives of the municipality to discuss all projects that must occur in the area. Only one community, Lagamar, has this council currently running. How can we explain that singularity? Well, one of the most important factors was the pressure from dwellers. Because of the fear of being displaced by the works of the 2014 World Cup, they resisted. At this moment, the right to the city for them can be understood as the right to remain at the same place they are now, where they raised their children and built their community.

An interesting point is that Lagamar had not been foreseen as ZEIS at the Master Plan in 2009. Only a year later is that a new law included it on the ZEIS map. This only happened

because the residents claimed the right to have their community recognize. They performed several mobilizations to pressure the city government and the members of Legislative.

Among the strategies for mobilization, community organizations and a local NGO promoted street meetings, produced information materials, created a blog and a news channel on the internet, developed art actions with the young ones and created a local forum to discuss the importance of ZEIS. This forum was responsible to mobilize people to protest in front of the City Hall and many other actions. One relevant point is that the dwellers, or at least part of them, are now rediscovering the proud of being part of the community.

But despite the protests, the Management Council of the ZEIS Lagamar has found great difficulties. The Municipality argues that there are no resources for the projects of regularization and urbanization. But, on the other hand, there are several projects focused on the 2014 FIFA World Cup that are in progress without any discussion with the dwellers. Two of these projects will directly affect Lagamar. One is the construction of a bridge and the other is the implementation of Light Rail Vehicle with a station within the community. These projects will promote the displacement of many families, but none of them could give an opinion on it.

This situation shows how the application of right to the city, at a local scale, is so complex. The State that states this right in national law and even in municipal legislation is the same one that violates the human rights, especially to adequate housing, at the local scale. Fortaleza, shown in this way, is rather dual, since its law affirms the right to the city while the government prefers to develop a image of global city, a city that is at the same time a market and a commodity, in which the poor people have no place.

Now, facing the difficulties with the government, dwellers are thinking of new strategies. Political strategies seem to lose ground to those of a legal nature. Residents are discouraged because they can't understand how the State itself violates its laws. The apparent victory represented by the creation of ZEIS was not decisive to prevent the threat of eviction. Now, they think of ways to go to the Judiciary to ensure their permanence. The Judiciary, however, was absent from all discussions about the right to the city. The trend is that the judges will just reaffirm the Civil Law, protecting property rights and not the rights to housing and to the city. As the dwellers have no record of ownership, they'll probably face resistance from the Judiciary.

Considering these difficulties, the effort to provide new rights in law seems to be the smallest challenge. The implementation of these rights is even harder. In a local scale, the political system must be considered as well as the way each community organizes its resistance. And in most of the cases similar to Lagamar – and there are many in Brazil – the State is often one of the enemies.

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## The Right to a City: Changing Peri-urban Landscapes in Latin America

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**Abstract:** This paper addresses the socio-spatial transformations in the periphery of secondary Latin American cities. House-building activities fuelled by migrant remittances and the appearance of new, gated communities steer processes of peripherization and suburbanization. The outskirts have become symbolic arenas where lower-class residents claim a right to a modern urban living outside the city. That claim is symbolically enforced by spatially transforming the countryside. Densification of the built environment occurs without the protection of vulnerable natural resources while the architectural competition emphasises social inequalities. I argue that the symbolic claim to urbanity outside the city primarily results in a social segregation within peri-urban settlements, which seems a more pressing problem than the usually noted differences between peripherization and suburbanization.

**Keywords:** urban sprawl, urbanity, segregation, secondary cities, Latin America

### Introduction

That the fifth World Urban Forum in Rio de Janeiro in 2010 centered on “the right to the city” can be seen as a logical outcome of a revival of that debate in Brazil and in the wider Latin American region, which set off at the start of the twenty-first century. While the forum especially focused on land and housing rights, it stimulated broader debates on urban space, resources and participation, in line with the work of Henri Lefebvre from the 1960s. Lefebvre’s work, though contested, has made an important contribution to urban studies because it proposed the right to the city as an all-inclusive notion, instead of addressing specific rights in specific parts of the city (Lefebvre, 1968; Brown and Kristiansen, 2008). The search for a more inclusive conception of what could be called the right-to-urbanity forms the starting point of this paper. It can be noted that the literature on Latin American cities and urbanization processes is still very much divided along territorial lines. On the one hand scholars discuss the contemporary hardships in inner-city slums and peripheral shantytowns (Eckstein, 1990; Goldstein, 2004; Moser, 2009; Perlman, 2010). On the other hand, scholars focus on the nature and effects of gated communities and condominiums (Coy

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and Pöhler, 2002; Borsdorf *et al.*, 2007). Sometimes informal settlements are said to profit from the investments of real estate developers aimed at upgrading the area (Salcedo and Torres, 2004). In other cases, the spread of those “cities of walls” results in higher levels of social segregation (Caldeira, 2000; UN-Habitat, 2010). The two lines of work meet in a joint vision on the contemporary, fragmented Latin American city (Roberts, 2005; Koonings and Kruijt, 2007; Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2010).

This paper addresses the increase of urban lifestyles and urban-type housing in the vicinity of secondary cities, which occurs through two juxtaposed processes: individual house building/upgrading activities and the development of planned urbanizations or condominiums. The first process is usually referred to as “peripherization”; the second process is called “suburbanization” (UN-Habitat, 2010: 11). Based on research in four highly globalized secondary cities in Latin America I describe how the outskirts of those cities have become symbolic arenas where residents claim a right to a modern urban living *outside* the city. I argue that the symbolic claim to urbanity outside the city primarily results in a segregation within peri-urban informal settlements, which seems a more pressing problem to social cohesion than the usually noted differences between shantytowns and gated communities (cf. Salcedo and Torres, 2004).

With approximately 80% of the population living in urban areas, the Latin American and Caribbean region is the second most urbanized region in the world. Prognoses indicate that the region will have the highest proportion of urban population worldwide by 2050 (UN-Habitat, 2010: 13). This growth, which is expected to occur through low-density peri-urban and suburban patterns, is mainly attributed to the growth of secondary cities and new urban areas (Córdoba Ordóñez and Gago García, 2010: 2006; UN-Habitat, 2010: 11-13). The disadvantages of such urban sprawl patterns have been extensively analyzed in earlier international debates. Yet a lack of consistent urban planning in combination with the power of real estate markets and incoming foreign currencies continues to support this trend in several Latin American cities (Klaufus, 2010a). A micro-level approach is used to address local experiences with socio-spatial changes in the urban peripheries in four selected cities: Quetzaltenango (Guatemala), San Miguel (El Salvador), Cuenca (Ecuador) and Huancayo (Peru). Ethnographic research was conducted between 2008 and 2012 as part of my CEDLA research project “Changing social landscapes in medium-sized cities”. The majority of the data will be drawn from research in the last two cities, which were visited more frequently. The criteria for selection of those four cases were: 1) their secondary position in national urban hierarchies; 2) evidence of rapid spatial transformations related to globalization. Although the cities differ in territorial size and number of inhabitants, all four are characterized by relatively high levels of transnational migration, incoming remittances and thriving activities of real estate developers. Specific attention is therefore paid to supply and demand in the local markets for new housing.

The selected cities’ characteristics can be summarized as follows. Cuenca is Ecuador’s third city in rank with 330,000 inhabitants in 2010. The municipality of Cuenca is planning to form a metropolitan area with nearby Azoguez (INEC, 2011). Huancayo is Peru’s ninth largest city with 323,000 municipal inhabitants in 2007 and an estimated population of 424,000 in the larger metropolitan area which includes collateral districts (Haller and

Borsdorf, 2012: 4). San Miguel is El Salvador's third city in rank, but second in importance. The municipality of San Miguel was inhabited by 158,000 people in 2007. Quetzaltenango is Guatemala's second urban area with 120,500 municipal inhabitants counted in 2002, and a projected 153,000 in 2012. It has an estimated population of 442,000 in the larger metropolitan area (Mancomunidad de Los Altos, 2007: 42; INE Guatemala, 2003).<sup>2</sup> According to local accounts, the real estate business in all four cities was not only boosted by remittances from migration to the U.S. and Europe, but also by their function as regional educational centers, which attracted students from other areas, and by residential tourism. In addition, money laundering activities play a major role since all those cities due to their favorable position on the international routes of trafficking, either by being close to the narco-production areas, as in the case of Huancayo, or by being international transit nodes, as in the case of Cuenca, Quetzaltenango and San Miguel.<sup>3</sup> The paper starts with a description of individual house-building activities induced by remittances from migration, followed by explorations of formally planned developments. An analysis of the outcomes in relation to the right-to-the-city debate is presented at the end of the paper.

### The dream-house competition in the urban periphery

Individual migration decisions often start with the ambition to “*superar*”, to create a higher standard of living for oneself and the rest of the family. A better house is one way to achieve that goal. As is known, Latin American development policies have generally not resulted in the provision of sufficient basic facilities and housing in peripheral urban areas (Fay, 2005). The decision to migrate and to spend a part of the remittances on home improvement can be understood as an attempt to achieve individually what the state and social organizations were unable to do on a collective level: to bring modern and comfortable living to the impoverished and neglected urban peripheries. Because of the building activities stimulated by migrant remittances from abroad, Latin American urban landscapes have undergone rapid and visible spatial transformations, especially over the last two decades. According to the Multilateral Investment Fund of IDB, over 61 billion dollars have entered Latin America in 2011 alone (MIF, 2012).

Even though on average only 1 to 5% of remittances is estimated to be destined to improve the current housing situation or be invested in new housing (Bendixen and Associates, 2003a: 23; 2003b: 29-30; 2005: 26; IOM, 2003: 22; Acosta *et al.*, 2008: 140-141; Céspedes Reynaga, 2011: 33), the total effect of remittances investment in land and housing has been extremely visible and perhaps more socially influential on the short-term than any other remittance destination (McBride, 2007; Piedrasanta, 2010). In other publications I have described the symbolic struggles over the architectural design of those houses between architects and migrant families in Cuenca (Klaufus, 2006), and the spread of the phenomenon of “migrant architecture” over different Latin American countries (Klaufus, 2011). In this paper I situate local experiences with house design within a broader academic urbanization debate. The architectural features of “migrant architecture” are understood as a form of

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<sup>2</sup> Some of these figures are also mentioned on [www.citypopulation.de](http://www.citypopulation.de).

<sup>3</sup> No reliable sources are available, but newspaper articles suggest similar relationships. Taking Huancayo as an example, see Bendezú (2012a, 2012b).

symbolic capital in the struggle for upward social mobility. At the same time, the increase of “migrant architecture” has generally become a catalyst of more construction activities, which results in a kind of “dream-house competition” within communities.

To give an overview of the construction activities and globalization influences in the four research locations, I start with Central America. In the highland department Quetzaltenango, where the city of Quetzaltenango is situated, almost 40% of the households received remittances from the U.S. in the first years of this century (IOM, 2005: 40; INE Guatemala, 2002). Almost 17% of those remittances were said to be destined for house building (IOM, 2005: 26). In the east-Salvadoran department of San Miguel, where the homonym city is located, 34% of the households received remittances in the first five years of the century (UNDP, 2005: 217). In the city itself, this was 28,5% (UNDP, 2005 database, table 21). A considerable part of the remittances destined for housing resulted in a temporary construction boom that was at its height before the international subprime crisis started. In San Miguel, legalized migrants who sought to improve the quality of life of their families preferred to buy turn-key houses in gated communities instead of having a house built on an individual plot due to the high level of insecurity and criminality in the city.

In Quetzaltenango, on the other hand, the aspirations of people with access to foreign currency were primarily converted into individually built houses and much less into formal real estate projects. Perhaps the symbolical message of self-building exceeded the importance of comfort attributed to turn-key houses as the representation of people’s physical journeys – and hence, their social achievements – are much more explicit in self-developed houses (Piedrasanta, 2010; Klaufus, 2011). Individual self-built houses became a preferred medium for the competition between neighbors, exactly because the aesthetic codes in those houses are relatively easy to manipulate whereas in condominiums, collective norms and rules tend to restrict individual adaptations to the house. With regard to the design of the new homes, facades painted in contrasting colors, decorated with travel symbols and adorned with neo-classical elements proliferated. Decorations of floral themes and symbols of the migratory journey, such as the Virgin of Guadalupe or the American flag are typical for the “migrant architecture” in that area. The massive house building and upgrading activities have resulted in a visual dominance of informal settlements as well as in a densification of the built environment on the hillsides surrounding the city. The international exhibition “Arquitectura de Remesas” paid ample attention to this form of peri-urban sprawl in Central America (Piedrasanta, 2010). Even though residential areas for a middle-income population were also developed in Quetzaltenango (see next section), the individually (and often informally) built houses were the most visible evidences of the spread of urbanity outside the city (see next photo).



Hillside near Quetzaltenango, Zunil, 2008. Photo by the author.

In the Andean cities of Cuenca and Huancayo similar tendencies were noted. Cuenca is a city with a long migration history, which resulted already decades ago in an influx of remittances and a concomitant change of building traditions. Seventeen percent of the households in the municipality of Cuenca has relatives abroad, the majority of which receive monthly remittances. Of those families, 29% receive over 300 dollars monthly (Martínez, 2004: 2, 8). Already since the start of the so-called “new migration wave”, which took off during the times of political and economic crisis in 1999-2000 (Jokisch and Pribilsky, 2002), local architects and policymakers in Cuenca complained about the construction boom in the urban periphery, first of all because it boosted the prices of land and construction work. In addition, it was said to transform the landscape in undesirable ways because vernacular houses made of wood and adobe were being replaced by “monsters of cement” (Klaufus, 2006). Today, the hillsides in villages near Cuenca such as Checa, Chiquintad and Sigsig are dotted with colorful multi-story houses, adorned with neo-classical entrances and sometimes with expensive luxuries such as Jacuzzis and satellite dishes.

Focus group sessions in April 2012 with return migrants or with relatives of migrants in Sigsig, near Cuenca, can illustrate the experiences and emotions that accompanied the construction of such “migrant homes”. Except for two or three participants, who had not been able to build a new house, everyone mentioned the improved domestic situation as a primary achievement. Through their improved houses they claimed the right to a standard of living similar to that in Cuenca, or comparable to the quality of live they had become acquainted with when living in the U.S. At the same time though, most families did not aspire to live *in* the city. Several times the informants confirmed that they were happy to live in a tranquil environment (Klaufus, 2012: 90). Especially the return migrants emphasized that they preferred waking up with the “crowing of roosters instead of with the traffic noise” which they had become used to when living in the U.S. (FG1 27/04/2012). They felt attached to their

villages, even if they wanted to offer their families the possibilities of modern urban lifestyles.

But the aspirations to build a better house often resulted in a “dream-house competition”, which did not turn out well for all competitors. Many of the multi-story homes remained unfinished or even uninhabited. One returned migrant confessed that he had been so obsessed with *building* a big house from the moment he arrived in the U.S., that he had not permitted himself to consider the consequences of *owning* a big house. He was not able to finish the house due to money shortages and now he was caught between a rock and a hard place: he either had to sell the unfinished house (an almost impossible option) or save money to finish it. That was not possible either, because since his return to Sigsig the household income had diminished drastically. There was just no money left to save (FG2 02/05/12). A woman whose husband migrated to the U.S. eleven years ago confessed that she found her new home “too big” for herself and her two children. When her husband migrated, they planned to build a large house of their own, instead of the house they rented. They envisioned a comfortable and happy future together in their dream house. But after eleven years of separation, the house had turned into an oversized, painful mnemonic of the continued separation, instead of a place to settle down together. At this stage, she considered his decision to stay away pointless because the longer he stayed away, the further they were removed from the reason they started to build the house in the first place (FG 02/05/12). Another spouse, who hardly ever received remittances, explained that she educated her children to do small jobs and learn how to weave Panama hats – one of the traditional livelihood means in Sigsig. In comparison with her ever-dissatisfied nephews who had been “spoiled” by a constant flow of remittances in money and gadgets, her children were much more “*tranquilo*”, untroubled, because they never got used to those luxuries anyway. Yet they did suffer from their cousins’ insults that their house was “ugly” (FG 27/04/2010). That last statement makes painfully clear how the “dream-house competition” and the local narratives about it turned some people into winners and others into losers. The stories evidence the social and emotional sufferings that are withdrawn from view by the spatial and aesthetical transformations of the landscape in Southern Ecuador.

In Metropolitan Huancayo, in which exists Huancayo and several surrounding villages, 11.6% of the households have members abroad (INEI, 2008; calculations by the author). Although large-scale gated communities are also being developed, remittances-receiving families tended to invest the foreign dollars or euros primarily in their existing houses, either to build a small workshop or shop, or to increase the domestic space.<sup>4</sup> Similar to the other cities, migrant families expressed a preference for bright colors and reflective windowpanes, which in this region specifically tended to be round and spherical in form (Klaufus, 2011). The competition over form and design had also entered this region. The discursive categories that informants used to describe the houses in their village for example, distinguished between houses made of “accessible materials”, meaning adobe, and houses built with “noble materials” such as reinforced concrete and bricks (see photograph 2). Accessible/free materials versus noble/expensive materials formed a dichotomy that paralleled the contrast between “humble” and “prestigious” lifestyles. The social values attached to material

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<sup>4</sup> For an example of a new urbanization project, see <http://www.centenario.com.pe/venta-de-lotes/lotes-en-venta/huancayo/alto-la-merced/caracteristicas>.

differences thus coincided with the social and status differences between remittances-receiving families and non-remittances-receiving families.

The self-confident demonstrations of home improvement that I encountered in Huancayo contrasted with the stories of financial and emotional losses of return-migrants in Sigsig that I described above. A remittances-receiving woman from nearby Cochas Chico, whose husband worked in the construction sector in the U.S., said that she had noted that the neighbors envied her visibly outstanding and comfortable house (HHX 13/04/12). Her emotional suffering became clear to me when she took the family photo album to show me her husband in his new living environment. The local architecture students who participated in my research workshop in April 2012 were surprised to find that people explained their design preferences in terms of taste instead of functional motivations, all stating “por que lo quiero pues!” – just because I like it! (HFM 17/04/12). People in Huancayo were much more reluctant than in Cuenca to tell about the difficulties of transnational living. The “success story” was repeated all the time. Designs of the new houses were univocally seen as signs of economic success and cultural prestige, even though the social balances were very precarious, as one woman had told me before (HSO 01/03/11).

In all four cities, the stories told by migrant families and non-verbally expressed in their houses all hold the same message: they do not claim the right to *the* city per se, but they do claim the right to *a* city. As a consequence of migration and remittances, and of the influential role of “impression management” and “image building” in contemporary consumer societies (Goffman, 1959), new social hierarchies are appearing. The social differences between migrant-families and non-migrant families are a case in point, and the informally developed dream houses on the Latin American hillsides are a symptom of that process.



Urban periphery of Huancayo, Cochas Chico, 2012. Photo by the author.



A “migrant house” with blue tiled facades in Cochabamba, 2012. Photo by the author.

### The dream-house competition in the urban periphery

In addition to the individual house-building activities, national and international companies became active in all four cities from the start of the century. Two patterns of suburbanization can be discerned in the four cities I studied. In Central America, housing projects primarily follow the scheme of large-scale leisure communities. The formulas of those projects vary from sites with luxury services, where customers buy a plot on which to build a house, to projects that offer turn-key houses with or without financial arrangements. Many of those projects directly target individual migrants abroad, for example through real estate fairs, or their relatives in Central America. In the two Andean cities, on the other hand, large-scale urbanization projects developed by multinational companies are scarce, whereas small-scale urbanization projects inside or outside the urban boundaries prevail (see Table 1 for an overview of several Cuencan projects under construction in 2010, with prices and extensions). Due to a lack of available land, large-scale developments have become impossible in Cuenca. In Huancayo, in turn, enough land is available. Yet real-estate developments are of a more recent date than those in Cuenca, so developers start with smaller projects to reduce the financial risks. A large variety of small-scale projects has started to dominate the suburban landscape (see Haller and Borsdorf, 2012, Table 3 for an overview).



**Table 1. List of urbanization projects with subsidized housing units available to transnational migrants, January-October 2010**

PROJECT	CITY	ZONE	# HOUSING UNITS	HOUSING AREA m <sup>2</sup>	COSTS IN U.S. \$
<b>Las Rieles de Moncay</b>	Cuenca	Moncay	18 departments 397 depts.	43,00 90,00	28.000 56.000
<b>Los Nogales</b>	Cuenca	Sidcay-Pana Norte-Via Llaao	20 houses	11.605	40,249
<b>Casa Grande</b>	Cuenca	Machangara - Oslo Pana Norte	29 depts.	87,11 124,08	21.182 59.973
<b>Urb. Paseo De Los Cerezos</b>	Cuenca	San Sebastian - Los Cerezos	14 houses 2 depts.	145,00 100,00	59.665 48.100
<b>El Porton de San Miguel</b>	Cuenca	Barrio San Miguel de Putuzhi parroquia Sayuasi	62 houses	10.000	42,000
<b>La Playa</b>	Cuenca	La Playita - Parroquia Sagrario	17 houses	17.000	58,000
<b>La Campiña</b>	Cuenca	Via Baguanchi - Paccha	120 houses 8 depts. 24 depts.	122,39 55,00 68,00	59,960 45,000 50,000
<b>Olimpo</b>	Cuenca	Yanuncay - El Salado Baños	16 depts. 128 depts.	from 51 to 95	39500 from 54000 to 60.000
<b>Urb. Fondo Ceant. Mag. El Tejar</b>	Cuenca	Parroquia San ebastian Barrio Tracar - Lacesa	9 houses	5.000	33,500
<b>Carapungo los Almendros</b>	Cuenca	Parroquia Paccha – via Baguanchi	40 houses	13.600	60,000
<b>Condominio Jardines del Valle</b>	Cuenca	Parroquia El Valle Barrio Cochapamba	27 houses	50,10 75,10	30,001 45,000
<b>Urbanizacion Los Pinos</b>	Gualaceo	Barrio Ayaloma – via Quimshi	59 houses	14.000	56,000
<b>Condominio Portal de Rio Amarillo</b>	Cuenca	Parroquia Sayausi Entrada a Santa maria y calle de la Cruz	5 houses 31 houses	110,00 98,25	55,000 50,000

Source: MIDUVI (2010).

In another article I have described the development of new real-estate projects in Quetzaltenango and San Miguel in 2008 (Klaufus, 2010a). Nueva Ciudad de Los Altos and Xela Gardens were the developments that dominated local housing and planning debates in Quetzaltenango in that year.<sup>5</sup> Since the international financial crisis, however, the demand for plots and houses in the fancy gated communities near Quetzaltenango has dropped considerably. Based on the information available on the Internet it can be concluded that neither of those two projects has been completed yet. Xela Gardens was relatively far removed from the city; and a lack of precautionary measures to cope with the geodetic activity of the underground of the “gated city” Nueva Ciudad de Los Altos seems to have halted that project too. In that article I also described the projects Hacienda San Andrés and River Side Gardens in San Miguel, which were developed over the years 2006-2008. Those projects suffered from the subprime crisis in 2009. Yet today, the real estate markets in that region seem to have recovered: new projects such as Villas Deportivas are currently being developed.<sup>6</sup>

Overall, the collective buildings on the premises and the turn-key homes for sale tend to be designed in a neo-colonial or neo-classical style, with reference to an American way of life. The websites of the real estate companies show pictures of the “dream houses” they sell; usually designs with abundant neo-classical elements. References to urban and cosmopolitan lifestyles are part of the marketing strategy: River Side Gardens, for example, is advertised as a place “you always dreamt of for you and your family like [the ones] in the United States”, and “going home feels like going on holiday.”<sup>7</sup> Although the available facilities such as sports facilities and picnic areas are meant to appeal to middle-class values of leisure and consumption, the middle-class customers are principally attracted by the urban infrastructure, which allows them to live their urban lives outside the cities (cf. Rodgers, 2004; Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2010).

In Cuenca, housing shortages are still high. The favorable market conditions have created a situation where not only professional development companies but also individual architects have expanded their activities from design and construction to real estate development. To diminish the risk on their investment, they usually build small projects with six to ten houses. Favorable regulations for *condominios* have further stimulated the trend of small-scale gated communities. Municipal regulations for (usually large) *urbanizaciones* state that the distance between front facades and the street needs to be seven meters. In contrast, regulations for *condominios* do not include that limitation as the whole area will be walled-off anyway. The project only has to include a certain amount of public space, for example, an entrance road (CPC 19/11/09). Commercially speaking, it is more profitable to develop a small *condominio* where – comparatively speaking – more space can be converted into houses. The demand from remittances-receiving families, a young generation of middle-class Cuencanos, and from a growing group of American retirees is especially high in the segment of houses under

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.nuevaciadadelosalto.com/>; <http://multivistas.com/en/proyectos/xela-gardens/>.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.miriverside.com/>; <http://www.desarrolladoraprieto.com/>.

<sup>7</sup> The full text is as follows: “En Parque Residencial Riverside Gardens usted podrá vivir en San Miguel, en el lugar que siempre ha soñado para usted y su familia como en los Estados Unidos. Descubra este bello lugar que puede ser suyo, en donde podrá vivir, divertirse con su familia, conocer nuevas amistades, disfrutar de sus hobbies y crear momentos inolvidables en un ambiente agradable y seguro, en donde Venir a Casa es como salir de Vacaciones” (Accessed on 20.06.2012, at <http://www.miriverside.com/riverside-gardens.html>).

60,000 U.S. dollars. At the same time, North American retirees, who fled from the economic crisis in their country, are able to spend relatively high amounts of money on housing and consumption, which puts pressure on the real-estate prices.<sup>8</sup> Several architects and commercial developers have started building family homes in closed homogeneous enclaves especially for those foreign *jubilados*. An architect who used to construct houses for the market of migrant families between 2003 and 2011 explained to me in 2012 how the market had changed: “nowadays [my clients] are no longer migrants, but the *gringos*, or retired people as they are called” (CVV 27/04/2012).<sup>9</sup>

In Huancayo, the driving forces of continued house building were the influx of people from the villages, university students, and Limeños who came to work here, as well as the investment of *narcodolares* in real estate. On the urban fringes, in the areas of San Carlos, Pilcomayo and El Tambo, large and medium-sized housing projects were constructed in the last decade. Yet while the urban area in Metropolitan Huancayo expanded from 554 hectares in 1961 to 3,677 hectares in 2011, the population density lowered from 116 people per hectare in 1961 to 94 in 2011, pointing towards the intensification of urban sprawl (Martínez Vítor, 2012: 169-170). With enough land available for planned projects and individuals, formally planned urbanizations alternate with dotted hillsides, where adobe houses sit side by side with colorful “migrant homes” as markers of urbanity in the countryside. The neighboring residents of suburbanizations and “migrant homes” have not moved into the city, but they have moved city life to the urban periphery instead.

### The right-to-the-city debate in various guises

In all four cities, urban planners and authorities have been unable to steer urban growth on the fringes of the city. Local experts mention short-term politics and the personal interests of the architects involved as the reasons for a lack of vision. In Huancayo, for example, adaptations to the zoning plans did not result in an adequate plan for sprawl. In the plan, the boundaries of the city were either denominated as ecological area or as pre-urban areas, neither of which seems to provide any guidance for preferred building heights, population densities or dwelling types. The assumption that lifestyle or aesthetical differences between city and countryside could somehow be maintained was also prevalent in the three other cities. Based on drawing-board plans, urban planners and architects tended to differentiate between urban and rural habitats. Such abstract differentiations often proved counter-productive as input for social policies. In the case of Ecuador, I have described elsewhere how differentiation of housing policies for citizens in urban, marginally urban and rural areas resulted in juridical inequality (Klaufus, 2010b). The limited possibilities to obtain government support in peri-urban areas and the success stories spread by migrant-houses became a catalyst for more migration and more “migrant houses”. This claim on urban ways of life in the urban periphery set in motion the aesthetical transformation of the Andean and Central American landscapes.

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<sup>8</sup> Fernando Villavicencio, personal communication, 23 April 2012.

<sup>9</sup> “Ahora ya no son los migrantes pero los gringos, o como se dicen los jubilados.”



**Gated community Alto la Merced under construction.  
In the background is the informal settlement Santa Isabel, Huancayo 2012. Photo by the author.**

In the city center, the transformation of the fringes is usually perceived as a problem by architects, planners and sociologists because they have lost control over the direction of the transformations, not only in the informal settlements but also in the planned suburbanizations (see Klaufus, 2006, 2010a). This perspective is not shared by the inhabitants of the peri-urban areas. The focus group participants in Sigsig (Cuenca) made it clear that landscape transformations are the least of their concerns. When I asked the participants if the increase of large villas on the hillsides bothered them, they responded that it was not something that occupied their thoughts as “everybody has the right to build whatever he wants on his property” (CFG 27/04/12). As long as trees, plants and farm animals dominated the landscape, blue-glass or purple-tiled villas and comfortable houses were considered as individual preferences that did not affect or harm the community in any way, even though they all acknowledged the individual stress that the “dream-house competition” could cause. The fact that remittances were partly spent on home improvement was seen as an achievement. Many participants from migrant-families stated that their individual sacrifices had at least enabled some sort of collective development. The investment of remittances in housing and small shops had “stimulated the local economy” (CFG 27/04/12).

Yet, according to the informants, increased comfort and a higher quality of life through home improvement went hand-in-hand with a loss of unity and solidarity in those formerly agricultural communities. They were not overly nostalgic about “traditional life” and explained that there are “good” but also “bad” traditions. The loss that they regretted most

was the loss of what they called “voluntary collaboration”, the willingness to form a collectivity. To summarize these findings, a cautious conclusion would be that people find that globalization and remittances have generally transformed life in the urban periphery in a positive way. The residents do not want to exchange their hillsides for Cuenca, Huancayo, Quetzaltenango or any other city as they regard those peri-urban environments as their habitat. But to optimize that habitat, the comfort of urban houses had to be brought to the periphery, and that is exactly what they are doing. This has resulted in winners and losers within each community or settlement. The return-migrant who was unable to finish his new home and got stuck with a “ruin” is probably as unfortunate as the buyer of a house in the stagnating gated community of Xela Gardens. To focus only on the dichotomy of “peri-urbanization” versus “suburbanization” as an explanation for the urban divide (UN-Habitat, 2010: 11) is to miss out on much more complex forms of urbanization and urbanity, in which the claims to live a modern urban life are ultimately expressed.

## Discussion

The right-to-the-city debate, based on Henri Lefebvre’s famous essay *Le droit à la ville* (1968) and David Harvey’s *Social Justice and the City* (1973), has recently gained renewed influence in Latin American political studies. Paraphrasing Lefebvre, Edésio Fernandes asserts that “The ‘right to the city’ would basically consist of the right of all city dwellers to fully enjoy urban life with all of its services and advantages – the right to habitation – as well as taking direct part in the management of cities – the right to participation” (Fernandes, 2007: 208). Most Latin American initiatives have thus far focused on the re-definition of individual and collective property rights and on spatial planning as instruments for development. Spatial plans are without doubt important as they form the basis for legal and social frameworks. However, in this paper I have tried to shed fresh light on the problematic developments within informal peri-urban and formal suburban areas alike. When it comes to the protection of natural resources, which includes valuable landscapes, it is clear that plans and regulations need to surpass strict urban municipal boundaries to include hinterland areas in order to achieve coherence between regional landscape policies, municipal zoning plans and local building regulations. Secondary cities like Cuenca, Huancayo, Quetzaltenango and San Miguel do have the ambition to administratively scale-up into *mancomunidades* (Quetzaltenango) or *areas metropolitanos* (Cuenca and Huancayo). Such broader governance layers can be imperative for defining the limits of environmentally and socially sustainable urban growth, provided that local-level experiences are taken into account.

The findings from the case studies show that urbanization is not a process that remains within the neat analytical boundaries of peri-urbanization or suburbanization. It is the result of many contrasting and sometimes contradicting activities in house building and upgrading on different scales, in which the “dream-house competition” among migrant-families occurs side-by-side with (sometimes failing) professionally-developed gated communities. Most of those transformation processes take place across city boundaries in the periphery where land is still available. Ethnographic research of the housing preferences and the social mechanisms that characterize everyday life in peri-urban settlements have shown that spatial plans are of no avail to secondary cities if urban planning experts ignore the daily reality of people on the other side of the municipal boundary. The ambition to build more harmonious cities, or the assignment to “bridge the urban divide” (UN-Habitat, 2010), should include those daily experiences. The right to habitation, of which lower-class people tend to take care themselves, can result in new social inequalities and exclusion on a local level. So the right to

participation needs to be re-assessed not only in and across cities but also within the peri-urban and suburban communities itself. We have often been reminded that the old dichotomies of urban/rural and formal/informal limit the debate on urban inclusion. The same can be said about the dichotomy peripherization/ suburbanization. If the right-to-the-city notion could be replaced by the right-to-a-city approach, we could start exploring the meanings of social inequality and citizenship across urban boundaries to foresee the ways in which urbanization processes are expected to take place in the years to come.

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**Urban Histories, Architecture, Public Spaces  
and Participation Practices**

## Postmemory and Art in the Urban Space

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**Abstract:** Pierre Nora's "lieux de mémoire" highlights the multiple forms by which memory connects to material or immaterial places, establishing links between urban practices and collective memory. In what way can landscapes and urban buildings appeal to the memories of the city's inhabitants? The aim of this paper is to bring forward the memorial work of *The Missing House* (1990) by French artist Christian Boltanski in the light of the notion of postmemory (Hirsch, 2001), and the necessity of a participative public art which can open up to inclusive urban practices.

**Keywords:** postmemory; absence; landscape; memorial artwork; place of memory

Sometimes it seems as though we are not going anywhere as we walk through the city, that we are only looking for a way to pass the time, and that it is only our fatigue that tells us where and when we should stop. But just as one step will inevitably lead to the next step, so it is that one thought inevitably leads to the next thought [...] so that what we are really doing when we walk through the city is thinking, and thinking in such a way that our thoughts compose a journey, and this journey is no more or less than the steps we have taken.

Paul Auster, *The Invention of Solitude* (1988[1982]: 122)

In 1990 Christian Boltanski creates *The Missing House* as his contribution for *Die Endlichkeit der Freiheit* (The Finitude of Freedom) exhibition, organized that year to include international artistic answers to the political situation in Berlin, after the fall of the Wall:

The artists were charged with creating a public and ephemeral art that would inform the city but not decorate it or provide it with new monuments. The art works were to articulate the individual significance and history of their specific urban sites, and each artistic commentary or intervention was to join in an informative network uniting the two halves of the city in a dialogue of East and West. (Czaplicka, 1995: 159)

Boltanski is a visual artist known for multiple installations that address Nazi genocide. Son of a Jewish father who escaped deportation during the German occupation in France, Boltanski is, according to Marianne Hirsch (2012[1997]), a member of a second generation whose artistic work obeys to the uneasiness of postmemory. The notion of postmemory

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concerns the offspring of those who testified in first-hand cultural and/or collective trauma, namely, the relationship that the generation who came after those who experienced the trauma has with that experience. In this way, the second or third generation *remembers*, not because they were there but because they have grown up in a particular family narrative webbed by the previous generation's trauma through stories, images and behaviors:

[...] postmemory characterizes the experience of those who [...] have grown up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are displaced by the powerful stories of the previous generation, shaped by monumental traumatic events that resist understanding and integration. It describes as well the relationship of the second generation to the experiences of the first—their curiosity and desire, as well as their ambivalences about wanting to own their parents' knowledge. (Hirsch, 2001: 12)

According to Hirsch (2001), postmemory work is based in some sort of investigation, an excavation beyond the surface, trying to understand what, for example, images of destruction unveil and conceal. Boltanski's memorial piece, which is discussed here, seems to obey this postmemory work. *The Missing House* devised for Berlin's oriental area is part of a two-set piece which included also *The Museum* exhibit, located in the West part of the city and which consisted of a sequence of vitrines displayed near Lehrter train station, setting a communicative link between the two sites. Located in Grosse Hamburger-Strasse 15-16, *The Missing House* refers to an empty space formerly occupied by a house where Jewish (and non-Jewish) families lived and who mostly perished in the Nazi death camps. In 1945 the bombs from the Allies were dropped in the center of Berlin striking down the house. This episode eventually led to its demolition thus leaving a vacant lot between two buildings. Boltanski gathered up an amount of information about the former residents, found in the local archives, and arranged in rectangular plates the names, professions and residence dates, which he placed on the walls of the buildings adjacent to the empty lot. Some distance away, in the West side of the city, inside the vitrines that shaped *The Museum*, one could find postcards, copies of documents concerning deportation procedures, photographs and other material about the former residents of *The Missing House*. At the end of the exhibition these vitrines were removed. *The Missing House* however, was favoured by a request from the population to be preserved and, with the support of the Berlin Senate this memorial work has remained until now.

Pierre Nora's "*lieux de mémoire*" (*apud* Hoelscher and Alderman, 2004), seems relevant in this case since it pays particular attention to the ways in which memory is spatially constituted. For the French historian, memory is connected to places that can be material or immaterial, places that wake up past rumors. Similarly, Crinson (2005) speaks about an "urban memory", whose meaning lies in a city which collects practices and objects that make a particular past allusion, while the city makes and re-makes itself. Thus, urban memory is something that refers the city as a place where one lives and where once one has lived, a place where we can find traces of the ones who no longer inhabit the city. About these traces which suggest a particular past, Brett Ashley Kaplan (2011), in *Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory*, deals with the relation between memory and landscape, offering guidelines about how the Holocaust has been revealing itself in the landscape. Landscape is here understood in an extensive way including literary and urban landscape. Kaplan asks herself: "How much do we know about the history of certain places? [...] How can we read spaces decades after a traumatic event?" (95).

According to Hirsch and Spitzer (2010), place authenticates narrative, namely, place validates what happened, although risking swallowing the observer into a traumatic past. Like Marcel Proust's *madeleine*, objects and places can work like mnemonic triggers that connect us to the history of the world where we live and to the memory of the city where we inhabit. The

word *landscape* is also used by Susan Suleiman (2006) to describe her work, which she defines by the incursions through a literary or physical territory which is dominated by memory. The Holocaust can be perceived as a global phenomenon that can be remembered through a certain landscape which attends to the traces or clues of the traumatic events, space-embodied, places of memory. And what happens when this place is an empty lot which used to be the site of a house, the setting of a forced abandonment caused by the Nazi's ethnic cleansing? This *traumatized landscape* can offer the observer some kind of landscape embedded in loss, in ruin, in which absence is not equal to forgetfulness or muteness, but appears as a gap that constitutes testimony. This omission is summoned by Henri Raczymow's "*mémoire trouée*", a memory that is perhaps absent but that is felt in all places after Auschwitz. It is about these post-Holocaust places, these places of postmemory, that in his recent book *Como Se Desenha Uma Casa* (2011) Portuguese poet Manuel António Pina seems to be writing:

Dir-se-ia antes uma casa,/ um pouco mais alta que um império/ e um pouco mais indecifrável/ que a palavra casa; não fulge. / Em certas noites, porém, sai de si e de mim/ e fica suspensa lá fora/ entre a memória e o remorso de outra vida./ Então, com as luzes apagadas,/ ouço vozes chamando,/ palavras mortas nunca pronunciadas/ e a agonia interminável das coisas acabadas. (pp. 14-15)

Through *The Missing House*, Boltanski becomes the archivist of an absent lot in the center of Berlin, telling stories that appear to redeem memory and to re-map the city in different ways. For Czaplicka (1995) Boltanski's piece makes use of a visual rhetoric of absence combined with historical information, producing in the observer or visitor not only a calling for his/her imaginative abilities, but also for his/her remembrance and reflection of things past. According to Czaplicka it is the combination of physical and material elements of the archive that characterizes Boltanski's installation, serving as an indicator of the unrepresentable and calling up not only the observer's imagination but also his/her knowledge and (post) memory:

As far as this engagement follows the material presence and archival excerpts to reconstruct the past in the present, the experience may lead to a consciousness of history or to a process of analytical commemoration, whereby the informed viewer may reflect on the causes and effects of the violent eradication extant in evident absence. (p. 168)

This house, which is absent, is in itself a powerful symbol for the destruction of what it stands for: a sense of community, of the everyday, of family, of home – lost, making *The Missing House* one of the few exceptions, for Czaplicka (1995), of the commemorative practice in post-war Germany by avoiding the representation of the Nazi atrocity through a monument or physical construction which, sometimes and paradoxically, can cause an obliviousness effect. Artist and writer Nuno Ramos (2010[2008]), speaks precisely of an "indivisible border, a non-commemorative monument made of soft steel, of a frail marble like floss"<sup>2</sup> (127; my translation), seeing this apparent contradictions as certifiers of the place's (of memory) authenticity:

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<sup>2</sup> "de uma fronteira que não divida, de um monumento que não celebre, feito de um aço mole, de um mármore frágil como penugem." (in the original).

O monumento esquecido ganharia do próprio esquecimento seu atestado de autenticidade, e neste paradoxo se encerraria. Mas aos poucos, quem sabe, sua história seria reconstituída por historiadores, [...] Então ruiria por si mesmo, intocado, a começar pelo telhado [...] Então uma nova etapa seria inaugurada, com o vão de uma quadra quase inteira vazia, obedecendo ao formato do prédio original, sem muros nem grades, mas onde ninguém entraria. Pois seria de péssimo alvitre ultrapassar a linha imaginária entre a calçada e o espaço onde o prédio estivera. Crianças seriam educadas, por gerações a fio, a não pisar além dessa linha, deixando aquele terreno vazio no coração da cidade superpovoada. [...] E desfeito, derrubado pelo tempo, vazio até mesmo de seu piso e de suas paredes, o antigo edifício ofereceria à cidade o patrimônio histórico de uma pergunta. (128-129)

The question asked by Ramos is perhaps the question that Shoshana Felman (1992) asks about the meaning of living in a former Jewish quarter, in her words, how can we *inhabit* history understood as a place of the Other's annihilation?

*The Missing House* is a powerful artwork maybe because it tries to represent something that touches us in a very particular way, the idea of living in a community, of life in a neighborhood, the idea of something ordinary and of the everyday, like living in a house.

According to Czaplicka (1995), the material traces and names, dates and professions that are in the plates placed in the adjacent walls of the vacant lot, summon up not only the presence of the former residents in the urban space but also their connection to the professional life of the city, placing the artwork in a context where we can contemplate the experience of loss and emptiness as personal:

To the extent that the commemorative insight into the place involves self-reflection and personal involvement, the contemplative subject may empathize enough to gain a consciousness of self in history and even to experience the loss mediated here as a personal one. It seems appropriate that this loss be experienced in Germany on a street once called Toleranzstrasse. (p. 171)

As van Alphen (1997) remarks, Boltanski's archivist mission is not, in this case, to release information about the Holocaust, but to put the observer in the immediate experience of a certain aspect of Nazism or a certain aspect of the Holocaust. In this way, what is happening is not only listening to the account of a witness, but being *placed* in a position from which one lives the past in a subjective way. However, an aesthetic of ruin, of the fragment, threatens to take the observer to call up "romantic" images of melancholy, losing him/herself in a sense of loss. According to Czaplicka (1995), the documental information included in Boltanski's artwork breaks this connection by incorporating a presence in the form of documents and historical traces. In this way, the artist points to an idea of recognition of loss: "Not a sense of loss but a recognition of loss should be the result: mourning (the sense of loss and the melancholic engagement) becomes reasoned in the recognition of what or who has been lost" (p. 185).

For Hal Foster (2004), many artists have been using as groundwork several documentary materials, images and historical texts, which leads Foster to speak of an "archival artist", someone who makes the archival procedure central in his work, in the sense that it opens up the possibility for a type of alternative order to the one used by the museums or traditional archives. Foster speaks of an "archival impulse" recalling the "archive fever" of Derrida (2006 [1995]), in which the human psyche is understood as an archive by the French philosopher, who uses Freud's mind topography to speak about psychoanalysis as an archival practice. According to Derrida, we suffer from an archival compulsion, something he calls "*mal d'archive*". However, Foster's archival artist is one who offers an alternative approach to the archive, understood here not simply as a database or as a device aimed at knowledge objectification or with a regulatory function, about which Foucault warns us, but as an

archival work made by artists in the boundaries of a humanist tradition that explores the archive as a tool which works upon collective memory:

As social scientist Arjun Appadurai suggests, the traditional humanist archive fits with the Cartesian duality of body and soul, as a corpus of knowledge or information that is animated by something less visible – usually the spirit of a people, the people or humanity in general. (Gibbons, 2007: 135)

For Aleida Assmann (*apud* Olick *et al.*, 2011), the archive is a kind of place of the “lost and found” which captures what isn’t (still) necessary or what wasn’t (still) understood, helping to position ourselves in time, serving as reference for social memory and thus creating a meta-memory, a second-order memory which preserves what was forgotten. Information about the former residents included in the plates of *The Missing House* re-builds and/or re-works out their memories, producing a memory of a memory which makes this artwork and this place an artwork and a place of postmemory. A particular investigation or excavation has brought to light the lives of the ones who inhabited a particular place, in a particular neighborhood, before Second World War events brought down to debris those “small stories” – the “small memories” which interest Boltanski (Kaplan, 2007) – and that are part of our History and part of the city’s history.

*The Missing House* then conjures up, in a very powerful way, questions of loss related to the German past, with all the phantasmatic burden that still pervades the city’s history. The house’s absence is synonym of the absence of the Jewish people, their culture and their engagement in the city. *The Missing House* as an artwork claims this absence by denying any physical construction in the empty lot of Grosse Hamburger-Strasse, embodying the emptiness as a containing site and allowor of memory but also as an absence that can never be fulfilled. This calling of absence seems to conspire to invoke memory and produce history, predisposing the observer not only to a form of mourning for the vanished inhabitants, but to a type of commemoration in which the artwork’s characteristics unveil individual stories through the plates with the resident’s names, and to an opening of the consciousness to a social history through an absent house (Czaplicka, 1995). The memorial work of *The Missing House* seems to bring forward a particular performance of cultural memory in the present (Whybrow, 2011), namely, the cultural trauma translated in the virtual annihilation of a people, which becomes a historical moment that continues to enfold, to re-work itself in the present, simultaneously carrying a certain urban past thanks to the specific location of the artwork.

As Mesch (2008) remarks, following Walter Benjamin, in this type of work the postwar city becomes a “mnemotechnic device”, which aims the recall of destruction. The destroyed or abandoned building serves as an echo of a traumatized landscape that seems to symbolize the wounds of the past that are kept open. Open wounds whose lack of cure are destined to be unsolved and never to be forgotten (Gibbons, 2007).

An obvious connection about place and memory brings us to the mnemonic techniques that Francis A. Yates (1992 [1966]) recalls in *The Art of Memory* and which acknowledge the ancient relation between site and memory. The art of memory can be translated into a sophisticated set of techniques aimed to imprint places and images in the mind. Places where images are put and whose presence and arrangement make us remember. In *The Missing House* there is the need of a participative passer-by who, through his/her (post)memory, seems to update the artwork. Thus, the inhabitants – those who interact with the city – are the real “makers” of the city, building with the help of their memory, the groundwork of an inclusive city which shelters, as Michel de Certeau notes, “the absence of that which has passed by” (*apud* Gibbons, 2007: 102). In this way, we can consider that the artwork, framed

in a form of urban art, operates as a medium through which the passer-by discovers the place of the city inside him/herself (Whybrow, 2011).

The postmemory's work that seems to concern *The Missing House* is found in what Hirsch (2008) notices as the "imaginative investment, projection and creation" (107), and that can be attributed to the observer of Boltanski's memorial, incorporating him/her in a *rememoration* of the city's past and allowing us, perhaps, to talk about an urban postmemory.

Without any explaining caption which can warn and inform the passer-by about the memorial site, *The Missing House* seems to adopt the commitment of a place that doesn't set itself apart but mingles in the city, allowing only the less (or more) distracted and/or informed observer/visitor/passer-by a powerful reflection about this place, about this absence, an absence as a trace of a former presence, and through which memory is updated by the observer who fulfills a role of a secondary witness or, in other words, the performance of a postmemory work.

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## Public Art by Citizens: Inclusion and Empowerment

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**Abstract:** To involve citizens in developing the processes of *city making* is an objective that occupies part of the agenda of political parties in the context of the necessary renewal of representative democracy. This paper aims to provide some answers to the following questions: Is it possible to overcome the participatory processes based exclusively on the consultation? Is it possible to “train” residents to take an active role in decision-making? How can we manage, proactively, the relationship between public actors, technicians and politicians, in a participatory process? We analyse the development of the process of creating the Wall of Remembrance in the Barcelona neighbourhood of Baró de Viver, a work of public art created and produced by its neighbours in the context of a long participatory process focused on improving the image of the neighbourhood and the improvement of public space. This result and this process have been possible in a given context of cooperation among neighbours, local government and the research team (CR-Polis, Art, City, Society at the University of Barcelona). The development of a creative process of citizen participation between 2004 and 2011 made possible the direct management of decision-making by the residents on the design of public space in the neighbourhood. However, the material results of the process *should* not overshadow the great achievement of the project: the inclusion of a neighbourhood in taking informed decisions because of their empowerment in public space design and management of memory.

**Keywords:** civic participation, public space, public art, civic empowerment

### Introduction

The right to adequate housing has been formally recognized by all regimes, democratic or corporate, that have developed social housing policies or subsidized housing to solve the serious situation created by the mass arrival of waves of immigrants to industrialized cities that offered better employment opportunities. Much has been said about the impact made by

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<sup>5</sup> The authors are researchers at CR POLIS. The CR POLIS was created in July 1999 developing an intense activity in the development of interdisciplinary projects related to public space and public art. Among its achievements we can point the Information System of Public Art in Barcelona ([www.bcn.cat / artpublic](http://www.bcn.cat/artpublic)), the process Mapping La Mina with the design of the neighborhood's Boulevard and the development of participatory processes in the neighborhood of Baró de Viver resulting in the Mural of Remembrance, the design of la Rambla and the monument to the Cheap Houses ([www.ub.edu/escult](http://www.ub.edu/escult)).

the principles of modern architecture – the famous functional segregation of the city – in the management of urban territories and attempts to solve the problem (among other measures with the work on minimum housing). But in many cases, the functional segregation is dwarfed by spatial segregation and is not a consequence of the application of modern principles, but of the dynamics of the land market: the land far from the city, often rural, is cheaper and therefore more interesting to build up. Proposals for garden cities, linear towns, in the early twentieth century, were spatially segregated from the urban centres they sought to serve. Hence, these models included transport systems as key elements of their articulation.

If the theoretical models looked for the solution of spatial segregation, which was fulfilled in some of the developments devoted to middle classes, the case analysed here clearly demonstrates that spatial segregation was one of the ideological elements in the formulation of the new neighbourhoods. This spatial segregation based on a relatively deficient built environment (poor materials, poor execution of the work, etc.) was based on several principles:

1. *Remoteness* from the centre is the first and essential condition.
2. *Isolation* of the area or neighbourhood because the transport network does not reach there.
3. *Deficits in urbanization*: from the lack of basic services (electricity, sewerage, health and even education), to a chronic shortage of equipment in a *minimum design of public space* (lack of asphalted streets, of lighting, of public spaces including qualified green space, of symbolic elements of identity reference, etc.).
4. *Reduction of urban functions* in the neighbourhood just to one: being a bedroom outskirts.

In summary, these neighbourhoods are born *outside* the city, built and developed as outskirts and as such receiving, for many years, a differential treatment: *abandonment*. Being part of the city, these neighbourhoods become, in the best of cases, *invisible* to the rest of the citizens. At worst, they are stigmatized and segregated, so definitely perceived as dangerous zones.

The restoration of democracy in Catalonia means that the new councils, regardless of territorial policies of a general character, have an obligation to reverse the processes previously generated, making these neighbourhoods into what they should have always been: a specific part of the city. Some authors have labelled this process as *remedial urbanism* (Font, 1999).

In either situation, the reversal of the processes has involved:

1. To bring centrality to these territories, coordinating with the urban area that has expanded over the years.
2. To connect the area by introducing fundamental improvements in the mobility network of the municipality.
3. To bridge the urbanization gaps with an active policy of improving infrastructure, facilities and eventually qualified public spaces.
4. To introduce functional diversity into the neighbourhood, providing a certain centrality.

These neighbourhoods, losing their invisibility little by little, become accessible and become, in short, a neighbourhood of the city. This is the case of the Baró de Viver neighbourhood in Barcelona, which we present here.

### *Baró de Viver: A short history*

As in other European cities, Barcelona's industrial growth generated job opportunities, and great waves of interior migration took place. Thus, the city doubled its population between 1888 (the year of the Universal Exhibition) and 1900 and doubled it again by 1930, reaching one million inhabitants.

Although the Reform and Expansion Plan by Cerdà (1859) would gradually unfold, the city was not able to provide, either by quantity or by price, enough housing to accommodate all this population. The phenomenon of infra-housing emerges, either by overcrowding flats on rent or by extending shantytowns in different parts of the city. Both the municipality (with the creation of the Institute of Social Housing, subsequently the Municipal Housing Institute) and the central government tried to alleviate this situation. Influenced by various European experiences, especially the French law *Habitations à Bon Marché*, (1894), in 1911 the first *Cheap Housing Act* is approved, aimed primarily at workers and promoted by the Institute of Social Reforms, to be followed by the *Homes Act* (1921) which expanded its objectives to middle classes. These laws are the start of State intervention in urban planning. Although the impact was relatively small and may not fully address or solve the problem. It is no wonder that, already during the Second Republic, the GATPAC (Architects and Technicians Group for Contemporary Architecture) raised again solutions to the problems that were cut short by the war in Spain.

During the Franco era, the population of Barcelona doubled in less than 30 years, and the problem persisted despite various attempts for a solution (by planning with the Regional Plan, 1953, and the General Metropolitan Plan, 1976; with the *Law of Limited Income Housing*, 1954, the various *National Plans for Housing*, the *Social Emergency Act* of 1957, the plans for the *Suppression of Shanty*, etc.).

But it was not until the restoration of democracy in Spain that municipalities strongly addressed the problem and, in the case of Barcelona, the city could host the 1992 Olympic Games, with the total eradication of shanty towns.

The neighbourhood of Baró de Viver began its history in 1929 with the construction of 381 cheap houses<sup>6</sup> on land in the municipality of Santa Coloma, by the initiative of Barcelona Mayor Dario Romeu, Baron of Viver. The official inauguration took place on March 31st, 1931, when the neighbourhood was renamed Francesc Pi i Margall (president of the First Spanish Republic), a name it retained until the fascist troops entered Barcelona, and then renamed Baró de Viver.

Located on the outskirts of Barcelona, the neighbourhood is configured as a *village* of one-story townhouses. Public space is poor, formed by the circulation streets and a kind of square. The Government *Gazette* published on January 4th, 1944, the Decree which provides

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<sup>6</sup> Designed by architect Xavier Turull; he was designated by the Patronat de l'Habitatge de Barcelona to house migrant workers families at the juncture of the universal exposition of 1929.

for the segregation of Baró de Viver and Bon Pastor of the municipality of Santa Coloma. So Baró de Viver formally annexes Barcelona. The neighbourhood borders the river Besòs.<sup>7</sup>

In its fight against the shantytowns in the 1950s, *Barcelona's Municipal Patronage of Housing* decided to build 20 blocks in the area, with a total of 486 apartments and two commercial blocks in order to house slum dwellers from the Somorrostro.<sup>8</sup> The new buildings adopt the type of multi-storey residential block and create a new urban fabric, organized as a continuation of the network of streets of Barcelona. This pattern coexists with the *village* built in 1929. However, as was common during the Franco era, new homes suffer from a deficit of urbanization and facilities that the neighbourhood will not resolve until the 1980s. Much of the neighbourhood social activity takes place in the only open space that exists: the football field built in 1949.

The unfolding of the *Regional Plan* (1953) represents the definitive isolation of the neighbourhood from the rest of the city. The neighbourhood is isolated from the urban context, bounded to the west by the river, to the north by rural land that over the years was to become road junctions, to the east by large factories like *La Maquinista*, the large railway yards of the corridor of the Sagrera, and to the south by the industrial estate of Bon Pastor. An area with poor transportation – the first bus will not arrive until 1964 – Baró de Viver is in that place that, in the words of Josep M. Huertas, *was the end of the world* and it is not until 1983 that the neighbourhood remains attached to the metropolitan area by Metro.

Despite its isolation, the associational and demanding life of the neighbourhood is rich and intense. Under the 1964 *Associations Act* that allows the creation of neighbourhood associations to ensure better living conditions, the *Neighbourhood Association* is founded, and several cultural and recreational associations arise. As usual in the Spanish context, these associations will become the core of the protests and claims against the Franco's regime.<sup>9</sup>

In 1983 a scandal breaks out in Barcelona. It is found that a significant portion of the housing estates built during the Franco era suffer from an illness of the concrete building structures called *aluminosis* that threatens their structures and jeopardizes the life of their inhabitants. Baró de Viver is affected in the buildings constructed in 1958. The City of Barcelona, deploying the technical resources of the *Metropolitan General Plan* (1976), designs a PERI (Special Comprehensive Reform Plan) to be launched in 1986.

The PERI implies the complete renovation of the neighbourhood, having a major impact since it involves (1) the demolition of the old cheap houses and (2) the demolition of the blocks built in 1958. Thus begins the process of demolition and construction of new blocks to relocate the affected neighbours, which will be implemented in 7 steps over a period of 14 years and finished in 1999. The public space of the neighbourhood was completely transformed, especially since the construction of the *Hall*, a huge building with an interior

<sup>7</sup> This river, one of the natural areas of the neighbourhood, every so often overflows, causing flooding – to highlight floods in 1937 and in 1943. Following severe flooding in 1962, the river was channelled between walls of concrete (1973-1975), breaking the morphological relationship with its territory. Crossing industrial and residential areas which discharge their waste into the river, the Besòs was, for many decades, an open air sewer, becoming considered one of the most polluted rivers in Europe. Then, in 1999, the river underwent a major refurbishment and re-naturalization, generating a big new public space: the Besòs River Park.

<sup>8</sup> The *Somorrostro* was one of the slum neighborhoods of Barcelona. It was sited at the beach near the railroad yards and the power plant next to the Besòs River.

<sup>9</sup> In 1974 the district participates in the days of bus boycott because of rising fares, queues and the poor state of the Santa Coloma road linking the district with the rest of the city.

garden designed by Emilio Donato, with the problem that this building was built on the old football field.

The mighty works for 1992 Olympics only residually affect Baró de Viver. The layout of the City belt road finally breaks down the contact with the river, but in the logic of infrastructure building in Barcelona, a large slab covers its layout through the neighbourhood. The *Llosa* will become a new public space equipped with sports facilities and a giant pergola generating a kind of Agora in the neighbourhood.

In 1992 a series of renovations were performed in the *Hall*, renamed as Plaza de Baró de Viver, and The Sources Square<sup>10</sup> was urbanized. Despite the policy of “monumentalization of the periphery” promoted by the City since early 1980, Baró de Viver remains one of the few neighbourhoods in Barcelona not to have a unique piece of public art in its territory.

The Neighbourhood Association leads the residents’ claims to improve the neighbourhood’s public space, which will be defined in the construction of the Plaza Pilar Miró 2007. Cultural dynamics grow and develop, and in 2004 the neighbourhood is able to design their own *Gegant*,<sup>11</sup> the Baronet, as the result of community work with young people.

The vindication dynamics of the neighbourhood continues, thanks to the existence of several municipal mechanisms (*Community Plan*, 2002; *Action Plan for the District of Sant Andreu*)<sup>12</sup> and as a result of a collaboration with CR POLIS at the University of Barcelona. Several participatory workshops that address the improvement of public spaces as a means of improving the image and identity of the neighbourhood were developed. One of the results achieved is the building of the *Wall of Remembrance* initiated in 2010, the remodelling of the Rambla de Ciutat de Asuncion and the *Monument to Cheap Houses*, and the remodelling of the Plaza de Baró de Viver (February 2011).

Quality urban design and public art *normalize* the neighbourhood as a neighbourhood of Barcelona. Despite the achievements, the work is not complete and several projects are pending continuity: the renovation of the subway exit including an area for skaters and urban orchards, the civic plaza and community centre.<sup>13</sup> Now, Baró de Viver is not the end of the world and is becoming a neighbourhood among the 72 neighbourhoods in Barcelona.

## The Wall of Remembrance

*The Wall of Remembrance* comes from a participatory process, begun in 2004, focused on improving public spaces in the neighbourhood in the context of the various regeneration processes developed at the request of residents by the City Council (PAM<sup>14</sup> 2008-2011) and the Generalitat of Catalonia (Neighbourhoods Act, 2010-2014).

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<sup>10</sup> ‘*The Sources Square*’ is the name given by neighbors because the urban design of this site is based on the installation of several iron fountains.

<sup>11</sup> The *gegants* (giants) are part of the popular traditions of Catalonia. They consist of anthropomorphic representations of between 3 to 4 times the scale of the human body, made of wood, *papier mache* and clothing. The inside is empty allowing carriers to be within the giant and make it walk and dance.

<sup>12</sup> Barcelona is organized into 10 districts and 72 neighborhoods. Sant Andreu is one of these districts and Baró de Viver is one of the neighborhoods in the district.

<sup>13</sup> In April 2012, the public competition for the Center was approved with a project by Territori 24 (Bet Alabern, Álvaro Casanovas, Adrià Calvo, Ivan Pérez i Filena Di Tommaso) and the writing of the competition for the square is now underway.

<sup>14</sup> PAM (Pla d’acció Municipal) *Municipal Action Plan*, which can be for the whole city and also for each one of the districts.

## *The opportunity: From noise barriers to the mural of remembrance*

As noted in Table 1,<sup>15</sup> we began participatory processes in this neighbourhood in 2004. This process consists of different moments and stages but, overall, the whole focuses on participatory development of projects of public space and public art (Salas, 2004-2012; Ricart, 2009; Remesar and Ricart, 2010; Remesar *et al.*, 2012). Here is not the place to analyze the whole participatory project (that can be followed through the above references), but it is interesting to synthesize the phases of this long working process.

**Table 1. Chronology of participatory processes in the Baró de Viver neighbourhood**

Year	Stage	Actors	Objectives
2004/2005	Starting the process	Young people from the neighbourhood/Universitat de Barcelona (UB)	To improve the image of the neighbourhood
2006	Expanding the process	Young people from the neighbourhood seek the complicity of the Neighbours Association [ <b>Neighbours x UB</b> ]	The same objective, extended to the improvement of public spaces in the neighbourhood
2007	Generalization of the process	Presentation of results to all the neighbours, and starting negotiating with the District Administration	To extend the objectives of the process to most of the neighbours
2009	Agreement neighbours, district, University	Fulfilment of a roadmap for implementing the projects demanded by neighbours [ <b>District x neighbours x UB</b> ]	Harnessing the opportunity cost for implementing some projects: <i>Wall of Remembrance</i> and Rambla Ciutat de Asuncion
2010	Tripartite process of participation	Different groups of the neighbourhood and on many occasions [ <b>District x neighbours x UB</b> ]	Design of the <i>Mural of Remembrance</i> by neighbourhood process Design of the Rambla de Asunción by neighbourhood process
2011		“The Neighbourhood” [ <b>District x neighbours x UB</b> ]	Opening of the <i>Wall of Remembrance</i> Presentation of neighbourhood to the whole District: Exhibition <i>Baró de Viver talk in images</i> Opening Rambla de Ciutat de Asuncion and <i>Monument to the Cheap Houses</i> Opening of the refurbishment of the Baró de Viver square
2011	Local elections	The ruling party lost the elections	Beginning of the re-negotiation of ongoing projects with the new the district government
2011	<i>Nas Margens</i> Exhibition (Museum da Cidade Almada)	Direct participation of neighbours in the design of the exhibition departing from the <i>Wall of Remembrance</i> [ <b>Neighbours x UB</b> ]:	To share the experience of the periphery by comparing neighbourhoods in Almada and Barcelona
2012	Fulfilment of some cases pending	The new district government introduces a public competition for the design of Civic Centre building and the Civic Plaza [ <b>Neighbours, UB</b> ] (x) [ <b>District</b> ]	Neighbours participate in drafting the tenders of competitions from the results of the previous process. BIMSA <sup>16</sup> runs the development of competitions
2012	New challenges	Restart of the processes of participation concerning the management of the metro exit [ <b>Neighbours, UB</b> ] (x) [ <b>District</b> ]	Restatement of tripartite agreement and its development. currently in progress

<sup>15</sup> We want to thank here for their collaboration in various stages of development of this process: M. Mariño, Iris Viegas, Núria Ricart, Nemo A. Remesar, and Tomeu Vidal.

<sup>16</sup> BIMSA (Barcelona Municipal Infrastructure) is the public company of the City of Barcelona intended to manage its own infrastructures and equipment.

Baró de Viver, facing the road junction<sup>17</sup> of La Trinitat, suffered from significant noise pollution. Therefore, the neighbours demanded to the District the installation of sound barriers that would reduce the level of noise, which agreed to the installation of noise barriers over 150 meters long by 4 meter high.

This facility provides an opportunity for the development of one of the initial project aims: improving the image of the neighbourhood by installing a public artwork, in this case a work created by the neighbours.

We began a series of workshops with different groups (associations, schools ...) whose results are shown in the *Fourth Participatory Encounter* in Baró de Viver. In this encounter, it was decided to carry out a *Neighbourhood Memory Archive* from the photos that neighbours can provide: “A photo album of Baró de Viver from its birth to the present. For this reason we invite you to bring your photos, news clippings, writings, etc.... you would want to appear on Noise barriers” (Salas, 2004-2012).

The call was a great success, collecting over 4000 pictures and hundreds of documents. While we proceeded to the digitization of documents, a new process started: *the creation of a narrative* for the wall. What do you want to explain? How do you want to explain? We believe that this point is crucial in creating an artistic work of this kind. The creation of a narrative might tend easily to reproduce the *official* narrative, whether that of the history of the city, cold and tendentiously objective, or that based on the personal memories and subjectivity, hot and with hints of folklore. The decision was crucial and we choose to use the working method that we developed in our research: the combination of a timeline with an atlas<sup>18</sup> based on the documents and photographs. This way:

Finally, it was decided that it [the mural] would reflect moments of life in the neighbourhood that had special meaning for the inhabitants, with particular incidence in urban planning and everyday life, without pretension to tell a complete history. Did not want a “history of the neighbourhood” but reflect the moments and subjects that the neighbours thought were more fundamental and recorded in popular memory as the flood of 1943, the snowfall of 1962, the construction of the giant of the neighbourhood or the fact that the athlete Albert Recuero, born in the neighbourhood, was selected for the 2004 Athens Olympics. (Fabre, 2011, no page)

The support (linear) facilitates the deployment of a temporal narrative and since the whole noise barriers will not be used, the same support facilitates the continuity of the ‘history’ in later times. In short, as pointed out by Carme Grandas,

It is not simply a look back to how the area used to be over eighty years ago, but rather a stroll through the most important events that form and mark the identity of Baró de Viver. It looks back at the administrative

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<sup>17</sup> “First it was thought to act in the sonic screens face front to the Trinity road junction, to draw the attention of drivers on the existence in that place of a residential nucleus of which most locals ignore the existence, with calls written with graffiti such as ‘Hello’ or ‘We are here’. But finally it was decided to focus on the face in front of the houses in the neighbourhood, to make it more visually pleasing” (Fabre, 2011, no page).

<sup>18</sup> The timeline should not be confused with a chronology, though chronology is in its base. It consists in arranging, temporarily, the most relevant facts for a given territory. Facts of urban, social, cultural, environmental, associative dynamics type, and so on. From this unfolding you can set the times that are considered most relevant to who builds the narrative. In parallel an Atlas is developed, a set of visual or written documents that can be anchored at the points of the timeline. These documents give signification to temporal moments. If the timeline, as we conceive it, has its origin in certain interactive games, the Atlas, as we understand it, has its origins in the work by Cerdà (1859) for his studies for the Reform and Expansion Project of Barcelona.



segregation with the 1954 regional development plan and the changes with the large-scale urban projects as a result of the 1992 thoroughfares plan, to the area's true driving force, its inhabitants, along with their festivals, associations and sports, the arrival of public transport and educational facilities, and more.

The photographs have other revealing details, showing changes in clothing and hair styles and children's games in the streets. They talk about the presence of women, from grandmothers running their homes and caring for extended families to working women and girls playing sport and studying. These details also talk about the times of the two dictatorships, the first illustrated with the construction of a group of dwellings called Baró de Viver, the second with an explanation of the social restraints on courting couples. There are also reproductions of official documents, showing the bombastic vocabulary and writing style of the Franco regime, obvious in the newspapers and especially in text headings and closings. Other documents reproduced are essential to understanding the post-war years: the ration books that people needed to buy food, clothes and other basic products for daily consumption. They officially disappeared during the celebration of the 1952 International Eucharistic Congress in Barcelona, though in practice they continued to be valid and were used for several more years.

The writing on the mural is not long, but rather the basic part of the work, linking the reproductions of documents and texts, becoming the leitmotif of the entire memorial. The inscriptions are short messages, a few lines of well-chosen words unravelling the history of the area, preserving it as a memory and keeping it for the future. (Grandas, 2011, no page)

## Theoretical considerations

We note that our project meets the title of this work. With the *Wall of Remembrance* and the design of the Rambla de Asunción with its *Monument to the Cheap Houses* projects, we achieved our goal to include neighbours in the urban decision-making processes, such as empowering citizens in relation to the projects of public space, public art and urban design. The term *empowerment* has been extensively used in studies of business organizations and refers to the need to activate or enhance the involvement of employees with the company as parts of some co-management processes, with the goal of improving productivity. Recently used in a broader context, especially in some approaches to the problem of governance within the context of the crisis of formal democracies, the high rates of abstention, the increasing distance between citizens and policymakers, and the abdication of responsibilities of the state apparatus in civil society, it has raised the need for new strategies to increase citizen involvement in the process of making political decisions and, thus, to revitalize a democracy that is being emptied of political content.

Although the concept of *power* is directly related to its exercise, especially from the perspective of repression, the word has, at least in Latin languages, some meanings that must be explored in the context of research on governance: "Power is not only the exercise of domination, whether through physical brute force or by political domain. Power is also capacity and ability. I can or I can not do anything in relation to the capabilities that, genetically and culturally, have been identifying me and my way of being in the world" (Remesar, 2008: 422).

With regard to these capacities and abilities, the exercise involves:

- Having the freedom to exercise them.
- Having the right to exercise them.
- Having the opportunity to exercise them.
- Having executive resources.

In a complex society like ours, their effective deployment depends not only on the legal-political framework that enables them (at the level of state, region or locality) but also depends on other factors that will enable their exercise. First, conditions must be provided for dialogue between parties (in our case, neighbours and local government). This dialogue often

grows from the neighbourhood vindication that obliges the administration to listen. Second, if we want to move forward its dialogue to achieve agreement and pact targets it is necessary to provide certain roadmaps that pass necessarily by the education and training of both neighbours, as technicians, and politicians, in an ongoing process.

If, as pointed out by Brandão (2010, 2011), the project of public space requires a willingness on the part of actors to share a foundational conviction:

Throughout the city are interested in both architecture as literature, cinema as geography, art and sociology, history and photography ... Because of that, summing all, the city is a diverse entity, but as a subject of design in itself is just one. Therefore, knowledge of the City can no longer exist to justify one or another of the disciplines that are devoted to it (even those that assign themselves the label of holistic) [...] The interdisciplinarity is mandatory, because only from a single view angle approach, the life of the city escapes ... and this requires a different attitude so radical, that would require a re-identification. (Brandão, 2011: 18)

What is true for the field of disciplines, then, is valid for the field of urban stakeholders.

In the case of citizen participation, as Merlin and Choay (2005) point out, the concept is ambiguous and nebulous. However, the European Council of Town Planners raises participation:

- [1] As a guarantee of environmental improvement in cities<sup>19</sup>
- [2] As a guarantee of territorial and social cohesion<sup>20</sup>
- [3] As a guarantee of change in the economic base of the city to allow its development in the context of the knowledge economy<sup>21</sup>

From our experience in the process in Baró de Viver, there are three major fields of relations among different actors that enable us to extrapolate a pattern of relationships, agencies and strategies for participatory processes: the objective of the internal relationship among the actors, the type of relationship of work in practice, and the type of relationship with the local government (see Table 2).

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<sup>19</sup> “Sustainability – integrating the economic, ecological and social change, based on the participation and commitment, will be a priority objective which will make all this possible” (European Council of Town Planners, 2003).

<sup>20</sup> “Cities are meeting places where social interaction is nurtured. The planning should strive to create a concept of neighbourhood to reinforce local identity, sense of belonging and human atmosphere. In particular, the smallest units of the city, the block, neighbourhood, or the ‘district’ – must play an essential role in providing a framework for human contact and allow public participation in managing the urban program. At the same time, these cells have to deal with urban network of the city, to provide context for local action. To support local communities is a need for flexibility in decision-making” (European Council of Town Planners, 2003).

<sup>21</sup> “Another major challenge is the development of innovative processes of local democracy – seeking new ways to involve all social partners to increase participation and ensure the common interests of all groups. The participation of citizens provides a better understanding of their demands and can initiate a cultural evolution that leads to the acceptance of a variety of solutions to meet the different needs of different groups, while retaining a shared identity across the city” (European Council of Town Planners, 2003).

**Table 2. Fields of relations among different actors**

	Objective of the internal relationship among actors	Type of relationship of work in practice	Type of relationship with local government
[NEIGHBOURS (X) UB]	Goal-oriented Cooperation	Facilitation / Education	From <i>without</i> to <i>against</i> : resistance strategies
[DISTRICT (X) NEIGHBOURS (X) UB]	Goal-oriented Cooperation	Facilitation / Education / Mediation	<i>With</i> , partnership, roadmap and technical support
[NEIGHBOURS, UB] (X) [DISTRICT]	Negotiating step by step. Overall objectives of cooperation, lack of focus	Facilitation, education (Neighbours / UB) Excessive meetings for coordination	Neither <i>with</i> or <i>without</i> Blocking of both long-term perspective of institutional relations and the objectives to achieve

Participatory processes should aim to generate power within the meanings indicated above, to empower citizens to have ownership of their own city. Not as users or through use, but as citizens, able to entrust the processes of creation of forms, of space, of art. These are processes that are beyond the electoral cycle, that require agreements between citizens and parties; slow processes of negotiation between neighbours, politicians and technical staff; processes in which, not necessarily, the arguments and technical proposals from the local administration are the arguments and appropriate proposals for the public art and urban design of the citizens.

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## Shedding Light on the Still-not-happened: Dérive, Terrain Vague, Áreas de Impunidad

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**Abstract:** In the twentieth century, the realm of architecture hosted appropriation and reframing approaches to public spaces. These sought to anchor urban experience into concepts of belongingness and collective use. This paper aims framing some of these approaches and concepts: “La dérive [the drift]” (Debord, 1956) departs from the common and everyday life to set urban intervention experiences as an alternative way of inhabiting the city; “Terrain vague [wasteground]” (Sola-Morales, 1995) calls for the need to take in spaces with negative connotations and not tame them; rather, this concept endorses a political approach to spaces by accepting their strangeness and freedom; “Áreas de impunidad [impunity areas]” (Ábalos and Herreros, 2000) refers to places where ambiguity, flowing and transitory states occur as a sort of engine for new sociabilities; these areas are marked by changeable programs and uses engaged in a permanent recreation of urban spaces. The present context requires reframing these action principles as plural appropriation mechanisms, this time in a different scenario: the constructed gist of the city.

**Keywords:** “dérive”, “terrain vague”, “areas de impunidad”

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Plan of Rome, Giambattista Nolli, 1748

## Introduction

This plan with the ground – the building mass in black – and the figures – spaces in white – makes use of a remarkable graphic technique for analysing and designing urban forms. In this famous 1748 map of Rome, by Giambattista Nolli (above), the areas occupied by private buildings are shown as a dark mass, ignoring the gaps inside them, so that what stands out in white shows the city's public spaces: its squares, its streets, the courtyards of its palaces and monastery cloisters, as well as the enclosed spaces with public character and dimensions, like the church interiors and the monuments.

Placing emphasis on how the pieces come together, the drawing is a precise instrument to say and assemble accurate constructions and processes from different times. The drawing is a practice and a way of knowledge and acknowledgment in the construction and subsequent sedimentation of actions on the same territory.

Claiming a renewed focus on public space in the consolidated city, this synthesis-drawing reflects a sense of reality of the particular practice of architecture: make the familiar strange. Watching what is familiar to us from a different intensity through new organizational schemes of the existing matter.



Plan of Chiado reconstruction. Source: Rui Mendes, 2012.

The reconstruction of the Chiado neighbourhood in Lisbon after the fire of 1986 (image above), promoted an important action on the consolidated space. The destruction caused by fire made visible the constructive features of the great building itself and the matrix that is the Baixa Plan. The gathering and design of new forms of path through the large blocks, exploring a new network of pathways activated in the interior and inside face of the buildings with ramps and stairs connecting all different levels, is largely strengthened by the construction of the underground tunnel that connects Baixa and Chiado at the sub-soil. The specific reading and synthesis designed by Álvaro Siza has created a renewed awareness of the work on the space in the consolidated city.

This (new) drawing reconstructs and reveals another way to read the space produced by segmented and assembled systems through time. It is an event that aims to be a new episode in a history of physical and temporal relations of continuity that architecture builds.

A study about what is built allows us to question the logic of action by the opposition between public and private sectors and between the new construction or building on pre-existences. It is the dimension of the collective, in space and time, which emerges from these drawings synthesis. The Urban Culture is the collective experience. The new guidelines produced are the matrix for the construction of new meanings and uses of buildings, spaces and places.

In the twentieth century, the realm of architecture hosted appropriation and reframing approaches to public spaces. These sought to ground urban experience in concepts of

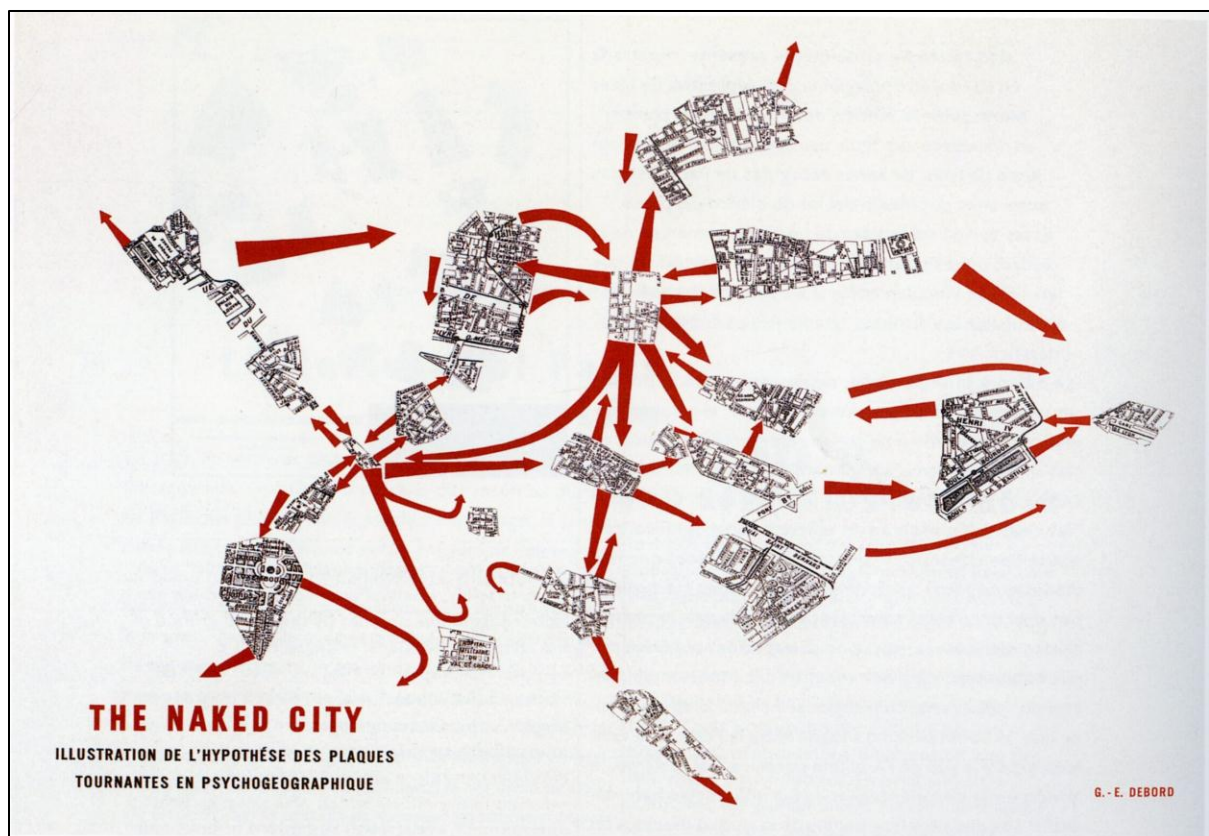
belongingness and collective use. This paper aims to frame some of these approaches and concepts:

“La dérive [the drift]” (Debord, 1956) departs from the common and everyday life to set urban intervention experiences as an alternative way of inhabiting the city;

“Terrain vague [wasteground]” (Solà-Morales, 1995) calls for the need to take in spaces with negative connotations and not tame them; rather, this concept endorses a political approach to spaces by accepting their strangeness and freedom;

“Áreas de impunidad [impunity areas]” (Ábalos and Herreros, 2000) refers to places where ambiguity, flowing and transitory states occur as a sort of engine for new sociabilities; these areas are marked by changeable programs and uses engaged in a permanent recreation of urban spaces.

These concepts do not characterize current society; they are obscured by dominant paradigms of planning and zoning. By gathering and activating them, this paper discusses architecture processes that allow integrating unpredictability, designing availability. The present context requires reframing these action principles as plural appropriation mechanisms, this time in a different scenario: the constructed gist of the city.



The Naked City, Guy Debord 1957.



## *Dérive and the Situationist International*

One of the most important movements of the twentieth century, the Situationist International (SI), introduces a thought around urbanity and its collective fruition. It was officially inaugurated on July 28, 1957, and auto-dissolved in 1972. It is since 1989, with the exhibition devoted to SI by the Centre George Pompidou in Paris, that many of its actions can now be revisited to come up with highly topical discussions concerning contemporary art, architecture and urbanism (Levin, 1996). The laboratory work of SI is the contemporary urban landscape and its first major criticism is about the theoretical poverty of the functionalism dominance in contemporary architecture. The “unitary urbanism”,<sup>2</sup> presented in 1953 in an essay of Gilles Ivan, “Form a new urbanism,” is a critique of urban planning as a tool and an objective approach and politics to a “reconceptualization of the creative city as political Gesamtkunstwerk”<sup>3</sup> (Debord, 1957). According to Debord, *Gesamtkunstwerk*, so often debated, could only be carried out in the urban dimension not corresponding to any of the more traditional aesthetic definitions.<sup>4</sup>

Rejection of the classical model of the individual artist and his autonomous artwork was translated into the field of architecture. To the SI the most basic unit of Unitary Urbanism was not the House but the “architectural complex which is the combination of all the factors that make up an ambience or a series of distinct ambiances at the level of the constructed situation” (Levin, 1996: 116).

Claiming for a new and radical cartography, Situationists make several kinds of graphical and textual documents that re-use existing maps, topographic images, aerial photographs and sociological graphics “as arguments to draw emotional aspects in relation to the built environment.” In these documents, the structure of fragments highlights “the discontinuity characteristic of a productive social geography” (Levin, 1996: 118).

The best-known psychogeographical maps are the “Guide psychogéographique Paris” and “Naked City” (image on previous page), both produced by Debord in 1957. However, the vast majority of documents about the psychogeographic investigation – “the arrangement of the elements of the urban environment in relation with the sensations they produce” – are above all textual descriptions that build up detailed information about the physical surroundings of the area observed (see Fillon, 1955).

In 1955, Debord wrote “Introduction a une critique de la géographie urbaine,” arguing for an experimental methodology for observing the processes occurring between randomness and predictability in city streets. His investigation ends when publishing the “Théorie de la Dérive” in 1956.

Already within the IS, Debord introduces the theme of Dérive to install an experience of urban intervention through contact with the everyday and the trivial, to register a “psychogeographical” materialization of an alternative way of inhabiting the city. The main argument/achievement of “The Théorie de la Dérivé” is the elimination of “Detournement”

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<sup>2</sup>According to SI, the expression “Unitary Urbanism” was discovered in 1953 and first used in a brief treatise at the end of 1956, distributed in Turin by Italian Situationists. The title was: “Manifestate a fafor dell’Urbanismo Unitario”. Cf. “L’Urbanisme Unitaire à la fin des années 50”.

<sup>3</sup>“Report on the construction of situations and on the Conditions of Organization and Action of the International Situationist Tendency,” presented in 1957 during the founding Congress of Internacional Situacionista, in Cosio-D’Aroschia.

<sup>4</sup>Debord, “Rapport sur la construction des situations” in: Berreby, Documents.

(the Surrealist Drifting) by removing the domain of accident and randomness from its program of urban action. *Dérive* is an operation that accepts randomness when subjected to certain rules: the spaces are set as a starting point in cartographic psychogeography, also maps with the directions of penetration into the environmental unit are analyzed. The units are going to examine the house to the neighborhood, up until the whole city and its suburbs are encompassed (Careri, 2002).

If we had to sketch a brief genealogy of the Situationists' actions, we can go back to 1921 to meet the first URBAN READY MADE. Earlier, in 1917, Marcel Duchamp proposed as readymade the Woolworth Building in New York. It was, however, an architectural object and not a public space. The readymade city held in Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre, given the first visit in Paris, 1921, "is the first operation that assigns a symbolic aesthetic value to a space instead of an object" (Careri, 2002: 76):

That "new interpretation of nature applied this time not to art but to life," announced in the press release explaining the Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre operation, is a revolutionary appeal to life versus art and the quotidian versus the aesthetic, openly challenging the traditional modes of urban intervention, a field of action usually reserved for architects and town planners. (p. 76)

It is not clear who proposed that place among artists Dada – "an abandoned church, little known and poorly, at that time surrounded by a kind of Terrain Vague contained by one fence." That little garden that surrounded the church was chosen precisely because it seemed an abandoned garden at our house: a place to inquire for being familiar, although unknown, so little frequented as obvious a space banal and useless, that like many others, would not have really any reason to exist.

More than 70 years after Dada and about 20 after Debord's statement of the *Dérive*, Ignasi de Solà-Morales puts us back to the same urban areas, now more dense, but especially in a state of non-productive and forgotten to the urban, social or political maps.

### *Terrain Vague: For a renewed cartography of urban space*

The first presentation of the essay of the Catalan architect Ignasi de Solà-Morales was held in an academic seminar at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, in Montreal, Canada, in 1994. Since its first publication in 1995, the Terrain Vague of the cities gained more visibility and led to several reflections. His academic repercussion is extensive even though when it comes to the discipline of architecture he is mainly focused on the idea of emptiness as urban scar.

TERRAIN, an extension of soil of indeterminate limits, of an urban nature and strange to the productive efficiency of the city.

VAGUE, a form of absence, but simultaneously a power for the future, expectant and available, where invisible questions of identity hold a range of disclosure.

Focusing the problem in dealing with these vague spaces, Solà-Morales also calls upon a fresh look on the consolidated city from the spaces that were left out of a certain idea of urbanity. It is mainly about the work of some photographers, who in the 1970s turn to urban spaces that are abandoned, obsolete, deactivated and forgotten in course of the urban expansion in post World War II, on which the essay of Solà-Morales (1995) builds a new cartography of urban space. The fascination with these "new" spaces is highly illustrated in the description of TERRAIN VAGUE, which contains multiple meanings and ambiguities. It indicates a double condition: strange spaces which are placed outside the generic domain of a

recognizable occupation and therefore reassuring and comforting; a sense of freedom and criticism within the “mind” of the city, an alternative space of escape and impunity to build other identities.

Solà-Morales mentions several authors in his work that allow him to strengthen the description of the urban subject facing this plot of land defined by indeterminacy. In a time of estrangement before the world (Marquand cited by Solà-Morales), the photographic images of this TERRAIN VAGUE have the power to become indexes, as “indexes more than icons” (Kraus, 1985) make ethical and aesthetic problems in contemporary social life.

The position taken in this essay with almost 20 years opens a new and complex sensitivity, which leads to the question of hegemonic values (which Solà-Morales associates to the modern illuminist legacy), which have revealed to be inadequate in many interventions in the interstices and residual areas in the city.

In contrast to how architecture has been making general standardisation criteria, tied to models that are essentially based on building the “emptiness”, artists and filmmakers have shown interest in these spaces of negative connotations, providing notions of belonging through preservation and recording memory.

The marginal spaces, in a transitional state, that withstand strategies of power and imposition of identities, carry in their fragile condition the characteristics that allow connecting links and continuity with the several transformations of the city. They also hold the possibility of finding for architecture a performance that is not exclusively about forms, optical and figurative.

In conclusion, Solà-Morales emphasizes this idea of seeking forces instead of forms, for the incorporated instead of the distant, the rhizomatic instead of the figurative. In the consolidated territory, the notion of emptiness attributed to these places is absolutely illusory: they are full of past events, full of identity marks. This attention has revealed the preparatory work that provides the appearance of the substract of each extract of the universe. Intensifying the collective vision of the whole, where each part has its relevance as part of the fitting built, it also enables us to test by drawing their validity within an organization that consists of the systems that make up the urban landscapes.

### *Área de impunidad*

The notion of “areas of impunidad” (Aballos and Herreros, 1997), which is one of seven micromanifestos of “una nueva naturalidad” in the 2002 text of the architects Inaki Aballos and Juan Herreros, is a kind of summary statement that extends “Terrain Vague” by Ignasi Solà-Morales, for a more proactive stance, incorporated in the project design. The most decisive of this proposition is the positioning adopted about places, particularly towards the “places of ambiguous condition”: “Places perceived as negative to which the practices of new social subjects give a new urbanity” (Ábalos and Herreros, 2002: 1).

According to the authors, the condition of urban places has been changed in past years. They are now understood primarily as landscape, whether natural or artificial, and this opens new conditions and other ways of approaching the project: these places, and by extension the universe, “would no longer be able to be understood as neutral ground for the construction of architectural objects, they are now the object of priority attention of the architect.” Returning to the initial image (Plan of Rome, Nolli, 1748), it would be as if positive and negative, black and white, fuses (in grey). And so we would have a homogeneous mass again, ready to be carved to a renewed reading of built space.

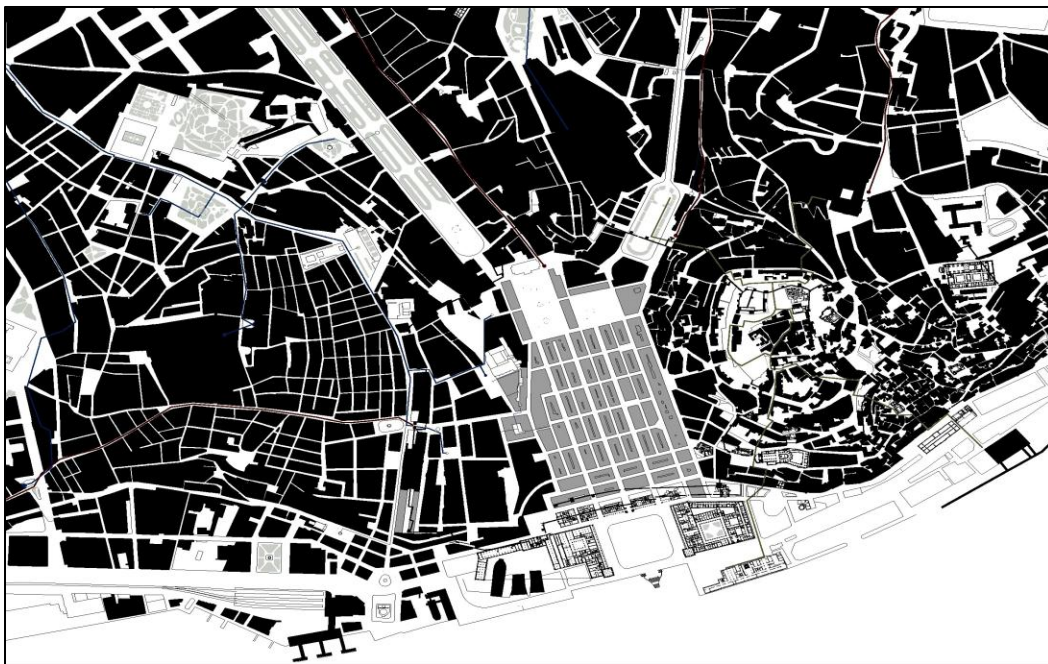
Somehow initiated by Solà-Morales, these micromanifestos set out to build a parallel mapping of this city-artifact made from a new “Material World.” This material is a cluster of elements of natural, artificial, immaterial or fluids with porous and fibrous areas, dense and stable, loaded with memories, with large tracts disconnected, without qualities, almost liquid (Ábalos and Herreros, 2002).

This new mental Atlas points to the conquest of new formal references, new symbols, words and techniques. Extending the questioning by Sola-Morales on the values of the hegemonic modern heritage, Aballos and Herreros (1997) choose to stimulate the critical responsibility of the project instead of the “moralistic sense of reformist politics” that is driven by the poetic dimension, and to find this through the dissolution of boundaries between natural and artificial, rearranging the existing matter. If we can understand that what we call nature is also the result of a constant manipulation, the project should aim for “a new description of the place, which is established first, by the invention of a new topography” (1997: 2).

Returning to the “areas of impunidad” idea as an array of thought rooted in this lack of boundaries, it is precisely these forgotten places of urbanism, the “open fields” and “unregulated territories” where we build all emerging forms of socialization. In the introduction to this micromanifesto, architects compare the work of the architect with the gardener, cleaning, preparing the ground, picking and planting species in an organized manner, taking care afterwards from that time do their work well.

On a final note, with great optimism and energy, Aballos and Herreros condition and highlight the relevance of these disabled and obsolete spaces to rehearse a new positioning of contemporary man before the world through architecture:

When we see a happy thought, fortunately results with almost anything, as if architecture were not involved, as if a new worldview began to come off without homeland, without cultures 1st or 3rd world: Pure transmission of a contemporary beauty that leaves all the rest way behind, time-wise. (1997: 2)



Plan of Chiado reconstruction and Pombal Baixa Plan . Source: Rui Mendes, 2012.

## *The reconstruction of Chiado and Terraços de Bragança as case studies, 1988-2001*

*“esses ignorados interstícios das cidades” – Siza*

The matrix of the Baixa Plan is the conceptual link and constructive action that establishes the methodology that the architect Alvaro Siza adopted for the recovery of Chiado (1988-2001). According to Siza, the reconstruction of a small part of the work should be based on a design unit, the “Baixa Building.” As Tostões (2008: 223) stated, “make the new city in continuity,” making connections and drawing spaces of relationship between high elevation and low elevation, in all directions, through the opening of public spaces in the previously private patios, highlighting permeability and movement through the connection of a new subway. Looking for a set of relations between different interventions of scale, programs and sequential times, we can bind residual spaces, interstitial and existing buildings. This view is supported by the temporal sense of urban development that will closely link phenomena that are compatible because the facts of the homogeneous nature according to Aldo Rossi (1966). Returning to the seminal text “Terrain Vague” of I. Solà-Morales, the recognition of space continuity is an important fact to re-look at to capture the attention of flows, energies, and patterns of time (Solà-Morales, 1995, 2002).



**Reconstruction of Chiado and Terraço de Bragança. Source: Rui Mendes, 2012.**

## Conclusion

All spaces are “Terrain Vague” outstanding. It is the intensity of a new look at urban spaces consolidated in the permanent construction of meaning over the built environment, which makes them available to happen every new entry in the collectivity.

The act of drawing that emerges from this condition approaches the accuracy of ‘addition, subtraction and adjust’. Not giving up the sense of presence deeply rooted in the material world, are works that interrogate notions of limits and fits, memory and context of action. These processes are primarily issued by a particular sense of reality of the exercise of architecture: watch what is familiar to us from another intensity, from synthesis of new designs. More than in the traditional object-artefact, architectural works are invested in the construction parameters and the establishment of coordinates that facilitate and promote a particular organization of experience. Referring to the size of the object are processes that are close to the near-nothing.

This is the construction of the experiment from small perceptions: “Small perceptions not only influence our experience but modify the concept of experience,” stated Jose Gil in “a imagem nua e as pequenas percepções” (Gil, 1996: 11). The conditions are not obvious, and require a recognition approach to construct a possibility of accepting the world. For a city for everyone (Rocha, 2007).

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## Aesthetics of the Informal Urban Landscape: A Potential Factor of Social Inclusion

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**Abstract:** As a vernacular expression, informality produces its own aesthetics of the urban landscape. Aesthetics is not a secondary matter for informal habitat: spontaneously produced by the inhabitants, the shape and appearance of urban space are functionally connected with behaviours and quality of life. This paper presents three operational tools for the field study of informal settlements in the Mediterranean, showing that the genesis of the vernacular urban landscape lies on the inhabitant's culture, local traditions, as well as contemporary patterns of living that propagate from the formal city. Leaving into the background the care of the landscape, the integrated rehabilitation programs often apply a technically oriented approach, or are mere window-dressing pursuing an aesthetic normalization. In both cases, the results do not allow a real inclusiveness, by excluding the expressive capacity of the inhabitants, the compliance with the features of the informal landscape and any participatory practice that can ensure their reproducibility.

**Keywords:** informal settlements, aesthetics, urban landscape, Mediterranean, social inclusion

### The value of the informal landscape

This paper investigates the permanence of some constitutive factors of the traditional urban fabrics that nowadays are spontaneously reproduced by the inhabitants of informal settlements in the Mediterranean. Many scholars found that contemporary spontaneous settlements show features rooted in the past and belonging to local traditions (Kerdoud, 2005), while they share with the ancient fabrics similar conditions of housing deprivation and a refractory response to the application of classical planning methods (Kenzari, 2002).

These rooting features seem to be qualifying elements for the informal habitat, and do not limit their impact on the socio-economic self-organization of settled communities, but often have the ability to shape and transform space, urban functions and landscape. They are among the factors that provide the informal areas of the Mediterranean area with an appearance, a structure and an organization substantially different from that found in slums of other geographical contexts (Figure 1).

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Figure 1. Manshiet Nasser, Cairo, Egypt: The informal city landscape

Often, however, external economic dynamics interfere with the genesis and development of settlements, limiting to a minor role the individual or collective action of the citizens in the production of the habitat (Fawaz, 2005). Thus, the traditional elements of the local identity emerge and survive with difficulty. They are recognizable to a non-superficial reading, but lose sharpness and ability in informing the urban organization and resisting over time.

The conservation or the spontaneous regeneration of features belonging to the traditional cultures is likely to get lost in the acceleration of the globalization phenomena. What are then the contact points between the informal city and the traditional one? It's still possible to find elements of historical continuity in the spontaneous evolution of the Mediterranean urban areas?

Some features of informal settlements, indirectly linked to the physical properties of the urban space, could satisfy the query. Scholars have used terms such as *evolutionary capacity*, *fluidity*, *organic structure*, *dynamism* and *flexibility* (Şenyapılı, 1996).

As it happened for the Mediterranean city, a topos of the narrative sensibility of painters from the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, contemporary vernacular habitats were being investigated by visual arts<sup>2</sup> before than by the analytical attention of planners, with figurative results synthesizing the coherence of the formal relations produced by the spontaneous city. The attention to these settlements, marked by an extreme precariousness of forms and materials, has developed a special consideration to the communicative power and the emotional impact of their formal and expressive canons, resulting in a sort of *aesthetic of poverty*.

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the work of the artist Dionisio González about South American slums.

On the contrary, if informal settlements have the stable appearance and the real solidity that distinguish the Mediterranean slums, perhaps we should appreciate in it the evocative capacity that is easily recognizable also in the traditional spontaneous urban landscapes, from the medinas of North Africa to the complex structures of the villages of the southern peninsular Europe (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Almonaster la Real, Andalusia, Spain: An example of traditional Mediterranean urban landscape**

Over the last twenty years, the work of researchers such as anthropologist Lisa Peattie (1992: 23-32) and artist Dionisio González (Figure 3) was defining an aesthetic principle leading to recognize the contemporary informal settlements at the status of folk art, with particular reference to the South American shantytowns.

We could develop this concept also referring to the Mediterranean context, but avoiding any aesthetic judgment derived from a romantic perception, albeit evolved. In fact, as Peattie stated, some features such as the suggestion, simplicity, irregularity and the perishable nature of the settlements cannot be considered as outcomes consciously desired by the informal builders, and therefore cannot be used as keys for the interpretation of the habitat and the landscape.

This is demonstrated by the general absence of the precariousness in the Mediterranean informal settlements: the specific environmental conditions make possible the rapid evolution of the shantytowns in solid urban slums, as distinguished from some poorer slums in South America.

With this caution, the aesthetic approach can be a useful tool to open a different point of view on the informal city. The investigation necessarily extends in the direction of the ekistics, by identifying closer connections between the aesthetic of the built environment and the processes enabling the production of the specific territorial settings in which, nowadays, we appreciate the canons of beauty and coherence of the landscape.



Figure 3. Dionisio González ©, “Buraco Quente”, 2004. Courtesy of the author.

So, we are referring to the notion of *cultural landscape*,<sup>3</sup> which in our specific case recalls the idea of a beauty never brought to perfection, born from and residing in the customary use.

This means that the aesthetic value is not assigned to the inhabitants’ creative expression implicit in the mere act of settling and shaping their own habitat; but rather to a core of traditional knowledge, developed, tested and handed down over history, which is the basis for a lasting permanence on the territory and for a wise use of natural resources. This approach to the informal settlements is, therefore, at once aesthetic and urbanistic, with the belief that the landscape coherence and the sustainability of housing solutions are not only essential, but also intimately related to each other. Based on this perspective, we can research the links between the idea of vernacular heritage (Illich, 1980) and the contemporary spontaneous expressions.

If the Mediterranean urban heritage and its identity can be preserved not only through their exploitation but also through their regeneration, i.e., through the reproduction of the process of signification, the transition from the concept of “heritage” to that of “heredity”, as

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<sup>3</sup> There are several definitions of cultural landscape. It is useful to recall the definition contained in Article 1 of the World Heritage Convention as amended in 1992, which was followed, in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (1999), by the classification of cultural landscapes heritage of the humanity into three main categories: “clearly defined landscape”, designed and created intentionally by man; “organically evolved landscape”, originally defined by a cultural structure and subsequently evolved in response to the natural environment; “associative cultural landscape”, in which the association between the natural and intangible cultural heritage is predominating.

defined by Geddes (1906: 74), this allows us to imagine the spread of the same kind of processes even in informal areas as an enzymatic element, which can stimulate a new production of territorial and landscape heritage.

### Three tools for the study of the informal settlements

The reading of the landscape in Mediterranean informal settlements is conducted using three different tools, designed to investigate the urban and architectural aspects as well as the cultural and social ones: analysis of the urban layout, explorations of urban drift, and indirect interpretation of perceptions of the urban environment based on analysis of vernacular photographs.

#### *Urban layout*

The first tool is the analysis of the urban layout based on the morphology of the built space and taking into account standard quantitative planning parameters such as population density and coverage ratio. Particular attention is paid to the texture of the road network.

As shown by Erickson and Lloyd-Jones (1997), one of the elements that tends to remain longer over time – and thus more deeply characterizing the urban fabric – is the road network, which undergoes minor changes with respect to the structural, formal and functional ones investing the blocks and individual buildings. What tends to stratify and become an identifying element is the relationship between the road network and served areas, which reflects spatial relations established among and by the inhabitants in terms of individual and collective use, ownership, displacement, etc.

We partially used the model for the analysis of the urban fabric defined by David Leyval (2009: 83-107), starting from size of streets and presence of crossroads with multiple branches. This way, Leyval identifies two main categories of the urban fabric: the labyrinth, typical of historic towns and spontaneous settlements, which is dense and made of a predominance of small paths mostly related to dead ends and nodes with three branches; and the grid, composed of a geometric distribution with a prevalence of nodes with four branches and wide and straight roads, referred to an explicit planning intentionality and to modern or contemporary urban models. Measuring the characteristics of informal settlements on the scale varying between these two extremes is obviously a very useful interpretative tool to our study purpose.

#### *Urban landscape*

The direct exploration of the studied districts allows a qualitative analysis of the settlement, aiming to survey the features that are not deducible from the documents and are connected with the urban landscape, with the stimuli and sensory impressions, with the lifestyles of the inhabitants, with the organization and customary use of common spaces. The specific tool is the *urban drift*, which allows for direct contact and a multilevel approach to the urban environment. The paths within the study areas followed the remarkable points of the urban environment (squares and major streets, open or green spaces, unique buildings, discontinuity of the urban fabric, etc.) with contextual variations and deviations depending on the unexpected encounter with everything that seemed of special interest for the deeper understanding of the place. Explorations were repeated at different days in the week in order to obtain a representation of the urban landscape independent from the weekly activity

rhythms. The urban drift, as an inductive research method, is an important source of information, due to the scarce availability of consistent data on the socio-urban for all selected case studies.

### *Perceptions*

The third instrument is the indirect interpretation of how residents and visitors perceive the urban environment. This interpretation is founded on the analysis of vernacular photograph,<sup>4</sup> and aims at obtaining relevant information about the self-consciousness of settled communities with respect to their habitat.

The concept of vernacular photography has recently been borrowed from the history of photography and art through a reworking of the oldest *vernacular architecture* concept. As Elizabeth Hutchinson (2000) noted, faced with the immense amount of vernacular photographs produced, attention needs to be moved from the visual aspect to the way a photograph is used: the vernacular photographs must be located within the complex systems of beliefs of the community that interprets it.

In fact, the content in the information of a photograph is conspicuous, by considering all the aspects related to the act of portraying the reality around us: the subject, the author of the photograph and their relationships; the situation and time of shooting; the reasons underlying it; the technique and image quality; the type of shot used; the title assigned to the image, etc.

However, due to the unavailability of a large enough sample of images for each case study, we preferred to concentrate on the *subject* of photographs, which has priority relevance for the author of the photograph. The samples were then interpreted on the basis of a number of factors:

- *Panorama*: the panoramic representation of the urban context denotes the attribution of significance to the place represented as a unit of homogeneous or related items;
- *Perspective of streets or squares*: the representation of a street or a square in perspective, especially from a higher point of view, shows intention to take the urban environment as a built, functional and lived whole, rather than singular parts of it;
- *Details*: an attempt of identification of the context can be found in the representation of particular and recognizable elements;
- *Modernity*: features related to the concepts of progress and innovation may indicate the presence of an ideal model or of a judgment on the place, positive or not;
- *Tradition*: the representation of traditional elements belonging to the past denotes a desire of preservation or the complaint of forms of backwardness;

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<sup>4</sup> The photographs were taken from the sharing website [www.panoramio.com](http://www.panoramio.com), preferred to other sources because it uses a system of geographical location of photographs based on Google Maps. Although the samples obtained cannot be considered representative of the real relationship of representation that the whole resident population builds with its own district, but they still add useful information to those obtainable with other methods and are valid for testing the general methodological framework. This tool, when used in a more systematic way through a content analysis, can be very effective in analyzing and evaluating some specific aspects of the urban landscape: see, for example, the research on Geneva/Dubai by Rico Maggi and Claudia Scholz (2008).

- *Residential buildings*: the relative presence of this factor emphasizes the importance attributed to the urban habitat as a living space, or as a place belonging to an urban and complex space;
- *Productive and trade activities*: this factor may provide a measure of the importance assigned to activities different from the residence and thus provide information on the vitality of trade within the urban habitat;
- *Public buildings*: they can be interpreted as elements of identification of the place with a higher social structure endowed with authority;
- *Mosques and sacred places*: in addition to providing information on the relationship between population and cultural tradition, these sites may represent collective landmarks other than civic ones;
- *Green spaces and natural elements*: as important component of the habitat, they are able to provide information on the perception of the settlement model.

Finally, the possibility of sharing and geolocation of the photographs offered by the web is very important. By using this tool, the author manifests the intention of communicating to a wider public some of the characteristics of places, by showing also their geographical location. This denotes a very strong linkage between the photo and the perceived identity of places.

### **Informality and tradition: Case studies**

The three tools described above were applied to four selected informal settlements, two in Istanbul (Gazi and Zeytinburnu) and two in Cairo (al-Dakrur Bulaq and Manshiet Nasser). They allowed recording their formal characteristics and understanding several aspects of the urban landscape and environmental quality.

In all four case studies, we have observed how, in the construction of the urban landscape, the spontaneous action of the people reuses – in different degrees and with some differences – the elements of a traditional housing culture, local or belonging to the cultural areas of origin of the inhabitants.

An example is the pseudo-rural landscape that can be observed in certain areas of Gazi, corresponding to the pioneer stage of the informal settlement (Figures 4 and 5). The organicity of the settlement fabric, the distance between the houses, and the significant and widespread presence of trees, hedges and yards contribute to the definition of the urban landscape, while the houses' typologies strictly recall those of the interior regions of Anatolia (Figure 6).

The structure of the settlement is clear and not stratified; the community is still strongly characterized by a dominant cultural matrix, which is rooted in the life customs of rural environments. The settlement model is highly adapted to the place and offers spaces and solutions to different needs, proving to be flexible and partially evolving if needed.



Figure 4. Gazi, the pseudo-rural landscape

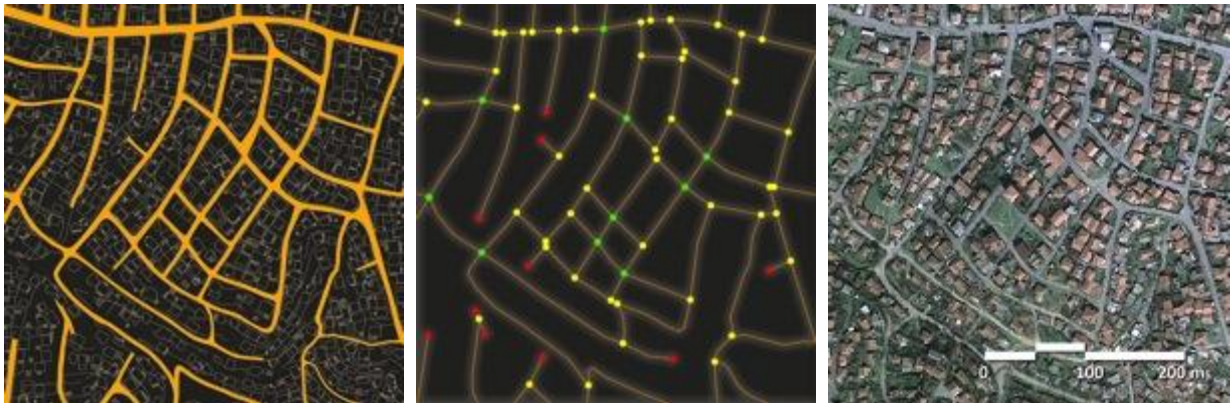


Figure 5. Gazi (Zübeyde Hanım): urban fabric and road network.

Note: The picture on the left shows the coverage ratio; the middle picture, connecting nodes and road branches.



Figure 6. First generation gecekondu in Gazi (left), compared with certain types of rural houses of eastern Anatolia (right). Drawings by: Pierrel (1987).

If the urban fabric is more densified, as in the other case studies selected in Istanbul (Zeytinburnu) and Cairo (Manshiet Nasser), the texture of the road network and the morphology of the urban fabric strongly approximates that of their historical core of reference, as we can infer from the parameters shown in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1. Urban layout: A comparison of the characteristics found in the study areas together with data on the traditional city in Istanbul**

Study area	Nodes per hectare	Road bars per hectare	Road bar/nodes	Dead ends per hectare	Nodes with 3 branches per hectare	Nodes with 4 branches per hectare	Coverage ratio (inverse)
Gazi South	2.75	5.75	2.09	5%	36%	59%	19,8%
Gazi North	4.31	6.81	1.58	15%	71%	15%	13,9%
Zeyinbumu	5.38	8.50	1.58	14%	74%	12%	18,7%
<b>Istanbul</b>	<b>3.52</b>	-	-	<b>9%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>19%</b>	-



**Table 2. Urban layout: A comparison of the characteristics found in the study area together with data on the traditional city in Cairo**

Study area	Nodes per hectare	Road bars per hectare	Road bar/nodes	Dead ends per hectare	Nodes with 3 branches per hectare	Nodes with 4 branches per hectare	Coverage ratio (inverse)
Bulaq al-Dakrur	10.0	13.44	1.35	33%	58%	9%	20.6%
Manshiet Nasser	21.9	27.00	1.27	35%	62%	3%	20.6%
<b>Cairo</b>	<b>5.54</b>	-	-	<b>15%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>22%</b>	-

These settlements show the highest degree of intentionality by the self-builders: the continuity of the settlement model and the uniformity and compactness of the built fabric are the strongest evidences of how the people follow, more or less consciously, a common program of unwritten rules, based on the interaction between the occupants and on the relation with the territorial organization pre-existent to the settlement.

The role of the mosque within the urban fabric is another prominent example: both the *gecekondu* of Istanbul and the informal settlements of Cairo show a special position reserved for the religious buildings and sacred precincts, which continue to determine the organization of the surrounding fabric as it was in the historic (medieval and Ottoman) city.

In Istanbul, the connection of the mosques with the system of streets served by shops and markets, often shielded from sun or weather by removable awnings and toldos, is reproducing the functional sequence and the distribution of collective uses that was typical in the urban organization of the historical peninsula, formed by a succession of caravanserais, *çarşı* and religious buildings (Figure 7).

In the informal settlements in Cairo, the religious buildings have a prominent location in the fabric and in the urban landscape: they frequently coincide with the points of greatest vitality inside the districts, often next to the market, repeating the functional combination formed by those two elements in the historical city. Far and protected from the hustle of the external major roads, the mosque and its open-air premises continue to create a break in the dense urban structure, suitable for the spiritual concentration of the neighbourhood life (Figure 8).

The links with the dynamics of formation of the historical city are therefore quite strong, and the Islamic cultural matrix plays a fundamental role by connecting the contemporary informal phenomena with ancient traditions more than with the internationalized dimension of today's Cairo.

Finally, in the case of the informal neighbourhoods of Istanbul, the constant presence of greenery is another link with the urban landscape of the traditional city, not only because of the widespread use of climbing plants but also for the central role assigned to the large trees. Ulya Vogt-Göknil (1965: 56) describes the Turkish traditional city as a vast expanse of wooden houses seemingly randomly placed with lots of greenery between one and another. Ekren Işin (2001) clearly describes how the Ottoman concept of pantheistic integration of the nature in the urban landscape has its roots in the shamanistic beliefs of nomadic Anatolia, converted over time in folkloric forms of superstition still found in certain rituals with the trees as a central object.



Figure 7. The system of commercial roads connecting Sümer, Nuri Paşa and Yeşiltepe (all neighbourhoods belonging to the Zeytinburnu municipality) is centred on mosques, neighbourhood centres, schools and public gardens.

A spiritual but experienced idea of nature, not yet polarized between aesthetic and functional purposes, gradually weakens under the growing influence of Western culture from the so-called “Tulips Period” until the nineteenth century, when the design of urban green spaces will be solved in architectural formalism and new gardening services based on European models will appear inside the city administration:

The city’s people are now idle spectators of the changing environment and merely watch what is being done rather than participating directly in the new implementations. The modern municipal organization intervenes between nature and man in this period, and the concept of nature become important in the standpoint of the city planning. (Işin, 2001: 208)

The typical fusion between houses and courtyards, between *mahalle* and large trees, around which, in the previous centuries, neighbourhood life was developing, will find no more opportunities for spontaneous expression within the planned city of the twentieth century. Only with the advent of the informal urbanization phenomena and the consequent easing of rational control on living space, will new opportunities make way for an urban landscape and for specific relations between nature and built environment that will approximate those of the past.



**Figure 8. An exception in the regularity of the road network in Bulaq al-Dakrur is used to enhance the presence of a neighbourhood mosque, by creating an optical cone aiming to the main entry and to the “speaker-minaret”, providing at the same time a small open space outside the mosque.**

These correspondences seem to draw some connections between the contemporary phenomena of informal settlement and aspects of vernacular culture belonging to the Ottoman Istanbul; these are subtle links with certain ways of living and organizing the city which were not conceived within urban planning in a modern sense, but which were based, particularly at the neighbourhood level, on the spontaneous building of interpersonal and intergroup relations according to the rules established by religion and common customs.

### **The colour of the informal city**

Among the main identifiers of informal urban landscape is the treatment given to the external surfaces of buildings and to the ephemeral elements of the built environment. This is a field of action in which the interventions directly operated by inhabitants can be wider and constantly spread over time, even in the face of subsequent developments in the structure and equipment of the settlement. It's obvious that each inhabitant finds greater expressive freedom by operating on all the modifications of the habitat that not only require less financial commitment to achieve them, but at the same time and as such, are considered minor or transitory and therefore are subject to a weaker external control, whether formal or informal.

This fact generates a varied spectrum of extensive customizations of the façades, colours and decorations of external surfaces and volumes, fixed furniture and removable equipment, which appear in the urban landscape only on certain occasions or for special uses. The range of applications is very broad and not inhibited by any form of prior planning, and this is a common feature of all spontaneous settlement:

The ingenious and daring uses of materials in new ways, textural combinations, and above all the use of colour, open a new domain of perceptual qualities. In both traditional vernacular and spontaneous settlements many more possibilities are found than in other environments; the vocabulary is much richer. In

addition, colour is often used to indicate ethnic, religious, regional, and other forms of identity (...) Colours can also serve as indicators of modernization and levels of acculturation. (Rapoport, 1988: 66)

For the definition of a local identity, it is even more significant if, in the spectrum of the expressive possibilities, some recurring elements are recognizable in the whole of the inhabited space, clearly related to traditional forms or, on the contrary, derived from the imitation of contemporary models. In the informal settlements of Istanbul, in districts at different stages of evolution, we can find recurring decorations, with which the inhabitants reproduce traditional decorative techniques or reinterpret traditional graphic patterns in an innovative and original way. The façades of so-called *apartkondu*, multi-storey apartment buildings illegally built, are frequently decorated with two techniques: the first involves the etching of abstract signs on the cement plaster surface (Figure 9). The second, more valuable, is the application of a continuous layer of ceramic mosaic tiles in various colours (Figure 10).



Figure 9. Gazi, the decoration on the façade of an *apartkondu* (left) and two buildings erected with the technique *hıms* in a xylography of the seventeenth century (right). Note: Image on right is copyright free.



Figure 10. Gazi: three examples of façade and mosaic; far right, a Parmakli kilim of the nineteenth century from Western Anatolia (seen on: <http://www.auction.de/>). Note: (right) © Nagel Auktionen.

Both solutions refer to an aesthetics linked to traditional forms: the first reproduces graphically the wooden anti-seismic reticular structure visible on the façades of ancient houses' *hıms*; the second, when not resolved exclusively with geometric motifs, often takes

the kilims' ornamental stylistic traits, the traditional rugs popular in the Balkans and Anatolia, by replacing the "knots" of the fabric with individual ceramic tiles.

Moreover, it seems important to note that the inhabitants of the analysed *gecekodu* settlements are able to formulate even stylistic traits that tend toward a local figurative identity, as happens in Zeytinburnu. This is an original synthesis of traditional signs and innovative contributions, which can envision a specific urban landscape for the settlement and prefigure the optimal integration within the metropolitan context. The mosaic decoration of the buildings is an exterior appearance of this maturity and this has spread and developed to such an extent as to constitute a typical feature of the landscape of Istanbul in recent years (Figure 11).

The coating in ceramic tiles, in particular on internal surfaces, was one of the typical characteristics of Turkish architecture and its relationship with the Byzantine mosaic has produced a remarkable synthesis for the Ottoman architecture (Vogt-Göknil, 1965: 137). The current interpretation does not directly show a desire for preservation, but directs attention to the aesthetic qualities that, if subject to revision, can trace a line of progress toward a future image of the city.

Similarly, the inhabitants of spontaneous urbanization in Cairo, despite the economic difficulties worsening their living conditions, are able to act effectively and in many different ways on the image of their habitat. The poverty of construction materials often reduces the façades of the houses to brick facing walls interrupted only by the bands of the grey concrete beams. The decoration is then obtained by a special layout of the bricks or reserving coloured surfaces in the more private and easily accessible spaces, as the balconies of the apartments or the exterior walls of shops on the ground floor.



Figure 11. Different mosaic decorations found on the façades of buildings in Zeytinburnu.

The first solution consists of simple geometric patterns placed above the main entrance of the building and frequently is the stylization of the word “Allah”, regularly replaced by the image of the cross in the Coptic districts. In the second case, although the plain colour green-blue is predominant, many walls show colourful compositions and applications of ceramic tiles drawing abstract patterns, plus the vibrant colours of the curtains used to screen the lodges (Figure 12).

Even in these examples the references to religious symbols are frequent: the five fingers, representing the pillars of Islam, trace decorative patterns obtained by placing on the wall the hands dipped in paint, while the elaborate paintworks of those who proudly came back from pilgrimage to Mecca create storied walls, where Koranic suras are mixed with other pictures: the Ka’ba, palm trees, airplanes, ships and other memories of the journey.

A special treatment is reserved for the mosques, by enjoying the more abundant resources provided by the commitment of the whole community. Often the external colour and decoration are the only means to signal the presence of the place of worship. The most common reference is then the mighty stonewalls of the monumental buildings of historic Cairo: carved in the plaster and painted with yellow ochre, a grid of signs is drawn to simulate the joints of the stones.

For certain structures, the decorative systems have reached a sophisticated level of codification. Such is the case of the bright colours of the pigeon house towers, erected on the terraces of the houses, which stand out in the general uniformity of the red bricks.

Most of the Cairo population finds in the towers for pigeons’ breeding an important additional resource to the family income. They are generally made of reused wood, with a lattice structure supporting the breeding room, which is accessed by a ladder.



**Figure 12.** Some examples of exterior decoration found in Bulaq al-Dakrur and Manshiet Nasser.

The practice of rearing pigeons is well established and, over time, forms, techniques and recurrent decorative styles are been developed and refined by the builders of the towers. These towers now characterize the cityscape, and although they are more frequent in informal areas, they often can be found also within the official town, where they are erected informally on the roofs of historic and modern buildings (Figure 13).

The spread of the pigeon house towers shows how an activity spontaneously organized and managed by the residents, under an implicit collective consensus, can enrich the urban image with encoded elements by restoring the identity and recognisability of marginalized tissues.

Collective activities and manifestations give colour to the common spaces of the neighbourhood streets during special events and religious celebrations, the Ramadan month, the Eid ul-Adha, weddings and funerals, or in connection with events that may influence the neighbourhood life, such as electoral and political campaigns. During the sacred month of Ramadan, large green carpets, normally carefully kept in special premises, are deployed on the ground along the sidewalks or in the public areas of buildings to accommodate the crowd engaged in collective prayer.



**Figure 13. Wooden pigeon house towers in the Cairene districts of Mit Okba and Agouza.**

On the occasion of the great celebrations of the Eid ul-Adha, the blood coming from the sheep sacrifice is used to mark and bless with the symbol of the five fingers homes, cars and aprons of children. Great coloured tents with traditional decorations cover the streets, shadowing the benches for slaughtering, meat distribution and sale of animal skins.

The same kind of textile coverage is also used to define and mark a space reserved to accommodate special groups and specific activities; for example, when a marriage or a baptism is celebrated with singing and dancing, or to receive visits of the relatives in a funeral, or to hold rallies (Figure 14).

These events occur with the same folkloric appearance, in historic districts, in new planned areas and in informal settlements. Spaces offered by very different types of settlement are readjusted to meet customary patterns of ancient origin, by keeping alive the original city image in popular imagination.

The topic of the colour is often taken into account in the regularization or improvement programs for spontaneous settlements. Governments and NGOs aim to requalify the urban environment through the repainting of the façades of buildings in an attempt to give to the built context an image of greater order and decorum.

The residents usually welcome this kind of intervention: although it does not affect basic services such as provision of electricity or drinking water, the repainting is not purely cosmetic because it's capable of raising the quality of living through the perception of an approximation to the image of formal districts. Even the paving of roads, which meets functional requirements, can have similar effects depending on the choice of materials used.

From these interventions, the population receives a partial confirmation of the right to occupy the places they inhabit, if they are founded on the governmental commitment to address not only the emergency issues but also the current ones.



**Figure 14. Community and family celebrative tents erected in the streets of Cairo.**

The vibrancy of colour and design aims to give local people new possibilities of identification with the places they living. In this sense, some projects implemented in the favelas of South America are famous, such as the one started in 2005 in the settlement of Belén in Iquitos,<sup>5</sup> where the painting of precarious dwellings was used as an educational tool.

The experiences in the Mediterranean are rare and generally integrated as a secondary part in wider redevelopment programs. The strategy usually followed in such cases is to use light colours, which give an idea of cleanliness and brightness, and very uniform, in order to make the built environment more unified and homogeneous. Such interventions have been tried by the municipal administration of Gaziosmanpaşa, within the recovery projects in highly degraded areas, where buildings were plastered and painted white. The white paint gives a renewed image to the district, but it also homogenizes its specificities, and introduces a foreign feature in the urban landscape.

This kind of approach, in fact, sometimes knowingly applied in the upgrading of informal settlements and less consciously in post-disaster emergency reconstruction programs (Gonzalo and Davidson, 2006), actually reduces the possibilities of expression of the people in those aspects more accessible to their free choice and is therefore likely to limit the ability of generating elements of local self-identification.

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<sup>5</sup> More information about the project can be found by visiting the website of the promoting voluntary association: <http://www.patchadams.org/belen-project>.



The risk is that of not involving local people in design and implementation of interventions, thus ignoring the real needs of residents, as happened for example in Bulaq al-Dakrur. Here, within the broader frame of a participatory and sustainable development program (Participatory Urban Management Programme, now Participatory Development Program) promoted and managed by GTZ, in 2000-2001 some public spaces of primary importance in the district were rehabilitated by planting trees, paving streets and painting the façades of the facing building (Nour, 2011: 79).

The success achieved in a first pilot area, where the inhabitants had limited their participation to a partial sharing of costs, was followed by the failure of a second experience: in this case, the operation of embellishment made in order to create a pleasant urban environment came into conflict with the established use of space of the people (Piffero, 2010: 114-115).

Another interesting experiment was conducted in 2004 by the “Help Lebanon” NGO in an informal neighbourhood of Beirut on the hills surrounding the central area of the Lebanese capital (Copin, 2004). The local community of Karm al-Zaytun, composed of migrant workers, refugees and low-income families, was involved in the repainting of their own houses. The project, funded by two local banks, was realized with the help of professionals and led by volunteer artists and architects who designed with the inhabitants the system of colours and decorations in *trompe-l’oeil* showing some identity elements of the district (Figure 15).

The success of this experience has brought the small NGO to operate at national level and to receive government support and the sponsorship of a corporation that has launched an on-line campaign in which users can experiment on an interactive website different colour solutions and to envisage the preferred changes for the appearance of the urban context.

Participation in the choices of defining the urban image is therefore an important topic in evolutionary paths of informal settlements; it is revealing that NGOs, frequently led to this kind of intervention by financial shortages, allocate more attention to this aspect, rather than the governmental bodies of territorial administration.

The first case, which may be defined, more than ever, as a “window-dressing” intervention is actually loaded with meaning through careful listening to the people, aimed at strengthening existing local identity or otherwise to defining a new shared landscape for the settlement. In the second case, starting from an authoritarian attitude, these actions are likely to be an easily accessible tool, to produce with minimal effort a result of considerable evidence, which, however, remains far from an authentic expression of local values.



**Figure 15. Panoramic view of the informal district Karm al-Zaytun (Beirut) after the participatory project that recolored the buildings. Source: Philippe C. Saad © 2004, courtesy of the author.**

## Conclusions

The perpetuation of the traditional aspects is of paramount importance as an effective organizational tool of the urban space available to the inhabitants, without which there is a risk of modelling the habitat on urban schemes unable to meet their real needs and not intended to be sufficiently dynamic and flexible.

The technical culture of classical planning, based on strong control of the spatial properties, can not interpret and reproduce the functional promiscuity and differentiation, the micro-strategies for the management of the city and the wide spreading of specific small-scale solutions proposed by the informality. It is even more difficult to maintain the dynamism and adaptability of the informal habitat and to project effective solutions on the spatial and temporal dimensions of the informal urbanization phenomena. This would be an attempt to replace the complex dynamics that always have produced the urban environments of the Mediterranean.

Demolition, replacement, rectification, normalization, and giantism applied to urban and territorial elements produce a homologation of spontaneous urban fabrics to the globalized image of the contemporary metropolis. The urban rehabilitation programs based on these principles propose forms of unshared intervention without any attention to the slow

sedimentation of local processes. As with the degraded areas of historic urban centres, these approaches can undermine and destroy territorial and landscape values.

Similar effects occur even when the regulatory action is guided by strong informal actors acting at a level much higher than that of the single inhabitant, often by using in a distorted way the symbols and instruments of the official authority. In both situations, the goal of maximizing economic or political profit tends to lead to the standardization of formal and spatial solutions, the depersonalization of living environments, the flattening of the urban landscape, and the interchangeability of residents (Figure 16).

Against this “industrialized” production of the city, some aspects of the examined case studies show that the free and self-organized action of the people is still capable of filling a space with new urban environments, albeit imperfect, incomplete, inadequate and illegal, but showing a structured and coherent identity corresponding to the settled society. Informality can generate territory, urbanity and landscape: the people directly produce their habitat, which becomes an active local space. This is a space that is not passively undergoing the regulatory action of positivist planning; this is a space where the Lefebvrian *contre-plan e contre-espace* (Lefebvre, 2000) are strongly manifested.



**Figure 16. The residential district built by the Turkish national housing agency TOKİ near the Gazi gecekondu settlement.**

The issue of the Mediterranean informal city is a metaphoric mirror of the ancient relationship between positivist planning and spontaneity, including expert knowledge and experiential knowledge, including promoters of the urban transformation and the self-producers of the city. In-depth study of urban dynamics and urban products makes clear the limits of traditional planning to represent and to meet the needs of local communities, as well as the risks of exploitation in favour of individual or restricted interests. The informal production of the city, instead, moving from a multiplicity of singular willingness to be composed, paradoxically appears as the closest to the collective interest of local communities.

A different and more appropriate approach should intervene in the management of the settlement processes rather than in the control of the formal and spatial characteristics of the

settlement, entrusting a large share of the latter to the local communities, which must have a structured and equitable participation in the transformation choices. The informal neighbourhoods can become true laboratories testing innovative technologies and systems for urban management and producing a coherent image of the city.

The lack of infrastructure and equipment in these areas pushes them to search advanced solutions and to implement actions aimed at achieving an overall sustainability of the urban habitat and not only at its standardization. However, in the spirit of integration, the residents of informal areas often refuse *a priori* those solutions that can appear as “extraordinary” or “second choice”, even if the same solutions are becoming the most appropriate in terms of sustainability also for the formal city. Thus, it is important to organize groups of residents in order to provide an efficient interface between population and administration, within which citizens participate and have the opportunity to elaborate procedures and practices that appear, and truly are, inclusive (de Miras, 2004: 452-461).

The revaluation of the traditional aspects in the informal city may open new fronts of research on the urban landscape. Unlike what happens in the program of revitalization of historic areas, in fact, in the case of spontaneous settlements, the urban renewal programs in situ usually focus on the lack of construction quality, infrastructure and services, ignoring the aspects related to the production of a coherent, satisfying and interesting urban landscape. In this sense, the potential and the urban qualities expressed by the spontaneous genesis of informal settlements are not adequately considered and developed with instruments designed *ad hoc*: they might otherwise be exploited to achieve the objectives set through the lens of the recovery of minor landscapes.

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## Night at the City, City at Night: Cosmopolitan and Colonization Rhythms in the Neo-Bohemian Inner Porto

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**Abstract:** The night in the city is composed by *otherness* layers, expressed more or less clearly or contradictorily, and designing a city spatial-temporal pastiche that we try to grasp, being aware that night is still a *Terra Incógnita* to explore (Gwiazdzinski, 2005). Taking the *cosmopolitan heterotopia* as the leitmotif, and engaging and following the urban production dialectic decoding (Lefebvre, 1991, 1996, 2003, 2008a, 2008b); the *ecology of knowledges*; and the abyssal cartography cosmopolitan city view (Santos, 2006, 2009a, 2009b), the essay discusses the inclusion/exclusion dialectics and colonization/cosmopolitanism expressions on/of the actual Downtown Porto embedded in a broader neo-bohemian urban trend. Considering the urban player as an *urbanauta* (Rodrigues, 2002), the reflexive adventure presented here has as main quest the approach to the actual inner Porto *rhythmicities* (Rodrigues, 2010).

**Keywords:** nocturnal city, party and neo-bohemia district, cosmopolitan heterotopia, colonial-cosmopolitan dialectic

*Don't forget the nite*  
*Don't forget the day*  
*We're just living*  
*When the day begin*  
*Don't forget the nite*  
*When the day begin*  
*Don't forget the nite*

*When the day begin*  
*Who's just finished*  
*Don't forget the nite*  
*We're just living*  
*Don't forget the nite*  
*Don't forget the nite*  
*When the day begin*

*Don't forget the nite*  
*Don't forget the nite*  
*Who's just finished*  
*Don't forget the day*  
*We're just living*  
*When the day begin*  
*Don't forget the day*

*Who's just finished*  
*When the day begin*  
*Don't forget the nite*  
*Who's just finished*  
*Don't forget the nite*  
*We're just living*  
*Don't forget the nite*  
*Don't forget the nite*  
*The Rita Mitsouko*

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## Cosmopolitan and colonial urban and nocturnal modulations: Sketching a framework

Society, and the city as it analyzer, continues to be organized by abyssal lines, reproducing colonial world views and practices by hiding and illuminating places, practices and urban actors. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2009b)<sup>2</sup> introduce this way the urban axis on his abyssal cartography. Modernity paradigm was founded under the tension between the pillar of social regulation, formed by state, community, and market principles, and the pillar of social emancipation, confining three logics of rationality: cognitive-instrumental – place of science and technology; aesthetic-expressive – place of arts and literature; and the moral-practical-rationality – place of ethic and law (Santos, 2006, 2009a). In the city, a modernity advent, prime elements from the regulation and social emancipation pillars, viz. community and aesthetic-expressive rationality, were perversely hidden and blocked, mainly by the hand of market (Santos, 2006; 2009a, 2009b). Therefore, we must engage on a reinvention of social emancipation, restoring those expressive-aesthetic rationality and community coordinates, embracing identity and communion ideas, essentials to the aesthetic contemplation (Santos, 2006, 2009a). Inscribed on abyssal cartography, the author suggests that, in the quest for social emancipation reinvention, we must recuperate and activate its essential principles, through the *sociology of absences* practice.<sup>3</sup> Identifying knowledge produced as non-existent by the hegemonic epistemology, and together with her faithful companion *sociology of emergences*, *sociology of absences* enables us to explore social experiences possibilities and potentialities encompassing a symbolic amplification of knowledge, practices, and urban actors, and therefore, following the *ecology of knowledges* (Santos, 2006, 2009a, 2009b). The *ecology of knowledges*, added and supported by a translation work, founds the cosmopolitan reason,<sup>4</sup> being a place “where the science trespasses its knowledge monoculture phase and recognizes other kind of knowledge as alternative” (Santos, 2006: 100, author’s translation) declining this way the western trend experience waste. Briefly, the task in this approach capable is to promote dialogue between cultures and worldviews, following the requirement of “collective, participative, interactive, inter-subjective and reticular” (Santos, 2006: 420, author’s translation). Cities and urbanities are distinguish fields to sociology of emergences and sociology of absences, encompassing an *insurgent cosmopolitanism* and promoting a *citizen urbanism* – capable to oppose and strive against the current capital globalized urbanism (Santos, 2009b). The subaltern, alternative or insurgent cosmopolitanism denotes a *down-top* globalization, where the enterprise is to fight against the social, economic, political and cultural exclusion leading by the neoliberal *top-down* globalization (Santos, 2006, 2009a). In

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<sup>2</sup> Proposal presented by Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos during PhD seminar classes, adding the urban axis to his abyssal cartography – where the epistemological and juridical axes were already focused (2006, 2009a). The essay is based mostly on a first approach and reflexion presented as that seminary final assessment with the title “Night in the City: Urban B-Sides through Porto City”, and has as inspiration my PhD work in progress, “The Nocturnal City: Rhythmicities, Designs and Expressions of a *Party District* in Porto”, supervised by Professor Carlos Fortuna, developed in CES/FEUC, and supported by FCT – Science and Technology Foundation.

<sup>3</sup> Sociology of absences can be described as an effort to “expose experiences, initiatives, and conceptions, that were effectively suppressed by the globalization hegemonic tools as expression of needs or emancipatory aspirations” (Santos, 2006: 184, author’s translation).

<sup>4</sup> Opposite to indolent reason, archetypal of hegemonic thought.



this ambience, a resistance attitude must be taken, facing the inequities with noticeable scope on the urban space. In fact, city is – and must be – an experimentation, innovation, and social emancipation field.

Attempting on heterotopy approaches (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008; Lefebvre, 2003; Foucault, 1997), it's assumed, and highlighted here, that the insurgent cosmopolitanism suggested by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, also covers the heterotopia search and grasp. There is an insurgent heterotopic drive crafting a rupture, an alternative urban approach, an exceptional and counter-hegemonic urban time experience. In this context the alternative cosmopolitanism re-designated and re-designed here as *cosmopolitan heterotopia* place to the urbanauta. Opposing to the resigned urbanite, subject of self-fulfilment prophecy, the urbanauta is an active city producer reacting/resisting to a broad production, an empowering urban player (Rodrigues, 2002). Comprises all sort of urban player, either tenants, city visitors, daily and cyclical workers and users, the urbanauta is a kind of engaged *flaneur*, exposed to colonial vibes but is also capable to imprint cosmopolitan experience. The night at the city can be considered as heterotopia (Rodrigues, 2010), shaping, by its core, a heterotopic time, providing to the *urbanauta* space-time alternatives and nightly experiences and productions.

Considering both everynight life, and the unpredictable, exceptional, and occasional night-life, *night* can inform a heterotopic city, opposite to a daily, normative and hegemonic time and rhythm. In an anti-economic time direction, night should be desirably redirected to social emancipation, community, affectivity, adventure, protest, pleasure, sociability, expression, ludic, and public space principles. The nocturnal city is shaped by abyssal lines being the night a distinguish place to read the abyssal lines. The nocturnal 'other side' of city was/is lead by obfuscation, invisibility, and absence. Diurnal and work referents are, or have been during ages, dominant in the western approach to the city and its urbanities, where living the city at night is living cross-current, in the 'dark side', embracing dubious, marginal and deviant issues. Nevertheless, the lunar and shady city, hidden and abandoned for ages, is now in the urban spotlight, many times appropriated and colonized with *daily* referents.

The nocturnal, nightly and neo-bohemian Porto and the new *Party District* became, as in most western cities, the favorite target to urban discursive practices, being proclaimed, reclaimed, promoted and regulated. The symbolic and material (re)taken of the (historical) city center have now a privileged place on city presentation, representation, experience and experimentation. This scenario implies a new way of thinking and doing City, and exposes the *inevitability* of knowledge and practices sharing.

On sketching the Nocturnal City, the Party District, and his loyal partner Neo-Bohemian District in Porto, some approaches are considered – those proposing or revealing the association of the urban center revitalization as a social, cultural, and inclusive city experience, with heterotopic attributes – *Café Culture* (Montgomery, 1997); *24 hours City* (Lovatt, O'Connor, Montgomery and Owens, 1994); *Creative City* (Landry, 2000, 2006); *Ludic City* (Stevens, 2007); *night-life, night-cultures and night economy* approaches (Bianchini, 1995; Chatterton and Hollands, 2003; Gwiazdzinski, 2006). These models are many times appropriated and rhetorically used, namely by politicians and formal city makers, serving the neo-liberal urban marketing and therefore deflecting them! They become a tasted field to all urban rhetoric's, like *sound bites*. The creativity, for instance, is an exemplar case (Fortuna and Rodrigues, 2011), being reduced many times to "a comfortable 'feel good' concept" (Chatterton, 2000: 397). The *Party District* imbedded and imbedding the *Neo-Bohemian District*, is presented, represented, and experienced by a range of urban characters and is capable to catalyze public space, and broadly, urban, economic, social, and cultural

development. It's assumed that particularly in the last five years, and due to heterogeneous and multi-scale emergence conditions (Rodrigues, 2010), Downtown Porto and Heritage Centre<sup>5</sup> have been the stage of an exponential perhaps unexpected, and exceptional *urban expansion*. There is an evidence of that expansion in uses, appropriations, movements, and dwellings in the city. There is growth and improvement of night-life, neo-bohemian, and public places – recreating the café, public and festive city, materializing and making the dense city visible and experienced.

The perchance fragmentary narrative presented here results from a previous and in progress fieldwork and analysis, or better saying it, from a rhythmanalysis composed by the rhythmanalist journal,<sup>6</sup> illustrating the walking, wondering, and sojourning in the city, mainly in the place unity called Party District embedded and embedding the Neo-Bohemian District – a field of rhythmanalysis works attempting on Nocturnal and Neo-Bohemian City production, regulation, consumption, expression and experience, viz. rhythmicities (Rodrigues, 2010).

The nightly city, the night-life, has as primary qualities the break with values, boundaries, conventions, and patterns supporting leisure-work, night-day, private-public, norm-deviation dichotomies and thus, the nightly Porto shapes an *emergence* and heterotopia field. Trough the absence-emergence sociological movement, the intent is to attempt and value the *B-side* kaleidoscope in what concerns to the night-life in Porto, exploring urban experiences, incipencies, and possibilities and, at the same time, denouncing the nocturnal hegemonic sides and absences creators. Night and day co-dwells, and expresses abyssal lines with different tension levels. Porto's night-life and inner city revitalization is a field for all kind of knowledge, all kind of power re-directing the city to cosmopolitanism – experience, share, and mix – or/and to colonialism – separation and domain – drives. Night-life arena is place of development and empowerment of community, of the aesthetic-expressive rationality, of heterotopia and resiliency in a dialectical movement with the dominant urban order, and therefore becomes target of the capitalist revalorization, being exposed to identity, urban, cultural and social fragmentation. Night-life becomes a commodity, target of *gentrification* and discovery-colonial *spirit*, where the tourist and the city user seems to be the special guest... reminding us that city remains a place where people actually live, not just visit (Lloyd, 2005)!... *For better or for worse*, we can presence the birth and expansion of the Party District embracing neo-bohemia and cosmopolitanism...

To conclude this framework attempt, a note must be made about the obvious synchrony between the Boaventura de Sousa Santos abyssal city lines and insurgent cosmopolitanism approach – and his *tuning* into cosmopolitan heterotopia above ventured – with Henri Lefebvre's dialectical urban approach. Henri Lefebvre alerts to the fact that the concomitantly to the massive production which homogenizes, fragment and fracture urban society, the urban society can also be able, in a kind of re-action, to create difference, and by this way satisfying a sort of urban necessities and creating others, encompassing this way the urban player, the

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<sup>5</sup> The historical centre was classified by UNESCO as World Heritage (1996). Downtown Porto was field of urban requalification during the 2001 Porto, Capital of Culture.

<sup>6</sup> Henri Lefebvre's (2008a) rhythmanalytical approach to the urban scenario can be briefly considered as the adventure of grasping urban rhythms by movements between subjective and objective experience, in a kind of urban rhythms diving, pursuing the understanding of social organization. The rhythmanalist journal integrates interviews to all the night-life players; media and hypermedia data; and all sort of materials that connect to the nocturnal and bohemia city production and rhythmicities.

citizen, viz. the *urbanauta* fights to redesign the space in a way which reflect and serve him. The urbanauta fights for the *right to the city* (Lefebvre, 1972), he *produces the produced space* (Lefebvre, 1991). Embracing an *urban revolution* (Lefebvre, 2003), the author enforces the power, the role, and the urban player right to city creation, that we may say should be oriented to a cosmopolitan heterotopia, believing that *Cities R' Us! Night-City R' Us!*

### Cosmopolitan modulations: Night-life, (neo)bohemia, public space...

Underlying the *cosmopolitan heterotopia* and the city, night, and party rights demands, it's assumed that the night-life, the Nocturnal City, can be a distinguished scenario and place to the emergence, assertion, and elevation of the communitarian and aesthetic-expressive qualities and drives forgotten, undervalued by the modernity project; in a sense, the adage: 'the night is a good adviser' is followed... The night is the field of city experience and experimentation and may reinforce social emancipation, relaxing therefore social regulation in a cosmopolitan heterotopia direction. Being inscribed in the leisure-pleasure-night triangulation, the night-life can sketch an urban constellation formed by community, debate, gathering, inter-cultural share, expressivity, cultural and identity diversity, art, protest and aesthetics, drifting apart from formal power and market forces... In fact, the nocturnal entertainment success in dense post-industrial cities is also a good illustration that "what attract people most, it would appear, is other people" (Whyte, 1980, cited in Miles, 1997). In Downtown Porto, we can find, even if just for moments "other' city, a free city, a wild city, a people's city" (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003: 201). *Going out, going to the night*, is also, and perhaps above all, a quest for the difference, the unpredictable, and the routine. A quest for contact, social and cultural sharing and, eventually, a quest of public experience and protest!

The Nocturnal City can duplicate territories and settings, duplicating uses and productions, and it is capable, at least, to multiply experiences. The night-life and the inner related neo-bohemian hold dialectical attributes that we must decode following the cosmopolitanism path. Downtown Porto buildings, streets, and squares<sup>7</sup> are being occupied, and appropriated, by *Café Culture*, *Street Culture*, *Movida*,<sup>8</sup> *Party Culture*, *Club Culture* and by all other expressions in between. The urban *nocturnity*, the 'free time' contents, bohemia, public space, dance, music, and all sort of nocturnal arts and emergent social movements, possesses contra-hegemonic qualities. The nocturnal city embraces, at the first, the heterotopia, the alternative, the deviant, the communal and even the clandestine side of the city. As we can feel in the field, and found in field gatherings and interviews, the night of Porto city also invite us to defy and reinvent the social emancipation and regulation, in an attempt to avoid the experience waste.

I think that is the night, the night potentiates it [bohemia], people become more... People after a working day... they need to free themselves a little, and sometimes to have a glass of wine... people want to release themselves, to chat, they want to have interesting conversations that they don't have in the working place...

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<sup>7</sup> Urban requalification targets the floor level, in the context of '2001 – European Capital of Culture'.

<sup>8</sup> *Movida* had entered in the last years on Porto's vocabulary, an appropriation more or less conscientious and proper of the Spanish *Movida* (original referenced to Madrid culture-art-night 1980s) as well as the world *botelón* to designate the liquor consumption in public spaces.

and at night, they have a drink and set them free a little bit... It's the night, in the night, with the sunset, it potentiates, it's almost inside us, isn't it?!... (Bohemian, Bar owner from Party District)

As well as night-life, its partner Bohemia – always strongly symbolic expressed – possess, by nature, cosmopolitan heterotopia qualities. It's consensual that Bohemia appeared as an identifiable way of life, with a counter relationship with bourgeoisie (Gluck, 2005; Wilson, 2000; Seigel, 1999), and as an urban way of life inner related to artistic movements. Bohemia provides to art a role in consumerism society (Wilson, 2000) and operates a double rupture, with the bourgeoisie dominant class and the people (Seigel, 1999). Nevertheless, those original bohemian wishes and representations are also trespassed; bohemia and bourgeoisie for instance, have a perverse relationship, “they imply, require, and attract each other” (Seigel, 1999: 5). Popular bohemia, bohemia, and bourgeois, counterculture bohemia and mass bohemia support and obfuscate each other by dialectical movements, being expressed and experienced in many ways. In fact, bohemia is not disappearing as some prophesizes, on the contrary, states Elizabeth Wilson (2000), bohemia is changing, is being transformed; we are nowadays in presence of a *quest for bohemia*. We can experience it in our during rhythmanalysis field work, during downtown tours, this bohemian quest, is experienced, being clear the recuperation and recreation of the bohemian places and imaginary – the neo-bohemia (Landry, 2006; Lloyd, 2005, 2006). Neo-bohemia became this way a desirable target to the colonial-cosmopolitan dialectical movements. Forgetting for now the bohemia serving the neo-liberal spirit and practice, we can place bohemia in an ambience and urban approach emphasizing aesthetic, expression and expressivity here considered as a *cosmopolitan heterotopia* source underlying the counterculture, the counter-power attributes. Bohemian embraces originally disorder, defy, community, and protest. As Richard Lloyd, points out, bohemians' dispositions are decidedly cosmopolitan: “Moreover, they are quite creative in re-imagining the spaces they occupy, often adding significant value by their presence. Despite limited economic means, artists are resourceful urban dwellers” (Lloyd, 2005: 222).

People forget that night-life is culture, you know, people think that night-life is only drinks, drugs... Is not that... No, not at all! Is more a leitmotif, more than... to artistic creation, at different levels, musical, plastic, whatever, and it's a fantastic people cross-crossing, isn't it?! Interaction, humanization, sharing and experience... (Bohemian, Designer, Dj)

It seems that Downtown Porto is a place of contact, not always involving conflict – as some colonialist prophesies dictates – and opened to different identities, generations, bohemians, cultures, ways of life, music styles. As Bennett (2005) denounces, usually, the research it is focused on the examination of *mainstream* consumptions activities, underlining the use of media, fashion, tourism, and musical consumption occulting alternative, popular experiences, and contra-cultures, whose experience have been wasted, crystallized as absences. In fact “we have the right to be equals when the difference diminishes us; we have the right to be different when the equality deface us” (Santos, 2006: 293, author's translation). Therefore, it's here assumed that also alongside macro issues concerned to formal space production, alternative and less massive urban rhythms must be emphasize, considering the everyday life (Lefebvre, 2008b), the local, the popular, and the territorialized experiences plain of political potential. In fact, in late modernity can provide the field to a sort of contra-cultures engaged in strategies and alternatives life-styles (Bennett, 2005) and the night at the city can be considered as the *main floor* to those alternatives, to heterotopia.

In the nighty city in outdoor or/and indoor experience, we can feel the diversity rhythms, expressed in identity and culture and place relationships. In Downtown Porto, difference and

repetition of cultures, identities, music and ways of life are noticeable. Downtown Porto is place to every bohemian expression, from the *bobos* – bohemian bourgeois (Brooks, 2000) – to trendy, hipster, underground, popular, local, mass bohemian and so one... We can feel the pacing of mainstream, underground, residual, elitist rhythms... Places like *cafés*, bars, clubs, neo-taverns, libraries, art and craft galleries, guest house, music stores, fancy restaurants, convenience store, smart shops, wine and gourmet houses, and a range of hybrid places, more or less carefully and characteristically design, are appearing almost daily/nightly in the Party District, inscribed in a rehabilitation, densification and diffusion wave. We can experience the Party District at different times, from the gathering after day-work, to the afterhours, expressing different rhythmicities (Rodrigues, 2010). It seems that a restless city has raised up (Fortuna and Rodrigues, 2011). We can find (Erasmus) university students, national, regional, and international party and night city users. There is a multi-identity, multi-cultural, multi-generation rhythms, that inhabit clubs, bars, cafes, street... The bohemian, and night contact zones, sometimes in the same venue – as we can see in the follow interview excerpt – making possible the co-dwelling of different types of music and places, inviting different cultures, identities and ways of life, constitutes an evidence of a cosmopolitanism direction of the city.

Here we have an interesting situation... a diverse occupation, you have one customer at a particular moment and in the other you have other customer, and costumers that do not collide, that are able to inhabit the same place, isn't it?! Sometimes cross-crossing... but they are different costumers; they are searching for different things ... (Bohemian and Bar owner from Party District)

Unsurprisingly, dance and music are important plans to the community and to the aesthetic-expressive rationality, and consequently, redefining the social emancipation. In Downtown Porto alongside the opening/improvement, concert clubs, dance clubs, bars, a variety of music-dance experience can be experienced on wanderings and sojourns in Party District – R&B, electro, drum'n bass, dubstep, funk, indie, metal, rock, jazz, folk, house, hip hop, kizomba, lindy hop, and so on. All appears to have places to express. Music is a place of and for heterogeneity, difference, identity, repetition, routine and the unexpected. Music configures diverse conjugations between cultures, ways of life, identities and therefore it might provide cultural contact zones in a heterotopy direction, agreeing with Bennett (2000, 2005) approach to music as a valuable element, as a cultural resource in the identity construction as well as an empowerment resource. The musical experience, experimentation and production may stand up as a valuable counter-hegemonic source. Dance, the most visible reply to music (Skelton and Valentine, 1998), is an expression, a space-time of diversity, contact, and communication. Ann and Ness (2004) consider that dance has as primary social function the production of a condition where harmony, unity and community are at high level and strongly experienced. Dance is a place of aesthetic and protest production and expression: “dance culture has almost always been resistant to the cultural-political domination of Puritanism; a culture of collective hedonism could hardly be anything else” (Gilbert and Pearson, 1999: 156). The speedily and cold social relationships are contradicted by dance and dance places, they can provide freedom from many social norms, values as social distance, conformity and reserve that can observe in ‘civilized’ day-to-day spaces (Skelton and Valentine, 1998).

Dance is a corporal expression without doubts, a way to Express yourself, and them, perhaps you are able to, I don't know, it's difficult for me to explain what it is... I feel a lot of pleasure when I'm dancing... we feel satisfaction, is a way to speed your energy... is joy... (Bohemian, Cyclical Bartender)

Dance and music are engaged in cultural and identity expression, alternative and heterotopia source, and embraces a sort of art that we can consider nocturnal art and crafts as the DJ, the designer, the event producer, the bartender... also pacing Party and Neo-Bohemian District rhythms... Further, Richard Lloyd (2005, 2006) alerts, neo-bohemian also hold jobs!: “many of them involved with the production of culture and consumption opportunities, suggesting that rather than viewing consumption as the other of productive practice, we need to look at the new intersections of consumption and production in urban space” (Lloyd, 2005: 217).

I go out to have fun and I put music to have fun and sometimes to amuse the other, it's part...

Yes, that performance side is very important and I think that I do that [as a DJ], we do that. For me, music is ever a history... you dance, you jump, you perform... (Designer, Bohemian, Dj)

A final note must be addressed, is this narrative moment, to the public night-space. The focus on indoor or outdoor night-life, and the movement between them, is directed primary to the public experience features. In what concerns to outdoor spaces, the physical and people/public space densification is an excellent analyzer of the dialectic cosmopolitanism-colonialism space production. The public space is a primary place to community and social emancipation, a potential and superb place to the cosmopolitan heterotopia research and development. If we attempt on the urban players uses and appropriations of public space, we see that they are contrary to the rhetoric and self-prophecy of the public space retreat – possibly supported by a diurnal referential... The public space concept is, by its nature, inscribed on the public sphere, being presented here as a place of transaction and unity between people and spaces. As Kristine Miller (2007) accurately point out, public space is a hybrid kind of public spaces and public sphere which are not static physical entities, they are constellation of ideas, environments, and actions. The public space revitalization and night re-conquest can provide the renewal of the urban and nocturnal sociability. The right to the public space re-thinking<sup>9</sup> the uses and urban players rights questioning whether current emergences might be capable of trembling abyssal lines.... In this sense, the night-life has, by itself, public space attributes more or less obfuscated by openness-closeness symbolical and material processes. The Downtown Porto vibes and paces suggest that Public Space is on the city-conquest field, also and namely by the nocturnal way. Public spaces that by the day-light are speedily crossed, are, at night, places to stop and stay; constructing identity, diversity, gathering, and communitarian places. Is the difference, contact, cultural and groupie share, and eventually public experience, that we pursuit to achieve at night! We can find in the nocturnal city, taking for instance the *nocturnal arts* as clues, a stage and source of social and cultural actions movements bringing to light the social emancipation and a more global cosmopolitan conscience that Public Space r' Us.

In public space milieu, the *Café Culture* model (Montgomery, 1997) – expressed by the global recognized café with esplanade – is a good analyzer of the cosmo-colonialism dialectic and its diffusion can be easily experienced in Party District rhythm analytical wanderings and sojourns. The *Café Culture* can illustrate the demand, proclamation, and recreation of the public sphere and urban public spaces (Montgomery, 1997), through the re-design and re-

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<sup>9</sup> See Mitchell (2003).

occupation of streets and squares. Although, Café Culture sometimes translates the colonizing issues of space production; it's used, in many European cities, as *cultural brand*, pursuing a historical *remake* of that culture as city cultural institution, as presentation and city lure. The café culture promotion is evident on the Party District and Neo-Bohemian landscape. In fact, after years of being neglected, and left to decay, the café culture, with more than a century of existence in Porto, has been, in the last years, reinforced namely by formal powers. In Porto we can also speak about the discovery of the café culture in the backyard, a kind of reverse and private *Café Culture* – the use of the archetypical urban design of historical and downtown Porto to expand the café, the bar, the restaurant, as terrace, as open space, as indoor garden...

Besides and alongside this symbolic and material public space recreation, we can say that there is a nightly, cyclical and occasional party use of inner Porto, accompanied by an intermittent and day-to-day public space use. The public space appears to be the field of discover and densification, not only by cyclical but also by day-to-day uses, more or less formal. In Downtown Porto, almost everyday, or at least every weekend in almost every street and square has – and particularly in the last five years – welcome a neo-street market, a concert, a performance, an artistic intervention. Under a pop up zeitgeist, it seems that we are building a *pop up city*, a pop up public space, more or less unexpected, with more or less routine, and more or less market and marketing co-dependent...

### **Colonialism modulations: Exceeding night-city; Night City and Bohemian City discovery...**

The historical connection between social space production and urban organization (Hall, 1992; Lefebvre, 1972, 1991, 1996; Harvey, 1992, Rodrigues, 2002) it's clear at night when a multi-layer composite denounces the unequal and abyssal city production global path. Besides the festive, communal, bohemian, amusing, and nocturnal qualities embedded in urban night-life, and so often paradoxically, other urban layers as the plain urban exclusion and social fragmentation appear when we approach and walk through and with the night. In Porto, we can also find an unequal city – where the historical Porto is an unquestionable space-time (Rodrigues, 2002) – being the *exceeding humanity* (Davis, 2004) and *disposable population* (Santos, 2006) *homes*. The abyssal city production exposes an exceeding city and exceeding urban dwellers; creates an informal city, sometimes deviant, sometimes marginal, sometimes illegal, and many times forgotten, obfuscated, and hidden, more or less violently! At inner Porto, the night at the city also sketches abyssal lines and helps to maintain exceeding urban players. Informal car parkers, *squatter*, informal economies (hotdogs and beer peddlers, for instance) and homeless people occupy, under different layers, the public space, shaping an informal city and redesigning the urban space with different levels of counter-hegemony, cross-crossing the formal and the normative city with the unequal and informal one. The human dignity referents, the lefebvrian *city cry and demand*, crashes many times with the formal and normative city... Living under a social fascism (Santos, 2009b), they bring to day light the *fight* against the indolence of dominant city and thus they can be helpful in the emergence-absence sociology, they are absences and also alternative amplification, emergencies to look out. They make imminent the public space re-thinking and re-questioning, re-thinking directed to the protest/demand, and fight for the city. In short, the follow journal excerpt points out the ostensive expression of this unequal development nightly experienced in the city night.

I leave the club in the harm night... One side of the street is populated by late bohemians... passing by, drinking at the door entrances, smoking, laughing... One the other side, four homeless people sleep under blankets! The abyssal lines can be experience in the everyday life in Porto, or better saying, in the everynight. The street marks the line in this case. The euphoria, the joy in one street side is only possible because there is an blindness drive, in a condition more or less modified by psychoactive substances, from the otherside ... (Night Notes, about 5 am 2009)

Inner related to the exceeding and unequal city production, and imbedded in a panorama of inner city re-conquest, gentrification appears as a face of urban regeneration, reproducing the colonial western spirit directing the right to the city and the right to the public space to desirable and convenient urban players where the urban marketing rules. Shielded on urban revitalization, gentrification aims “in short, to lure highly mobile and flexible production, financial, and consumption flows into space” (Harvey, 2001: 359), executing abyssal lines, and endorsing urban management and control with the drive to destroy ancient ways of life, uses, and cultures. To Loretta Lees (2008), despite the desire of new middle classes for difference and diversity, they tend to auto-segregate: “far from being tolerant, gentrification is part of an aggressive, revanchist ideology designed to retake the inner city for middle class” (Lees, 2008: 2449). In the same direction, Sharon Zukin (2005), alerts to the fact that *gentrifies pioneers*, pursuit and preserve the atomization of cultures, groups and social classes, creating “islands of renewal in seas of decay” (Zukin, 2005: 184). Gentrification has, therefore, a strong impact on urban life, producing absences on an abyssal way fostered by indolent discursive practices focused on the atomization, expulsion or occultation, for instance, the local and natives of *inner city*, making their existence unbearable, and naturally, beginning conflicts; “selling urban identity and the individuals within a city as a commodity is problematic given the differences between outsider and insider perceptions. When people do not participate in the story that is being sold about them, it creates resistance” (Landry, 2006: 165). Lower or higher cost gentrification, runs the risk of embracing a more or less naïf attitude supported by the arrogance that there are more noble, ‘civilized’, or deserving classes and groups, in the use of this city part under a colonized word view and practice. The following dweller statement can illustrate how place identity and rootedness cohabits with a feeling of being invisible and disregards and how “the danger of always falling into the fashion trap” (Landry, 2006: 165) exists.

Nowadays coming to Vitória is chic, good! Because we are chic! I’m not ashamed to say that I live in Vitória, on the contrary, I’m very proud. I regret that people who are coming here treat us as we were garbage. (Local dweller – General Meeting/Debate on Vitoria Parish)<sup>10</sup>

The Downtown Porto is nowadays recreated as place for renewal urbanities, focused on leisure, tourism, and gentrification, engaged in a *cult* of creativity, (neo)bohemia, night-life, and culture.<sup>11</sup> Urban development discursive practices, mostly supported by a neo-liberal worldview, and naturally following the visibility and competition<sup>12</sup> urban marketing axioms, are able to colonize urban spaces and cultures, many times shielded by the nocturnal entertainment and neo-bohemia. In fact, on the so called late modernity, space is open to

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<sup>10</sup> The most immersed by Party District and the so-called Movidá...

<sup>11</sup> See Pereira (2006); Queirós (2007); Fortuna and Rodrigues (2011) for approaches to Porto.

<sup>12</sup> In what concerns the inter-urban competition and visibility, see also Zukin (1995) and Peixoto (2000).



leisure as essential part of individual, cultural, and social fulfilment, being the leisure activities appropriated by urban marketing and market wills and therefore, subject to indolence rationalities. The festive city promotion is, to George Hughes (1999), part of a major process of a global economic rationalization played by an assortment of marketing strategies, and the nocturnal city economy the last manifestation of social management;<sup>13</sup> the ludic space as the best “use of land in the rent gradients of contemporary cities” (Hughes, 1999: 133). The city re-direction to pleasure is easy to define in purely consumption terms: a consumption space from which the undesirable people are marginalized (Lovatt and O’Connor, 1995). The renewal leisure economies where the night-life is included, are the main new economic expression in the urban network (Mcneill and While, 2001), with clear impact at the level of unequal spacialization and fragmentation. In this scenario, and underlying the Nocturnal City dialectical features, we must take into account the *nocturne optical illusion* potential risk of the alternative, inclusive, and counter-hegemonic night attributes. As Henri Lefebvre puts it “then, in a brightly illuminated night the day’s prohibitions give away to profitable pseudo-transgressions” (Lefebvre, 1991: 320). In fact, neither bohemian, nor public space, nor night-life, in spite of their cosmopolitan heterotopia potential, had ever been democratic, the golden ages assumption always hides the other side, the unequal and colonial side. As Elisabeth Wilson points out, “even before 1900, bohemian atmosphere had become a marketable commodity” (Wilson, 2000: 42). Bohemians had always “colonized seedy, marginal districts of cities, but an inexorable law decreed that every Bohemia of the Western world be subject to gentrification [...] Once the artists had discovered an area and created its bohemian ambience, entrepreneurs and property developers were quick to spot its commercial possibilities” (Wilson, 2000: 42). We can consider that bohemia can assume different and sometimes paradoxical expressions, besides the already mentioned constructive urban role of bohemia and public space, we can also observe and listen to space conquest maneuvers by the dominants ones, being many times the popular or residual converted and appropriated by a kind of *gentrified bohemia*...

The rehabilitation and urban development formal strategy in inner Porto seems to be anchored in leaving places and builds collapse and then activating the gentrification, privatization, and fashion triangulation to those places. The trend seems to be the city privatization, and the supportive gentrification of its public spaces, facilities, and equipments, more or less ostensibly. In this direction, and at the same time, the formal power is engaged in the task of eradicating all kind of public and popular city demand actions and drives. Nowadays, it’s formally declared the aim to attract people and new middle and high classes flows (Fortuna and Rodrigues, 2011) in a kind of urban management dictating who and how the space can be used, and translating therefore the abyssal thought of that symbolic-material colonization dynamic.

Returning to the remarkable public space example, and as stressed before, in Porto, there was a boom of *café* culture: restaurants, stores, bar and cafés extensions – more or less ‘violently’ – to the street and squares and many times replacing and making-over the ancient cafés namely by gentrification. Nocturnal and diurnal leisure became dependent of media forces, and thus, public space rhythms are also paced by a sort of media-visual: “Cities are

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<sup>13</sup> See also Gwiazdzinski (2005).

now a media event and city-branding is the process by which media attention is secured. Like a voracious beast, the media needs feeding, and cities are part of the feeding frenzy” (Landry, 2006: 163). Along with this advertising hegemony in public space, the car hegemony in public space is also easily grasped in Party District rhythm-analyst wanderings and sojourners. In fact, they are good analyzers of the relation between densification and urban viability, sustainability, and revealing the indolence more or less naïve of a sort of urban actors. Despite being apparently open and having features to a cosmopolitan heterotopia, the Party District is engaged in a range of symbolic or material socio-cultural production, being also favorite place for brands to show off that might fall in a festival trend which invades squares and streets with intermittent, cyclical and permanent occupations panoply, revealing a kind of void fear impelling to ‘dress up’ public space with a sort of outfits pacing urban rhythms... In what concerns to night issues, the strategy seems to be, first, the formal powers let the exponential growth of indoor and outdoor places and uses at night, and now, the control and regulation and repression came along with urban speculation.

The discursive practices move to and emphasize public nuisance and urban insecurity, following the space-social fragmentation and night-life control strategies. And again, the path seems to be the social regulation, the counter-drive of social emancipation principles, of public space, of urban inclusion, of heterotopia. The night-life is the urban ‘salvation’ but is also a problem, mobilizing control, regulation, in Foucauldian terms, pursuing the body domestication... Night-life improvement, which we can consider that begins with some bohemian and spontaneous actions and urban interventions, is now focused on a top-down decision without the involvement and perspective of all urban players, creating new tension zones, new conflicts between entertainment and dwell, between formal and informal city, between different cultures and ways of life. In urban, night and control triangulation, the nocturnal city is not immune to the social and urban manager direction (Fortuna and Rodrigues, 2011) that can be materialized in conflict issues and relation (Brabazon and Mallinder, 2007) between who’s being colonized and who’s colonizing. In a reverse way of the cosmopolitan direction pointed out previously, city dwellers, the *cityusers*, the bohemians and all sort of urban space and night ‘makers’ are conflicted related – more or less violently, more or less symbolically, and nowadays highly mediated. Nevertheless, even in that scenario, and in the cosmopolitan heterotopia perspective, the night issues also mobilized local people, debates, gatherings, awakening the urbanauta, promoting communication between all sort of bohemia and urban players...

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## Transforming Cities, Societies and Policies: Psychological Reflections on Participatory Processes' Experiences

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**Abstract:** Transformations involving worldwide urban contexts and new governance models have been playing a key role in highlighting heterogeneous and diverse devices addressed to promote new connections between social actors and Institutions. Contextual features and dynamics compel us, as researchers, to take into consideration conditions and meanings of political and administrative patterns. Indeed, governing global complexity – at both over-local and local levels – is evidently far from being effective merely through standard procedures. We propose some reflections on critical questions concerning participatory devices. Our conceptual frame refers to the psychosociological matrix rooted in psychodynamic – in order to take into account how sense-making is tensely constructed between individual and social dimensions – and organizational theories – concerning psychosocial issues in the Local Institutions. We will make reference to some of our action-research experiences carried out in different local contexts (Italy, Portugal and France) proposing, finally, considerations on different participatory processes' scenarios.

**Keywords:** participation, complexity, psychosociology

### The contexts of our reflections

Europe debatably represents a context that has been recently subject of broad transformations, implying significant dynamics at a global level, generating interesting discussions around crucial themes for societies' coexistence and governance. We are especially referring to the intense debate about the proper forms for political regimes to adopt with rapidly transforming societies within such a diversified attempted union of different cultures. The conjunction of decisive events, such as the constitution of European Union, the Soviet Union's collapse in

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1989 and the re-unification of Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, made the period between 1980s and 1990s particularly “hot” for democratic politics and society’s future. Even though democracy had already represented a crucial and controversial topic for the establishing equilibrium after the Second World War, new and different issues were now demanding responses (Dahl, 2000; Diamond and Morlino, 2005). At that time, a broad and critical debate about structural conditions of democratic systems started to question the proper models of democracy (Held, 1987). Several countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia were “opting” for socialist and communist regimes making the debate not only lively but also topical worldwide. In Latin America, after a wide spread dictatorship period and in Europe after the end of Portuguese and Spanish dictatorial regimes in the middle of 1970s, a notable consolidation of democratic neoliberal model started to take root almost everywhere. When said situation took hold in the East Europe Countries, the debate about the deep pillars, principles and mechanisms of democracy turned to seem an offsite issue (Santos, 2003).

Representative democracy was first conceived as a model wherein states had to play a “liberal” set of interventions in order to guarantee access and prosecution to individual interests without the risk of arbitrary political interferences. Neoliberal representative democracy actually marked a further passage of this idea due to the increasing importance and influence of financial markets. The consolidation of such a center of power, alternative to the states, created new space-time coordinates for national and international exchanges. Henceforth, neoliberalism was essentially concerned with new claims for international financial market rules in connection with national needs and ambitions, implying in addition a deep questioning of sovereignty (Anderson, 1999). Considering the new commercial, communication and knowledge fluxes put into action within globalized contexts, states are asked to cope with opposing tendencies: on the one hand to guarantee state sovereignty and, on the other hand, the diffusion into global networks. These two systems stress both the existence of (new) hierarchies among states at the global level and the possibilities for questioning the hierarchies themselves (Santos, 2007).

Due to the growing complexity of the current global scenario, different and opposite instances are taking more and more space in the political and social agendas. Somehow reacting to the process of reducing representative mechanisms into voting systems as unique forms of legitimizing representative democracies, scientific debates have been questioning the proper idea of rational choice itself emphasizing how on reducing participatory mechanisms could represent a form of naturalizing spontaneous citizens’ involvement into political life.<sup>3</sup> In this respect, some scholars have argued such a process would have prevented the overcharge of demands for Institutions by keeping the role of citizen distinct by the role of politician (Schumpeter, 1967) and avoiding, in this way, dangerous democratic “excesses” for good government work (Huntington, 1975). Therefore, the tense equilibrium between stable establishments and changes seemed to find in social participation a decisive argument entailing other issues, such as the standardization of bureaucratic mechanisms, the disaffection of electors and the control over social and economic transformations.

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<sup>3</sup> An intense debate has been developing around the controversial theme of “rational choice” mainly in politics and economy (Coleman, 1990; Elster, 1979; Von Neumann and Morgenstern, 1944). In the social field, questioning rational pillars implies to question the validity of general normative postulates because societies are in a continuous process of transformation claiming so for new theoretical models.

Moreover, such a process was also making clear a sort of subverted connection between supply and demand in public services, emerging from the increasing technical specialization of bureaucratic apparatuses. Interpreting social demands as general claims to be responded and supplied through political projects and technical codes, the whole process came to be reported as unachievable by most citizens. In other terms, in turning social demands into intelligible political and administrative objects, there was the very control and appropriation of the issues themselves (de Gaulejac *et al.*, 1995). It became a theme of debate mostly for the high required technical and managerial skills promoted by new public management school in the 1980s. The promotion of outsourced public services through the consolidation of the third sector, the NGOs and other local, national and supranational entities, and the required high-specializations were addressed to foster new standards of efficiency and effectiveness. Nevertheless, what looked like potentially provoking deep changes, resulted as still strongly framing the emerging problematics into too narrow rationality-based principles and mechanisms.<sup>4</sup>

In this sense, public administrations have especially been expected to not only understand and explain such phenomena but also to implement effective public measures. Somewhat overlapping and somewhat diverging, the discourses on new public management have more recently left the space to the new sensitive passage from government to new governance principles. Meant as not just the outsourcing of public services, new governance is then meant to introduce horizontal and networking principles, implying processes of wide reorganization of public policies making.<sup>5</sup> Hence, a new model of connection between societies and Institutions characterized by circularity, reciprocity and unpredictability is heading to renew and transform structural aspects of societal governance.<sup>6</sup>

## Transformations and new instances

Complex phenomena such as the growth of financial markets and their connection/influence on national states, as well as the much hankered for renewals of public administration systems, were calling for new inclusive paradigms. Approaching the complexity of the changes ongoing in the economic, political, social as well as organizational areas, it is possible to recognize transversal determining factors implying the ways contemporary societies are coping with the idea of complexity. Managing these issues is simultaneously a matter with several current “emergencies” involving the representative roles in the whole political sphere, the national states facing controversial globalizing pressures, the increasing

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<sup>4</sup> Della Porta (2011) synthesizes some challenges for current democracies, related with transformations occurring among states, parliament, executive powers, financial markets and new emerging supranational entities. The author highlights how Financial Markets deregulation, patrimonial fees reduction and public services privatization must be framed within the new public management rhetoric. Somewhat obliged to behave as private ones, multiple Institutions were demanded to get in contact with not-intervening states on the one side and big multinational agencies on the other side. The imposition of a new *lex mercatoria* worldwide, promoted mainly by World Bank and International Monetary Fund, also affected legitimacy of states (in terms of scarce transparency and accountability) as well as freedom to manage state budgets (*ibidem*, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> As underlined within the “White Book” guidelines presented by EU in 2001, they are: openness, responsibility, effectiveness, accountability and participation.

<sup>6</sup> Bauman (2009) is particularly clear at this respect, pointing out the continuous changes of human lives, determining a “liquid” modernity, characterized by the emerging of unknown elements which, in turn, will not last long because destined for being substituted by new compulsive modernization.



role of spontaneous social protests and the worldwide current economical and financial crises. Complexity is then visible inasmuch as it is possible to intend such events not in terms of urgencies emerging from stable contexts, but rather as diverse expressions of “social establishments” changing and questioning instituted equilibrium.<sup>7</sup> Hence, the enduring crisis of coexistence systems also involves how common people can feel part and reciprocally be identified as members of societies. Such a crucial problematic is one of the multiple aspects involved in what seems to represent a diffuse change of paradigm (Kuhn, 1962).

In this respect, several scientific areas have stressed the importance of such an epistemological topic concerning contents, as well as approaches. Lyotard (1979) and later Vattimo (1987) have based their reflections on contextual variability and its “epistemological” implications, in terms of an organic society turning into both a fragmented and a liquid one (also Touraine, 1992; Baumann, 2000). Critical Sociology has also played a special role in this debate, indicating the risk of reproducing Modernity assumptions within current theories. Latour (2004) and Santos are amongst the most recognized exponents of this school of thought. Santos (2007) has specifically contributed to the deep critical debate over this theme, proposing the concept of “ecology of knowledge” and Nunes (1998-1999) argues that it is matter of connecting them in a not-mutual discrediting way. Hence, by pointing out the necessity of recognizing not only new cultural universes but also new connections among them, he proposes to transcend the narrow area of scientific and technical specializations.<sup>8</sup>

What seems to be emerging is also referred to the breakdown of essentialist presumptions of stability, concerned with the idea of making the world an object on hand to be described through unhistorical and universal laws. As a result of this, contexts seem to lose common references to general paradigms, requiring new solutions. Knowledge codified by sciences is called upon to cope with contextual realities refusing, because “untrue”, linear and all-inclusive explanations. Finally, sciences are looked to legitimize their own reflections and results by working unexplored connections between instruments and objectives and, consequently, rethinking their general goals (Salvatore, 1996; Grasso and Salvatore, 1997). The paradigmatic question emerging from the relation between ongoing transformations and cultural changes seems to reveal the very crisis of grand narratives. Losing the role of status-references for societies, like it used to be during Modernity (which, in turn, can be considered as “narration” too), big narratives have recently displayed problems of plausibility and legitimacy. In other terms, previous big narratives concerning and justifying certain social, political, economic orders and regimes seem to prove the crisis of the possibility to create unique ways to understand reality.

As a result of this situation, a variety of scholars have started thinking new models of research and action in terms of social construction. System (Von Bertalanffy, 1968), cybernetic (Wiener, 1966), relativity (Russell, 1925), quantity (Plack *et al.*, 1922) represent some random examples of different scientific fields approaching in such a way. In social

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<sup>7</sup> D’agostino and Manoukian (2009) suggest that the use of the adjective “complex” starts to be massively used with the crisis of the linear thought: “The main characteristic of complexity is not only the co-presence of separated and isolated multiple elements but rather association, connection of what is considered to be antagonist and that breaks into organizational establishments, opening so paradoxes and contradictions” (p. 56).

<sup>8</sup> Nunes (1998/1999), inspired by the famous work of Charles Percy Snow (1995), has stressed the political character of splitting sciences and politics, due to policy attitude to the manipulator use of science’s language in opposition to considered low massive and undifferentiated culture.

sciences this focus has been developed by theories concerned with both discourse and interaction-making, especially in the “socioconstructivist” field (Mitchell, 1988; Gill, 1994; Harré and Gillett, 1994). On fading clear distinctions between subject and object in the processes of knowledge, attention is frequently paid to the relationship between subjects of knowledge. Phenomena are not intended as events, but rather as part of complex contextual connections. In this sense, it is necessary to include in such a perspective of study the position itself of the researcher, intrinsically part of the examined processes (Weick, 1997). In this respect, thoughts and the activities implied in producing representations and concepts of the reality are considered as proper theories by Neisser (1987). Henceforth, the activity of knowing is meant not just as a representation of reality (Moscovici, 1961), but mainly the operation aimed to categorize it in accordance with the role played by the observer (Grasso and Salvatore, 1997). For these reasons, the connection between subject and object becomes extremely important for science, actually displacing the question of the object towards the question on how theories and realities are reciprocally bonded.

Some schools of thoughts related to the Psychology field have recently deepened these epistemological pillars, grounding a rich and compound framework of theories and methodologies. The authors of this paper are oriented towards such a scientific approach, especially referring to Psychosociology.

### **New paradigms and psychosociology**

Contemporary psychology presents twofold scientific attitudes: the one oriented to individuals and the other one providing a wider view on the relationships constructed by individuals and contexts (Carli, 1987; Gill, 1994; Billig, 1997; Grasso and Salvatore, 1997). The first one, elaborating scientific paradigms deriving from modern natural sciences’ patterns, is essentially concerned with a unitary vision of the human being whose psychical phenomena are analyzed by means of rational models. In these terms, the goal of these theories is the approximation of the “truth” by means of experimental methods as main research models. All of the approaches addressed to “cure the individual” are engaged with such a mission by calling upon a type of psychology intervening for normality, i.e., the re-collocation of what is reported as diverse compared with the general features of either a context or a society. Recognizing in this type of scientific action the purpose of adhering to requirements, i.e., without deeply questioning the meaning in terms of psychological dynamics, the “contextual” psychology is rather characterized by conceiving interactions as the ground from where individuals and societies arise (Gergen, 1991; Harré and Gillett, 1994; Billig, 1997). The human mind is also conceived as byproduct of social processes and so, losing the status of strictly personal attribute, it rather represents a system capable of generating meanings.

The action of thinking comes to have a social worth due to the constant negotiation within and through social and cultural frames. In other terms, to think corresponds to managing relationships and the models supporting thought reveal the ways people construct meanings of the reality. When such a vision of the reality is integrated with some psychodynamic postulates – especially referring to psychoanalytical contributions – it is

possible to consider the semiotic dimensions of reality.<sup>9</sup> Psychosociology (Barus-Michel *et al.*, 2005), working on the connections between signs and processes of signification constructed within and through social interactions among individuals, between individuals and groups as well as between groups (Petit and Duboise, 1998), intends reality as an expression of latent and unconscious meanings. Individual and social agency are therefore studied as products of the human necessity to find meaning in the world and, in turn, human mind itself results as an object of proper signification. By taking advantage of some specific Freudian theory's re-elaborations, Ignacio Matte Blanco (2000, 2005) really does represent one of the most important scholars in indicating the existence of a bi-logic function of the mind.<sup>10</sup> By emphasizing the unconsciousness in terms of semiotic device working with specific rules, distinct from the rational and logic ones, the author implies the emotional categorization into the analysis of social construction processes. Carli and Paniccia (2002, 2003) have effectively deepened this perspective by proposing models of explanation on the connection about emotional processes of signification and social sphere: the unconscious interpretation of the reality is not said to be dependent on each individual but rather on their interaction. People interpret their environment through two different processes: on the one hand, the emotional symbolization grounded in unconscious dynamics and, on the other hand, the operative categorization based on rational criteria which are negotiated and explicitly shared by individuals. Reciprocally and mutually determined, both of the two processes tensely emerge within discursive and behaving practices: symbolization orient categorization by defining its frame while the categorization turns intelligible reality instances, i.e. scopes, resources, limits.<sup>11</sup> In studying new governance dynamics and participatory processes, we are called, henceforth, to find a coherent theoretical/methodological ground consistent with these principles.

## Our perspective on participatory processes

The complex social, economic and political conjuncture, evident in the 1980s due to the attempt of imposing neoliberal policies at the global level which, revealed the impossibility of managing with monolithic paradigms the multiple social demands and claims emerging all over the world. A deep questioning about states' intervention in economy joint to the crisis of welfare state and the simultaneous collapse of socialist experiences was on the way as well

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<sup>9</sup> In this sense, as highlighted by Enriquez (2003), if social science's function is to focus on the manifest characteristics of social interactions whereas psychoanalysis is better concentrated on unconscious processes that create and simultaneously shape social interactions themselves, it is necessary to integrate such studies on how people feel, fear, act in relation to both individual and social imaginaries.

<sup>10</sup> What has been formulated by Freud can be observed through the perspective of Ignacio Matte Blanco in terms of two co-existent modes of the human mind (bi-logical system): on the one hand the homogeneous mode and, on the other hand, the heterogeneous mode. His theoretical contribute is centered on the opportunity to think on psychic reality in terms of relations between symmetric and asymmetric mental dimensions, on the basis of the relation between consciousness as formulated in the first psychoanalytical topic (Blanco, 2000, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> Every social event is emotionally constructed, implying that every element of the context is symbolized in a shared way without necessarily including consciousness processes. Emotionality is actually neither individual nor personal, but rather collective and deeply ground social interactions. As a result, the authors propose the definition of Local Culture, meant as the combination of meanings oriented by emotional symbolization that allow the interpretation of reality. Local Culture is constructed in a recursive mode among individuals and it is dialogically connected with contexts that, in turn, support it or not (Carli and Paniccia, 2003).

(Pires, 2002). Grounding a critical reflection on the quality of democracies also implied rethinking the idea of public service and its increasing demands for technical specialization. Within such a scenario, growing claims for renewed bottom-up connections between social actors and democratic Institutions were reporting the necessity to get through strict mechanisms and legitimated praxes of representative democracies. Recognizing, as a result of the citizens' participation reduction into standardized mechanisms, the actual marginalization of several sectors of society, there emerged, in different parts of the world, the will of breaking with some instituted equilibriums. Public administrations were demanded to re-elaborate working patterns in order to effectively govern such complex scenarios. The exigency of public policies to be conceived in strong connection with both globalized and specific local issues represented the demand of new governance models able to include higher levels of complexity and contextual variability. According to Donolo (2006), the diffusion of new models currently shows how policies try to incorporate complexity so as to manage the environment. As we have already highlighted, the high-stressed procedural aspects of neoliberal democracies and the emerging difficulties in accomplishing new public management agendas, public administrations became particularly exposed to democratic experimental devices. In order to join such a need with the improvement of public policies' effectiveness, social participation came to represent one of the more suitable choices.

Participation was thought to improve a more equal, effective, stable and easy decisional processes (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987). It was generally in 1990s that some European Countries started to get into more structured participatory experiences, getting inspiration from Latin America ones which were emerging from wide-spread movements for democratization in opposition to dictatorial regimes (Diamond and Gunther, 2001).<sup>12</sup> In that period, even though the neoliberal democracy paradigm seemed to have an undoubted primacy throughout European Countries, some converging situations, such as local and supra-local financial reforms and new equilibriums originated with the end of the Cold War, made Europe particularly sensitive to Latin America experiences. The "know-how" coming from Brazil gave the opportunity to think up alternative patterns for democracies by involving citizens and communitarian movements in order to reposition resources for sustainable investments implying also, as a matter of fact, questioning current social and political establishment paradigms (Allegritti and Herzberg, 2004; Sintomer, 2007). European Countries, in re-elaborating Brazilian participatory models, were also especially attentive to reorient main Public Administration instances towards modernization, marking significant differences by proposes of social inequalities' rebalancing in Latin America (Sintomer and Allegritti, 2009).

With such premises we have highlighted the high quality debates within scientific fields concerning new epistemological perspectives on reality, noticing several points of contact with the growing number of psychosociology contributions. Focusing on the issues related to social participation as a macro-area concerning management of living together processes, we

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<sup>12</sup> As concerns Latin America context, one of the main responses was articulated in the idea of engaging citizens in policy-making. Quoting Roberto Guimarães (2008), the aim was to rebalance economic implications which used to cause inequality in resources' distribution. Instead of assuming mere consensus building strategies, politics decided to orient their actions towards the management of the conflict, already existent in almost all social sectors. Furthermore the author states that the context was essentially ready for such experiences because of the incomplete process of citizenship construction, wherein incorporation of some social sectors used to be made to the detriment of majority (Guimarães, 2008: 10).

are proposing to approach them in terms of collective sense making. It implies participation, as psychosocial event, is always dealing with unconscious processes aiming to symbolically construct the context. It is then an immanent characteristic of social relationships engaged in living together. Once adopted this psychosociological categorization for participatory processes, it is possible to analyze what terms is both contextual and institutional development drawn in through participation. These “demands” assume profound meanings by having reading models on the symbolic-emotional dimensions express through participatory processes themselves.

In continuity with some psychosociological contributions (Mannarini, 2004; Fini, 2010; Antonini and Fini, 2011; Falanga and Docketti, 2011), we mean to consider the new and multiple agencies crossing with and within participatory processes as shared symbolical interactions. In this sense, it is possible to stress some main ideas we have been building in our theoretical and fields experiences: (1) participatory processes, as political and administrative devices in the area of new governance instruments, deal with the constitution of new settings of interaction, i.e. they are firstly psychosocial processes; (2) such a constitution entails a deep reflection on who are the agents implied within, opening to approach which types of involvement strategies are being adopted; (3) in this respect, it is necessary to analyze what types of “demands” are carried out by the multiple agents in order to identify what sort of symbolical relations are being instituted within specific contexts; (4) such an analytical perspective is supposed to be carried out during the whole process, in order to discern individual “theories” collectively supporting cultural models within social interactions; (5) comprehending the characters of cultural models (Carli and Paniccia, 2002, 2003; Salvatore, 2003) means to deeply reflect on the role of unconscious dynamics constructing participatory experiences’ interactions and then what types of “demands” are being carried by the multiple agents; and (6) by approaching participatory processes in their psychosocial dimension we mean to grasp the unconscious worth of such demands which, in turn, support sense-making of such devices.

Our proposal is then directed towards the construction of integrated outlooks on participatory processes, by complementing psychosociological contribution with the study of political, economic and historical aspects of the examined contexts. Such a view is rooted in the acknowledgment of several claims for deepening a wide range of critical issues emerging by these processes, such as social inclusion, communication distortions, matching individual and collective choices, and so on (Fareri, 1998; De Ambrogio, 2000; Bobbio, 2004; Sintomer, 2007).

## **Lisbon, Paris and Fiumicino: Reflections on different participatory experiences**

According to our theoretical/methodological approach, we are going to briefly present some considerations about three field-experiences we have recently had at the local dimension in Portugal, France and Italy.

As far as Lisbon is concerned, participatory processes implemented by the Municipality represent the fieldwork for the PhD Thesis of Dr. Roberto Falanga. Specifically referring to 2012, they are: Participatory Budgeting, Local Agenda 21 and Simplis, which belong to the same Administrative Division, DIOP (Division for Organizational Innovation and Participation), as well as the Project BIP/ZIP implemented by a team within the Local Program for Occupancy.<sup>13</sup> According to his theoretical and methodological approach, he is working with the teams directly engaged with the management of such processes which, presenting basic differences in terms of “political project”, also develop diverse methodologies. Participation has come to represent a criterion through which we may approach these processes, even though, whilst working with different aspects of social and institutional life, they involve different targets of people and address, therefore, participation to different objectives. And still, the contact with the two teams framed within the work of research, has taken place in different ways: in one case, with the DIOP it has passed through the membership with the Project OPtar concerned with the analysis of some of the main Portuguese Participatory Budgets;<sup>14</sup> in the other case, with the team BIP/ZIP the contact has been constructed with the help of Nelson Dias, head manager of the Portuguese not-for-profit organization In Loco and member of the Project OPtar.

Focusing on a general view of these processes in terms of “supply”, Lisbon represents on the one hand a unique case in the European scenario for its engagement with participatory processes what, at the same time, needs a critical reflection on their quality and effectiveness. It is evident the interest of the Executive power lead by António Costa (Costa, 2012) with the promotion and implementation of participatory and consultative processes. And the variety of methodological architectures, as regards both back and front office work, do testify a lively political commitment.<sup>15</sup> What about the articulation with the administrative levels? And what about the reciprocal effects with society? As regards the first question, it is important to recognize that the internal organization of different administrative levels within such processes differ from one another. To what extent are the bureaucratic architecture, system and connections able to sustain the claimed agility in implementing such processes, is a crucial question inasmuch as it reveals what degrees of change are being conceived in terms of public service (Normann, 2004). Hence, here we arrive at the second question: where is society positioned in these processes? Once again, it would be incorrect to generalize the attitude of citizens and/or community groups with respect to such proposed actions as they can be both of a spontaneous and pre-planned nature. Nevertheless, there is one transversal question emerging from the ongoing field experience that, to some extent, reveals a shared necessity of all the actors engaged or thought to be included in these processes: the importance of coordination. Central to any participatory process, including ambitious examples ones like transforming traditional administrative praxes through political projects

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<sup>13</sup> Further information: [lisboaparticipa.pt](http://lisboaparticipa.pt) and [habitacao.cm-lisboa.pt](http://habitacao.cm-lisboa.pt).

<sup>14</sup> Project “OPtar” lead by Dr. Giovanni Allegratti, researcher of the Centre for Social Studies (CES) and PhD tutor of Dr. Roberto Falanga.

<sup>15</sup> In short: Participatory Budgeting, in its 5<sup>th</sup> year edition, includes both presence and online participation; Local Agenda 21, at its first edition, works with online submissions of proposed partnerships, followed by one open meeting in the elected area; Simplis as process mainly addressed to internal modernization of the Institution, includes online proposals submissions and some planned meetings with civil servants; BIP/ZIP is also based on online partnerships’ proposals integrated with some open workshops and relative meeting with each constituted and financed partnership.

into participatory ones, is a coordinating function. This essentially remarks on two issues: on the one hand, participatory processes are part of both a whole political strategy and a bureaucratic machine which is not only background but rather context for their development; on the other hand, the proliferation and diversification of participatory processes could come to supply a confused service to citizens, suffering, in the end, a perverse effect of weak participation. In sum, the questions concerning who are thought to participate are concerned with how participatory processes are politically conceived and technically managed both within and with the whole Institution.

As regards Paris, the experience refers to the fieldwork undertaken for the Master Thesis of Dr. Matteo Antonini, tutored by Dr. Gianni Montesarchio in 2011. The participatory process examined was being implemented at the District level<sup>16</sup> in a very central area of the city governed by a democratic and reformist French party. Some of its exponents had been adopting participatory devices for some years in order to both get back the decreasing consensus of electors and restore a long-term vision for the area.<sup>17</sup> With the collaboration of a socio-analyst expert in participatory processes (Lapassade, 1974), the District Manager started the process acknowledging the distance perceived by citizens in terms of public responses. With such premises, citizens' participation has come to figure as a possible form to involve the "real actors", without politicians nor militants. With the purpose of creating a setting wherein exist legitimating open debates and exchanges, the District Council sensed the opportunity to strengthen its status and improve the relation with citizens.<sup>18</sup> The implication of Dr. Antonini was negotiated in terms of external expert in charge of providing information about participatory experiences abroad (in this case, in Italy) for the District Council, as well as for the political party Assembly. Such a proposal was rooted in a widespread discontent and skepticism towards participatory democracy, especially evident in the political logic of opposition between Council majority representatives and the rest of the elected representatives.

In this scenario, the articulated connections in evidence were established between: (1) Party leader and District Councilor; (2) District Council and citizens living in that area; (3) District Councilor and Dr. Antonini. In the first case, there was the emerging conflict between internal wings of the Party itself, resolved through delegating the management of the participatory process to a socio-analyst expert. As a result of this, participation was characterized by high expectations regarding new consensus and the expertise reduced to the application of the right techniques. Moreover, participation itself represents here not only a device but also and mostly a value: more democracy is always helpful. With respect to the relation with citizens, it was evident the link operated between contact with the daily district life and more real vision of the problem. In other terms, also in this case there was the value-based imagination of competence in terms of more knowledge and power, which could be addressed in service for political life. To some extent it could sound like only the "outsiders" from the political system are really capable to understand the reality. When such a notion occurs to actors pertaining to the political system itself, we interpret it as a twofold attitude

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<sup>16</sup> Since October 1795, Paris has been divided into 12 "arrondissements", increased up to 20 in 1859.

<sup>17</sup> Further information: [mairie3.paris.fr/mairie03/jsp/site/Portal.jsp?page\\_id=558](http://mairie3.paris.fr/mairie03/jsp/site/Portal.jsp?page_id=558).

<sup>18</sup> The hypothesis was to set up a pilot device in order to verify the possibility of implementing a permanent participatory process to within the multiple administrative tools.

based on undervaluing its governing role and idealizing citizens' objectivity. This idealization always aims to maintain control of the other, who is perceived as slippery and therefore dangerous (Carli and Paniccia, 2003). Lastly, as regards the involvement of Dr. Antonini, it is evident how the proposed presentation of participatory best-practices from abroad was thought to work on the direction of building consensus with the said two audiences. Then, one more time, participation is intended as a technique able to solve conflicts with weak references to contexts, histories, and policies.

What we judge necessary to underline in this case is the social construction of the problems that can drive the decision of implementing a participatory process. Whenever the problems end up being isolated as objects per se, participation is reduced into a mere technique expected to solve “dysfunctions”, like both internal and external conflicts. As a result of this, a so-conceived participatory process loses specific objectives because the implementation of the process turns into the objective. In this specific case the original objective had been more democracy and more electoral affection, less environmental uncertainty and conflicts.

As regards Fiumicino, a city belonging to the Metropolitan area of Rome, the fieldwork carried out by Dr. Falanga (2011) has to be framed within his Master Thesis tutored by Dr. Francesca Dolcetti and Dr. Giuseppe Imbesi. Still considered as both an autonomous town and a satellite city (or an appendix) of Rome, Fiumicino houses the huge area “riserva statale del litorale romano” (national environment conserving of the roman seacoast) where the Leonardo da Vinci Airport is planned to be enlarged according to the master plan “Due hub un unico Paese”. The “riserva”, instituted in 1996, decrees the preservation of naturalistic and historic-archaeological values within its 18.600 hectares and holds important agricultural activities, such as the most important Italian farm “Maccarese Spa”. Calling upon multiple political levels of management, such an area does present important issues for multilevel governance, stakeholders and society.<sup>19</sup> Recently subject to several interventions, this area has turned into a large and small-scale controversial object of discussion for the inhabitants first, as demonstrated by the spontaneous constitution of the citizens' Committees. Figuring as a multiform context in being “gateway” of Rome, main trade center and agricultural and fishing national reference, several and complex issues carry questions concerning with governance.

In this respect Dr. Falanga has worked in a “hybrid” direction by complementing the study with Urban Planning perspective and competence. Such a scientific partnership has resulted in the proposal of a participatory process to be implemented by the Fiumicino Municipality with the constituted research team's supervision.<sup>20</sup> The contact with the Councilor responsible for Environment and Tourism policies summarizes the decisive traits of this work in revealing how complex were the issues proposed to work on through citizens' participation. Since the “riserva” represents such an important area and since diverse projects had already been implemented and others were going to be realized, the research/action

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<sup>19</sup> In short, this area is regulated by national outline laws, while planning and control functions are managed by Rome and Fiumicino Municipalities and landscape issues are governed by the Region Lazio responding to European guidelines. Finally, the official entity representing the “riserva” is the CEA (Environment Education Center).

<sup>20</sup> The team was then composed by members of the urban planning and architecture department – Dr. Giuseppe Imbesi, Dr. Estella Marino and Dr. Marco Valle – and members of the clinical psychology department – Dr. Francesca Dolcetti and Dr. Roberto Falanga – of the University “Sapienza” of Rome (at that time, Dr. Marino was also employed by Fiumicino Municipality as an expert in environment and planning).



hypothesis dealt with gathering all the actors affected by future changes in order to optimize public interventions. In accepting to meet the team, the councilor showed to be rather oriented to promoting cultural activities for improving collective quality of life. It used to represent, in his view, the most pressing issue for Fiumicino, which could best take advantage of some consensus building process. In highlighting team's scientific interest for the "riserva" and the projects within, the Councilor replied enumerating the complex geomorphologic characteristics of the area and recognizing the worthy socio-economic matters related in both short and long-term interventions. However, the idea of organizing participatory process was raising difficult questions, mostly related to social claims and their purpose was not fulfilled.

In this case, what we consider essential for further exploration is the meaning of network. We think it extremely important as in relation to the scientific interdisciplinary experience, as to the evidently complex multilevel management of the territories. What we have argued with respect to going through the monolithic idea of sciences working on their own on their "objects" producing at the end self-referential knowledge, goes in the direction of promoting interdisciplinary and re-conceiving researchers' mandates in the work. On the other hand, the multiplicity of actors whether directly or indirectly involved in the management of an area does not necessarily correspond to a network of subject. And even when they get together, like in participatory processes, the passage towards becoming network demands to take into consideration multiple psychosocial dimensions and power instances. The case of Fiumicino, in underlining these points, actually emphasizes the fundamental role of analyzing the multiple demands carried by all the actors involved in a participatory process from the first contacts.

## Final considerations

At the end of this paper, we would like to emphasize some questions we have highlighted in the text in order to remark which theoretical criteria have driven us to propose this methodological perspective. Considering the epistemological worth of participatory processes in terms of political, bureaucratic and social devices, we have outlined a specific psychosociological approach. Starting from a socio-constructivist vision of the concept of participation we have argued the necessity of referring to theoretical models that concern social processes grounded in specific types of coexistence. Participation is not considered as a social attitude to be introduced anywhere in order to achieve predetermined objectives. It rather represents an interesting device which calls upon complex questions referring to multiple levels, actors and issues. In these terms, we have highlighted the importance of understanding what types of "demands" are both pre-planned and spontaneous by all the actors included in said processes. We think that the matter is not just one of making people participate but rather exploring how participation is imaged, represented, used, shared and so processed by the actors in specific contexts. As a result of this perspective, participatory processes represent complex devices that construct their own meanings, which can be grasped through psychosociological models. Such work is necessary in order to analyze the deep meanings of these processes and – as we have showed in the three cases – this work means to ground and frame the whole process of research/action.

Lastly, our considerations regarding the role of psychosociology in the field of participation studies originate from and aim to deepen interdisciplinary views on this subject so as to possibly contaminate and integrate new and different approaches.

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## Engagement and Estrangement:

### Participation and Disciplinary Autonomy in Álvaro Siza's

#### S. Victor Neighbourhood

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**Abstract:** Citizens' participation in the design process has been discussed since the aftermath of World War II as an instrument to promote a more humanist approach to habitat. However, it has been also accused of fostering populist outcomes where the designer is merely the hand of the people, challenging the traditional limits of architecture's disciplinary autonomy. Hence, to which extent can architects negotiate their critical approach to the status quo with the will of the people? Is there any contradiction between the architect's social commitment and architecture's disciplinary autonomy? Should the architect design for the people or with the people? To contribute with some possible answers to these questions, this paper presents a critical approach to Álvaro Siza's S. Vitor housing neighbourhood, a project designed with citizens' participation. It will discuss the contributions brought about by the creative tension immanent in the relation between the designer and the user. It will chiefly explore the delicate negotiation between the architect's engagement and estrangement in the design process, and its consequences in promoting urban inclusion.

**Keywords:** architecture, citizens' participation, populism, disciplinary autonomy, Álvaro Siza

## Introduction

In December 1976, the influential Italian architectural magazine *Lotus International* published an issue with a contribution by Álvaro Siza on his project for the S. Victor housing neighbourhood, in the Portuguese city of Porto. This project was part of a larger housing programme designated the SAAL Process, which was launched in the aftermath of the 1974 Portuguese democratic revolution.

This programme had the ambitious goal of contributing to solve the country's housing shortage, which was estimated to affect 25% of families (David, 1976: 60). Moreover, it aimed to accomplish this ambition using an innovative methodology, which was based upon the social organization of the demand (Bandeirinha, 2007). The programme prompted the

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creation of dwellers' associations, and encouraged participatory methodologies where the future users and the so-called technical brigades (usually coordinated by architects) should be part and parcel of the process.

In this issue of *Lotus International*, the magazine published a sort of manifesto entitled "The Line of Action of the Technicians as Technicians", written by Álvaro Siza. In this text, Siza delivers his account on the challenges brought about by SAAL's novel methodology, arguing that "the Brigade does not adopt simplistic positions, such as: learn with the people or teach them" (Siza, 1976a: 87). By rejecting these *simplistic positions*, he dismissed, therefore, both a populist and a paternalistic approach. And, on a Marxist tone, he went on arguing: "the Brigade believes that its expertise and its ideas, within the concrete limits of the reconstruction of the habitat, with a dialectic relationship with the present ideas of the population it works for, will form the basis of a physical world created for and by a society that wants to be classless" (Siza, 1976a: 87).

Siza was thus keenly arguing in favour of a disciplinary approach that should, above all, be able to pursue a qualified outcome, one that should overcome the temptation of just delivering "what people want". Moreover, the Brigade should reject the idea "that the urgency of the problems could constitute a limiting factor to quality and poetry" (Siza, 1976a: 87).

Siza's plea on quality and poetry seems thus to resonate with a drive towards an autonomous disciplinary approach, one which should be severed from the contaminations brought about by negotiation processes such as participatory procedures. However, he was also keen in rejecting an approach where the project was constructed from a hegemonic position. Hence, how can the gap between these two seemingly opposed poles be bridged? Is it possible to preserve architecture's disciplinary autonomy while, at the same time, be engaged with other stakeholders towards pursuing a negotiated outcome?

To contribute possible answers to these questions, in this paper I explore Siza's project for the S. Victor neighbourhood, designed and built in the mid-1970s under the aegis of the SAAL process. The built outcome is discussed against the background of the debate on participatory processes and new design methodologies, which aimed at an empowerment of the users in the design process.

## Shunning conformism

The historical periodization modern/postmodern has been heavily discussed by the scholarship and it seems, now more than ever, to be defined by extremely blurred lines. To avoid the notion of postmodern, several alternative notions emerged, such as late capitalism or post-Fordism. Cornelius Castoriadis, a Greek-French philosopher, challenges this historical periodization and suggests a political one instead. According to him, the critical or modern period (from the Enlightenment until the sunset of totalitarianisms in the late 1950s) was superseded by the retreat into conformism. Hence, according to Castoriadis, the current historical moment is characterized by a "complacently mixed up with loose but fashionable talk about 'pluralism' and 'respect' for difference, for 'the other', it ends up by glorifying eclecticism, covering up sterility and banality, and providing a generalized version of 'anything goes'" (cited in Aureli, 2008: 7).

Hence, Castoriadis' notion of retreat into conformism resonates with an instrumental use of rhetorics of difference to foster a liberal drive. In this context, thus, what is the extent to which the SAAL process resonates with this retreat into conformism?

One of the goals announced with the creation of the SAAL was to enhance *pluralism* and to foster architectural approaches that could be respectful for difference and for *the other*. The

outcome of the SAAL operation at S. Victor embodies this programme and, as such, it was praised by some of the most influential international critics and professional media. However, instead of eclectic, the project was connoted with references from the 1920s architectural avant-garde and thus seen as a belated dogmatic modern. Moreover, instead of sterile or banal, it was cherished as an outcome of a “hyper-sensitivity towards the inherent nature of a given-site” (Frampton, 1986: 10). It seems, thus, that there is little resonance between this project’s characteristics and Castoriadis’ suggestion of the current historical moment as a retreat into conformism. Moreover, I would suggest that the project for S. Victor challenges conformism and the ‘anything goes’ approach thus embodying a convoluted condition of ambivalence that pervades the project in multiple layers. To further examine this condition of ambivalence, I will explore Siza’s assessment of the delicate balance between an appraisal of ‘the other’ and architecture’s disciplinary autonomy.

## A critical negotiation

In the same issue of *Lotus International* mentioned above, the magazine also published an apologetic review on a local proletarian housing type, the *ilhas* (islands), written by Siza to support his Brigade’s architectural approach in S. Victor’s operation. Siza’s appraisal of the *ilhas* model is, at first sight, somewhat unusual.<sup>2</sup> In fact, poor living conditions at Porto’s *ilhas* were considered responsible for some violent plague outbreaks that had occurred in the city since the late nineteenth century. They were the result of a bourgeois speculative exploration of the new working class that migrated from the countryside to build the workforce that would support Porto’s (and Portugal’s for that matter) belated industrial revolution.

The *ilhas* are small housing complexes built in the backyard of middle-class houses, with one single common access to the street and a narrow common yard/corridor, which serves as the only source of light, access and ventilation to the housing units. As their name suggests, they are isolated communities hidden from the street (and, often, also from public concern) behind the bourgeois house, which acts as the filter towards the public space.

Despite the charged public opinion on the *ilhas*, Siza considered them a model of community life, which was, in fact, a direct consequence of the segregation of the population in those settlements. He acknowledged, however, that this was a housing model that the inhabitants repudiate en masse. “But to repudiate this image”, he contended, “does not necessarily mean refusal of systems of adaptation and whatever is positive in that community life” (Siza, 1976b: 87).

Thus, Siza argued that the *ilhas* should be considered “the basic element of the urban tissue.” To solve the essential problems of the model, however, he claimed that an emphasis on the design of the open spaces should be the Brigade’s primal concern. The spatial organisation of the houses would be a secondary problem to be solved later, one that he considered easier.

On a reflection about the enigmatic title of Siza’s brigade appraisal of the *ilhas* model, Alexandre Alves Costa contends that Siza was deliberately creating a new statute for the *ilhas*

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<sup>2</sup> For more information about Porto’s *ilhas*, see (Teixeira, 1996).



associated with a clear social and political agenda. Costa (2002: 12) argues that “when one calls proletarian island to the *ilhas*, one is conferring them a new sense and a new dignity. The singular gives them globality: it is the group of all *ilhas*, it is the city to be built or reconstructed. Proletarian because the new city will be for the workers before it becomes a classless city.”

The implementation of this programme was not, however, as straightforward as Siza and his team would wish. In the area assigned to the S. Victor brigade, the municipality already owned some plots while others were privately held. The occupation of the parcels was also diverse: some were vacant, some occupied by residents and others had empty or ruined buildings. With such diverse conditions, the expropriation of some properties was a fundamental step to develop a plan for the entire neighbourhood.

The S. Victor brigade divided the area in two different sectors: the recuperation and adaptation of the *ilhas* in the S. Victor quarter and the Senhora das Dores quarter. For the first, they designed a project to recuperate the *ilhas* model, creating larger houses with improved sanitary conditions. For the latter, the plan was rather more complex and considered four different types of intervention: type A, on completely free land in the interior areas of the neighbourhood; type B, on empty plots at the perimeter of the neighbourhood; type C, reconstruction using existing foundations and walls of semi-destroyed buildings; and type D, recuperation and adaptation of inhabited buildings at the neighbourhood’s perimeter belt.

Due to problems related to the expropriation process, which created many obstacles to the implementation of the general plan, the brigade decided to start building in the areas where the property was already owned by the municipality.<sup>3</sup> Only two operations were, thus, eventually built: One of type C (reconstruction using existing foundations and walls) and one of type A (on free land in the interior of the neighbourhood).

The housing block created under the type A intervention would eventually become well known in the architectural milieu of the late 1970s and early 1980s. This housing block, however, resonated little with the urban vernacular that Siza so enthusiastically called the “basic element of the urban tissue”. It showed, instead, clear references from the interwar modernist avant-garde, especially with the housing neighbourhoods designed in the 1920s and 1930s by the Dutch architect J.J.P. Oud. Further, Siza himself would also recognize this. Already in 1976, he acknowledged that they proposed “an architecture that made little reference to that existing, but which was rather overlaid on it (conserved even if in ruinous condition)” (Siza, 1976b: 90).

The ambivalence that pervades this project is conspicuously highlighted in this tension between preserving the city’s collective memory and delivering an autonomous artefact.<sup>4</sup> It resonates, moreover, with a larger debate on the preservation of the human qualities of the humble and prosaic against the human alienation fostered by everyday experiences where repetitive gestures are tokens of modernity’s drive towards rationalization, universalism and functionalism.

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<sup>3</sup> The Municipality had previously bought plots in the neighbourhood to build a parking lot for the residents in the area. This programme was considered useless by the SAAL brigade whom, therefore, converted the available area into housing.

<sup>4</sup> This ambivalence resonates with Aldo Rossi’s idea of an autonomous architecture, which should emphasize both geographical continuities and historical discontinuities. For an insightful discussion on this, see Aureli (2008: 53-69).

## Disciplinary autonomy and social engagement

To uncover the deep structures defined by modernity and everydayness, and the relentless rationalization of contemporary city, the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre claims for a critical analysis that can go beyond a simple ‘change life’ attitude or a rejection of lived experience. Therefore, Lefebvre calls for the expression of the energy, humanity and creativity embodied in the humble, prosaic details of daily existence in order to challenge the commodification of the everyday.

According to Mary McLeod (1997: 12), Lefebvre’s interest in the humble and prosaic is also a manifestation of his criticism on the elitism and heroicism of Nietzsche’s rhetoric of the “superman”. Hence, for Lefebvre, it was time for a “superhumanism”. McLeod (1997: 28-29) argues that Lefebvre’s postulation of superhumanism “is a rejection of bourgeois humanism, of universal rationality, and of suppression of difference. It is also a refusal to accept the death of subjectivity, the endless proliferation of signs, and the celebration of commodity forces – the ‘anything goes’ mentality.”

In the disciplinary field of architecture, the critical analysis suggested by Lefebvre can be paralleled with the concept of “critical architecture”, which Hilde Heynen (2007) defines as a critical engagement of architectural works to their social condition. Heynen uses the Frankfurt School’s critical theory to define an architectural approach that is able to combine its autonomy with social interests. To illustrate this approach, Heynen presents the architecture of the modern movement, especially its architectural proposals in the field of housing. She claims that this architectural approach proposed “a new way of living that offered an alternative to the exploitation and injustice of the status quo. Modern architecture”, she argues, “thus equalled a social project, with utopian overtones, based upon a critical attitude towards the existing” (Heynen, 2007: 49).

This combination of disciplinary autonomy and social engagement is, however, a challenge to established divisions between the notions of modernity and avant-garde. Heynen suggests the notion of a heroic avant-garde, one which is dominant in the works of Matei Calinescu and Renato Poggioli, as associated with those progressive political and artistic movements, which are fostered by a utopian approach, challenging the status quo. In contrast, Heynen designates as transgressive, the idea championed by Peter Bürger and Andreas Huyssen’s of the avant-garde as an artistic approach concerned with bridging the gap between art and life, as opposed to modernism’s autonomous drive.

For some members of the Frankfurt school, such as Theodor Adorno or Jürgen Habermas the concepts of modernism and avant-garde could be used interchangeably. For Peter Bürger (1981) and Andreas Huyssen (1981), however, this “veils the historical achievements of the avant-garde movements. [...] Their radical demand to reintegrate art into everyday life.” They argue that the modernists struggled to salvage the purity of high art while the avant-garde attempted to subvert art’s autonomy, its artificial separation from life.

Hilde Heynen (1999: 192) argues, however, that in “Adorno’s view it is only by preserving its autonomy that art can remain critical.” Therefore, for Adorno there is a “dual character of art” that can be useful to use as framework for heteronomous forms of art such as architecture. According to Heynen, on the one hand it allows us to “see works of art in the perspective of their social definition and social relevance [...] and on the other hand in the perspective of their autonomy as aesthetically shaped objects” (p. 192).

## Dwelling on a liminal position

Siza's manifesto published in *Lotus International*, mentioned above, stresses this need for a balance between disciplinary autonomy and a critical assessment of social conditions. In the project for the S. Victor neighbourhood this *dual* approach is also present. On one hand, the architect preserves his autonomy by using the architectural project as a tool to translate the users' demands. On the other hand, the outcome of his work is the result of a critical assessment of everydayness.

Thus, the rationality and anonymity associated with the modernist principles inherited from the Enlightenment values is mingled with the avant-garde's desire to bridge the gap between art and life. From this dialectic results a negotiated outcome where needs and desire can be reconciled, as Henri Lefebvre argued. In fact, according to Siza himself, what interests him in the construction of a city "is the capacity of transformation, something quite like the growth of a human being, who from his birth has certain characteristics and a sufficient autonomy, a basic structure that can integrate or resist the changes in life. This doesn't signify a loss of identity, though" (Siza, 1991: 64).

Siza's approach reveals a detachment from both authoritarian and paternalistic positions. With this detachment, he delivers an architecture that stands between the anonymity of the everyday and the avant-garde's conflation of art and life. Or, in his own words:

the architectural creation is born out of an emotion, the emotion caused by a moment and a place. The project and the construction, demand from the authors to free themselves from that emotion, on a progressive detachment – transmitting it as a whole and hidden. From then on, the emotion belongs to the other(s). (Siza, 2009: 109)<sup>5</sup>

This detachment resonates with Brecht's notion of *Verfremdung* (estrangement) as noted by José António Bandeirinha (2010). This estrangement becomes instrumental in supporting a position of resistance to a populist approach where the aspirations of the users would unconditionally define the architect's performance. The architect uses it as a tool for the translation of the users' aspirations and thus, as in Brecht's plays, "the actor speaks this [both highly polished and plain] language as if he were reciting someone else's words: as if he stood beside the other, distancing himself, and never embodying the other" (Bloch, 1970: 124).

Siza's project for S. Victor therefore represents an architectural approach that challenges dogmatic preconceptions and resists populism. The creative force that Siza finds in blurred hierarchies and reciprocities challenges established definitions of modernism, postmodernism, avant-garde, autonomy, participation, or populism.

Hence, Siza's architectural approach dwells on an in-between position, one eloquently expressed by the Portuguese modernist poet Mário de Sá-Carneiro in his poem "7", written in 1914: "I'm neither myself nor the other, / I'm something in-between: / A pillar in the bridge of boredom / That goes from me to the Other" (Sá-Carneiro, 1996: 80).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This text was originally published in 1992. Translation by the author.

<sup>6</sup> "Eu não sou eu nem sou o outro, / Sou qualquer coisa de intermédio: / Pilar da ponte de tédio / Que vai de mim para o Outro." Translation into English by the author.

This liminal *locus* entails an embedded condition of *thirdness* that stems from a process of negotiation in which the architectural project occupies a pivotal position as an instrument of mediation between those opposing poles, rather than a tool to claim architecture's autonomy.

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## Evolution of Coimbra's Town Center and the Emergence of Downtown Re-creation

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to contribute to the debate about the consequences of extensive and dispersed urban growth, focusing on city centre depopulation in the city of Coimbra (Portugal). It provides geo-demographic information that reveals a decline in the population and functions of city centre parishes, contrasting with the marked growth in more peripheral parishes. This urban expansion process, which has intensified in recent decades, is reflected in the organization of the urban territory, with a weakening of the city centre (which has become less dense and less diversified) and a fragmentation of urban and social structure. It may therefore be asked why new structures and infrastructures are being built when there are so many depreciated buildings and city areas that are uninhabited and unused. The densification of Coimbra town centre could offer a solution to the current pattern of extensive dispersed growth through the appropriate reuse and rehabilitation of urban voids, and the generation of new dynamics that attempt to recapture the very essence of the city.

**Keywords:** extensive city growth, city centre depopulation, urban fragmentation, city centre densification, Coimbra (case study)

### Introduction

In recent decades, urban growth in Portugal has been largely determined by volatile market forces and private interests, with a lack of clear regional and urban strategies. The expansion of urban perimeters has enabled construction to spread to previously rural areas, resulting in sprawling configurations that are dispersed and discontinuous, manifested mostly through low-density monofunctional car-dependent urbanization. This peripheral urban expansion has been accompanied by a consequent depopulation of the city centre, contributing to the fragmentation and impoverishment of the urban structure and lifestyle.

This article aims to contribute to the debate about how to contain extensive and dispersed urban growth, focusing upon the serious problem of city centre depopulation. It is predicated upon the assumption that this debate should centre on the development of *our* (i.e. European or Portuguese) cities; hence, while it may be interesting to consider the Asian megalopolis or American suburb in order to anticipate scenarios or compare different situations, these are too remote to be of much use as models. Indeed, there are clear signs of urban fracturing in Portugal. However, despite predictions of the *death of the city*, a space undoubtedly still exists

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for the city in this expanded urban territory. This *space* does not need to be invented or stolen from elsewhere, as it already exists (if in weakened form), awaiting reappraisal. This article is driven by the belief that it is important to reflect upon the depopulation of our city centres, and to question why we should be continuing to multiply structures and infrastructures when there are so many depreciated buildings and city areas that are unused and uninhabited.

The article results from research undertaken in the ambit of a PhD dissertation in architecture. It begins with a contextualization, after which the main aim and thesis are presented, before homing in upon the city of Coimbra as a case study. The geo-demographic information provided (resident population, number of buildings constructed and vacant, population movements, etc.) enable evidence of city centre depopulation accompanied by a marked growth of peripheral parishes, thereby supporting the initial hypothesis and reinforcing the need for research of this kind.

## Background: City and density

The increase in the number of people and activities in a particular area (urban mix) usually produces a more vibrant attractive city. However, it also brings consequences that must necessarily be taken into account. One of these is the matter of the balance between the number of people and good urban performance.

This is not a new question, nor is it exclusive to the twenty-first century. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the question of population density and its consequences has been debated and researched, and it is by no means a linear or consensual matter. Indeed, there have been strong reactions to the various changes taking place in the city, which should be considered as both reflexes and reflectors of transformations occurring in the social, political, economic and even cultural order.

The term ‘urbanism’ first appeared in 1867, when Ildefonso Cerdá, planning the expansion of the city of Barcelona, grounded his intervention proposal with a theoretical argument that was ultimately published as *Teoría General de la Urbanización* (Cerdá, 1867). However, the *discipline* of urbanism, which resulted from the need to intervene in cities that had undergone transformations in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, only really achieved theoretical maturity in the mid-twentieth century. Anthony Vidler (1976) considers that this response to the nineteenth century problems of mass production, principally as developed by Le Corbusier, forms the *second typology* of architectural production, a typology that was modelled upon the process of mass production itself.<sup>2</sup>

The city at that time was considered to be a specific technical and aesthetic object, with its own quality and order (Choay, 1980), which needed to be questioned and structured. In this ambition to materialize a *new order*, various proposals appeared, and although some were moderate and practical in nature, others very radical and utopian, advocating the complete razing of the ancient city, with a rejection of any intermediate solution. According to Choay (1980: 2): “This neologism corresponds to the appearance of a new reality: at the end of the 19th century, the expansion of industrial society gave rise to a discipline that was

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<sup>2</sup> Vidler (1976: 260) considers that the first typology “developed out of the rationalist philosophy of the Enlightenment, and initially formulated by the Abbé Laugier, proposed that a natural basis for design was to be found in the model of the primitive hut.”

differentiated from the previous urban arts by its reflexive and critical nature and by its scientific pretensions”.

Overpopulation was considered as one of the factors responsible for the calamities in these cities.<sup>3</sup> Alternative forms of urban *tessitura* and population redistribution were suggested (such as the garden city movement in England, the German rationalists, Corbusier’s *Plan Voisi* and *Ville Radieuse*,<sup>4</sup> the Athens Charter, etc.). High density now became synonymous with overpopulation, and was thus considered to be a common enemy. Then, with the transition from the liberal state to the welfare state, the possibilities for intervention increased, which meant that the concept of density began to be considered something that could be regulated. Hence, maximum densities were determined in order to ensure certain physical and social qualities in urban environments.

A century later, the situation is almost inverted. Although industrialization initially led to a massive rural exodus, when cities became the main focus of attraction and centres for population concentration, the development of transport and fossil fuels has since caused them to expand, resulting in the phenomenon known variously as *urban dispersion*, *oil stain growth*, *diffuse urbanization*, or the internationally recognised *urban sprawl*.

Cities, as living organisms, are nourished by flows that keep them active. The density of these flows is closely connected to the way their structures and mass are related and organized, and needs to be fluid enough to avoid the blockage of arteries but consistent enough to avoid the obliteration of space. This living organism suffers frequent mutations, which are ever more fleeting.

Thus, it may be necessary to put forward a *fourth typology*, as an indignant reaction to the depopulation of the city centres. This typology would not be satisfied with the superficial fitting-out of “scenographic” façades, but would demand measures and interventions that generate new dynamics and attract people and activities, densifying the urban fabric and breathing life into depressed spaces. It would cut across the various scales of intervention (territorial planning, the urban plan, urban project and urban design, to be completed with the architectural design), affirming that the city exists, that it is alive and requires attention. It is not in awe of or resigned to the global city, the generic city, but seeks out the local city, the particular city, the city of citizens, the *polis*. In our case, this would mean focusing on the Portuguese city, and, for the purpose of this research, the city of Coimbra. As Soja (2000: xii) observes: “It is almost surely too soon to conclude with any confidence that what happened to cities in the late twentieth century was the onset of a revolutionary change or just another minor twist on an old tale of urban life.”

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<sup>3</sup> As we know, industrialization and the development of industrial zones in and around the city provoked a mass rural exodus, as populations flowed to the cities in search of a better way of life. This phenomenon was so abrupt and intense that the large cities were unable to respond effectively, generating new problems, such as the question of how to house this new social class that was being formed (the “industrial proletariat”).

<sup>4</sup> Although in this model, the buildings, as isolated elements, were very high density in relation to the surrounding area, their layout in the territory meant that they could have large free areas that dissipated the idea of concentration and chaos associated with high density cities at the end of the nineteenth century.



## (Re)-designing urban density

It was the elevator and reinforced concrete on the one hand and the car on the other, some will say (from a functionalist perspective). It was the democratization of the habitat with European social democracies and the right to a free and healthy environment, others will say (in the wake of social hygienism, the precursor of modern ecologism). It was the pressure of the modernist Central European and Soviet avant-garde which, from the 1920s, proposed a rupture with the urban forms of the past, claiming technological liberation while aiming to create a radically new urban space – so will argue those that privilege cultural revolution, and, in this case, the disciplinary autonomy of architecture. However, rather than explain the causes, it is important to assess the extent of the rupture and its consequences in this particular place... (Portas, 1987: 11)

The debate about the consequences of urban spread has gradually acquired a more urgent tone. There have been international studies into the relationships between sustainability, form, size, density and the uses of a city (Burton *et al.*, 1996; Masnavi, 2000; Newman and Kenworthy, 1999), and cases have been presented that argue for greater compactness and concentration of the constructed environment, as two essential features of urban sustainability (Rogers and Gumuchdjian, 1997; Rogers, 2005).

*Densification* and *compactness* as an alternative to dispersed growth is also an objective for some of those responsible for territorial planning in Portugal (PROT-AML, 2002; PNPT, 2007).<sup>5</sup> Despite evident concerns with extensive urbanization and city centre depopulation amongst both politicians and professionals operating on the ground, there are numerous factors that require more in-depth research and reflection, supported by concrete data.

The research presented here seeks to advance our knowledge about *urban compaction* through an analytical and critical study of the changes that have taken place in the city of Coimbra, supported by a study of densities/continuities/multifunctionalities. City centre *densification* is viewed as an alternative to the extensive dispersed growth and city centre depopulation of recent decades, on the assumption that the appropriate (re)use of *expectant voids* (i.e., spaces that are built but vacant) may facilitate the (re)inhabitation/rehabilitation/regeneration of the city centre, generating new dynamics that will help to recapture the very essence of the city.

This research takes place within the sphere of architecture. Thus, it holds that it is important to view the city as a systemic construction, as a continuous *project*, a process where there is an intrinsic relationship between the whole and the parts, drawing a close relationship between the urban plan, architecture and urban design. It also seeks to reconcile spatial quality with micro scale (variations in the built surroundings, types of housing, public spaces, etc), aiming not only at immediate local effects but anticipating consequences on a broader scale (the mesoscale of neighbourhood, parish, town, and county). Although this process clearly requires an interdisciplinary approach, we also aim to analyse and highlight the role of urban and architectural design in the quest for effective models and solutions that are

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<sup>5</sup> These documents argue for greater compaction in the city, on the grounds that it will reduce land consumption, atmosphere pollution and infrastructure costs; improve traffic fluidity and efficiency in the supply of services and infrastructures by local authorities; bring benefits for economic activities associated with the repopulation of urban centres, and community gains such as social insertion.

appealing and generate polarities. This focuses on the urban project, as Sólà-Morales (1987) defines it, highlighting: (1) the territorial effects beyond the area of intervention; (2) the complex interdependent nature of the contents; (3) ways of overcoming monofunctionality; and (4) ways of mixing uses, users, temporal rhythms and visual orientations.

Although *the urban* is obviously a transdisciplinary theme, requiring close interaction between professionals of different areas, architecture may be asserted as the base discipline for the project of “city-making on the city”. In this sense, the research in progress aims implicitly to highlight this discipline as a *tool* for the design of a theoretical and operative discourse that sustains “growing inwards” in an attempt to *patch up* what already exists, (re)creating relations between *full and empty* – or, if we like, between public and private space (though today, the line that separates the two concepts is increasingly blurred) – integrating the volumetry of the *full* in the space of the *empty* in a relation of interdependence.

While the general aim of this research is the pursuit of the *idea of the city* as a *project* that requires a close relationship between architecture and urban design, the more specific aim is the depopulation of city centres, focusing on the particular case of Coimbra.

### Case study: Coimbra (Portugal)

It is of interest to find out how and when the urban structure became *unstuck* from the individual matrix of the building, and to gauge the oscillations in density that occurred during this process. Coimbra will be used to show how, over the course of the twentieth century, the city limits shattered and the constructed mass pulverized, extending into the neighbouring territories with the consequent depopulation of the centre (loss of people and functions).

For this research, which is still in its early stages, the *City of Coimbra* was considered to be the area confined by the city limits line proposed in 2011 by the Municipality (Figure 1). This area was divided into three zones: the *city centre* (Almedina, S. Bartolomeu, Santa Cruz, Sé Nova), the *first periphery* (Santa Clara, S. Martinho do Bispo, Stº António dos Olivais, Eiras), and the *second periphery* (S. Paulo de Frades, Trouxemil, Torre de Vilela, Ceira, Castelo de Veiga, Antanhol, Assafarge, Ribeira de Frades, Taveiro). Each of these zones corresponds to different time periods of Coimbra’s urban development. At this point of the research, it is important to go back to 1864 (I General Population census in Portugal) to recognize the progressive city limits growth. At 1860 decade, the city was defined by Almedina and S. Bartolomeu parishes and a share of Santa Cruz and Sé Nova. The collection and analysis of quantitative data (resident population, constructed buildings, occupied and vacant dwellings) enable us to validate the problem. For the present paper, the resident population was analyzed in periods of ten years and systematized in some graphics and tables using fifty years periods to simplify the evaluation of its evolution.

**Table 1. Resident population (1864, 1911, 1960, 2011)**

Coimbra	Parishes	1864	1911	1960	2011	Var. % 1864-1911	Var. % 1911-1960	Var. % 1960-2011
City Centre	Almedina	2785	3363	3705	927	21%	10%	-75%
	S. Bartolomeu	3186	3186	3451	631	23%	-12%	-82%
	Sta Cruz	3479	3479	11476	5678	77%	86%	-51%
	Sé Nova	3273	3273	10156	6722	118%	42%	-34%
First Periphery	Sto António dos Olivais	3635	6102	18005	38850	68%	195%	116%
	Sta Clara	1336	2432	5706	9908	82%	135%	74%
	S. Martinho do Bispo	3144	5040	8534	13999	60%	69%	64%
	Eiras	775	1499	3988	12075	93%	166%	203%
Second Periphery	S. Paulo de Frades	868	1354	2469	5801	56%	82%	135%
	Trouxemil	816	1249	2160	2719	53%	73%	26%
	Torre de Vilela	0	340	579	1243	n.a.	70%	115%
	Ceira	1972	2627	3504	3728	33%	33%	6%
	Castelo Viegas	480	524	1613	1707	9%	208%	6%
	Antanhol	485	835	1317	2549	72%	58%	94%
	Assafarge	721	989	1447	2722	37%	46%	88%
	Ribeira de Frades	593	779	1683	1927	34%	116%	14%
Taveiro	893	1249	1681	1961	40%	35%	17%	
Total	City Centre	12723	20581	28788	13958	62%	40%	-52%
	First Periphery	8890	15073	36233	74832	70%	140%	107%
	Second Periphery	6818	9946	16453	24357	46%	65%	48%

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Portugal – census 1864, 1911, 1960, 2001.

During the late nineteenth century, the city of Coimbra saw a substantial population growth (45% at the four last decades) within their urban limits, which extended only later on the first decades of the twentieth century. Variations in the resident population were significant between 1960 and 2011, when the phenomenon of urban expansion intensified, the road network improved and there was an increase in the number of private car-owners. It was found that the population of the central parishes decreased by at least half (São Bartolomeu: -82%; Almedina: -75%; Santa-Cruz: -55%; Sé Nova: -34%), while there was an exponential growth in peripheral parishes with good access to the centre, such as the parishes of São Paulo de Frades (135%) and Eiras (203%). This peripheral growth has extended beyond the limits of the municipality and can also be found in parishes of neighbouring municipalities, such as Condeixa-a-Nova (199.5%), connected to Coimbra by the IC2 (see Figure 4).

Figure 1. City limit proposed in 2011 by the Municipality

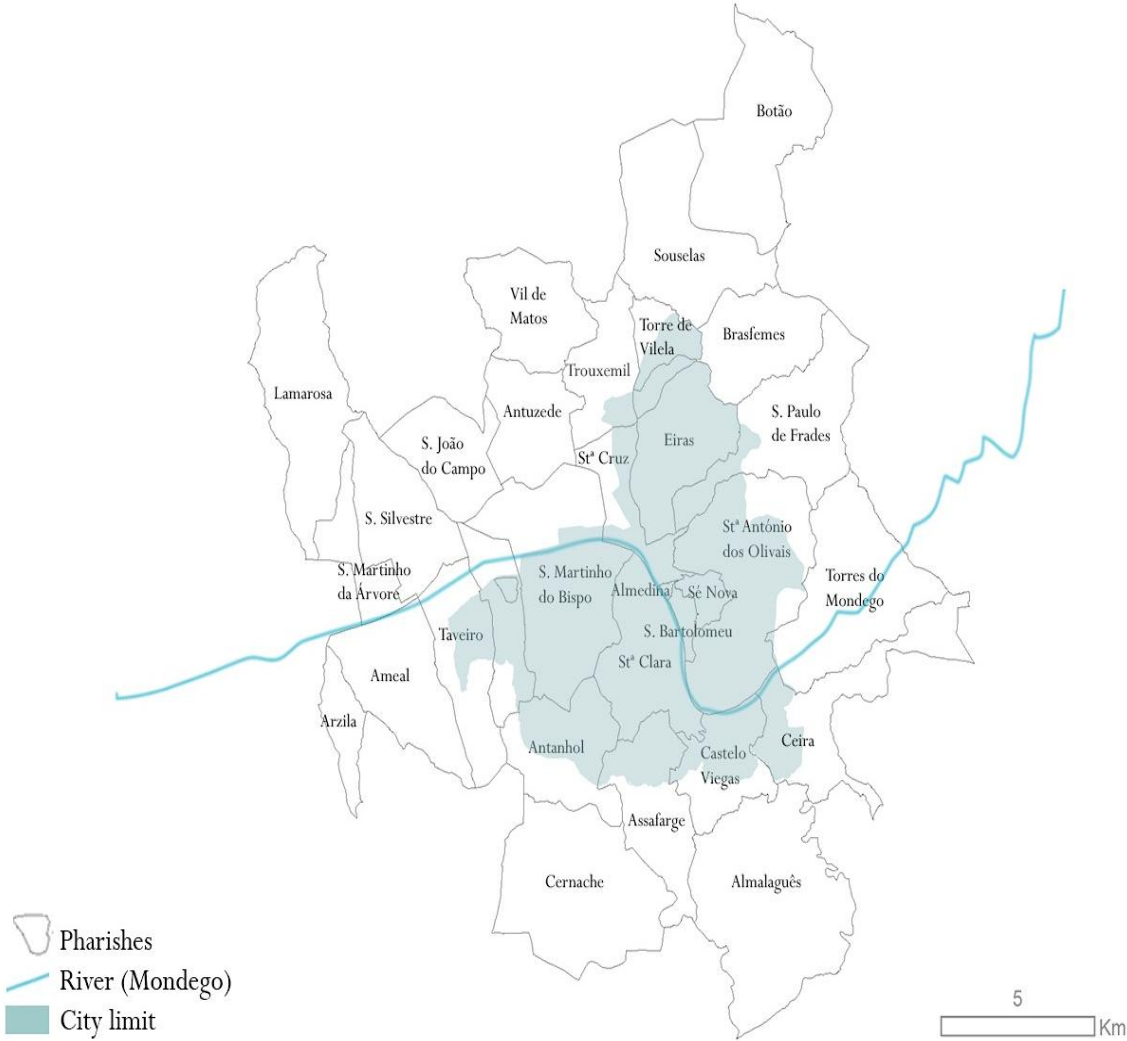


Figure 2. Resident population 1864-2011

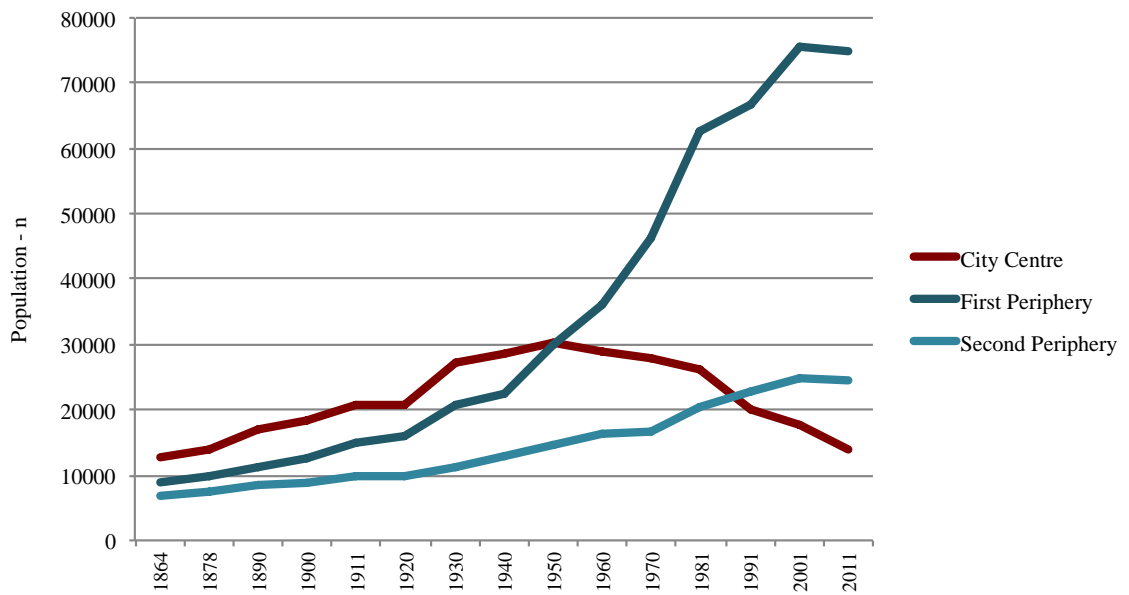


Figure 3. Resident population variation 1864-2011

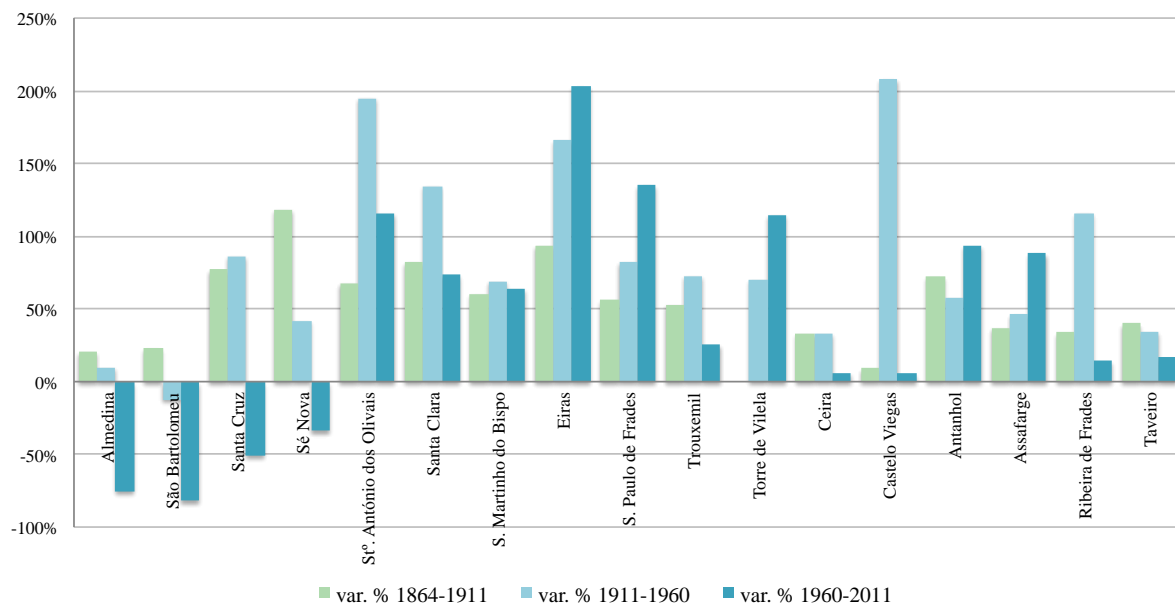


Figure 4. Resident population variation 1960/2011 – District of Coimbra

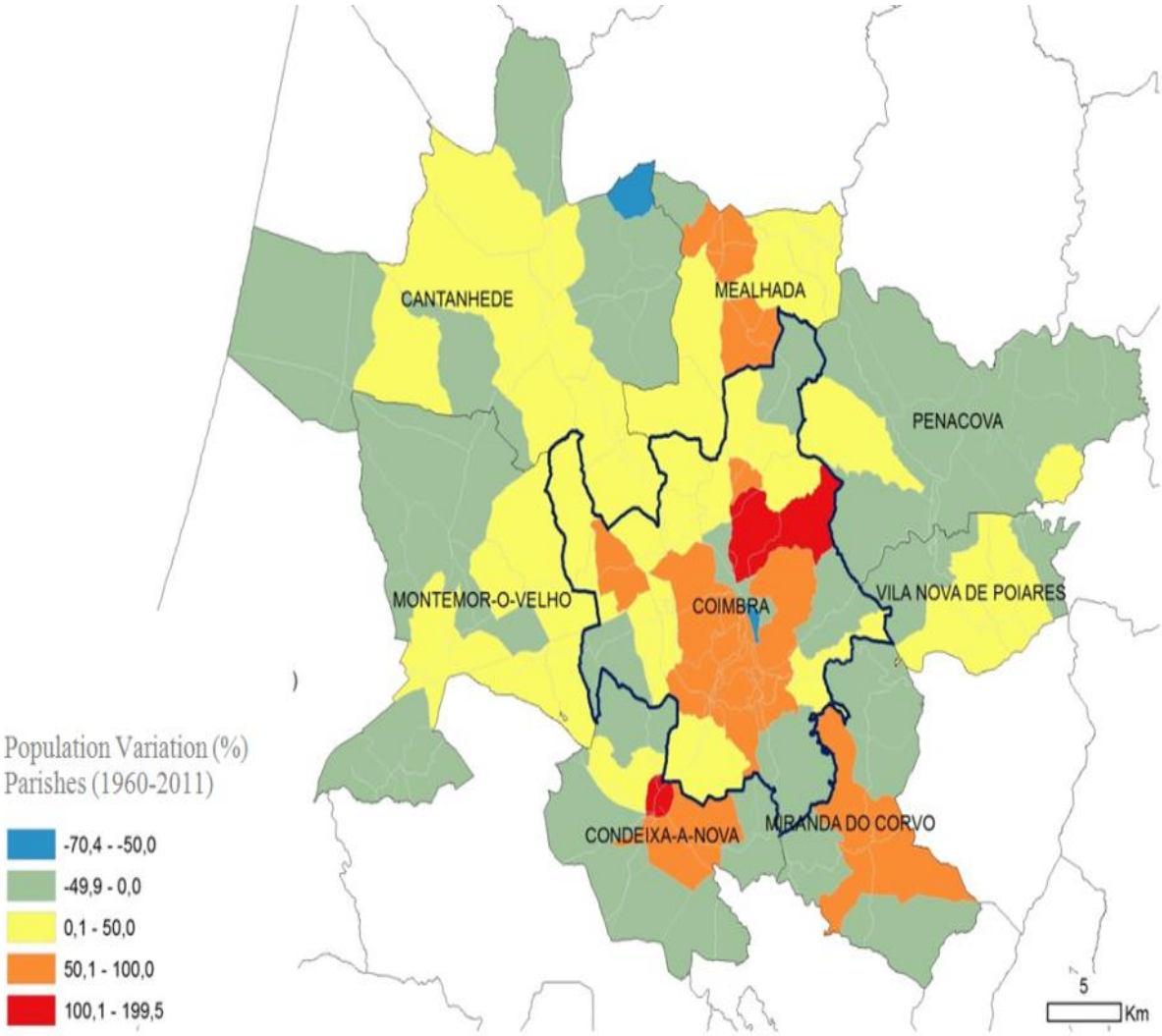


Figure 5a. Resident population evolution 1864-2011 – Municipality of Coimbra

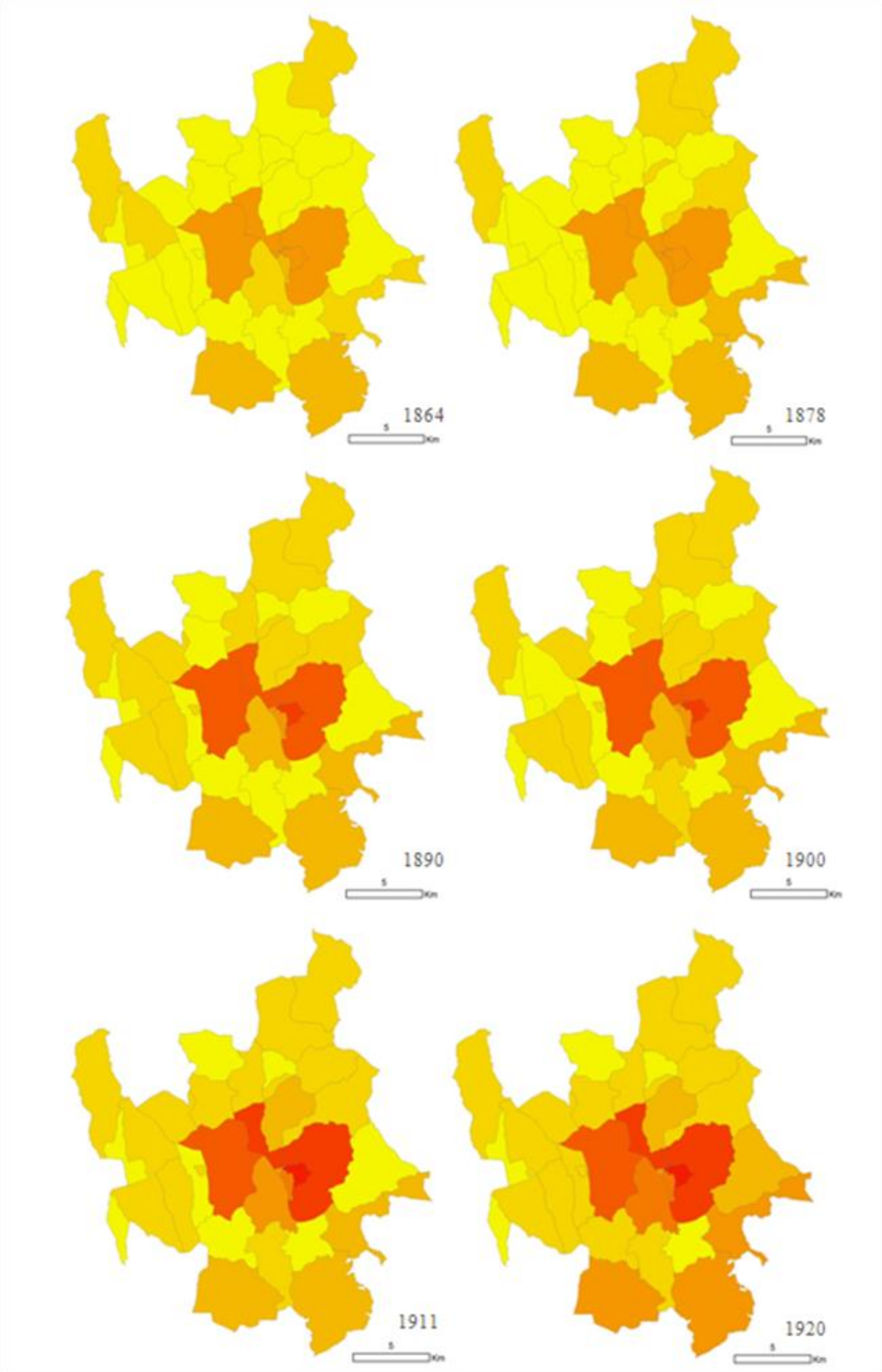
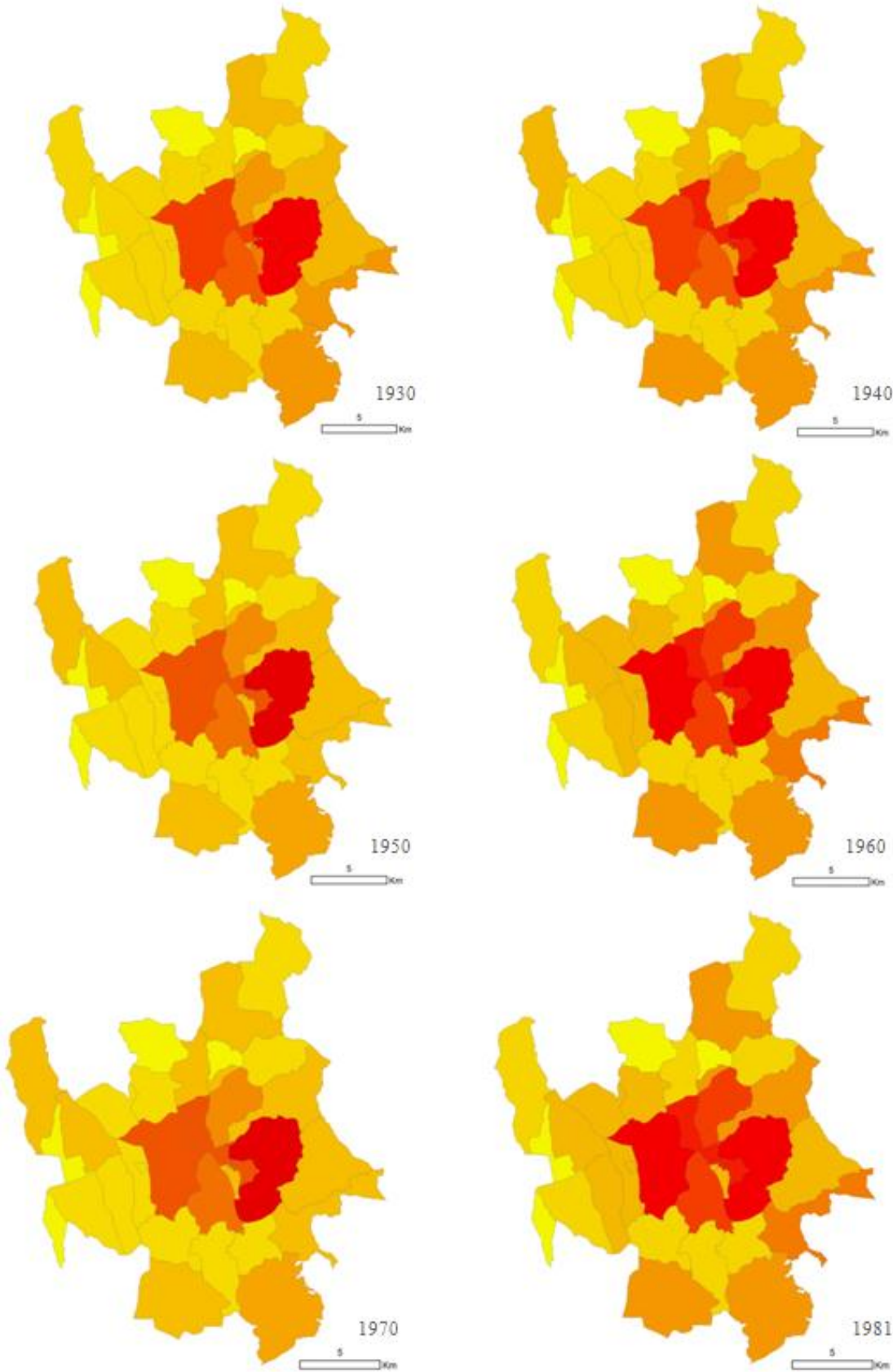
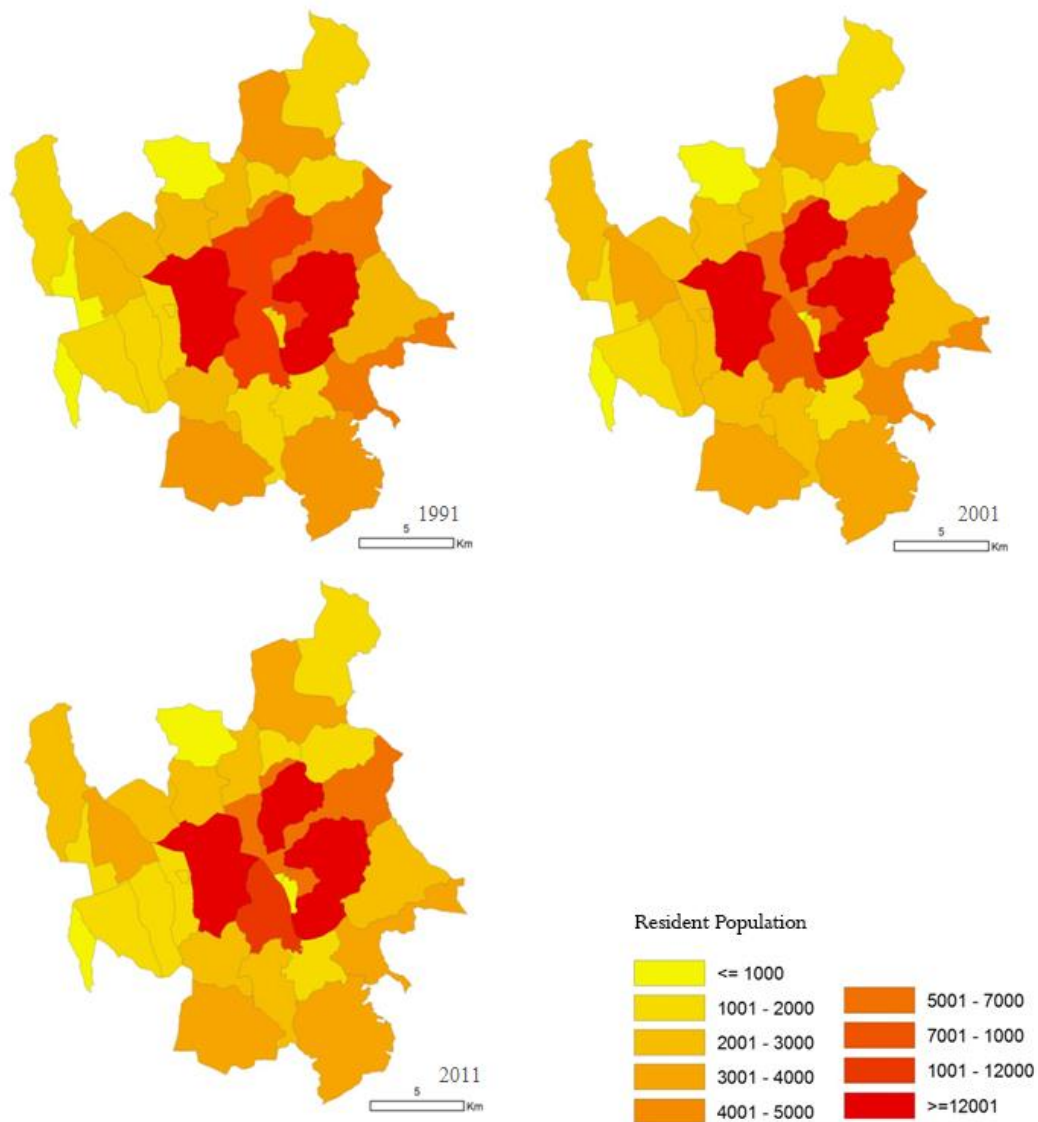


Figure 5b. Resident population evolution 1864-2011 – Municipality of Coimbra



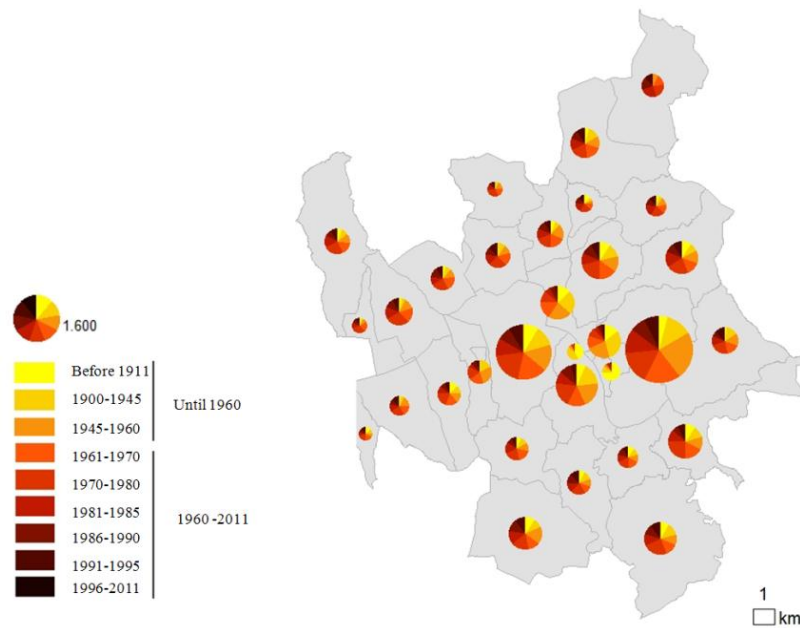


**Figure 5c. Resident population evolution 1864-2011 – Municipality of Coimbra**

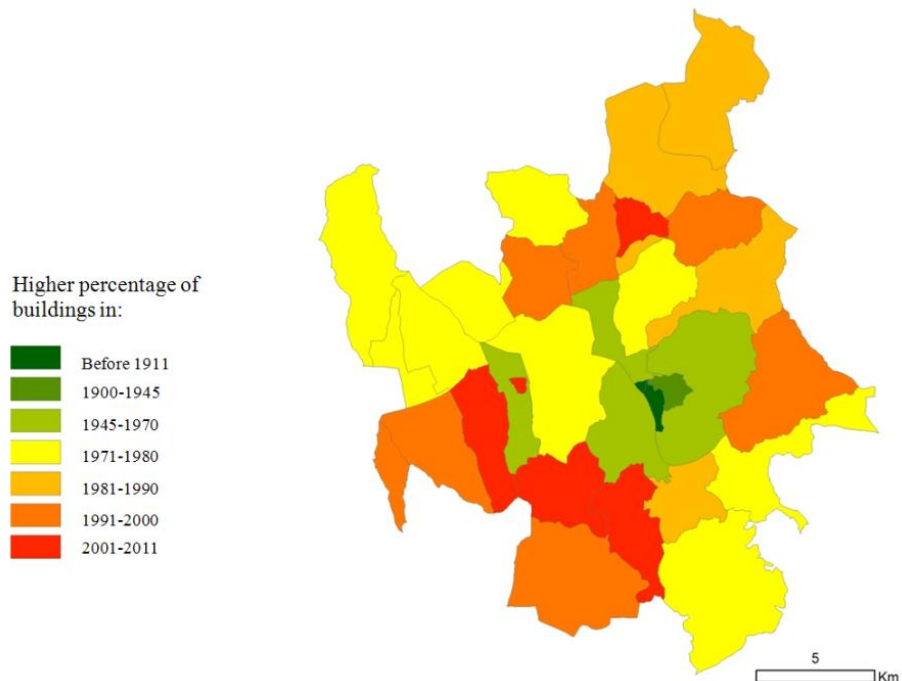


This development of the peripheral parishes has been manifested in the form of a property boom. Coimbra presently has 40,638 buildings, of which over half (59%) were built since the 1970s and around a quarter (27%) in the last 20 years. However, the buildings are not uniformly distributed, and the increase is not reflected in all parishes. For example, the parishes of Santo António dos Olivais, São Martinho do Bispo and Santa Clara have the most buildings, while Arzila, São Bartolomeu and Vil de Matos have the fewest (Figure 6). What is more, while the buildings in the central parishes mostly date from before 1919 (as with Almedina and São Bartolomeu) or were built between 1920 and 1945 (in the case of Sé Nova), in some parishes outside the central city area (such as Torre de Vilela, Taveiro, Antanho and Assafarge), most of the buildings were constructed in the last decade, between 2001 and 2011 (Figure 7).

**Figure 6. Number of buildings by parish and year**



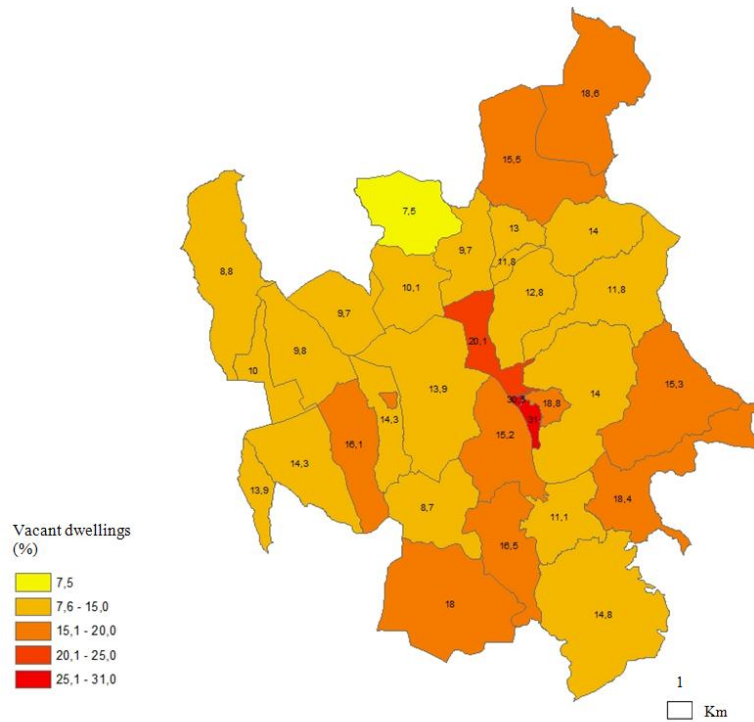
**Figure 7. Higher percentage of buildings in a period of time**



This population exodus from the central parishes of the city has also had repercussions on the number of vacant properties in those areas. In the parishes of São Bartolomeu and Almedina, over a quarter of houses are vacant (31%), though there are few vacant properties in the parishes outside the city centre, less than 10% in seven parishes (Vil de Matos,

Antanho, Lamasosa, Trouxemil, São João do Campo, São Silvestre and São Martinho de Árvore). However, paradoxically, in some areas of recent growth (in the parishes of S. Martinho do Bispo and Sta Clara), vacant dwellings are in the double digits (14% and 15%).

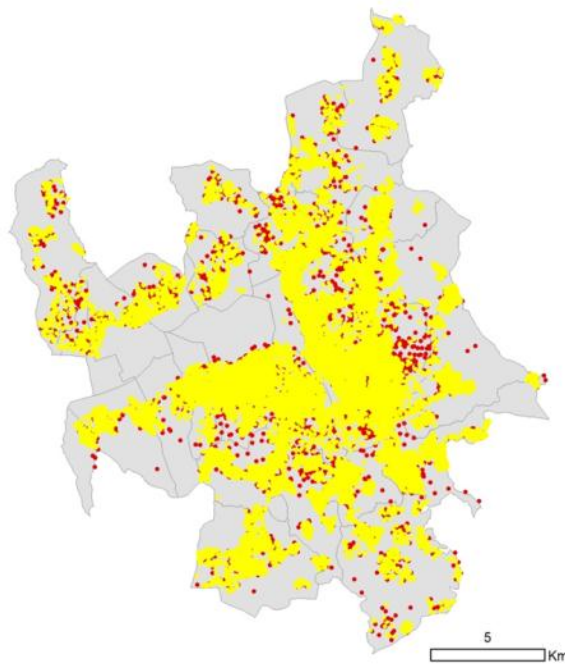
**Figure 8. Percentage of vacant dwellings in the municipality of Coimbra (2011)**



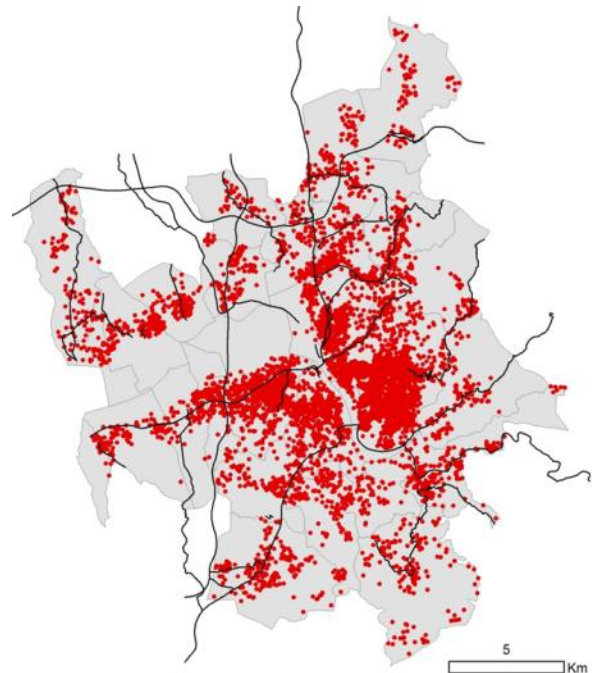
Source: National Institute of Statistics, Portugal – census 2011.

Thus, the population of Coimbra is moving away from the city centre to occupy new spaces in the surrounding countryside. This phenomenon is also visible in the analysis of the resident population by statistical subsection. Figure 9 shows (in red) the new areas of population expansion (i.e., the parishes of Santo António dos Olivais, Lamasosa, Eiras, São Martinho do Bispo and Assafarge) and the expansion of the population along the main highways leading into the city (Figure 10).

**Figure 9. Population distribution: Yellow dots correspond to 2001 and Red dots to 2011**



**Figure 10. Population distribution in 2011 – main highways leading into the city**



## Final considerations

The depopulation of Coimbra city centre has occurred at the expense of extensive territorial advances, resulting in a less dense and less diversified city, with a fragmented urban fabric. This article has presented geo-demographic data illustrating population movements since the end of the nineteenth century. The next step in the research will involve analysing the relationship between the demographic and cartographic dynamics in the city (the consequence of the human occupation of territory), which will enable the relationship between structure, form and urban density to be dissected at different moments of the city's growth.

This analysis will serve to support the thesis that the extensive dispersed growth noted in recent decades may be contained by densifying the city centre. This *densification project* will involve, firstly, identifying spaces in the city centre that are *vacant, obsolete* and *unfit for use*. Once the existing voids have been identified and characterised, it will be possible to decide which are best suited to be considered *expectant spaces*. Finally, proposals will be drawn up for the rehabilitation of those areas. Through strategic proposals, it will thus be possible to revive the social and economic fabric, creating the necessary attractions for a population increase. This should make it possible to devolve to the city one of its most ancient attributes – density.

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## Participatory Urban Plans for 'Special Zones of Social Interest' in São Paulo: Fostering Dense Central Areas

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**Abstract:** São Paulo was the first Brazilian city to integrate instruments from the City Statute into its 2002 Master Plan, designating some areas as *Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* (ZEIS). When located in neglected but central, transportation-rich neighbourhoods, these ZEISs were primarily intended to encourage public and private investments in order to finance quality social housing and attract new residents. ZEISs can be built up more densely than other areas to attract capital, but as part of the statute's goals of increased social control over development, participation in the planning process is required. This paper discusses how such participation qualifies projects towards a compact but also inclusive city model. By advocating affordable housing as a key point to reach a sustainable city, we will analyze the participation in the polemic case of the "Nova Luz" project in order to understand its effectiveness in contrast with the spirit of the Statute. This analysis aims at clarifying the role of participative planning in this urban and legal framework in order to formulate a method for the development of other central ZEIS.

**Keywords:** participative planning, dense cities, social housing, ZEIS, Nova Luz

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## Introduction

Brazil is now known for its economic recovery during the global financial crisis of 2008 that originated in the United States. Another Brazilian accomplishment includes the advancements in urban regulations as of 2001, with the approval of the City Statute. Both facts could indicate a potential overcoming of the traditional inequality in the Brazilian society, easily observed in its slums and overcrowded suburbs. However, these facts represent what Harvey denominated as “unequal geographic developments” (2004), a process now visible in several real estate developments taking place in the city and headed by the municipal government, such as the “Nova Luz” project.

The conflicts deriving from this case are related to the history of social mobilizations for urban transformations that led to the City Statute in 2002, whose instruments and provisions aim at expanding the democratic participation in the construction of fairer cities. Many are the levels of participation provided for in the Statute. One example is the obligation of municipalities to develop Master Plans based on discussions with the local civil society, using participative planning methods, despite the considerable variation in participation levels between different municipalities.

In the case of São Paulo, two participation levels outstand in the Strategic Master Plan (PDE) of 2002. The first is related to the implementation of public hearings, common in democratic cities, in order to collectively debate the impact of major urban projects, for which the approval is conditioned to the existence of previous public discussion forums. Another participation forum was established by the regulation of the Special Zones of Social Interest (ZEIS), a zoning concept created to expand the right to housing, either in informal areas or in consolidated areas. The ZEIS requires the formulation of Urbanization Plans by a Managing Board comprised of members of the government, real estate owners, and residents. When located in central areas, it generates debates on the production of social housing as a fundamental action to include poorer families in good urban locations. In this sense, the “Nova Luz” project is a landmark: without the ZEISs and the history of urban fights before them, social housing would not be taken into consideration in the business model. This difference has been mostly responsible for significant changes in the project, as discussed below.

## Brazilian urban legislation and financialization of the urban realm

### *City Statute*

The City Statute is a Brazilian federal law passed in 2001 to regulate the chapter of the Constitution of 1988 related to urban policies. This legal landmark provides municipalities with legal instruments to settle their urban and environmental liabilities after the hasty urbanization process experienced by the Country last century. From a predominantly rural Country in 1940, when only 31% of its nearly 40 million inhabitants lived in cities, Brazil became an urban giant in the 1970s, when 55.9% of its population lived in cities. At the time of passing of the Statute, Brazil had nearly 170 million inhabitants, of which 81.2% lived in cities. A large part of that population lived in informal and precarious settlements as a result of the unequal distribution of income and wealth.

The Statute is the culmination of a process denominated “*Movimento pela Reforma Urbana*” (Movement for Urban Reform), motivated by the end of the dictatorship period (1964-1984), when social groups demanded urban improvements and social housing. Thirteen

years after the Constitution was promulgated (1988), the Statute regulated the constitutional principle of the “social function of cities and property”, which then reassessed individual rights against collective rights. In practical terms, this means the assurance of the property right provided that such property meets its social function, to be determined by the municipal legislation.

Another remarkable aspect is the definition of the municipal role in controlling the urban order. The cities then had urban instruments to be regulated in accordance with the Master Plans, which became mandatory for cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants, but also for cities located in areas of environmental and/or historic interest. Such instruments aim at combating land speculation, one of the main aspects that drive price increases in urban land and the consequent expulsion of poorer families from good locations.

The entire local urban policy, from the formulation of the master plan, must include the effective participation of society in the form of public hearings, creation of boards, environmental and neighbourhood impact studies, popular initiatives to propose urban laws, and participative budgeting practices. São Paulo was the first state capital in Brazil to approve its Master Plan, back in 2002.

### *Strategic Master Plan and Special Zones of Social Interest:*

#### *Impacts of the Statute in the urban legislation of São Paulo*

As the Country’s financial capital and regional pole of Mercosul, São Paulo is a divided city (UN Habitat, 2010). Most of its population (57%, according to the census of 2000) lives in peripheral neighbourhoods and approximately one-third of it lives in informal settlements. On the other hand, the economic elite – with better health and education indexes – lives in neighbourhoods with better urban quality that have experienced a demographic decrease in the last decades.

The Strategic Master Plan of São Paulo (PDE) formulated alternatives and proposals to deal with its complex urban problems, such as the existence of empty urban spaces in good locations in relation to swollen peripheral settlements. The identified challenges include the high population density in areas unsuitable for housing, such as environmentally fragile or protected areas. This situation can be reverted by an increase in the appropriate housing stock and the urbanization of informal settlements. On its turn, well-located housing can only be made feasible through a reduction in the prices of urban land, so as to enable the acquisition of housing units for dwelling purposes. This leads to another central issue in the urban development of the city, which is the speculative retention of real estate in consolidated neighbourhoods.

Many urban instruments and incentives indicated in the City Statute have been incorporated to the PDE, including the ZEISs, Special Zones of Social Interest. These zones are intended to combine urban development with the inclusion of low-income groups into the formal city with three main objectives: (1) promote urban and land regularization in informal settlements; (2) enforce the mandatory development of idle or underused buildings, including potential expropriations; and (3) require real estate owners to produce a certain proportion of



social housing units in developments located within ZEIS perimeters. Initially, the regional master plans defined 964 ZEIS in São Paulo.<sup>3</sup> Any urban project to be implemented in these territories must comply with a specific urbanization plan containing specific urban parameters formulated in a participative way by a managing board – coordinated by the Secretariat of Housing and Urban Development (SEHAB) – and including representatives of residents and land owners. For the first time in São Paulo, collaborative planning was provided for in the urban legislation.

Four ZEIS categories were defined. Categories 1 and 4 involve the regularization of informal settlements, while all other categories are intended to induce housing developments in idle or underused land. ZEIS 3 were defined as consolidated districts capable of receiving higher population densities or containing inappropriate housing, such as slums and tenements. In this category, the minimum housing rate<sup>4</sup> for any urban project in lots larger than 500 m<sup>2</sup> in area must be 80% of the total built area. As an incentive to the production of housing in valuable areas, this category has a plot ratio of four times the plot area. This means that parcels in ZEIS can benefit from larger built areas than those located in other parts of the city. This constructive addition allows for the distribution of the higher price of the parcel into a higher number of housing units as a way to compete with lower land prices practiced in the suburbs. The ZEIS Urbanization Plan is responsible for defining the urban parameters that will shape the environment built in accordance with the local characteristics.<sup>5</sup>

Ten years after the PDE was approved, few developments have been carried out in ZEIS 3, despite the growing demand. Most of such developments are initiatives of the real estate market or the state-owned Urban and Housing Development Company (CDHU) with developments in punctual parcels that do not benefit from resources to urbanization plans. The ZEISs contained in the urban renovation project of “Nova Luz” are the exception to this rule and its urbanization plan is the first in the city. Nevertheless, regardless of the provisions set forth in the Strategic Master Plan, the community affected by the project had to fight for the municipal government to install the Managing Board in order to formulate the plan of these ZEISs and exercise their right to take part in discussions.

The main objective of the “Nova Luz” project is not to expand the housing opportunities downtown. As a matter of fact, it intends to implement new uses to a territory that is rich in urban services and equipment, but that also concentrates popular housing, much of it informal and precarious. According to that project, the ZEISs will receive removed residents to give room to more profitable urban developments to be implemented in the demolished areas within the “Nova Luz” perimeter. Understanding that urban context is critical, as it has been the background of social and economic disputes that reveal the urban development model of São Paulo.

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<sup>3</sup> Regional Master Plans are local plans approved in 2004 for each district of São Paulo, based on the 2002 Master Plan (PDE) guidelines.

<sup>4</sup> According to the 2002 Sao Paulo Master Plan, the housing promoted in ZEIS areas must only address low and medium income families.

<sup>5</sup> The territory comprised of the central districts of São Paulo is very heterogeneous and present different levels of underused buildings, architectural, environmental, and intangible heritage, urban infrastructure quality, and other factors.

## Financial capital and the urban realm

Although the city of São Paulo has instruments to prevent unequal development, these instruments are almost worthless against the power of the property as the base for accumulation in the current financialized capitalist scenario.

Transformations were observed in the world economy during the last three decades of the twenty-first century: growth was no longer measured predominantly by industrial production, but by financial results. And part of these investments is allocated to the production of urban spaces, as seen in many cities of Latin America:

One of the changes with the greatest impact on the current urban revolution is the change caused by the increase in private real estate inversions. Such increase allows us to affirm that cities have experienced an acute intensification of the commoditization of urban development. (Mattos, 2007: 83)

As the financial capital of the most industrialized country in the southern hemisphere and one of the most important cities in Latin America, Sao Paulo is one of the local centres where global processes take place in the world economy. However, this centrality requires the city to adjust to the demands of the new economy:

In order to overcome spatial barriers and to ‘annihilate space with time’, spatial structures are created which themselves ultimately act as a barrier to further accumulation [...] a crowning glory of past capital development and a prison which inhibits the further progress of accumulation. (Harvey, 2001: 247)

In his discussion about the “real estate restructuring”, Pereira (2006) suggests how that contradiction would be overcome. Urban interventions become ways to promote local land valuation, a guarantee of accomplishment of foreign investment accumulation rates. This occurs along with interferences in social and spatial dimensions defined by a certain productive hierarchy and by a redefined space-time relationship. Thus, real estate business becomes a specific capital increase strategy.

Since the decade of 1990, the city has been the object of significant urban transformations. Particularly in the last few years, São Paulo has become the target of foreign capital investments, as real estate companies can now go public and capture foreign capital. The Brazilian Company of Real Estate Studies (Embraesp) provides accurate data on the real estate valuation in São Paulo. According to data from 2008, many neighbourhoods experienced a valuation above 50% in five years, some of which reached 78.4%.<sup>6</sup> This leads to several processes of expulsion of low-income dwellers from areas under valuation. The investments in civil construction works, which foster the generation of jobs and some local economic development on the one hand, enhance the urban social inequalities on the other hand.

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<sup>6</sup> This valuation refers to Moóca, a central neighborhood with vast abandoned areas where old factories were installed in the early twentieth century. Different ZEIS were defined in Moóca, which were almost eliminated in the revision of the Master Plan by several minor laws proposed by members of the city council (UOL Economia, 2008).

## Participation in the urban realm

### *Participation and urban legislation in São Paulo*

By the early twenty-first century, the urban planning model in force in the city of São Paulo used a strongly authoritarian and centralizing vision, or occurred by means of small negotiations without “open debate”. This was a typical “Latin American” method that resulted from the dictatorships that took over the continent (Singer, 1995). The rupture with this model took place with the Strategic Master Plan of 2002, one of the first master plans elaborated after democracy was re-established in Brazil. After intense debates in public hearings and public debates organized by the society, which had the manifestation of several social groups interested in city planning, the Master Plan was passed as a law on September 13, 2002, and later complemented by the Law of Strategic Regional Plans for municipal district offices and the Land Occupation and Use Regulations.

The society’s engagement in urban planning showed to be important as it raised interest in the population to interfere in the spatial development of the city. This occurred as of 2006, when the PDE was scheduled for Revision according to the law. Several structural changes were proposed, including the characterization and delimitation of the ZEISs, but the social rejection led to the formation of a front comprised of popular and middle-class segments supported by the public opinion (Hirata and Pereira, 2010). Protests were numerous after the release of news on a new urban project, indicating that the society is vigilant not only to said projects, but also to the lack of a new Master Plan, which should be approved in 2012. The case of “Nova Luz” demonstrates the consequences of participation through the Managing Board, as described below.

### *Participation and social movements in the central region*

#### *of the City of São Paulo*

As another participation model, social movements organized ways to claim low-income housing, acting as a tool to formulate and accompany urban policies. The symbolic and historic central region has been neglected since the predominantly popular occupation took place as of the 1950s and has been the stage of social mobilizations in the early 1980s. As of 1975, organized groups claimed rights to dwellers of tenements (Picinni, 1997), as well as reduced power and water fees. These groups were responsible for the first occupations in the early 1980s (Pereira, 2005: 12) and leveraged housing movements focused specifically on the central region. Those groups drove the first public policies, such as the renovation of tenements from 1989 to 1992. The year of 1997 has been the most important milestone in this process, when said groups joined other movements from different regions of the city and squatted 17 abandoned buildings in the central area (Pereira, 2005). As a form of denunciation and pressure on the local government, they claimed the conversion of those buildings into popular housing. Some of these buildings were incorporated into the program (2000-2004) named *Morar no Centro* (Living Downtown), a proposal that resulted from the debate between those movements with students and academics (José, 2010: 113). Finally, the city planning in that period included low-income housing in central areas by means of the delimitation of ZEISs in the Master Plan.

Squats still occur today but have not accomplished results as effective as those seen in 1997. On the contrary, many dwellers of squatted or low-rent buildings were evicted, either

related to social movements or not, which led to denunciations of violation of the Housing Rights. A dossier specifically developed for the central region (Fórum Centro Vivo, 2006) and elaborated by the civil society from 2005 to 2006 described the expulsion of the low-income population, not only occupants of abandoned buildings, but also children and adolescents in vulnerable situation, homeless people, waste pickers,<sup>7</sup> and street vendors.

Advancements and drawbacks of these social accomplishments have given the central region an important role in the urban debate, indicating the existence of a movement for political participation in the urban struggle and ensuring the only space for official and effective participation in urban policies focused on the central region, as described below, by means of the Managing Board of ZEIS C016, the region of Luz.

## **Extension of and limitations to the participation in the Nova Luz project**

*The Urban Concession and the compact city model:*

*A city sustainable for whom?*

The central neighbourhoods of Luz and Santa Ifigênia, wealthy in the past, had luxury residences and apartments, commerce, and services oriented to middle and high classes of São Paulo. The departure of the local elite as of the 1950s oriented the public investments to newer neighbourhoods in a process that created new central areas and conditions that allowed for the expansion of the real estate capital of São Paulo. Attracted by falling prices and good location, poor workers began to occupy old buildings. The municipal government's negligence contributed to the deterioration of the neighbourhood. New uses, but also illegal activities such as drug dealing and prostitution, emerged in more precarious areas. However, streets like Santa Ifigênia developed a dynamic commerce specialized in electronics and automotive equipment, attracting thousands of consumers from all over Brazil and Mercosul every day. In spite of the in numerous problems, recent data indicate that the region has an occupation density four times higher to the city average, indicating that it remains vigorous and intensely used. According to the Census of 2010, the district of República, which involves the region of the "Nova Luz" project, has a demographic density of 27,833.41 inhab./km<sup>2</sup>, while the city average is 7,387.69 inhab./km<sup>2</sup>.

Due to its incomparable history and location, the state government has invested in this region in the last decades so as to recover it and turn it into an artistic and cultural pole. Such investments alone have not reverted the deterioration of the urban environment or met the needs of current residents. Dwellers claim better housing and infrastructure, as well as daycare centres and leisure areas.

In 2011, the multimodal station of Luz was integrated to a new subway line and became the most important regional and urban transportation hub in Brazil. From that station, one can reach the Faria Lima station in fifteen minutes, located on the avenue that presents the most expensive floor area in São Paulo. This fact had a severe impact on the real estate prices in the region, initiating a process of expulsion of residents that could not afford renewing their rental agreements, for instance.

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<sup>7</sup> In Brazil, these workers do not refer themselves as "waste pickers", but as "collectors of recyclable materials".

“Nova Luz” was conceived by the municipal government to take advantage of a privileged location. The control of real estate property plays an important role in the project and demonstrates the use of such property in the current capitalist accumulation scenario and how such control can provide a concrete solution to the hindrances indicated by Harvey. The region comprehends old neighbourhoods where the format of plots is the result of a long process of family inheritances, abandonment, tax indebtedness, and other factors that represent legal hindrances to their sale. Small plots divided among several owners require endless negotiations with small-scale gains when compared with international real estate business. The State should be responsible for ensuring conditions to solve those hindrances. However, its laggard bureaucratic structure is incapable of keeping pace with the capital dynamics.

Hence, the public-private partnership model was formulated based on the “urban concession”, instrument regulated by the law in 2009. Advocating for a “compact city” model supposedly capable of minimizing the effects of urban sprawl, the city now looks for partners to “renovate” 45 blocks inside the perimeter defined for concession. In this case, the concession would provide a private entity with exclusive rights to explore the constructive potential of the region by expropriating real estate properties and implementing new buildings according to pre-defined volumetric parameters. This would be done along 15 years divided into five phases. On its turn, the grantee should perform urban improvements and expropriations. In the City Council, the municipal government argued that this method would enable improvements with no use of public funding. In order to attract investors, the government promised tax exemptions of up to 60%. However, after the feasibility study was complete, the municipal government admitted that an input of R\$ 355 million would be required, while its studies indicate that the project would only be in the market’s interest if it reaches at least R\$ 600 million (Dantas, 2011). With the resale of expropriated plots alone, the minimum expected gains would be R\$ 229 million (Teixeira, 2012), but it might reach R\$ 5 billion after all phases were complete.

The urban proposal currently in force (São Paulo, 2011) plans to demolish 33% of the current area (approximately 600,000 square meters – see Figure 1) to install boulevards inspired by the *Ramblas* of Barcelona, with cycle paths, broad pedestrian streets, squares, and rain gardens. The demolitions would make room for new office and apartment buildings for the middle and high classes. Potential services include 10 movie theatres, 10 bars and restaurants, four hotels, one theatre, and 30 parking lots. Today, the perimeter has 187 residential buildings, with many planned for demolition.



**Urban Concession area. Source: “Nova Luz” project at: [www.novaluzsp.com.br/proj\\_plano.asp?item=projeto](http://www.novaluzsp.com.br/proj_plano.asp?item=projeto).**

In short, the “Nova Luz” project follows an urban development model that rebuilds well-located areas where the low cost of real estate allows for higher capital gains through the valuation of new developments. Where permitted by the zoning law, the project plans to remove old buildings that now have popular residential and commercial use to implement modern buildings for nobler uses. Approximately one million square meters would be added to the current floor area, which stands for an expansion of 94%. And this is one of the main arguments used by the municipal government to defend its project: a compact city where people live and work in the same region with easy access.

The main critics to the “Nova Luz” project refer to its orientation to people and uses that are not part of the current urban fabric of the area. The population that has set residence and work at the region decades ago has not been considered in the project, as it focuses on a different public to be attracted by new developments. One example is the housing proposal, which estimates approximate 5,000 new housing units. The socio-economic data demonstrate that 62% of current residents live and work in the region, with 47% of them living in rented units, a number far above the city average of 21%. Although the owners of expropriated plots would be indemnified and new housing units would be sold under mortgage agreements, many of the rental residents would not afford a mortgage or have permanence guarantees in view of the expected valuation.

A part of the current residents joined the housing movement, which has squatted 44 old, empty buildings in central São Paulo since the 1990s, gathering almost 10,000 homeless families. This action has been more successful than the municipal power itself, as the latter has produced only 2,833 housing units in the last 10 years. Nonetheless, the movement has been ignored by public policies for the central area and startled with the project that intends to demolish one of the buildings occupied five years ago, which holds 253 families.

According to a sample registration covering the entire project perimeter, 44.39% of the families make 0 to 3 minimum wages per month and stand for the most expressive layer in the income survey. The second largest percentage, 36.99%, includes families with 3 to 6 minimum wages a month. The third group, 15.14%, presented monthly earnings of 6 to 12 minimum wages, and the fourth group, 3.48%, makes more than 12 minimum wages per

month (with 1.93% of families with monthly income of 12 to 16 minimum wages, and 1.55% of families above 16 minimum wages per month). However, the economic feasibility study indicates that the minimum value of new housing developments out of the ZEISs perimeter is based on families with monthly income above seven minimum wages. Therefore, poorer families would only be contemplated in the ZEIS, as well as almost the entire public health and education facilities.

Another group not considered in the project includes current homeless people, many of which are chemical-dependents. A survey indicated 922 people in the project perimeter, representing 7% of the entire homeless population of São Paulo. No proposals were made to approach this population of citizens that have not been considered in social policies for years and, on the contrary, have been the object of police raids on a daily basis.

The project intends to expand the local employment rates, but ignores the negative impacts on the current 2,278 commercial establishments that employ 16,806 people. The scale of urban interventions may lead to the loss of job positions along the estimated 15 years of implementation.

The population is concerned with the eradication of the intangible heritage. The project does not take advantage of the local cultural wealth, where – due to the absence of appropriate public spaces – groups of musical expression meet in bars and musical instrument shops to produce free entertainment of good quality. These practices have been ignored by the project and areas to accommodate them have not been considered.

Virtually all of the areas of common use in the “Nova Luz” project were planned for private uses. Except for a new square, the public urban space is comprised of regular and pedestrian streets. The urban model proposed do not have entertainment and cultural areas oriented to the local and daily use by citizens, such as libraries and leisure areas, in a more modest scale than museums and concert halls.

In view of the foregoing, the predominant objectives of real estate capital have evidently prevailed. As it fails to serve current users that will experience the effects of real estate valuation along 15 years, the concept of “public interest” that justifies an Urban Concession was distorted in a project that privileges the interest of only one part of the population – the one that can afford and consume the reformulated area.

### *Participation in the ZEIS of the “Nova Luz” project*

In order to comply with legal decisions, the municipal government has promoted public hearings and meetings with groups with specific claims. However, these measures have shown insufficient for an effective participation, either because of tense manifestations that even caused the cancelation of the first hearing, or because of the number of issues exposed in three minutes, of which very few were considered in the final project.

The ZEIS Managing Board represents another space for participation. Responsible for the development of an Urbanization Plan for the ZEIS perimeter (PUZEIS) within the “Nova Luz” perimeter (shown in Figure 1), the Board was only established after popular pressure, as the consortium in charge of the project unilaterally developed a preliminary plan for the area that was being considered by the municipal government.

The Managing Board has played a critical role in the development of the project. In spite of its restriction to the ZEIS area, the Board has forced the municipal government to review core points of its initial proposal. These points include: the creation of a registry of current residents to be considered in the detailed housing project, which was initially conceived without previous knowledge of the local housing needs; maintenance of the building occupied

by homeless families on Mauá Street, currently out of the ZEIS area and planned for demolition in the preliminary project; inclusion of social rental developments for residents that cannot meet the requirements of housing mortgage and depend on subsidies; permanence of some social gathering spots, such as *Bar do Léo*, famous for attracting people from all over the city; and assistance to chemical-dependents by services to be implemented.

As the approval of the PUZEIS represented the main hindrance to the publication of the invitation to bid for the Urban Concession of “Nova Luz”, the board members connected to the government opened a voting session to solve this issue in April 2012. The remaining board members considered it an insufficient version of PUZEIS and abandoned the voting session as an act of protest. According to Raquel Rolnik, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to proper housing, that version excluded items previously agreed upon between the municipal government and the civil society, as well as some requirements contained in the Master Plan of São Paulo (Rolnik, 2012). However, the government arguments there is room for inclusion of said items between the approved draft and the tender that will select the grantee of the “Nova Luz” project, as the Board meetings are still ongoing.

Should such proposals be effectively incorporated to the tender process, the “Nova Luz” case might become an example of how social participation is critical in the development of more appropriate urban models. It also means fresh air to the development of a participative culture in the planning of public policies and opposition to the technocratic practices in force.

As the Board is the sole communication channel recognized by the municipal government, the proposals formulated by the civil society embrace the entire intervention area of the project and not only the ZEIS perimeter. This strategy aims at defending the intangible heritage, businesses and estates of all affected groups, both in social and spatial terms. However, the municipal government is not obligated to incorporate all proposals, except for those directly related to the ZEIS perimeter.

Even if little is changed in the final project, the mere existence of this space for participation of the civil society has already given fruits as it represents a more mature phase in participative practices in São Paulo. One example is the combination of local retailers and the housing movement – groups that have traditionally had very different demands, sometimes even contrary to each other. Their representatives in the Managing Board strove efforts to formulate and defend a set of proposals that could benefit all, and not only their own and particular interests. Another example was the establishment of an association of residents – AMOALUZ – motivated by the threat that the “Nova Luz” project represents to hundreds of families that have lived and worked in the neighbourhoods of Luz and Santa Ifigênia for decades. The association was also critical in the creation of the Board by exerting pressure on the municipality to have it abide by the legislation. Moreover, the association has obtained support by similar movements from other cities in Brazil and abroad, which expanded the debate beyond municipal borders. This confluence of different social groups increases the civil society’s power of persuasion before the municipal government and – in a year of elections – forces mayor candidates to take a position regarding the project and its impacts.

## **Conclusions: recovering central areas with social inclusion and environmental and urban quality**

The “Nova Luz” project is not an isolated case. Other cases found in the city have raised questions regarding ways of social participation, such as the East and North sections of the outer metropolitan ring road (Rodoanel), interventions in the southern water spring areas, and



structures to prepare the city to the World Cup of 2014. Sharing a common aspect, all these initiatives are disguised as public interest issues, while they actually privilege private interests. Therefore, this is not an issue to be faced only with the use of the urban legislation, but the participative practices established in the Statute are relatively recent elements and tend to grow in each urban project.

Another issue involves the urban model produced by this effort to occupy empty urban spaces. As the inclusion of sectors previously prevented from accessing empty buildings by means of the ZEIS is guaranteed, will the urban and environmental quality be also guaranteed? Although the City Statute proposes instruments to promote the social function of the city and property and Brazilian master plans try to enforce such instruments, they seem to be incapable of producing a suitable and sustainable urban design according to the concepts and principles they intend to materialize. This happens because, as presented above, for the ZEISs to be economically feasible, they depend on the use of a high plot ratio. As popular housing units have reduced private areas, we should question which model conciliates high constructive and demographic density with environmental and urban quality.

Another challenge in this sense is that rule does not consider the pre-existing occupation in the demarcation of these perimeters. Consequently, older central areas could then hold the same type of buildings as any other region in São Paulo, even though they are characterized by their own urban models, which present buildings with no frontal setbacks, but aligned to the sidewalk. This situation enables the connection between buildings and the city, more favourable to a mixed use and more interesting for consolidated neighbourhoods. In areas defined as ZEIS 3, when no protected buildings of historic interest are found inside or around it, the construction of housing towers with adjoining parking lots has been observed as a reflection of an urban condominium model that reduces the quality of those locations.

This demonstrates the extent of the responsibility of the ZEIS urban plan as an important instrument to define different urban parameters for each context. It can conciliate the objective of accessible housing offer with the maintenance of the local heritage and characteristics, as discussed in the case of the “Nova Luz” project.

An ongoing research<sup>8</sup> aims at developing a method to assist in the formulation of such parameters based on the human needs related to the environment and environmental comfort methods. The first case study in this research focused on the “Nova Luz” project and demonstrated that the managing board interfered in the definition of the urban parameters of its respective ZEIS, providing a reflection on the role of participation in the formulation of urban models.

Another case study is currently under development in ZEIS 3 C028, covering an area of 357,106.20 m<sup>2</sup>. Located between the neighbourhoods of Cambuci and Liberdade, its urban characteristics are very different from those in the Luz in many aspects. Although central, the

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<sup>8</sup> “*Edificação e desenho urbano com adensamento e qualidade ambiental: habitação de interesse social na recuperação de áreas urbanas degradadas*” (Urban design and building with higher demographic density and environmental quality), research under development by the *Laboratório de Habitação e Assentamentos Humanos* (Laboratory of Housing and Human Settlements) – LABHAB and *Laboratório de Conforto Ambiental e Eficiência Energética* (Laboratory of Environmental Comfort and Power Efficiency) – LABAUT, both in the School of Architecture and Planning of the University of São Paulo, funded by CAPES and supported by FAPESP, under the coordination of Prof. Dr. Márcia Peinado Alluci and joint coordination of Prof. Dr. Maria Lúcia Refinetti Martins. The research started in January 2010, and should be complete by December 2014. The authors of this article are part of the team and have developed post-doctorate research.

region known as Glicério is marked by one- or two-story buildings, many of which are warehouses used as workshops or small factories. As it is subject to flooding, this region has been historically related to low-income housing and, to this date, concentrates tenements with inhabitability and sanitary problems. The perimeter includes a plot with approximate area of 100,000 m<sup>2</sup>, owned by an electric power company that was privatized in the 1990s and occupied by some warehouses of historic interest. Today, the estate presents soil contamination problems and acts as an urban barrier whose walls prevent public access.

The municipal government has no interest in developing the ZEIS urban plan for this location or for any other ZEIS 3 in São Paulo. On the contrary, the new developments to middle income (above 10 minimum wages per month) in the perimeter demonstrate new interest by developers in the region. These towers illustrate a remarkable valuation, a process that can work as an obstacle to the implementation of economic housing when allied to the compact city model defended by the municipal government and exemplified by the “Nova Luz” project.

Another expressive data is the intervention of a social housing movement that managed to prevent the auction of an area owned by the Social Security Department in the same ZEIS. The movement occupied the plot and, after negotiations with the Ministry of Social Security, established a partnership with said ministry for a housing development for their families. The project is still under development,<sup>9</sup> but its design seems to incorporate all vices of private developments in terms of lower quality for economic feasibility. On the one hand, the location of the plot inside a ZEIS facilitated the sensitization of the Ministry, but on the other hand, its constructive parameters and the cost of the land – currently high valued – will lead to the production of an urban project of poor quality and disconnected to its surroundings. If it were included in an urban development for the entire ZEIS area to recover the whole region, the urban results would be much better. Therefore, while the participation of social movements was decisive to produce a housing development for low-income families at a good location, the urban debate on environmental quality resulting from the recovery of underused areas for housing purposes is still very immature.

Higher demographic densities in central areas, intended to generate a fair and sustainable city, show to be inherent to the debate on participation. More than a mere legal requirement, the historic context of conflicts on city projects is not related only to social political attitudes, but also to the quality of urban compactness, usually discussed as a quantitative matter. Thus, the core idea is the quality of urban design, which can and must be the driver of a more democratic city.

In the current context where real estate valuation overcomes historic uses of the city and aggravates urban problems, the spaces open to social participation in the several urban plans show that social justice and sustainability belong to the urban debate as necessary and fundamental issues that support development strategies throughout the society.

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<sup>9</sup> Images of the project and data on the real estate acquisition process were accessed on 06.06.2012, at: <http://forumcorticis.blogspot.com.br/search/label/Projeto%2022%20de%20Mar%C3%A7o%202012%20Cambuc%C3%AD>.

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## Understanding the Present-day City through Urban History: An Approach to Guarda

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**Abstract:** As a medieval border town over a mountain top, Guarda grew with an intrinsic organization due to its military purposes. It transcended city walls and transformed itself, its growth spurred by rapid industrial development. The 1980s' innovative studies about Guarda didn't envision sustainable growth, disregarding geographic, historic and socio-cultural specificity. Guarda expands downwards, driven by the same territorial effects common to every city, with conspicuous results on its urban shape. Our hypothesis explores the feasibility of working with the methods of architecture by studying the urban permanencies of Guarda. This reflection aims to make intelligible the length of the city construction process, reflecting upon its current development towards a compact city, intelligible, sustainable, and not denying its historic or geographic complexity.

**Keywords:** Guarda, project of the city, history, urban development, ontology

Cities today present an amalgam of spaces made by permanency and change, where architecture plays a fundamental role in providing solutions between highly organized spaces and forgotten ones. Architecture remains a presence as the changes in the stability of the space become faster, and it works repairing, protecting, being used and, overall, establishing relations with other built presences (Gregotti, 2011: 5) as well in the spaces between.

In a state of such transitivity, which leads to an absence of coherence (which was provided at other points in the city's history), can be explained through a few concepts<sup>2</sup> that justify the territorialized and global space that the city became (Cacciari, 2010). Thus, this article explores the feasibility of working through the methods of architecture, aiming at a city that can express itself in a clearer way, thus becoming a city which is compact, sustainable, and comprehensible, and which is not denying its complexity in history and in geography (Gregotti, 2011: 148).

Approaching a city through this method also means comprehending the city as a project in continuous growth, a project that carries with it what Rossi (2001) calls in his book *Architecture of the City*, "permanencies". These permanencies are part of the urban matter

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<sup>2</sup> In his article "City Frontiers and Their Disappearance" (1991), Wim Nijnhuis draws his attention to the changes in the way we move in the world and how they affect the city, exercising a detachment for the notion of place, and changes in the notion of limit and city shape. Sprawl, diffuse city, oil stain growth, etc. are many concepts that induce us to think of a city that covers a large area, without defined rules, and has lost its sense of cohesion.

and assure its continuity and cohesion (Rossi, 2001: 64). They absorb the changes of the present but to be fully understood they need to be interpreted in the time that they were built. Permanencies, as different parts of the urban factory or specific buildings, monuments, or public spaces, need to be understood in the specific conditions that they were developed in the past and confronted with what makes them different from the present. This understanding of the city cannot be submitted only to specific parts of the city but to the whole on an ontological level, as Rossi (2001: 142) says: “...Never was a city deprived of the sense of its own individuality”.

Reflecting through architecture, we develop an instrumental approach – a tool, a laboratory of reflection – looking for the intelligibility of the present urban space and how it sets conditions for further developments (Távora, 2007: 21, 22) with clear objectives in mind. It explores key elements in the reading of a city, valuing density, identity, centrality, heterogeneity, and the urban system in which it is involved, providing sustained interventions.

As a tool, it considers a multidisciplinary basis – morphological and socio-cultural – supported by the knowledge of history and architectural representation methods, revealing the process through which the city was constructed and the concepts behind it. Developing a longitudinal reading over the circumstances of the development of an urban space, this instrument has as its subject the city of Guarda.<sup>3</sup>



**South view of *Guarda*, 2011. Photo by Cátia Ramos.**

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<sup>3</sup> As a case study, Guarda presents itself as city whose knowledge of urban history is disseminated by a various number of publications, but an overall reading has not yet been constructed.

## Guarda under a new instrumental approach: Developments...

The reading of the urban narrative of Guarda starts with geography, where “...history signs settle and overlap...” (Gregotti, 2010: 373). Its unique environmental conditions established not only a city but also a set of concepts, which are widely accepted today. We are talking of two concepts: *Beira* and ‘border town’. These concepts are practically one. *Beira* in the twelfth century represented frontier or borderline and was born practically at the same time as the city. *Beira*, or the border, was understood not in the abstract and contemporaneous meaning of a line (Martins, 2000) but rather as a wide field of contrasts (Gomes, 1987: 11-13), framed by rich valleys to the north and south (River Mondego, *Zêzere*) and a mountain system called Estrela to the west and the Iberia tableland. Guarda was born to guarantee the safety of this border along with other cities. If we attend to its name, we can learn much from it, located in the eastern branch of the mountain system of Serra da Estrela, *Guarda* means sentinel, a lookout to nearby Spain.

Sancho I, second king of Portugal, gave a charter to the city (1199) and established an episcopate a few years later, two primal conditions to make it an urban settlement. Guarda was founded as a strategic city in response to the demands of a country that was itself being founded. Urban by official status, it was a key element in the country’s population and military defence strategy. As a sentinel, Guarda sits at an altitude of 1,056 meters. The natural platform upon which it rests was circumscribed within walls through the first Portuguese dynasty until the fourteenth century. The walls enclosed a military and urban Guarda, dependent upon the rural areas to provide food.

The principal main roads at the time were the *colimbriana*<sup>4</sup> and an old Roman road heading north (Gomes, 1987: 24). These roads mould an interior oriented by the cardinal points and its doors. The interior space of the city is defined by two streets that structure the principal public spaces, following the main existing roads at the time. From north to south, along *Rua Direita* (Straight Street) we find the principal squares, marked by the presence of a church, each one related to a specific activity – religious, market, etc. Crossing the *Rua Direita*, from west to east, the street of St. Vicent, *Rua de São Vicente*, intersects main squares related to the way of living inside the city (Gomes, 1987: 44-53). This medieval city contained a heterogeneous community reflected in the shape of the city’s urban pattern and the toponyms of streets. Moreover, the different powers of the king, clerical, bourgeois, the common citizen, and the Jewish community occupied different positions in relation to the public space. The place of churches, palaces, houses, civilian or bourgeois represent a hierarchy in society. However, this doesn’t mean that the elongated platform was totally occupied. Inside the higher southern part of this contained city, the tower marked a clear ground for the military machine, while the lower northern part had its own density and hierarchy.

From the beginning, the outskirts of Guarda were an invariant factor immediately outside the city walls. The monasteries of the mendicant religious orders could be found there, as well as those members of the population who were not allowed inside the city. Being outside the city walls meant a public space more open to everyone, but also meant greater instability

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<sup>4</sup> At the time, the principal medieval roads in this region were *via Colimbriana*, heading west towards Coimbra, and *via Dalmácia*, crossing together in Ciudad Rodrigo in Spain.

throughout the centuries. When the reason was security<sup>5</sup> (Gomes, 1987: 49), in the need to guarantee the consistency of the city walls and the borderline, the outskirts were easily destroyed.

Along with some border towns, such as Trancoso and Covilhã, Guarda kept its supporting role as a military device until it became obsolete in the face of new advancements in war. The French Revolution marked the start of the end of a city characterised by granite walls rising over a plateau. City walls either became part of the city buildings or ceased to exist. From medieval times until the eighteenth century, *Guarda* had a floating population and maintained a certain cohesion and density marked by some monuments and facilities introduced in this time period (e.g., hospitals, monasteries). Facing east, the outskirts gained a built consistency due to the suitable topographic characteristics of the hill.

In the late 1800s, Guarda was facing a decisive moment in its urbanity (Rossi, 2001: 83), in which a late industrial revolution was promoting the growth of the city. The nature of this moment is established by the railroad network that arrived in 1882, placing this city as the first urban centre for those leaving or arriving in Portugal. Helena Borges (2010: 28) stresses that “...The rail-road was the big unifier of the territory, allowing the easy transportation of goods, stimulating production and allowing development and contributing to the diffusion of ideas, knowledge, practices, and attitudes”. By 1892, two railway lines connected below Guarda, 3 km away from the city centre, in a place known as *Guarda-Gare* (the place of the railway station). This position was determined by technological reasons, counterpointing the city and framed by the Serra da Estrela mountain range, resting 300 meters higher.

A Constitutional Monarchy followed now the efforts of the Regeneration. Progressively, the country was establishing basic infrastructures in Portugal and in each city, including Guarda.<sup>6</sup> Guarda’s urban shape suffered transformations taken by a collective urban and educated movement, acting through a dialogue that reinforced the local power and allowed compromises that made changes. A committed community and an enterprising bourgeoisie were the main actors of these changes. Through a series of Haussmanization concepts, and following in scale Lisbon and governance laws, Guarda was also looking for public sanitation, infrastructure, and public spaces.

The transformations took an orderly evolution and can be seen in terms of two forms of intervention. The first one took place in the medieval part of the city to improve public sanitation and resulted in the elimination of problematic areas, cutting the medieval pattern in two through the old medieval square, from north to south. The second affected the outskirts of the medieval town and its monuments, drawing the street and squares, public gardens, and distinguishing the space for the urban *flâneur*. Meanwhile, new streets were opened in the surrounding areas of the known medieval outskirts, facing eastwards, and moulding the terrain. Soon the different architectures embellished the streets, reflecting different artistic movements, integrating reference monuments, creating new equipment and new cultural offers, and renovating ways of commerce, industry and science. Scientific studies carried out at this time found that the city air and its altitude were extremely suitable for the cure for

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<sup>5</sup> At the end of the first dynasty, King D. Fernando (1367-1383), awaiting war in the disagreements with Spain and expecting Guarda to act in the defence of the Portuguese nation, tears down a part of the outskirts of the city, both houses and public buildings.

<sup>6</sup> Guarda was the first city in Portugal to have electricity for private and industrial use in 1896.



tuberculosis, and the city's extensive sanatorium complex framed the southwest of the city. The impulse for development had started, and soon the old royal roads became the national roads network and the car became a reality in Guarda. Road EN18 and road EN16 link the district city to the south through Covilhã and Castelo Branco, west to the coast, and east to Spain.

The city vividly accepted secularization as the Constitutional Monarchy led to brief Republican Governments (1910-1926). In the second quarter of the twentieth century, Portugal was entering a new political transformation set by an inward-looking dictatorial regime. Launching the dictatorial doctrine, the fascist propaganda found its ideology in the mysticism of a glorious Portugal of the past praising a progressive city (Grande, 2002: 122). Duarte Pacheco was Minister of Public Works. His efforts resulted in the legislation needed in planning, leading to a tighter control over the urban Portuguese territory.

In a short period of time, almost every city in Portugal had been submitted to the new urban rules, which established that every city needed to have an urban plan to control its growth, and Guarda was no exception. The middle of the twentieth century marked the arrival of urbanism to the city. Architect João António de Aguiar drew up the first Urban Plan of Guarda. Although this plan was not implemented in its entirety, it worked as a basis to orient new interventions. The city still worked as a support to the rural area but also experienced the development of manufacturing industry, a school-building programme, and the development of new public services, such as the courthouse, more bank services, transportation, a hospital, an army, a hotel, a cinema, a post office, commercial stores, etc. All of this meant the growth of a truly urban population that wished to live in the city<sup>7</sup>.

The Urban Plan of Guarda turned out to be decisive for the local governance and a reference in city growth. Supported by the new legislation in land ownership, the 1949 Urban Plan brought with it two ways to process urban development: one oriented towards inward growth and another towards external growth. The first one sponsored actions on the improvement of the medieval core and other central areas of the city. The medieval urban pattern was being sanitized, increasing in density, and most of the small density areas next to the medieval core were now accommodating new three-storey buildings for housing and commerce. A new civic centre was being built nearby, providing a new range of public services. To the southeast, the city growth was drawing new accessibilities by taking advantage of the soft slope of the mountain. This southeastward development doesn't carry any controversy since it's a natural condition. The physical characteristics constitute strong impositions to city growth. To the north, both the climate and terrain are equally as harsh and to the west the mountain system of Serra da Estrela is a natural borderline.

In a growing city where the need for housing<sup>8</sup> was increasing and was usually provided by private initiative, the solutions adopted focused on multi-story housing with commerce for income or single-family houses that were not available to all. Although the solutions provided by the dictatorship weren't enough, they followed the dictatorial ideology and people's

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<sup>7</sup> We need to bear in mind the increasing importance of urban migration, both from the hinterland and between the hinterland and the coastal cities of Portugal.

<sup>8</sup> The increasing urban population in Portugal brought to the public realm the importance of social dwelling. Before the end of the dictatorship, around 1960, dwelling was a theme that had caught the attention of architects who observed at the time that a social problem had been created. The 1960 colloquium "Social Aspects in the Construction of the Habitat" was the first where the theme was discussed by the Architects National Union.

aspirations with processes that formalized in the city neighbourhoods of detached or terrace houses, supplanted by some multi-story solutions in the late 1960s (Figueiredo, 1968).

Meanwhile, the railway station area began to expand. An Urban Plan<sup>9</sup> was made to organize the industrial, commercial and housing that the railway station was magnetizing and highlighting. The first impression of Guarda remained one of detachment, alone and standing at 1,000 metres. Since the propulsive moment of urbanity, Guarda's development increased in speed and it didn't slow down after the dictatorship. Now the country was part of common European, and there was much to be done.

The needed interventions and planning devices didn't rely on a municipality with wide technical support, and up to today most of the investments had been managed by the central administration. Until the establishment of the municipality land-use plan in 1994, Guarda relied on an urban plan dated from 1974 and a study called MEREC.<sup>10</sup> The MEREC study focused its attention on the endogenous resources of the city and its council potentials, regarding most of its operations in urban planning – analysis and propositions – and also in establishing measures to improve basic infrastructure, water, electricity, solid waste, etc. (Bendavid-Val, 1987). Architect Maria A. de Castro (1988: 3-6) stresses the importance of MEREC in providing studies and strategies that brought new ways to intervene in the cityscape, and successful contributions for concerted efforts in the drawing of the city. However, she pointed out that new projects were damaging the city's silhouette: the high-rise buildings and the lack of green areas, parking space and urban facilities (Abrunhosa de Castro, 1988: 8). Pressures from private investors were forcing the city to spread down from the mountain top, losing its significant landscape provided by the ancient medieval core.

The municipality Plan was approved in early 1994, for it was mandatory in order to receive financial support from the European Union. This financial support allowed the country and its cities to receive a very different quality in services (Salgueiro, 1999: 33). The new highways established faster communications to Europe and to Lisbon and allowed an improvement in economy and industry.

Guarda and its counterpoint *Gare* (railway-station) began to physically bond including small settlements and agriculture land. Through the national POLIS<sup>11</sup> program, along with a national policy for urban renewal since the Lisbon Expo 98, Guarda experienced a renewal of the historical centre and a new public park between the new ring road and the back of the industrial platform of Guarda-Gare near a riverbank.

Since the 1970s, urban planning in Guarda detached itself from drawing, making strategic assumptions, forgetting the local (Choay, 2004: 72) in order to be absolutely functional in constant economic development, relying on the space of the flux (Castells, 2010: 869). The new economic and social shifts transformed this praxis and stopped the urge of outgrowth, channelling thoughts towards Guarda as support to an urban proximity space; a

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<sup>9</sup> Urban Plan of *São Miguel da Guarda - Guarda Gare* made in 1949 by the same architect of the Urban Plan of *Guarda: João António de Aguiar*.

<sup>10</sup> Managing Energy and Resource Cities was a study of the American organization AID (Agency for International Development), guided by the Tennessee Valley Authority. This programme started in the late 1970s as a concern for those countries that were facing growing urban demands with scarce energy and natural resource consumption.

<sup>11</sup> The Polis Program, created in 2001 by the Ministry of Environment and Territory Planning, is dedicated to cities environment and urban renewal, and was developed in cooperation with central and local administrations.

transformation in the conception and practice of urban plans entirely justified by the history of the city's cultural role.

## Conclusions

As a project in continuous growth, Guarda faces new concerns and challenges. To address the intelligibility of the city's construction process, its centrality, heterogeneity and density we should consider adopting a new observation method. Let's try to understand Guarda as a city made of matter, where its history may be read, holding to its permanencies, a city with a history drawn from events that express the particular reasons of its matter, and general reasons that it shares with other cities (Rossi, 2001: 187). The approach to Guarda aims to develop an analysis and comprehension of the continuities and discontinuities of the present with the past as a reflexive practice towards new development possibilities.

The 800 years of Guarda's construction process reveal some ways through which the city can handle some of its problems ontologically. Since the nineteenth century, actions on the city have taken into account prior developments, considering them and acting upon them. Through the dictatorship, planners and architects considered likewise and intervened by laying the basic infrastructure to city growth: the street. The subsequent years have separated these basic actions without taking into consideration the city's prior conditions, transforming its geography and cityscape into a pile of objects. Working in architecture towards the contemporary issues of the city, like density, centrality, etc. means finding new responses made visible through new observations. These observations must make their way between the rules of a supposed density<sup>12</sup> that allows access to the indiscriminate distribution of volumes and those places constructed with intelligibility and heterogeneity, with permanencies and changes, where architecture and the city streets are both infused with one another (Aureli, 2010: 64) as a fully dense three-dimensional experience at a thousand metres.

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<sup>12</sup> Variable density in 65, 45 and 20 dwellings per acre: Article 8°. Dimension of plots and typologies, clause 2 b) of the Municipal Regulation on Territory Planning of *Guarda*.



North view of *Guarda*, 2012. Photo by Cátia Ramos.

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## The Other Inhabitants of Bourgeois Dwellings: The Case of the Iberian Boulevards in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

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**Abstract:** During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, subordinated classes were not excluded from the new bourgeois residential spaces, neither from mansions nor from apartment buildings. Specific dwelling units were by then conceived for this kind of inhabitants, within the bourgeois habitat: in attics, basements, interior rooms or small compartments at the rear side of the main buildings. This paper intends to show how a strict social hierarchy was spatially created inside the bourgeois dwellings and how a new order was established, a paradoxical one, in which some people required simultaneously the presence and the invisibility of others; engaging in a constant game of hide and seek. As examples, I use mansions and bourgeois apartment buildings erected between the mid-nineteenth century and the beginnings of the twentieth on the main arteries of Barcelona, Madrid and Lisbon. I believe that an inquiry on the emergency of the bourgeois city helps to understand the production, or the continuous reproduction, of unequal citizenship in contemporary cities.

**Keywords:** boulevards, nineteenth-century architecture, Iberian Peninsula, the bourgeois apartment, residential space

Boulevards have been studied and wrongly labeled as the exclusive residential spaces of the bourgeoisie. The assumption that these were wealthy homogeneous spaces in nineteenth century cities has been recently undermined by scholars dealing with non-Western and colonial cities, where the traditional concept of the colonizers' neighborhood (the European quarter or the White City) tended to omit the presence of the colonized that lived within the very same neighborhoods (Chattopadhyay, 2002).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Swati Chattopadhyay (2002) argues that the assumption of a "White Town" was "based upon the reluctance to move between the city scale and the architectural scale".

When interrogating the main boulevards of Barcelona, Madrid and Lisbon, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century we perceive the invisible dwellers, the anonymous human beings that can be observed in photographs, walking in the boulevards, usually carrying loads, and wearing uniforms. Their clothes, a visual sign of their status, made them easy to identify, but we don't know their names or their families. By looking closely at architectural sources, the plans of buildings and dwellings, we are at least able to see the spaces assigned to them, which were both physical and social in the hierarchy of the boulevard. By changing the scales of inquiry between the street and the dwelling, and focusing here on what went on inside the houses and the apartments, this paper intends to uncover aspects of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Iberian city that have been quite neglected by scholars.

The Iberian home was a multi-class space, a space of differentiated people, with a very distinct everyday, a distinct background, occupying different spaces according to each individual's place within the hierarchy of the dwelling. Servants were hired for cleaning, cooking, washing, ironing, starching, tidying up the rooms, opening the doors, running errands, carrying loads, driving the carriages, taking care of the horses, dressing and hair-dressing, taking care of children, breast-feeding the babies, and heating the dwelling. The disproportionate number of the household's staff common to other European capitals such as London, was in obvious contradiction to the modern desire for individual autonomy and anonymity.

At the Federico Marcet and Dolores Planás palace, located on Barcelona's Passeig de Gràcia, the family members were just two persons, living in a mansion with 13 rooms for servants. This was an extreme case, but it showed that inside bourgeois mansions, the dwellers were mainly the workers. They outnumbered the bourgeois family members. The staff included servants, porters, stable boys and the coachman. Madrid's mansions had surely more service staff since they were much more palatial than in Barcelona or Lisbon, such as La Castellana's Villamejor palace (1885-1887) as well as Senator Anglada's mansion (1876).<sup>3</sup>

In the bourgeois apartment, such as those built in Barcelona, there were from two to four servants' bedrooms and some of them were bigger than the others, suggesting that a room could house two servants. In Madrid, a principal apartment (the undivided floor, above ground floor) had either four or five rooms for servants. Some were deliberately intended to be double rooms and others single. There could be up to eight servants inside an Iberian apartment. In many cases, servants outnumbered or equaled the bourgeoisie within the dwelling. Only in half-floor apartments (upper story ones), servants could be less in number when compared to the bourgeois family.

Iberian examples show that the values of a regime do not exactly correspond to the regime's set of laws and, further, that the laws are not entirely effective. This is clear when related to the regulations of space within the city (public space regulations, housing regulations). While the ideologies accompanying the extension plans of Iberian cities in the second half of the nineteenth century promoted healthier ways of inhabiting the city, emphasizing the importance of light and air (in contrast to the dwelling conditions of the old neighborhoods), the new apartment buildings of the second half of the nineteenth and the

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<sup>3</sup> See the plans and elevations for these palatial buildings at Madrid's Municipal Archive (Archivo de Villa), permits 7-122-26 and 5-116-35.

beginning of the twentieth century were designed to house a great number of people (servants, coachmen, stable's hands, porters) in basements and in small rooms facing narrow courtyards lacking light and fresh air. There was a considerable difference between what was prescribed and what was actually practiced.

Spatial strategies were put to work by both architects and their clients in order to reduce the burden of having to share the dwelling space with workers and work activities, as well as to control the working staff:

- Barcelona's principal flats<sup>4</sup> always had two parallel corridors, lit by light wells, connecting the front side of the apartment to the rear. One of these corridors gave access to a secondary set of bedrooms, their dependencies, the lady's embroidery room and the chapel. The second corridor gave access to the service areas, the kitchen, the storage area annexed to it, the sewing room, the ironing and starching room, the toilets and lavatories, as well as the servants' rooms, which were the smaller ones and always faced the narrower light wells. The double corridor device meant to hide the work spaces from bourgeois view.<sup>5</sup>
- Female servants lived inside the house or in the same flat of their masters and mistresses. Specific forms of patriarchy that characterized the Iberian dwelling embodied the weight of the Catholic Church, the spectacle of which penetrated the dwelling (namely by means of chapels), explicitly attributing specific activities for women within the household.<sup>6</sup> Besides creating a paternalistic relationship between master and servant, Catholic patriarchy perpetuated a particularly strong sense of guilt and shame associated with women's sexuality.<sup>7</sup> By attributing the responsibility of the original sin to women, Catholic ideology led to a high level of control over the female servant's body. This was different from what happened at the same time in Paris, for example, where they lived on the sixth floor of Haussmann's apartment buildings, therefore allowing them some independence (Martin-Fugier, 2004). In Lisbon, Madrid and Barcelona, the body of the female servant was extremely controlled. It is also important to point out that the architectural strategies of locating the female servants' rooms in the same flat as their mistresses', so as to enable them to control their sexuality did not prevent sexual harassment and promiscuity within the dwelling. That strategy only limited the female servants from having a sexual life of their own, independent from the bourgeois family whose male members often went to their rooms.
- Basements were the chosen location to house male servants of an apartment building. In the apartment building of António João Quintão (1891) at Lisbon's Avenida da Liberdade

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<sup>4</sup> The un-split floor above the ground floor had twice the size of other apartments in the same building. It was usually reserved for the residence of the owner of the building. These grandiose apartments were very common in Barcelona and in the Madrid. In Lisbon, on the contrary, they were very rare.

<sup>5</sup> Plans showing the double-corridor device can be seen, for example, in Barcelona's Administrative Archive, permits 5843 and 7294.

<sup>6</sup> Chapels were very common in Barcelona's bourgeois apartments. At Alejandro Damians i Rovira's flat at Passeig de Gràcia, the chapel had ribbed ceilings and a sacristy annexed to it, suggesting that religious service was performed there. See Barcelona's Administrative Archive, permit 5843.

<sup>7</sup> On Catholicism and women, see Warner (1976), Boxer (1975), and Galot (1965).



there were nine rooms for male servants in the basement, behind the porters' dwelling and the storage compartments. Male servants' units had one common toilet and their area that was accessed through the backstreet, not through the boulevard. Inside, they had a service stair leading to the bourgeois dwellings above.<sup>8</sup> The same happened at the apartment building of Francisco Teixeira Marques (1907) in Lisbon's Avenida. Here the basement had four rooms for male servants, each room housing at least two of them.<sup>9</sup> Washing facilities were generally located in basements as well, next to the furnace, wood and coal storage compartments. Many of these buildings also housed stables, coach houses and the stable's staff dwellings in basements. Horses and carriages accessed the ground floor by means of a ramp. However, the most common dweller of the basement was the porter. Porter's lodges commonly possessed small basement windows facing the street, offering a different perspective of the boulevard: people's feet, shoes, and dogs.<sup>10</sup>

- The kitchen in Barcelona's apartments was extremely small, even compared to other service areas such as the ironing rooms. It showed a complex relationship between the bourgeoisie and the activities performed in the kitchen. In single-family houses (mansions) the kitchen could still have regular dimensions as it was placed either in the basement or on the ground floor, following the model of the aristocratic palace where there was a strict separation between service activities and residential ones. In mansions, kitchens were usually accompanied by ancillary spaces such as a pantry and a separate room for washing and drying dishes. However, in both standard principals and in half-floor apartments, the kitchen had to be placed in the middle of the dwelling. In Barcelona, the kitchen could not be expanded towards the rear side of the dwelling because this side was still considered a 'noble' part of the residence, where the dining rooms and some family bedrooms stood, facing the garden, the terrace or the vast interior of the perimeter block – the rear side galleria. If the kitchen could face neither the street nor the rear, there was only one possible place for it, and it was in the middle of the dwelling, usually facing a narrow light well. The unresolved problem of having to share the same floor with the kitchen led to its shrinkage and near impracticability.<sup>11</sup>
- Madrid's dining room worked as a barrier between the apartment's public areas and the service ones. Before the dining room stood the living room and the parlor and after the dining room, the kitchen and its dependencies.<sup>12</sup> In Barcelona, the buffet (or ante-dining room) where the servants placed the trays, while waiting for the right time to perform the service, prevented them from standing inside the dining room during the meal. From the buffet they could observe the dining table and perform their service without making themselves too visible to the family guests.

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<sup>8</sup> The plans of these basement dwellings can be seen in Lisbon's Administrative Archive, permit 12.743.

<sup>9</sup> See Lisbon's Administrative Archive, permit 3.144.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, the plan and elevations of Marquis de Encinares apartment building located at Madrid's La Castellana, at Madrid's Municipal Archive (Archivo de Villa), 18-190-1.

<sup>11</sup> Examples of reduced kitchens can be seen in the apartment building of Dominga Juera de Vilar, located at Barcelona's Passeig de Gràcia. See plans in Barcelona's Administrative Archive, permit 2116bisC.

<sup>12</sup> This was the case of Juan Isasi's apartment building (1906) located at Madrid's La Castellana. See Madrid's Municipal Archive (Archivo de Villa), permit 16-477-18.

- Another strategy consisted in limiting windows' view: at Marcet's palace, built in 1887, on Barcelona's Passeig de Gràcia, the second floor was reserved for service areas, mainly servants' bedrooms. The floor was surrounded by a galleria, which served as a corridor to access the rooms. Servants' rooms numbering at least 13 faced an interior courtyard. The entire floor, served only by a small service staircase was also meant for storage and other working activities, like ironing and starching clothes. Here servants had an entire floor for themselves and their duties, but the design of the space strategically denied them a view to the outside. Although the attic had many windows facing the street, they served only to bring light to the corridor allowing access to the servants' rooms. Instead of placing the servants' rooms on the outward side of the attic floor, thus providing them with windows facing the street, they were purposely located on the inner side, with windows facing only the internal courtyard. The corridor for the servants' circulation was given a more prominent place in the design than the servants' bedrooms. The design denied them a view over the boulevard. It clearly indicates that servants were not supposed to observe the street. They should not waste time.<sup>13</sup>
- Windows facing narrow light wells or very slender lateral courtyards, the narrowest of all in the apartment, were always the sole source of light for a set of compartments organized around them. Such was the case of kitchens, storage rooms, servants' bedrooms, bathrooms, lavatories and toilets. These narrow courtyards were, therefore, spaces of shared sights, sounds and odors. Since these light wells were narrow spaces, sounds could be made more audible around them, and conversations could be maintained by speaking from one apartment to the other.<sup>14</sup> The smells of cooking crossed from one dwelling to another as well as the bad smells of the toilets, in a period when sewer systems were far from perfect, although being improved by new urban infrastructures, such as water supply. The windows of the servants' rooms usually faced these light wells. From them, they received all these human sights, sounds and odors, and they could interact with neighboring servants without being controlled by their masters and mistresses; they were the sole inhabitants of the narrow light wells, which constituted a space where domestics could produce a small and limited world of their own using everyday tactics to escape the strict employment (scheduling) of time assigned to them.
- Some servants' rooms didn't have windows facing any light well. Instead, they had small transom windows that opened higher in the wall or above the door, which faced the corridor, the kitchen or some other service room. These were the architectural expressions of the limits of confinement within the dwellings.<sup>15</sup>
- The vestibule is an architectural device imported from the aristocratic palace. Ancien Regime bourgeois dwellings never possessed a vestibule. It often presented two sequential rooms: the first one containing the recessed cubicle for the porter, the second one containing one or two staircases. Supervised by the porter, the vestibule was the

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<sup>13</sup> The drawings (plans, sections and elevations) of the lavish and pompous mansion of Federico Marcet, a railroad magnate and entrepreneur, can be seen at Barcelona's Administrative Archive, permit 3066.

<sup>14</sup> As in the apartment building of Ricardo Roca i Molins (1882), later owned by Joan Comas i Crós, located at Passeig de Gràcia. See Barcelona's Administrative Archive, permit 1107.

<sup>15</sup> See the plan of upper story apartment built by Juan Guardiola (1883) and owned by Felix Vidal in 1888, in Barcelona's Administrative Archive, permit 1591. See also in the same archive, permit 2116bisC.

space of class sorting. From his cubicle, the porter controlled who was accessing which stairs and helped to prevent any kind of mistakes: bourgeois residents and guests used one staircase; servants and workers used a different one. The porter was aware of the tenants' and owners' habits and visitors. He also knew the servants' schedules.<sup>16</sup>

- The accesses to mansions had a hierarchical design: in Madrid's "La Ladera", a cluster of houses developed by the Marquis de Salamanca at Paseo de La Castellana between 1865 and 1871, all the houses had two separate entrances, the main one facing the street, and the service access facing a dwindling alley. The garden layout showed the correct path to the different social classes, as well as their tasks within the household. It clearly displayed the hierarchy of the entrances concealed beneath the mask of a picturesque or romantic design.<sup>17</sup> Significantly, the garden was not geometric, orthogonal or French. In the French classic Cartesian garden, the order was obvious, transparent and elitist. Here, the new bourgeois order was disguised under a crooked path of trees and shrubbery. In these gardens, the stables, coach houses and the porter's pavilion, all detached from the main house, were a novelty in Iberian cities. Formerly, they used to be attached to or incorporated into the main house, the old regime palace.

The architectural strategies for the bourgeois domestic and architectural order were defined by unspoken code, not imposed by any policy or law. There was no law stating that servants within the apartments should live in rooms without windows facing the street or facing large central courtyards, or that servant's stairs and entryways should be smaller than the bourgeois ones and as hidden as possible. They were designed and built this way and yet there was no covenant demanding it to be so. Owners and architects of the new liberal and constitutional Iberian states, whose organization should rely upon the social contract and the premise of equality among human beings, could not overtly produce spaces where its social hierarchy would be blatantly symptomatic of inequality. Bourgeois architecture produced or reproduced the social differentiation smoothly and silently, almost naturally. The new order within the dwelling was a paradox because it required both the omnipresence of workers and their invisibility.

Today, it is urgent to raise political consciousness of the production of unequal rights in architectural and urban design. Although obvious for most of us, these topics are definitely not taken for granted. Many students continue to think that these issues are marginal to the process of architectural design in most European schools. I would dare to suggest that architectural and urban academic curricula should include one course on "politics of architectural space" in which students could investigate social relations of power and difference inside buildings they know: apartment buildings, office buildings, schools, and so on, either focusing on power strategies or tactics of resistance, using Michel de Certeau's

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<sup>16</sup> Different types of elaborate vestibules and stairways can be seen in the apartment buildings of Alejandro Damians i Rovira (1895), Maria Martorell (1874), Ramon Comas (1868), Dominga Juera de Vilar (1869) and Salvador Fábregas (1872), all located at Barcelona's Passeig de Gràcia. See Barcelona's Administrative Archive, permits 5843, 7294, 2149C, 2116bisC and 2435bisC.

<sup>17</sup> See the building permits for La Ladera at Madrid's Municipal Archive (Archivo de Villa), permit 5-68-2.

concepts (de Certeau, 1990: 57). This, I think, would help to create a generation of architects more capable of designing spaces of inclusion.

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## Urban Regeneration Interventions from the Inside Out: Peer Reviews through a Cross-European Project

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**Abstract:** We all know how urban regeneration policies and interventions have evolved; nevertheless, major differences persist between policy-drivers and among urban practitioners, especially because of local contexts. When developing area-based approaches, specific issues come about, forcing urban managers and practitioners to adapt their strategies and tactics when and where work is needed; this might be in the fields of social housing, renovation of derelict buildings, employment, education, social inclusion and cohesion, or frequently a mix of several topics by means of integrated policies. This is why a peer review among urban regeneration interveners is an important mechanism to enhance experience-based knowledge by confronting individual understandings and different points of view from experts. Such a learning process was set between 21 urban practitioners from six European cities (The Hague, Oslo, Berlin, Dresden, Porto and Preston), on a project initiated by EUROCITIES and The Hague, which lasted between September 2009 and November 2010. Visits to each other's deprived neighbourhoods and subsequent meetings gave important inputs to create knowledge by exchanging ideas, perceptions and experience. In this paper, we will highlight the specific contribution of Porto Vivo, SRU as a project-partner, its inherent learning attainment, and a balance of conclusions and reflections.

**Keywords:** urban regeneration, urban practitioners, urban management, experience-based knowledge

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## Introduction

Urban regeneration (UR) is the way communities try to recover deprived areas, a process which is performed by several professionals, with distinct backgrounds and competencies, and who also are culturally and context-influenced, features that are mostly evident when they meet together in an international project and present their points of view openly. This was the case of the Urban Regeneration Working Group (URWG) set by the EUROCITIES network and the Dutch city of The Hague, a learning process that highlighted the relevance of experience-based knowledge every time these experts came together on visits to each other's deprived neighbourhoods and subsequent meetings. Between September 2009 and November 2010, 21 urban practitioners from six European cities (The Hague, Oslo, Berlin, Dresden, Porto and Preston) were involved in this experience, exchanging ideas, perceptions and knowledge: explicit, tacit, but mostly experience-based knowledge (Wassenberg and van Dijken, 2011).

The objective of this paper is to outline the importance of such a cross-European project on the production and diffusion of knowledge, which “can inspire and innovate urban practices according to the local context” (Wassenberg and van Dijken, 2011: 72). The paper begins by exploring the role of urban practitioners and managers, a countless number of professionals who dedicate their work to UR interventions and who are mostly context-limited and influenced. Next, we recover the literature on tacit and experience-based knowledge and discuss how such knowledge influences the pathway followed by the urban management field, in order to demonstrate the relevance of the learning process developed on such a cross-European project. In the following section, we dedicate some time on methodological issues, namely, on how we consider and perceive Porto Vivo, SRU<sup>4</sup> (PVSRU) participation in the project, and how we developed two questionnaires sent to the URWG participants in order to collect their insights as well. In a matter of fact, these questionnaires were designed to understand the insights from PVSRU about the project, on one hand, and from the partners of the URWG, on the other; that is to say, what PVSRU has learned from their colleagues, and what the peer experts have learned from this Portuguese case study. This is a reflection proposed after more than one year following the conclusion of the project.

Thus, the contribution of this research is that through surpassing context-limitations and influences, it reveals the learning attainments for a direct partner involved in an European project, namely, the perspective of PVSRU, and the learning inputs to the other partners when its experience is presented to them *in loco*. This cross-learning process is developed in two sections of this paper, which aim to respond to the formulated research questions by integrating a revision of the work carried out by PVSRU, an experience that is greatly identified as relevant by the partners in the URWG, at a European level, and what PVSRU has attained from peer insights. To sum up, we will present the contribution this European project gave, on an experiential and knowledge-based perspective, to its direct participants in particular, and to the European cities in general.

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<sup>4</sup> Porto Vivo, SRU – Sociedade de Reabilitação Urbana da Baixa Portuense, S.A., a Portuguese public-owned company which performs the task of rehabilitating the downtown and historic centre of Porto (Portugal).

## The role of urban managers and practitioners in developing urban regeneration policies

A great number of people work daily on UR in their deprived city-areas across Europe, with an array of constraints, as has been identified in several research studies (e.g., Wassenberg and van Dijken, 2011; European Urban Knowledge Network, 2010; Droste *et al.*, 2008; Wassenberg *et al.*, 2007; Turok and Taylor, 2006; English Partnerships, 2004; Egan, 2004). They are the agents of UR practices, putting in place theoretical planning perspectives and UR policies and strategies, and demonstrating how the execution of such a function actually works out. Though the common consensus is that UR policies are area-based initiatives and specifically context-influenced, few attempts have been made to develop an instrument that could transfer the tacit, experience-based and context-specific knowledge produced in such case studies, except by means of explicit, theoretical studies that don't give the whole and exact picture. In fact, it is not that simple to demonstrate how integrated UR approaches are done in practice, and how differently it can work out from place to place; it is simpler to write about it, and let the reader make her/his own interpretation from the text the researcher and/or academic presented, which may not be quite exactly the practitioner's understanding (Wassenberg and van Dijken, 2011; European Urban Knowledge Network, 2010).

UR works on a continuous and long-term timeline, since the key characteristics and the core functions of a city, from economic, political and social perspectives, evolve (Wassenberg and van Dijken, 2011; Allen, 2004; Vallega, 1995). More intricately, the city is not a unity but a sum of parts that deliver *unicity*. While areas of the city may be performing well, others are not, which may exercise, in consequence, negative effects over the better-off areas and/or, ultimately, over the entire city. This is a common phenomenon that justifies the UR policies through an integrative perspective performed across all European cities, and which may consist of a social, economic, physical, financial, demographic, sustainable and collaborative nature. City, private, national and European funds are brought into projects, depending on the relevance, interest and dimension of the project itself or the area addressed (i.e., a single area or the whole city), setting in partnerships different types of agents, from national governmental bodies to municipal entities, from private investors to residents, from European organisations to local associations (Wassenberg and van Dijken, 2011; European Urban Knowledge Network, 2010). In fact, a broad range of key actors perform UR policies and put in motion rehabilitation strategies directed to resilient communities (Bagwell, 2007; Turok and Taylor, 2006; Egan, 2004; English Partnerships, 2004). Consequently, the policies, the agents, the contexts, the sort of partnerships, and the issues or problems vary widely, as do, eventually, the lessons given by such UR initiatives, though common features are also highlighted among European UR policies and programmes, like their integrative nature and area-based constraint (Wassenberg and van Dijken, 2011; Droste *et al.*, 2008; Wassenberg *et al.*, 2007).

The urban professionals within the 'core' occupations require a variety of skills to better develop their job, of a practical nature, including, at the top of the list, cross-sectoral thinking and working, but also the knowledge of what works in the field, in order to tailor it to local circumstances (Bagwell, 2007; Turok and Taylor, 2006; Egan, 2004; English Partnerships, 2004). Cross-disciplinary learning is also considered of high relevance, including the effectiveness of 'learning by doing' and 'learning by observing others', that is to say, as Egan (2004: 195) suggested, "Interdisciplinary or inter-professional working has been suggested as a further means of gaining the cross-sectoral skills that are seen as crucial to effective

neighbourhood renewal.” In the study of Egan (2004), the working partnership is the generic skill most frequently mentioned by his organisations’ sample, due to the relevance of being able to handle the complexities of working with people from different cultural and organisational settings, from the public, civil and private sectors.

**Table 1. List of occupations involved in urban regeneration practices**

Type of Occupations	Kind of Involvement	Description	Examples of Occupations
‘core’ occupations	full-time	the built environment professionals	planners, architects, urban designers
		decision makers and influencers	staff from local, regional and central government, developers and investors, staff from voluntary and community associations
‘associated’ occupations	part-time	important contributors	educators, police officers, health service managers and staff in local businesses
‘wider public’	not necessarily employed or directly involved, but whose active engagement is essential	legitimately interested	local residents, the media, members of neighbourhood groups and tenant associations, students and school children

Source: Adapted from Egan (2004)

Besides the technical skills, Egan (2004) also identifies ‘soft’ or ‘process skills’ such as entrepreneurialism and the ability to spot opportunities, create links, manage diversity, network effectively and write creatively, for instance, for the conception of a project or for funding proposals. These ‘softer’ or generic skills, as well as ‘harder’ or technical skills, were further developed by English Partnerships (2004), who have synthesised these concepts (see Figure 1). Also, Turok and Taylor (2006) speak about strategic skills and process skills, regarded as ‘soft skills’ specifically addressed to initiate and promote change. However, in their opinion, practical skills are even more ‘vital’ for implementing change because they are considered to be successful in the day-to-day management and running of an initiative. In the study conducted by Turok and Taylor (2006), practical skills come first as far as perceived learning improvements are concerned, as well as the need of ‘meeting people doing similar things’ and ‘meeting others’ for enhancing opportunities of experience-sharing, namely, international experience-sharing, as also suggested by Egan (2004).



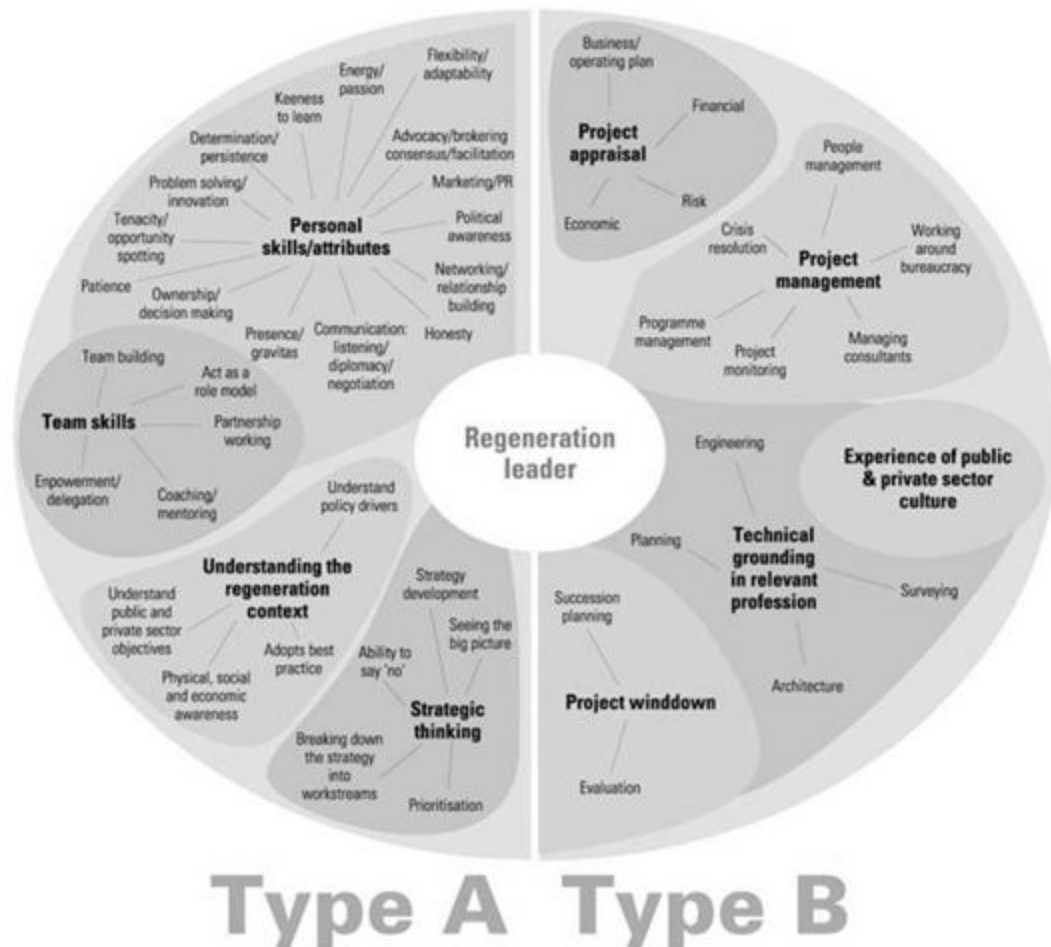


Figure 1. Summary of key skills needed to be an effective regeneration leader.  
Source: English Partnerships (2004: 13).

To sum up, these generic, personal and practical skills, of ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ natures, are common attributes of urban managers and practitioners when developing, managing, monitoring or appraising UR projects, and which can be fostered if experience-based knowledge is shared through international learning experiences.

### The influence of tacit and experience-based knowledge in the orientation of the urban management field

The urban planning and management field is developed, to a large extent, through scientific and technical knowledge, the so-called explicit and codified knowledge as defined by Polanyi (1958, 1961, 1962, 1966, 1967), which takes into consideration or often reports to tacit and experience-based knowledge resulting from local-based case studies (*cf.*, Bakıcı *et al.*, 2013; Hordijk and Baud, 2011; Wassenberg and van Dijken, 2011; Coaffee and Healey, 2003). In fact, there is this need to combine and integrate, with a more significant weight, other forms and types of knowledge, such as tacit knowledge that results from work experience, as well as environmental and sector-related knowledge, or even social knowledge, with adapted geographic range. Therefore, the knowledge that comes out from typical knowledge institutions, like universities and research centres, should be combined with the knowledge sourced at urban planning departments, city-level or national-level institutions producing

urban policies, or from governmental bodies and civil entities, like housing associations, since the knowledge embedded here will only difficultly be disseminated to an extent larger than the one confined to selected case studies. Such disaggregation of knowledge, according to its source and type, enables “decisions to be motivated by knowledge of issues rather than *a priori* political preferences” (Hordijk and Baud, 2011: 116), or by limited familiarity of scientific references.

Knowledge is defined by Howells (2002: 872) as a “dynamic framework or structure from which information can be stored, processed and understood.” The relational feature of knowledge is also acknowledged, since it is, intrinsically, a socially constructed process resulting from the capacity for connectivity and dialogue, an active process that is mediated, situated, provisional, pragmatic, contested, and shaped by external social, organisational, historical, economic and local contexts (Dvir, 2006; Howells, 2002; Blackler, 1995; Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Polanyi, 1966). Such an interactive and dynamic process also integrates learned behaviour and procedures, all of which must be captured and transferred, at an individual and organisational level, throughout and between organizations (Howells, 2002). Experience-based knowledge originates, according to Coaffee and Healey (2003), in collective action practices, habits and routines, participative and partnership practices, which are an uninterrupted learning mechanism resulting from embedded day-to-day work, organised institutional practices, and experiments and innovations, within evolving institutional and social networks, and performed at different levels of governance cultures (whilst also influenced by these), while deliberately manipulated by strategic actors, enabling participatory knowledge (Hordijk and Baud, 2011; Dvir, 2006; Coaffee and Healey, 2003). These aspects are, in fact, highly valued by the theory of regional growth, extending the perspective to questions of urban growth, when tracing the causes of certain regions and cities to be leaders and winners (Benko and Lipietz, 1992; Benko and Dunford, 1991).

Michael Polanyi (1958; 1961; 1962; 1966; 1967) has identified the frontier between explicit or codified knowledge and tacit knowledge. As far as explicit knowledge is concerned, it is defined as the know-how transmitted through a formal and systematic language, that is to say, codified, which does not require direct experience and which can be transferred in printed or embodied formats. Tacit knowledge, in turn, is characterised by not being able to be communicated in any direct, easy or codified manner because it is concerned with direct experience and it is acquired via informal transmission of learned behaviour and procedures. Polanyi (1966) deconstructs further the concept of tacit knowledge, identifying the process of learning without awareness, which he calls ‘subception’, and the process of assimilating things from the outside, named ‘indwelling’, aspects that are strongly associated with innate values and skills (a topic previously developed). Furthermore, the acquisition of tacit knowledge involves ‘learning by doing’ (Arrow, 1962), ‘learning by using’ (Rosenberg, 1982) and ‘learning to learn’ (Ellis, 1965; Stiglitz, 1987), as suggested by Howells (2002), but also ‘learning from mistakes’, since it is considered essential the “awareness of limitations, challenging assumptions and awareness of the contribution of other professionals” (Egan, 2004: 55), defeating the so-called ‘taken-for-granted assumptions’ (Coaffee and Healey, 2003). In addition, the acquisition and interpretation of explicit knowledge also requires the usage of tacit knowledge. Undoubtedly, “all the information taken up by an individual has to be altered and interpreted” (Howells, 2002: 874) through the use of tacit know-how, strongly influenced by past experience and shaped, constrained and influenced by geography (Howells, 2002; Polanyi, 1966).

The local knowledge-set, as well as the learning mechanisms in its orbit, are developed through localised patterns of human interaction, spatially constrained by distance in terms of

acquisition costs and barriers such as, for instance, language barriers, despite the fact that classic economic literature largely assumes costless knowledge spillovers, commonly treated as a public good and assumed as easily transferred between people and organisations (Howells, 2002). Through the perspective of regional and urban economics, the local knowledge-set is at the basis of spatial externalities and agglomeration economies, generally speaking. These, in turn, are at the core of concepts such as cluster, industrial district and *milieu innovateur*. Moreover, such effects underlie cities' growth, being an essential factor for the advantages of cities, explaining the durability of these as a form of territorial occupation (Marshall, 1890).

Concluding, the urban planning and management field has the challenge of including, to a greater extent, the tacit, experience-based and participatory knowledges produced in our cities, which includes the UR practices that are hardly known through the classic codified literature and which can be achieved, for instance, by participatory action research (Whyte, 1989) or by means of international exchange experiences and the establishment of inter-organisational and inter-agency partnerships, that is, through the development of broader synergies (Hordijk and Baud, 2011; Wassenberg and van Dijken, 2011; Kagan, 2007).

## Methodological considerations

### *PVSRU: Participating in a cross-European project*

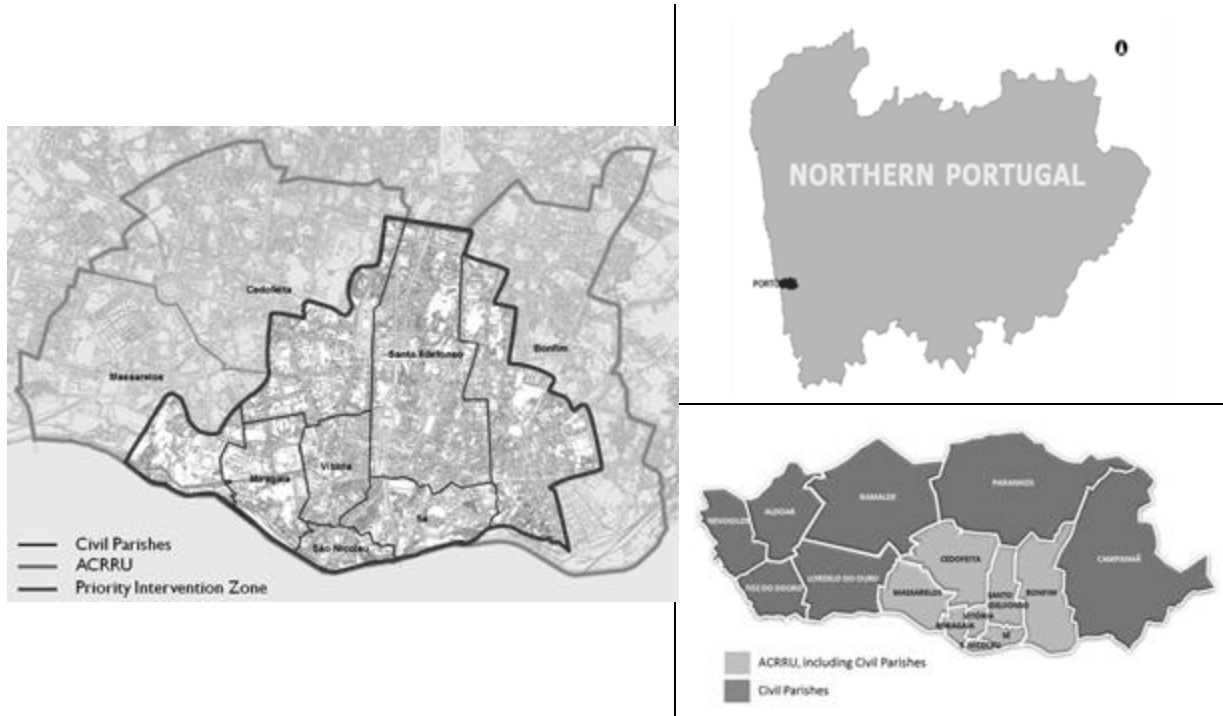
PVSRU is a Portuguese public-owned company, established in 2004, with the objective of promoting the regeneration of the downtown and historic centre of Porto, part of which is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, specifically focusing its intervention in the Priority Intervention Zone (PIZ), which represents an area with half of the dimension of the Critical Area of Urban Reconversion and Renovation<sup>5</sup> (Câmara Municipal do Porto and PVSRU, 2010; PVSRU, 2005; Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto, 2004). Such delimitation and concentration of the urban rehabilitation effort has allowed the redirection of synergies, as well as the definition of paths for sustainable development, identifying and involving local agents and partners (PVSRU, 2012; PVSRU, 2011; PVSRU, 2010).

The invitation to join the URWG came after a series of contacts from the EUROCITIES network<sup>6</sup> in 2009 and was formalised after a meeting of the Economic Development Forum (EDF) of EUROCITIES, in Nuremberg (Germany). The objectives set at the start of the URWG were related to the way deprived urban areas were defined, the identification of actions taken by cities to address the problems of these areas, and mechanisms to measure the impact of interventions, not only in those areas but also in their urban surroundings. The interest of PVSRU to participate was evident, since the objectives of this URWG represented an effective learning mechanism for the organisation as a whole and for the practitioners in particular (PVSRU, 2012; PVSRU, 2011).

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<sup>5</sup> The Portuguese acronym is ACRRU.

<sup>6</sup> The EUROCITIES network involves more than 140 large cities in over 30 European countries (see <http://www.eurocities.eu>).



Location of Porto, the city parishes, and of the ACRRU and the Priority Intervention Zone, the delimited working areas of PVS RU. Credits: PVS RU.



Images of the meeting in Porto, in 2010. Credits: PVS RU.

The URWG had as its leading city The Hague, since it was the chair of the EURO CITIES at the start of the project, but it also included the cities of Oslo, Berlin, Dresden, Preston and, of course, Porto, joining 21 urban practitioners from various fields. The chairman of the URWG was Martin Eyres, also Head of European Affairs at the city of Liverpool, who gave support and guidance throughout the project. The meetings and site visits, one for each city, lasted for more than one year, between September 2009 and November 2010. For the first time, the experiences of local urban practitioners were central in delivering new knowledge with practical objectives. Such visits, in specific, enabled the study of different sectoral policies and urban development projects and the exchange of background documentation, since it was also intention of the URWG to deliver a final report which could transmit to other cities and European decision-makers its main conclusions and recommendations. This report, titled “A practitioner’s view on neighbourhood regeneration: Issues, approaches and experiences in European Cities” and published in 2011,<sup>7</sup> was the work of Frank Wassenberg and Koos van Dijken from the Nicis Institute (The Netherlands), but it also received contributions from all the partners involved.

### *The research questions and how to answer them*

Our study valued the importance of a cross-European project on the production and diffusion of knowledge over the specific field of UR and resilient cities, and specifically, the knowledge produced from a URWG that involved a total of 21 urban practitioners, plus its chairman and Head of European Affairs in the city of Liverpool, and the two authors of the final report, representing the Nicis Institute. Hence, our study involved consultation with a total of 24 partners, and aimed to respond to the following research questions:

- i) How is an actor like PVSURU conducting a renewal process in a city-centre area, while balancing people, place, economy and the organisation itself?
- ii) What has PVSURU learned and attained from this cross-European project, from the insights of peer practitioners?
- iii) What have peer European practitioners learned from the PVSURU experience, making it different from their own specificities as far as UR local-based approaches are concerned?

We believe that in order to answer these leading questions we had to have, on one hand, the insights from PVSURU, and, on the other hand, peer reviews from the project partners, as a cross-exchanging process of perceptions, which will lead us to conclude about the achievements of this working group in terms of knowledge. Accordingly, two questionnaires were developed and sent by e-mail to all the participants, a mix of open and closed questions, in order to provide different kinds of information. This method has enabled a survey of rich and thoughtful information, which has been valuable to the research as a whole. We present in Table the two questionnaires created for this research.

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<sup>7</sup> The final publication was sponsored by EMI, the European Metropolitan Network Institute, a joint initiative of the Nicis Institute and the city of The Hague, and co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

**Table 2. Questionnaires addressed to the participants of the URWG**

Questionnaire for PVSRU	Questionnaire for the URWG Partners
1- Were you familiar with the urban problems of the cities participant of the URWG, namely, The Hague, Oslo, Berlin, Dresden, and Preston, before it has been created by the EUROCITIES?	1- Were you familiar with the urban problems and the regeneration activity being conducted in Porto city centre by PVSRU before the URWG dedicated to UR was created by the EUROCITIES?
2- If it was the first time you have heard about the regeneration processes being developed in those cities, what have you learned about their experience?	2- If it was the first time you have heard about the regeneration process being developed in Porto, what have you learned about our experience?
3- What have you learned from the insights of peer practitioners about your own work in Porto?	3- To what extent have the URWG and the visit to Porto, in particular, influenced the perception you had about the regeneration issues in general?
4- To what extent have the URWG and the visit to those cities influenced the perception you had about the regeneration issues in general?	4- How far are the specificities of the UR process in Porto different from the local-based approaches in your city?
5- How far are the specificities of the UR process in those cities different from the local-based approaches in your city? If simpler, please pick just one city which you find important to highlight in order to explain the contrasts.	5- Have the lessons you attained from Porto influenced your work as urban manager/practitioner, that is to say, have they implications in your work or in the way you will design your future strategies and/or action plans?
6- Have the lessons you attained from those cities influenced your work as urban manager/practitioner, that is to say, have they implications in your work or in the way you will design your future strategies and/or action plans?	6- Do you consider the experience in Porto of European relevance for other urban managers/practitioners, as far as UR approaches are concerned?
7- Do you consider the experience in Porto of European relevance for other urban managers/practitioners, as far as UR approaches are concerned?	7- Finally, to what extent do you consider important the influence of tacit and experience-based knowledge delivered through the participation in a cross-European project, such as the one you have experienced in the URWG set by the EUROCITIES?
8- Finally, to what extent do you consider important the influence of tacit and experience-based knowledge delivered through the participation in a cross-European project, such as the one you have experienced in the URWG set by the EUROCITIES?	

As indicated Table 2, from the total number of participants in the URWG, we received contributions from 29% (7 respondents out of 24) and 50% of the total cities involved (3 out of 6), namely, The Hague, Dresden and Porto. We dedicated a two-week period for the consultation of all the participants, having sent an initial e-mail with our research objectives and the questionnaires, and a second e-mail as a reminder. This short time frame is certainly the main reason for not having a better response rate. In fact, two of the practitioners were unreachable because one was absent from the workplace and the other had changed job.

**Table 3. Contributions for our research, in percentage, by type of contributors**

Survey Indicators	The URWG Sample (no.)	Contribution to our Research (%)
Total URWG Participants	24	29%
PVSRU Participants	2	100%
PVSRU Partners	19	16%
URWG Chairman	1	100%
Final Report Authors	2	50%
URWG Cities	6	50%

In the next section, we present the results of these questionnaires, after a qualitative and interpretative analysis of all the contributions was conducted, and which were cross-referenced with the conclusions presented in the report of the URWG by Wassenberg and van Dijken (2011).

### **The learning attainments from participating in a cross-European project**

For PVSRU, the URWG became an important learning process, confirming previous expectations. The amount of issues and questions raised, the problematics around integrated policies implementation and the challenges of area-based initiatives – all gave practitioners practical substance for reflections. The themes that were thoroughly discussed were related to the balance between people, place and organisation, the social mix approaches, the durable quality of interventions, governance issues, how to empower residents and about financial issues. All of these were subjects that interested PVSRU in particular, since its activity includes them all interactively.

Intervening in a vast and central area like the one where PVSRU acts makes the task largely complex because of the diversity it includes. In this sense, the peer reviews from the URWG made PVSRU realise how a stronger action should be put in place, as a top priority, in order to invert the physical decline, since this problem, coming before the social and economic dimension, was the main factor responsible for the negative image that, ultimately, was also responsible for the socio-economic problems. However, the peer practitioners also advised that such a strong physical intervention should be performed alongside media involvement in the process, since negative images may be defeated by showing the successes and accomplishments to the wider public.

Neighbourhood management and development is one such success, at an intangible level, but with great physical implications, like the one being carried out by PVSRU through the Urban Area Management Unit. Such an initiative involves the private sector in the regeneration dynamics, stimulating residents to be the first to care, defend and regenerate their neighbourhoods, their own houses and their businesses. This is also important from a financial perspective, since the public sector, investment-restrained in this time of crisis, may then count more on the involvement of the main protagonists of urban regeneration, that is, the residents and property owners.

However, for PVSRU, long-term funding and access to European subsidies are crucial for delivering such physical successes and turn the situation around in its most deprived areas.

Alternatives must be also considered, and PVSURU has always tried to arrange creative forms of financing for the huge task it has in its hands. The growing partnerships network is fundamental in such an equation, as well as sourcing new forms of project funding, since European funds are not always reachable when too restrictive or too complicated to apply for. Public money should always be seen as a multiplier, since it indicates the direction for good and necessary investments and encourages creative projects when tenders are launched.

The URWG has showed how a local-based approach, though needing a national governmental supporting lever, is a priority in every UR programme, especially when intervening in such a large deprived area, as it is the case in Porto and in Oslo, for instance, even if due to different reasons. Actually, the perception of problems makes the strategy different and the rehabilitation aim adapted, an evident fact when we compare Berlin with high unemployment rates, Oslo presenting relative social degradation, the issues of social cohesion and housing prospects in The Hague, and the physical deterioration in Porto and Dresden. Each city has a very different context and a different set of problems; cities are in different levels as far as the developing of the regeneration process is concerned, which produce distinct lessons to be taken from each partner. For instance, heritage issues are not as relevant in Berlin as they are in Porto and, as a consequence, rehabilitation issues in Porto seem much more complex, demanding a higher investment amount. However, on the topic of empowerment, as referred to by one Porto practitioner, there is still a long way to go to induce a higher participation of the local population in the projects, in strategy definition and implementation.

Additionally, the openness and flexibility of the implementation of strategies is an *a priori* condition for the work of urban practitioners. In fact, one participant from Porto highlighted how it is positive to have the possibility to learn from different programmes and strategies being implemented in different environments, because they can change the way one thinks about one's own city's situation and the need to adapt solutions to the city's own context. The responses to the questionnaire prepared for the representatives of PVSURU recognised that the URWG created, first of all, new knowledge about the reality of the urban problems of the participant cities, including of their own city, Porto. The access to some background information, when available previously, didn't offer the same valuable input as the actual visits and meetings provided by the URWG. Moreover, when presenting one's own city's experience to outsiders this enables interesting reactions, since the peer practitioners will certainly value actions and projects from a different angle, and receive questions on strategies and tactics from unexpected perspectives, which will make the presenters think them over again. One Porto practitioner recognised how the peer perspectives originated new internal organisational questions, namely, about how the European money was being spent. Notwithstanding, it is curious how such a cross-context project also makes the cities see that the problems partner-cities have are so different from their own, with such a different intensity, which almost causes a sentiment of reassurance. Porto may have several legal constraints, large financial difficulties and a dense and widespread physical problem, but it is also true that it does not have, for instance, the same integration of immigrants issues as other cities do, though some techniques and approaches may be applied to Porto.

To sum up, the possibility to exchange ideas with other urban professionals made the participants from PVSURU think differently, having important implications in the way they see their own city, which they acknowledged. Some ideas and concepts could be transferable, not only at the PVSURU level, but also to other agents and areas of the city: for instance, by using facilities as local icons; by encouraging tenants to keep their houses and neighborhoods clean and safe; and by promoting social programmes that may foster micro-entrepreneurship. In



fact, it was also recognised how all cities seemed to have common problems: how to promote regeneration in an environment of financial stress; how to combine incentives with a more visible ‘public hand’; how to improve citizen participation; and how to avoid some negative side effects, such as gentrification, which was an issue in Berlin, for instance, and may also become an important one in Porto.

Let us present, as a concluding remark, the opinion of one respondent to the questionnaire addressed to PVSURU, as far as the importance of the influence of tacit and experience-based knowledge delivered through the participation in the URWG was concerned:

In loco exposure to problems and solutions enhances our ability to assess and find own solutions to the problems we face. It is a “face-to-face” source of knowledge that is very difficult to get otherwise.

## **The experience of PVSURU: To what extent of European relevance?**

PVSURU had the opportunity to present to their peer partners from the URWG the local-based approach that has been conceived and implemented. During the all process, but especially during the site visit and subsequent meetings in Porto, in April 2010, the peer practitioners received support material and information, and there were deep exchanges of ideas about the city and its regional context, and its economic and demographic evolution in the last three decades, that is, its suburbanisation process and economic decline, which are the main reasons for the abandonment and ageing of the city centre. The de-population, the great number of vacant floors and the physical degradation are effortlessly visible in the area of intervention of PVSURU, part of which is classified by UNESCO as World Heritage since 1996. The unprecedented, unparalleled and far more difficult task of PVSURU in regenerating this unique intervention area, when compared with the examples given by the other cities in the URWG, made this a stimulating case study of European relevance, as it was unanimously considered by the project-partners on the survey distributed.

In the study visit to Porto, a presentation about the city was given by the Studies and Planning Department of the City Council, where the municipal strategy and its main pillars were presented, namely, social cohesion, competitiveness, social housing, empowerment, education, sports, urban safety, employment and, last but not the least, the UR policy. A presentation of the urban rehabilitation strategy followed, given by PVSURU. Important for awareness of the local-based approach were also the presentations prepared by relevant agents, which included the University of Porto (by presenting its Creativity Industries Project), the ADDICT Creative Industries Agency (focused on the promotion of the creative industries), the ‘Cidade das Profissões’ (a center of information in the employability field), the Entrepreneurship Office (a project integrated in the Action Programme for the Urban Rehabilitation of Morro da Sé\_CH.1), the Association ‘Porto Digital’ (which promotes projects related to Information and Communication Technologies), the Youth Foundation (aiming to integrate young people in professional life), the ‘Arts Palace – Talents Factory’ project (a creative hub and incubator for micro-enterprises and artists), the Energy Agency of Porto (whose mission is to promote innovation and to contribute to sustainable development), and the ‘Metro do Porto’ company (a light-rail network, founded in 2002, which has the city centre of Porto as its core, and which has significantly changed mobility in the metropolitan area of Porto). The three-day visit to Porto was, consequently, very intensive, diversified and rich in terms of the knowledge transferred, but its purpose had been accomplished, which was related to a better understanding of the context-specificity of the regeneration task developed by PVSURU, a better perception of the cross-dimensional dynamics occurring in the historic

centre and an incisive study of the Urban Rehabilitation Project created for the Morro da Sé area, in particular and exemplificatively.

The practitioners learned about the experience of PVSURU, a strong actor at the lead of a challenging renewal process, involved in partnership models with other strong local agents, targeting: physical upgrading, the fostering of employment, social policies intensification, cultural and educational promotion, and the development of entrepreneurship and, specifically, of the creative economy. It was demonstrated how an old regulative system that determined fixed rents was broadly responsible for the deterioration of the built heritage, which was also frustrating or at least delaying most of the UR projects (Wassenberg and van Dijken, 2011). This adverse context was demonstrated to have generated, surprisingly, little interest for people to live, to work, or to invest in the historical inner city of Porto for decades. Most of the peer practitioners did not know much about the reality in Porto and they found it particularly difficult to understand the macro circumstances and the legal framework as far as the rental market is concerned.

Moreover, Porto is the centre of a metropolitan area, such as Berlin, The Hague or Oslo, but there is no metropolitan level of government in Portugal. In Portugal, urban policies are applied at the local level, and centrally/nationally directed and appraised, which also explains the severe urban sprawl Portugal has been experiencing in the last decades, enabling, therefore, contradictory effects of regeneration policies (mainly active at the city centre) and housing policies. However, for some cities, such a close link between national and local government was inspiring, as it was stressed by one of the respondents to the questionnaire, particularly in relation to shared assets and resources (including land and buildings).

Though so context-specific, Porto could still find similarities with other cities around the need to balance modernisation and regeneration of the city centre and waterfront, and the need to protect the cultural and architectural heritage that makes each city unique and thus attractive to visitors and investors. Ultimately, as pointed out by one practitioner, the key question could be related to the retention of the prestige and benefit of a UNESCO listing, against the pursuit of regeneration that aims for the city centre to achieve the standards of the twenty-first century. An optimum outcome should be, of course, to accomplish both, but it remains to be seen if that is achievable.

Peer practitioners have pointed out how the URWG, in general, and the visit to Porto, in particular, had underlined three key messages: the need for genuine partnership and collaboration between different public sector actors; the importance of strong management, decision-making and political support; and the enabling role of residents and local “champions”. Lessons learned in Porto were, according to our peer practitioners, transferred to their local contexts and used as an example in many situations, for instance, in reference to local/government linkages, the role given to the private sector, stakeholder involvement and the more flexible ways of financing sustainable urban regeneration, and the importance of recovering and redeveloping an outstanding historical urban centre listed as World Heritage.

Concluding, the participation in the URWG was a very important learning experience that has shown that not only do the big headline messages affect future work and working practices, there are also ongoing benefits through *ad hoc* exchanges of information, given the opportunity to contact counterparts and to ask questions directly, give remarks and seek advice, enabling also future collaboration because close contact is kept and future knowledge may also flow more easily. Seeing, hearing and feeling the different practices have been the core gain of such an experience. The exchange of this tacit knowledge could never be reached with only written reports, or with simple presentations, films or conferences, because, as one

peer practitioner noted, *“Learning from each other across Europe is essential in order to assess your own problems appropriately”*.

## Conclusion

When developing this paper we initially aimed to review our own participation in a cross-European project, but we then realised that we would also learn more about ourselves by obtaining the perceptions of our partners. This was the best way to prove the importance of participating in an international working group for the production and diffusion of knowledge among the urban practitioners involved. But it is our belief also that not only the partner-cities benefited from this experience, as other cities in Europe also benefited from the transferable knowledge we have produced (Wassenberg and van Dijken, 2011).

Our work has showed the centrality of tacit and experience-based knowledge transference in the context of an international exchange programme of urban practitioners. In fact, cities in Europe face similar problems but have highly distinctive contexts and milieu pressures that make each case study unique. Porto was presented as a unique example of how a regeneration programme can be carried out, having a strong agent at the lead, namely, PVSRU, while trying to perform an integrated intervention, balancing place, people, economy and environment-based policies.

The aim of the URWG set by EUROCITIES was to conduct a project with a start and a finish and with a tangible result, and this has also been the perception of all the partners involved, gaining a better knowledge background from such a tangible result, which is based on the tacit knowledge transference. People, who normally do not have the chance to go abroad and get a foreign appraisal of their own work, as well as see other work being carried out, had, in this case, such an opportunity. They all concluded with greater recognition of the importance of European policy and funding; the importance of partnerships, of involvement and of empowerment; and the importance of a model that includes the private sector. Moreover, we have indicated how the working group itself may represent a starting point for the creation of a formal learning mechanism in Europe, for instance, a hypothetical exchange programme for managers and practitioners in the field of urban regeneration.

Though we had some limitations, as far as reaching all the practitioners and getting the highest number of insights possible to our questionnaire, we still could confirm the learning opportunities that were taken by the participants of the URWG, in an interconnected way. This is an example of a successful transnational exchange of experiences that has stimulated practical knowledge, but further investigation could still address a broader network of international projects carried out by the EUROCITIES network, for instance, or the URBACT network, contributing to better recognising the importance of such initiatives.

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## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors, which do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any institution or entity related with URWG, created by the EDF of the EUROCITIES.

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# Influence of Relations of Power on Local Development Planning Processes: Two Cases of Palestinian Joint Community Planning Processes

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**Abstract:** Considering the fragile conditions of the Palestinian Territory, Local Governments (LGs) are obliged to look for effective tools to steer local development with very limited resources. A participatory local planning approach called Strategic Development and Investment Planning (SDIP) has been recently introduced by the national government (2009) to help LGs work closely with their citizens to identify, implement, and monitor community priorities. Despite the success stories in implementing SDIPs, relations of power have negatively influenced the SDIP in certain Palestinian cities/towns leading to the exclusion of crucial sectors of the community during the planning process. This paper intends to map power landscape in two selected towns (each consists of multiple communities administered by a single LG) and draws recommendations and needed interventions to improve local participatory planning processes.

**Keywords:** participatory planning, Palestine, strategic planning, power relations, local governments

## Background

### *General considerations*

Many local administrations in Palestine are challenged to work under difficult conditions such as limited resources,<sup>2</sup> increasing population, and relatively high levels of unemployment. Moreover, the Israeli occupation has negatively affected the balanced relation between the different cities (different economies) on one hand, and between each urban area and its

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<sup>2</sup> Following 2005 local elections, Hamas political party has taken the majority of seats in local elections. As a result, many local administrations were boycotted by donors considered crucial for funding local development processes. Central Government transfers are unstable and need to undergo a reform process. Other types of local resources include local revenues by providing services as electricity and water, however, the central government's tendency to establish semi-public utilities for water and electricity services will affect the financial status of municipalities.

neighboring rural communities on the other hand. This geographic discontinuity calls for pressure on resources and demand for public services in each Palestinian city, town, or village.

Given that local administrations are the closest governmental bodies and are elected by the citizens, it is very important for decision makers (the elected mayor and local council members) to look for innovative ways of providing the needs of the citizens taking into consideration the existing challenges. After 2005 local elections, some municipalities took the initiative of preparing a development plan for their town/city/village, such plans varied in terms of strategic orientation and level of citizen participation. Moreover, the final output (the development plan) lacked, in general, concrete implementation and monitoring processes. Other planning approaches were introduced by international agencies to support local administrations in preparing and implementing strategic development plans.

Following these initiatives, it has become evident that there is a need to validate and adopt a harmonized and localized approach by the national level represented by the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG). In September 2009, the MoLG launched a policy paper and a procedure manual to introduce a customized development planning approach on the local level, the approach is referred to as Strategic Development and Investment Planning (SDIP). The SDIP seeks to:

- Promote the decentralization process in Palestine;
- Improve governance and decision-making processes at the local level;
- Improve responsiveness to emerging community needs;
- Enhance services delivery at the local level; and
- Set the basis of an integrated development approach that ensures integrated development among different governing levels. (MoLG, 2009)

The SDIP procedure manual is a step-by-step guideline that identifies the key steps in strategic planning on one hand and a systematic involvement of the community on the other hand. Due to lack of capacities at the municipal level, external planners and facilitators are contracted to support the municipality in managing this participatory process.

The scope of the research will mainly focus on the planning stage, which is considered quite crucial as it demonstrates the first encounter between the local administration and its community. During this stage, different levels of citizen participation (informing, consultation, partnership) are used to ultimately produce a commonly accepted planning document (SDIP for the locality). The table below summarizes key “encounters” between the citizens and the local administration throughout the planning process as extracted from the SDIP procedure manual.

### *SDIP in joint communities*

Based on the policy paper, the SDIP ideally functions within a context of having:

- A single local planning authority – a municipality that has the capacity to mobilize the community and private sector, and has the political willingness to involve the community in decision making;
- A populations of more than 7,000;
- Existence of an organized community through civil society organizations and private sector.



Hence, smaller municipalities (or village councils) serving population less than 7,000 are encouraged to undergo the SDIP process through the cooperation with nearby local authorities (either municipalities or village councils). This coincides with the amalgamation reform processes by the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG). However, SDIP national stakeholders (MoLG and others) and external experts (who facilitated the SDIP in the field) stated that there were considerable variations between the SDIP experiences in joint communities despite the standardized process.

A rational explanation for such variation can refer to the complexity of relations generated during the planning process; this complexity is mainly due to the existence of multiple-decision makers (multiple municipalities, multiple village councils, or a combination) as well as multiple communities. Within this landscape, “Power” would have the biggest influence on the planning process; those who have “power” would dominate, while those who don’t would be marginalized and – in some cases – excluded.

## Research hypothesis and questions

Classical planning theories tend to identify the act of planning as a technical tool used by planners to guide decision makers. However, many of the contemporary theorists (who have considerable experience in planning practice in public agencies) such as John Forester and Norman Krumholz argue for the significance of looking at planning from a political perspective. In his opening statement in “Planning in the Face of Power,” Forester states: “In a world of intensely conflicting interests and great inequalities of status and resources, planning in the face of power is at once a daily necessity and constant ethical challenge” (1989: 3)

Such arguments are considered valid in our communities today considering that capitalist societies continue to produce a difference between those who have power (status, money...) and those who lack it (the poor, the minorities, the marginalized...) (Forester, 1989: 3). Hence, in order for planning to achieve its main objectives of social equity, prosperity, and the social welfare, planners are challenged to understand the planning systems including the relations of power they are working within:

If planners ignore those in power, they assure their own powerlessness. (Forester, 1989: 27)

Not understanding the degree to which a situation is politicized may cause a person either to use power and influence when it is unnecessary and thereby violate behavioral norms as well as waste resources, or underestimate the extent to which power needs to be employed, and fail in the task of implementation. (Bevlyne Sithole, 2002: 10)

The term *power relations* – which is used in this research – refers to: “[The] approach for understanding a system by identifying the key actors or stakeholders in the system, and assessing their respective interests in, or influence on, that system” (James Mayers, 2005: 2)

Moreover, one must mention that “culture” which contains all the values, norms, assumptions and behaviors plays a crucial role in identifying the different patterns of power relations and how to de-construct them in order to better understand how they work and influence the planning system: “After all, politics, policies and patterns of behavior are the cultural products of history, time, and place and they are rarely exportable” (Krumholz, 2002: 5).

**Table 1: Key “encounters” between the municipality and citizens**

“Encounter”	Description	Responsibility
<b>Phase 1: Preparation and Assessment</b>		
Formation of Core Planning Team (CPT)	The CPT is the technical entity responsible for managing and leading the SDIP process. It consists of selected local council members, staff members, and civil society	The local council members
SDIP management chart	The management chart shows all involved entities and their roles and responsibilities. They are usually clustered into: decision makers at the municipal level, municipal technical departments, civil society, stakeholders representatives, and Thematic Working Groups	CPT with the support of local council
Stakeholders analysis	Should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The importance of the stakeholder in the SDIP;</li> <li>- When and How to be involved in the process;</li> <li>- Potential contributions;</li> <li>- Potential benefits/added value for the stakeholder to engage in the SDIP</li> </ul>	CPT
Formation of technical committees and stakeholders group	Technical committees – referred to as Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) – are in charge of assessing the locality in the different sectors (social, planning, local economy, environment, services, security, and culture)	Proposed by CPT, approved by Local Council and announced in the community meeting <sup>3</sup>
The first community meeting	The purpose of the meeting is to officially launch the SDIP process	Open invitation
<b>Phase 2: Visioning</b>		
First planning workshop	The objective of the workshop is to identify the priority objectives for the locality based on the assessment. A common vision is drafted	CPR, Local Council, TWGs, and Stakeholders groups. With the help of External facilitators
Formation of Community Priority Committees	Based on the priority objectives, the TWGs are dissolved or re-structured into Community Priority Committees in order to focus on the identified priorities	CPT with the support of local council
<b>Phase 3: Action Planning</b>		
Second Planning workshop	To agree on the final list of development projects to be implemented in the next 4 years. Selected participants include members of the Priority Committees, Stakeholders groups, municipal staff and local council	CPT
Spatial reference <sup>4</sup>	Where identified projects are spatially located	Planning TWG, local council, Engineering department, CPT
Second community meeting	To validate the SDIP	Open invitation

Reflecting on the above, one assumes that conducting SDIP in a context of multiple-decision makers and communities will have a great influence on the newly adopted process. Therefore, it is quite important to understand the relations of power between the different stakeholders in order to be able to steer the process and capitalize on the diversity aspects that make the SDIP a successful tool for encouraging joint cooperation.

Hence, the objectives of the research are to:

<sup>3</sup> Based on the feedback of the involved stakeholders, the second edition of the SDIP procedure manual (2011) publically encourages interested individuals to register in the Thematic Working Groups and Stakeholders groups during the first community meeting.

<sup>4</sup> This step was added in the table for research purposes.

- Map key power relations between the different stakeholders in a multi-community context;
- Identify how and when such power relations could influence the SDIP planning process.

In order to achieve the objectives, the research asks the following questions:

- What is the context of power relations the SDIP has been conducted under? This includes sub-questions as:
  - Who are the primary and the secondary stakeholders?
  - What are the potential roles, contributions, and interests?
- How do different stakeholders interact through the process?
- What are the key steps/actions that were influenced during the process?

## Methodology

The research will be based on extracting lessons learned from two case studies. The following is a diagram (next Figure) that explains methods of data collection and analysis per each case (Mayers, 2005) and (Sithole, 2002).

<b>Inception</b>	<b>Step 1: Initial understanding of the system</b>	
<p>Before starting any investigation in the field, the key features of the system should be generally understood. This can be done by noting the general context, decision makers, and their organizations</p>	<p>Case study description. Review SDIP outputs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting Minutes;</li> <li>- Stakeholders Analysis</li> <li>- Diagnostic Report</li> <li>- SDIP</li> <li>- Spatial allocation of projects</li> <li>- Videos...</li> </ul>	
<b>Field Work</b>	<b>Step 2: Stakeholders' analysis</b>	
<p>It is important to note that Stakeholders interests can be, characterized into;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organizational</li> <li>2. Individuals</li> </ol>	<p>Guiding Qs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who are potential beneficiaries?</li> <li>- Who might be adversely affected?</li> <li>- Who has existing rights?</li> <li>- Who is likely to be voiceless?</li> <li>- Who is likely to resent change and mobilize resistance against it?</li> <li>- Who is responsible for intended plans?</li> <li>- Who has money, skills or key information?</li> <li>- Whose behavior has to change for success?</li> <li>- Which stakeholders should be involved who are not included?</li> <li>- Which stakeholders are involved who should not be there?</li> <li>- Factual Qs such as how long have you been in post? Who is the decision maker in the group?</li> <li>- Decision making? How is it exercised??</li> <li>- Is the stakeholder connected to other institutions or groups?</li> <li>- What benefits and costs have their been, or are there likely to be, for the stakeholder?</li> <li>- What stakeholder interests conflict with the goals of the policy/ institution?</li> <li>- What resources have the stakeholder mobilized, or are willing to mobilize?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Semi-structured Interviews with people who have been working in the system for sometime</li> <li>- Semi-structured Interviews with other stakeholders, to get to know – from their side- who is relevant and crucial to be within the system</li> </ul>

### Step 3: Understand relations of power

A Highly sensitive step, depends a lot on observation, focusing on formal and informal settings where decisions are made

**Guiding Qs:**

- Who is dependent on whom?
- Which stakeholders are organised? How can that organization be influenced or built upon?
- Who has control over resources? Who has control over information?
- Which problems, affecting which stakeholders, are the priorities to address or alleviate?
- Which stakeholders' needs, interests and expectations should be given priority attention
- With respect to the policy or institution in question?

Based on observations, key interviews, focus groups discussions, one can create the following table in order to position each stakeholder

Stakeholder Power / Potential	High Power	Low Power
High Potential		
Low Potential		

*Power* = ability to influence decision making and influence others to make decisions

*Potential* = those who get affected by the plan

### Step 4: Final assessment and proposed changes

Based on the above, it is preferred to use tables to cluster the information gathered. Following the tables, one can use guiding Qs to define changes needed;

**Guiding Qs:**

- What are the roles or responses of the key stakeholder that must be assumed if progress is to be made?
- Are these roles plausible and realistic?
- Are there negative responses which can be expected, given the interests of the stakeholder?
- If such responses occur what impact would they have?
- How probable are these negative responses, and are they major risks?
- In summary, which plausible assumptions about stakeholders support or threaten the proposed option?

Tables to cluster and analyze the information gathered

Reflection on SDIP process, identify key influences and draw conclusions

## Case studies

### *Case 1: Al Yaserreyeh Municipality*

The joint communities of Al-Yasereyyeh are located in the south west of Hebron Governorate, the area is blocked from the south by the separation wall, the north areas are surrounded by Palestinian villages and towns such as Ithna, as for the east, the communities are 12 km away from Dora town with most of the land in C areas (according to Oslo Accords).

Historically, most of the families have descended from Dora village and are still highly dependent on Dura in terms of social relations (marriage...) and local markets. The communities of Al Yasereyyeh exist within B areas; this entails that prior arrangements with the Israeli side is needed if Palestinian Police should enter – for short-term activities – the communities which limits the role of law enforcement in the communities.

The communities of Al-Yaserreyeh are divided into three main agglomerations; each of these agglomerations is divided into smaller ones. Such structure is highly emphasized by the families that exist in the region and have great influence on the dynamics of the society, the table below demonstrates the size, families, and different agglomerations within Al-Yasereyyeh.

According to the Palestinian Center Bureau of Statistics the total population of the communities is 22,000 (2007). Both Deir Samit and Al Koum communities were administered by separate village councils lead by representatives of the families. However, and due to the size of its population, Beit Awwa was administered by a municipality with appointed local council from the two families, the local council used to appoint a mayor every 6-months-to-1-year from each of the families to avoid any disputes, however, the process wasn't as smooth as envisioned and many violations – in terms of duration – had occurred that negatively affected the performance of the municipality. None of these communities have witnessed local elections. Based on a decree from the Ministers' council in late 2010, Al Yasereyyeh<sup>1</sup> municipality was established to replace the 2 village councils and 1 municipality, and to serve the whole geographical area. It is worth mentioning that a group of residents of Al Koum have demonstrated against the establishment of Al-Yasereyyeh and are still not satisfied with the outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> The name came from Yasser Arafat since the date of establishing the municipality coincided with his memory.

**Table 2. Influence of Families in Al Yasereyyeh**

Population (estimated)	Families, agglomerations	Key characteristics
<b>1. Beit Awwa (Far south)</b>		
12,000	Switi – Western part of village Masalmeh – Eastern part of village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear separation between the two families with poor social relations due to historical dispute</li> <li>- Focus on trade with Israel as source of income, especially selling used furniture/appliances...</li> <li>- Financial conditions of families are relatively good due to the prosperous trading business</li> <li>- Large areas of land were confiscated due to separation wall</li> </ul>
<b>Deir Samit (the middle of Al Yasereyyeh)</b>		
8,500	Hroub → Deir Samit Awawdeh → Semia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Other smaller families as Sharha and Sharawneh</li> <li>- Hroub Family known for its prosperous gold business in Hebron city</li> <li>- Financial conditions of families are relatively good due to the prosperous businesses</li> </ul>
<b>Al Koum (far north)</b>		
1,500	Al Koum → biggest aggl. Others include: Himsa, Moragh, Beit Makdoun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The biggest family is Rjoub – descending from Dura's Rjoub family</li> <li>- Dependence on agriculture, animal raising, and labors in Israel</li> <li>- Financial conditions are poor in comparison to Deir Samit and Beit Awwa</li> </ul>

Source: (author, 2011).



**Demonstration tent against establishment of Al Yasereyyeh in Al Koum. Photo by the author, 01/2012.**

After several negotiations between the Ministry of Local Government and the communities, it was agreed that the composition of the local council should go as follows:

- Mayor → appointed – unless elections take place or local council agree on representation
- Beit Awwa → 8 representatives
- Deir Samit → 5 representatives
- Al Koum → 2 representatives

Currently, key municipal staff members (city engineer, financial manager, city manager) as well as the local council rotate on regular basis in the existing premises of the three previous village councils and municipality. A new building was constructed (only earlier stage) between Deir Samit and Beit Awwa. A Government employee – working in the Ministry of Local Government- is now the appointed mayor of Al-Yasareyyeh. Three representatives from the local council are also acting as mayors in the communities when the appointed mayor is not available.

### *Case 2: Al Ittihad Municipality*

The communities of Beitellow, Deir Ammar, and Jamallah are situated northwest Ramallah city. The three communities are physically connected via urban fabric and transportation network forming a crescent-shaped rural expansion as shown in the aerial photo below. Social relations (marital relations) highly exist. Deir Ammar Camp is situated on Deir Ammar's land, however, the residents of the camp receive their services via UNRWA and hence, the municipality isn't mandated to provide them with the services.

According to the Palestinian Center Bureau of Statistics the population of the communities 6503 (2007). Each of the villages was administered by a village council lead by respected representatives of the families. Based on a decree from the Ministers' council in 2005, Al Ittihad municipality was established to replace the 3 village councils and to serve the whole geographical area. The municipality had witnessed 2005 elections, the elected council was from the three villages, the mayor was from Jamallah village and the municipality building was in Jamallah. Currently, a new building was constructed in Beitellow and is used accordingly. Following a decision by the Minister of Local Government, a new appointed local council (none of its members are from the three villages) headed by a Government employee – originally working in the Ministry of Local Government – took in-charge the municipality late 2010.



**Table 3. Key relevant data about the three villages**

Village	Existing services	Unique features
<b>Beitellow</b>	2 public schools 1 kindergarten 3 Civil Society Organizations (agro-cooperatives, and 1 women association) Public clinic Mother care and child center Youth club (has won awards in the governorate)	Plenty of water springs, privately owned by families in the village The biggest (size and population) amongst the three village Considerable number of educated people in comparison to the remaining two villages (especially women) Most of the Municipal employees are from Beitellow (the accountant, the accountant office, the head of administration) Abundance of land (unknown owners)
<b>Deir Ammar</b>	2 public schools Farmers cooperative 2 civil society organizations Kindergarten	Proximity to camp created good relations between the political parties Some refugees had been living in Deir Ammar village (outside camp boundaries) and are receiving services from the municipality Several historic places, such as prophet Gheith's on the top of mountain and located within a forest (announced as a key historic area in the region) Has a central location amongst the three villages
<b>Jamallah</b>	1 mixed public school 1 kindergarten	The smallest (size and population) amongst the three villages According to the statement of its residents and the two villages, it has been stated that the percentage of educated people is less than Deir Ammar and Beitellow (especially amongst women) Employment: many people still work in Israel

## SDIP in Al Yaserreyeh and Al-Ittihad

The SDIP process took place around April and ended in October 2011 in the two cases, and was financially and technically supported (and proposed) by the Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDPF),<sup>2</sup> a group of experts were sub-contracted by the MDLF to closely follow up the planning process and to support the municipality and the communities in the technical and facilitation requirements. The SDIP has produced a series of prioritized projects that should be implemented in the upcoming 4 years. The estimated budget needed for implementation is 11 million USD<sup>3</sup> in Al Yaserreyeh and 16 million USD in Al Ittihad, sources of funding are still not clear and would depend highly on the follow up of the local councils to lobby for the projects.

<sup>2</sup> A semi-government entity implementing capacity development and infrastructure support on behalf of the central government, the MDLF is basically financed by group of international donors.

<sup>3</sup> The average annual budget of each municipality is 2 Million NIS covering both operational and capital investments.

According to the SDIP documents in both cases, it can be stated that most of the proposed projects are related to infrastructure; this includes rehabilitation of water, electricity, and road networks, in addition to provision of public services such as schools and health care facilities. The SDIP process in Al Yaserreyeh was interrupted and altered due to several constraints which include:

- A change of the coordinator of the Core Planning Team (CPT) during the diagnostic phase;
- Time pressure to finalize the diagnostic report has led selected municipal staff to finalize it and validate it in public meeting;
- Very weak public participation: despite the fact that Thematic Working Groups were established, most of the meetings didn't take place. Special focus groups meetings were conducted to collect information from the public. 2 public meetings (as per SDIP process) were held with average No. of participants not exceeding 30.

17 key persons in Al Yaserreyeh and 20 in Al Ittihad were interviewed including:

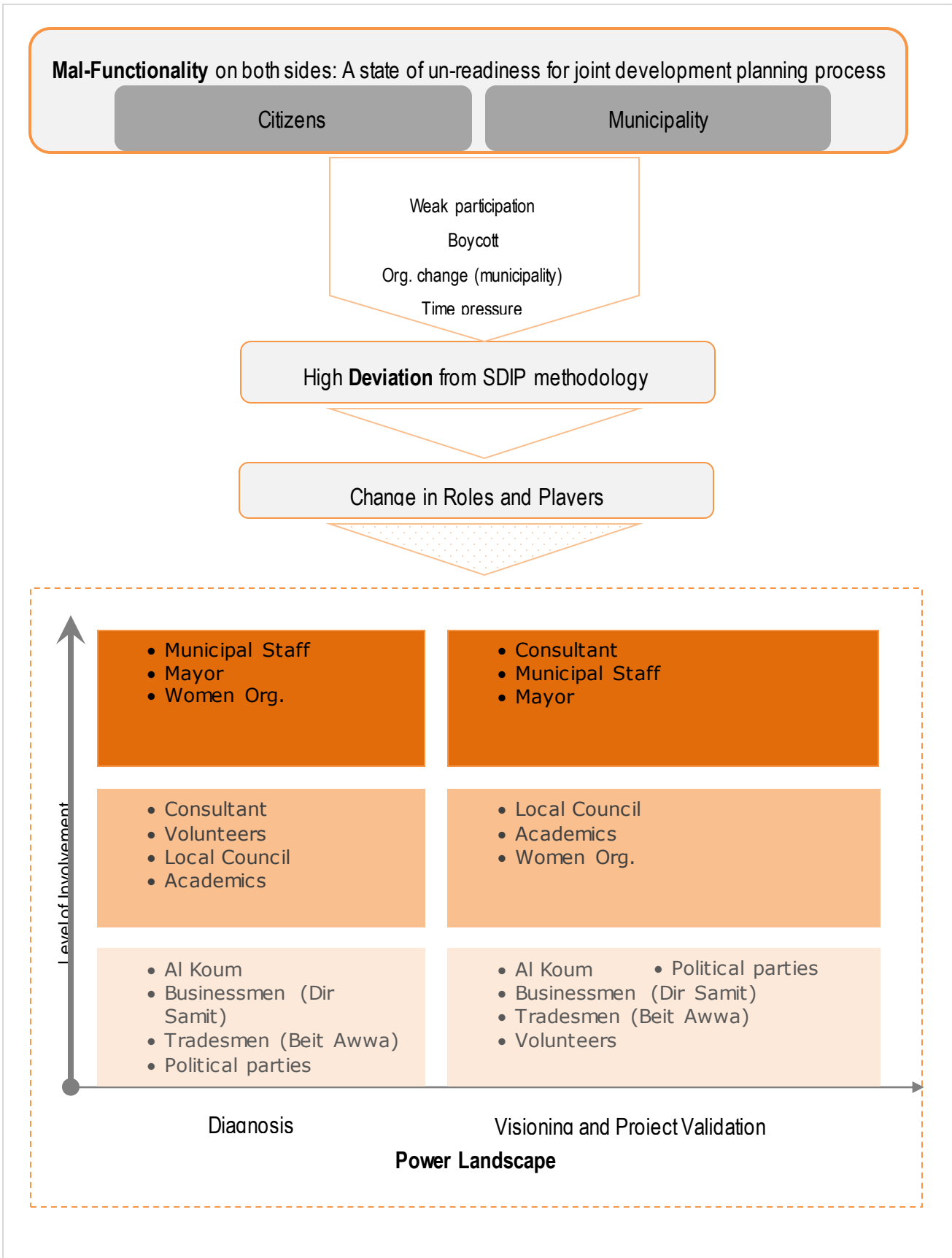
- The MDLF
- The consultants
- Municipal staff
- Appointed mayor
- Local council also representing representatives of families and political parties.
- Former local council members (elected and village council)
- Members of the stakeholders group or who have participated in the process
- People who boycotted the process

Depending on each case, a matrix for all the interviews was prepared to cluster all sorts of collected data, based on the matrix, the analysis per each case was prepared.

### **Analytical perspective**

The next Figure demonstrates the analytical sequence that shaped the landscape of power relations which dominated the SDIP process in Al-Yaserreyeh.

Analytical Diagram



Having analyzed the context in which power relations had developed prior and during the planning process, it was highly evident that a state of mal-functionality of the two crucial players had casted its shadows on the planning process. On the municipal level, the accumulation of poor performance (on the management, financial and technical levels) of previous village councils and municipality has negatively influenced Al-Yaserreyeh's performance and citizen's satisfaction. Al Yaserreyeh municipality remains the main entity, which exemplifies a portrait of a heterogeneous context despite the fact that many efforts were conducted to enhance its financial and organizational capacity.

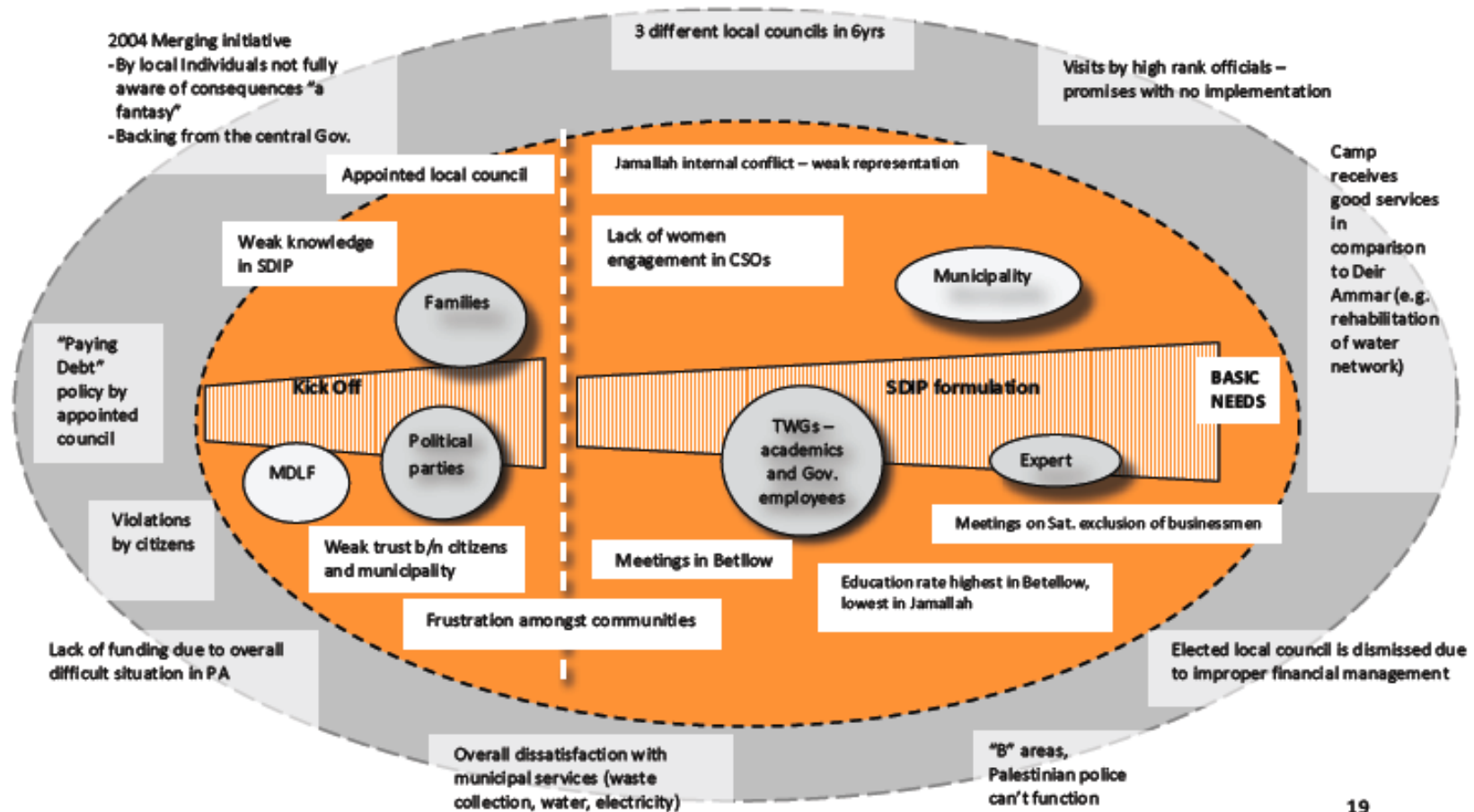
On the community level, the dominance of family structures is quite evident; the case of Al Koum clearly validates this by the ability of a certain family to mobilize the residents and public opinion against merging. The historical conflict between the two main families in Beit Awwa had affected services provided by the municipality, which as a result increased the resistance of Dir Samit and Al Koum to merge. Apathy and abuse/exploitation of municipal services is an indicator of citizens' lack of commitment and unwillingness to engage in development activities for the common good.

Considering the above, a deviation from the SDIP methodology is inevitable and would consequently influence roles and responsibilities of players; the majority of the stakeholders from the three communities didn't see an added value to engage in the process which had put more pressure on CPT newly assigned coordinator and the consultant team to prepare the SDIP under time pressure, this has led to the exclusion of certain groups that have participated in early stages. Due to the fact that the area has suffered from poor infrastructure and lack of funding, most of the outputs of the plan reflect the basic needs of the communities in this sector based on the statements by the interviewees.

Figure 5 demonstrates the landscape of power relations that dominated the SDIP process in Al-Ittihad. The graph demonstrates the general context (outside grey shape) with key factors that have influenced the planning process and its outputs. The inner shape shows the key factors that have affected the process in terms of representation, exclusion and commitment in the process; it is worth mentioning that the conflict, which had occurred at the beginning of the process, has proven the dominant role of families and political parties in municipal work. However, once it has been understood that the SDIP is a technical process with clear set of objectives and methodology, many of them lost interest. Moreover, the general dissatisfaction amongst the citizens towards the municipality had also limited the level of participation.

Only academics and government employees saw the benefit of participating during the SDIP formulation, hence, it can be stated that there was relatively balanced relations of power; minor conflicts had occurred especially during the geographical positioning of certain projects (e.g. schools, health centers, stadiums). However, most of the interviewees agreed that the methodology used (voting and general discussions between the groups as in the SDIP manual) and using technical criteria for evaluation helped to create consensus. Nevertheless, this scientific approach has hindered the participation of some groups such as workers and shop owners as they couldn't interact on the same level with the academics.

Based on the fact that the overall situation in Al-Ittihad hadn't improved with the establishment of the municipality in terms of basic services such as electricity, road network, water, etc. it was inevitable for the participants to choose basic needs as the priority projects.



## Reflection on SDIP methodology – conclusion and recommendations

There are prerequisites to introducing SDIP in newly merged communities, it is preferred that such municipalities are first empowered by technical and financial means. Building trust between the citizens and the municipality is quite crucial to assure that citizens are willing to work closely with the community on development planning, this can be done by increasing transparency on one hand, and communication channels on the other.

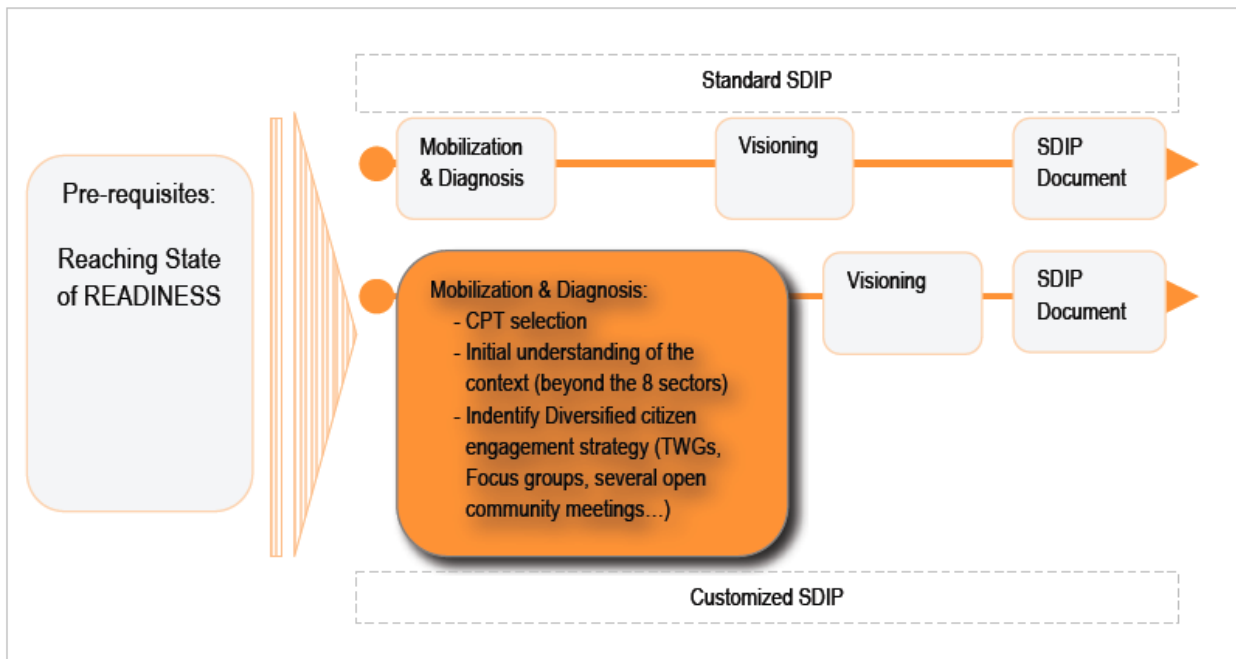
The case of establishing Al Yasereyyeh municipality is a prominent example of a top-down decision to merge two village councils and one municipality, based on the perceptions of the interviewees, it is concluded that careful analysis of the context and relations of power were not taken into consideration prior to the decision which had led to resistance by certain community groups, lack of trust between the municipality and the citizens, and the persistence of mal-functional municipal performance. The three communities of Beit Awwa, Deir Samit and Al Koum lack the basis for establishing a common vision for the area due to their indifference and limited social relations (especially between Al Koum and the others). Moreover, limited law enforcement due to limited police dominance (“B” areas according to Oslo Accords) had weakened the role of the municipality as a service provider on one hand, and the driving force for sustainable development on the other.

Despite the challenges, the ministry will continue to work towards decreasing the number of local administrations through merging neighboring communities. In order for SDIP to function properly within such contexts, many pre-requisites are needed to reach an acceptable level of readiness on both ends (the communities, and the municipality) that tackles issues of:

- Municipal capacity
- Promotion of citizenry
- Significance of joint development planning
- Incentives for encouraging the merging such as increased share of grants and financial transfers to implement capital investment projects could also lay the ground for better participatory planning process in joint communities.

The results also call for certain adaptations in the SDIP methodology, for example, the earlier stages of the SDIP would need considerable time so as to be able to have a deeper understanding of the system and to develop the best strategy of engaging the citizens, for example, focus group discussions during the data collection process (outside the scope of Thematic Working Group meetings) were found to be useful in the case of Al Yasereyyeh. The diversification of citizen engagement strategies is considered of an added value to assure equal representation and involvement of different community members. The selection of the CPT coordinator is highly crucial; he/she should not only have good technical knowledge but also be socially acceptable by the majority of the amalgamated communities. External facilitators play an important role in neutralizing the SDIP and promoting that the process is transparent and assures equal opportunities.

As development planning is a new approach in Palestine, and due to the fact that small communities still lack basic services, it is inevitable that most of SDIP projects are of basic infrastructure character. Moreover, what remains crucial for the joint communities is the geographical allocation of essential projects; technical guidance during this stage could eliminate potential conflicts. But what remains more important is having a vision of one homogenous and connected area where services in one community complements the other.



### Reflections on SIDP methodology

#### Acknowledgments

The research was conducted during the Master Program in Urban Planning in Birzeit University, and will be used as recommendations for the Local Governance Program in the GIZ.

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## Annexes

### Interviews schedule – Al Yasereyyeh, Case 1

	Name	Village/town	Org. /SDIP role	Occupation	Date
1.	Dr. Shadi Al Ghadban	-	Birzeit Continuing Center Consultant	BZU professor	22.12.2011
2.	Nancy Masri	-	MDLF		27.12.2011
3.	Rasheed Awad	-	General Director – MoLG Hebron Directorate Acting Mayor		29.12.2011
4.	Mohammed Switi	Beit Awwa	Al Yasereyyeh CPT coordinator	City Manager	30.12.2011
5.	Andaleeb Atawneh	-	Birzeit Continuing Center Consultant	Community development expert	29.12.2011
6.	Sarah Al Awawdeh	Deir Samit	Head of women organization		
7.	Munther Hroub	Deir Samit	Al-Yasereyyeh Municipality	Head of Financial Dep.	31.12.2011
8.	Ahmed Mohammed Hroub	Deir Samit	Al-Yasereyyeh Municipality Fatah Political Party	Appointed Local Council	31.12.2011
9.	Safa' Sharha	Deir Samit	Volunteer		31.12.2011
10.	Ahmed Hroub	Deir Samit	Citizen	School principle	31.12.2011
11.	Badreyeh Switi	Beit Awwa	Local council member	Head of women organization School principle	31.12.2011
12.	Rasmi Switi	Beit Awwa	Beit Awwa school	P.E. teacher	31.12.2011
13.	Samih Switi	Beit Awwa	Al-Yasereyyeh Municipality CPT	Head of Admin Dep.	31.12.2011
14.	Wisal Masalmeh	Beit Awwa	Polytechnic University Volunteer	Student	1.01.2012 via phone
15.	Sharif Rjoub	Al Koum	Al Koum	School principle	1.01.2012
16.	Ateyyeh Rjoub	Al Koum	Against Al-Yasereyyeh	School teacher	1.01.2012
17.	Ashraf Abu Hlayyel	-	Al Yasereyyeh former CPT coordinator	City Engineer	1.01.2012 via phone

**Interviews schedule – Al-Ittihad, Case 2**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Village/town</b>	<b>Org. /SDIP role</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	Ms. T aghreed Zeyadah	Betellow	Betellow Women’s association CPT member & Social TWG	Gov. employee	14.12.2011
2	Mr. Lou’ ai Darwish	Betellow	Environmental TWG- coordinator	School teacher	16.12.2011
3	Mr. Shadi Daoud	Betellow	Betellow and Deir Ammar agricultural cooperative Stakeholder group & LED1 TWG	Gov. employee	14.12.2011
4	Mohammed Darwish	Betellow	Head of Betellow Animal resource cooperative Stakeholder group & LED TWG	Retired teacher	16.12.2011
5	Nasir Radwan	Betellow	Fatah Political Party – regional focal person Infrastructure and Security TWG- coordinator	Military intelligence	12.12.2011
6	Sa’adat Outhman	Jamallah	CPT & Social TWG	Retired teacher	16.12.2011
7	Sa’ed Zeid	Betellow	Legislative council Planning and organization TWG Institutional TWG	Gov. Employee	13.12.2011
8	Khamis Abdullah	Deir Ammar	Al Awa’el School Sports TWG– coordinator	School teacher	14.12.2011
9	Hanadi Bader	Betellow	Water Authority LED TWG	Gov. Employee	14.12.2011 via phone
10	Hind Fadel Bader	Betellow	Social TWG & Sports TWG	Teacher	13.12.2011
11	Tahseen Odeh	Deir Ammar	Deir Ammar Agricultural Committee	instructor	13.12.2011
12	Eng. Mohammed Radwan	Betellow	Betellow Women’s association; CPT member & Social TWG	Head of Admin. Affairs Dep – Al Ittihad municipality	13.12.2011
13	Fida’ Bazzar	Betellow	LED TWG– coordinator CPT, institutional TWG	Municipal accountant	13.12.2011
14	Nasri Hamdan	Betellow	CPT last 1.5 months	account ant – Ittihad municipality	13.12.2011
15	Yaser Mohammed	Jamallah	-	Political representative	16.12.2011
16	Manal Kahla	MDLF	MDLF focal person	Urban Planner	05.12.2011
17	Shaher Hijjawi	Consultant company	Team Leader for the project	Planner	07.12.2011
18	Faisal Bazzar	Jamallah	-	Business man – Al Bazzar media Co.	18.12.2011
19	Abdullah Abdul Wahed	seconded from MoLG		Acting mayor Al Ittihad	18.12.2011
20	Ali Badaha	Deir Ammar	CPT	General Director – Property Tax Dep. – Ministry of Finance – Ramallah directorate	18.12.2011

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<sup>1</sup> Local Economic Development.

**Spaces, Differences and Cultural Actors  
as Agents in Urban Change**

## Territory Imagery: A Planning Tool for Seeking Spatial Justice

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to explore collective imageries<sup>2</sup> of the Sarajevo citizens after the territorial division of Bosnia and Herzegovina into two entities, a split that also bifurcated the capital city. The creators of the document responsible for this division—the Dayton Peace Agreement<sup>3</sup> in 1995—were using the map scale of 1:600,000. The result of this political act is an inter-entity boundary line (IEBL) that cuts through Sarajevo, passing through houses, lands, dwelling blocks, and the city’s public green zones, dividing them in two. As a case study of spatial division and (in)justice, I will take Olympic Mountain Trebević and its current physical and symbolic relation to the city. In the past, Trebević was known as the lungs of the city. It was connected with the city by the cable railway that was destroyed during the war. Today it is subject of collective memories, politician campaigns, film scenarios, individual extreme sport activities, art projects, utopian voyages into the future, and more. My examination of this specific site contributes to the discussion on how people imagine this space in relation to how dual governance effects its political organization; and if territory imagery can contribute to the discussion and planning of this or any other contested space and if it can be a just space.

**Keywords:** contested space, territory imagery, just space, re-emerging territory, imagery scenarios

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<sup>1</sup> Born in Doboj in 1981, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Live and work between Sarajevo (B&H) and Venice (IT). I’m a PhD student in Urbanism in Doctorate school of IUAV in Venice. The research topic is “Imaging Sarajevo, Recomposing the City and the Territory”. Research is focused on the context of contemporary city that recently experienced the war or other urban conflict. It includes the territory in transition as a concept that contains rural and urban, social and cultural, physical and symbolic spaces and citizen’s imagination about it. As citizen, architect and artist I was always interested in the processes of interactions among the citizens and the city. I developed and I’m still working on different architectural/artistic projects related to the symbolic urban transformations where the citizens from the beginning are involved. I’m collaborating with LIFT, a spatial initiatives association, and I’m an active member of Crvena – Association for Culture and Art, both from Sarajevo.

<sup>2</sup> For imagery (noun) and imageries (plural) I consider “the materials or general processes of the imagination” of certain events, objects and spaces. Definition from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/imagery> [accessed 15.05.2012].

<sup>3</sup> Various sources (21.11.95 to 20.11.05), The History of Dayton Accord, December 12, 2005. [http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/dayton/setimes/special/dayton/history/feature-01](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/dayton/setimes/special/dayton/history/feature-01). The Dayton peace agreement was the initiative launched by the United States in the Autumn of 1995. Proximity negotiations between the warring parties, represented by then Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, and Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, opened at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio on 1 November 1995. The document was formally signed by the three Balkan presidents on 14 December 1995 in Paris.

## Introduction to contemporary Sarajevo

The whole world was looking at Sarajevo during the XIV Winter Olympic Games in 1984 and when the Bosnian war started in 1992. In spatial terms, these two events radically transformed Sarajevo's urban form and image, and fuelled and influenced today's citizens' imageries about the city. Sarajevo was always presented as a place where east and west meet due to its Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian roots, an intersection that is still visible within the urban layout and architecture of the city. During Tito's Yugoslavia, the image of Sarajevo was held up as the representation of the Yugoslavian dream of brotherhood and unity; multi-national Bosnia and Herzegovina was an example of "Yugoslavia in small" scale (Dizdarević, 2000: 27). Today, Sarajevo is dual city, culturally and administratively divided as a consequence of the Dayton Peace Agreement. I assume that contemporary Sarajevo is the meeting of two different cultural and administrative territories that contain several real and imagined cities: Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, Olympic, Socialist, Post-war, multicultural, physically fragmented, contested, build-it-yourself, and others. Sarajevo as a collection of cities is a puzzle city: "It is true that what begins from one part continues from a different side. The new piece that we put doesn't go simply in addition to the previous image, but it redefines the whole, reordering the shape and continuously modifying the vision that we have about it. The image of the puzzle is not composed, it is recomposed" (Ampoux, 1997: 73) – again and again. In this or in any other complex urban environment, the "contestation inside cities" (Harvey, 1997: 27) and spatial justice become urban subjects, such as planning or imagining the city. Sarajevo's territory has always been a part of contested worlds (Phillips, 2005: 3). Using the Olympic Mountain Trebević, which rises so close to the city, as a case study, this article examines how people imagine this space in relation to how dual governance effects its political organization; and if territory imagery can contribute to the discussion about this or any other contested space and if it can be a just space. Finally, the article asks if a contested territory such as Olympic Mountain Trebević could be the subject of re-emerging territory, a notion that might help us recognize and discover new imagery elements that are contesting this contested space.

## Trebević – mountain in the city

Trebević – part of the natural chain of Trebević – Jahorina-is the closest mountain to Sarajevo. It hosts beautiful forests, mountain flowers, medicinal herbs, wild fruit, mushrooms, and several water streams. Its relief is rich in various contours: steep slopes, narrow valleys, sharp ridges, flatlands, and plains. The highest peak is 1,629 m above sea level. The average altitude of Sarajevo is 500 m. Part of the city is settled on Trebević's lowest elevations. In 1920, people began skiing on its slopes, and in the following years ski jumps and a ski lift were built, which were in operation until 1963. Due to Trebević's topography and proximity to the city, a bobsled and luge track was built there for the XIV Winter Olympic Games, held in 1984 in Sarajevo and its mountains. Trebević has always been a favorite sport, excursion, and picnic destination for Sarajevo's citizens. Above is the romantic and ideal description of Trebević. This image is rooted in the past, but very often used even today in some descriptions of the mountain. From the city center there are different roads that can bring us to the mountain by car, and the approximate distance from the city is 10 km. In 1992, at the beginning of the Bosnian war, Sarajevo's cable car, which before the war was driving to the heart of the mountain in a 12-minute ride, stopped functioning. The loss of Sarajevo's cable car created an urban void that in the past had represented a memorable voyage (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. View from Trebević in 1975 (left); view from Trebević in 2011 (right). Photograph from Monography of Sarajevo (left); Photograph by Zoran Kanlić (right), September 2011.**

From different places on the mountain, the whole city could be seen clearly, as if placed on the palm of the hand. In 1992, Trebević changed its role and meaning for the citizens of Sarajevo. Trebević and other hills around the city were the refuge and outpost for the Serbian besieging forces. In 1996, when war ended in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the mountain was almost completely contaminated with mines, especially the slopes oriented toward the city. De-mining was completed by the end of 2008, when, as written in local daily magazines, Mountain Trebević was finally given back to its citizens. Today, according to the Dayton Peace Agreement, the mountain is divided between Bosnia's two entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska, between Sarajevo and East Sarajevo. In 2012, Trebević looks abandoned by the city administration. It is difficult to define it simply as a contested territory, but there are documents such as the above-mentioned peace agreement and different maps that confirm its contestations.



**Figure 2. Political map of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2002). Source: [http://www.vmapas.com/Europa/Bosnia-Erzegovina/Mappa\\_Politica\\_Bosnia-Erzegovina\\_2002.jpg/maps-it.html](http://www.vmapas.com/Europa/Bosnia-Erzegovina/Mappa_Politica_Bosnia-Erzegovina_2002.jpg/maps-it.html).**

Trebević in terms of spatial and social justice, and its relation to Sarajevo, is very complex territory, represented by real and imagined elements of nature, citizens' memories, Olympic past, recent war, post-war environmental risk caused by mines, destroyed infrastructure used as perfect scenography for alternative art and extreme sports (*Dani/Days*, weekly magazine, 2008), film scenarios, political campaigns, dual administration, and so on. If this territory is represented by the different contestation elements, can it be a just space? And where do we search for relationships “(or the myriad of potential relationships) between identity/difference, spatiality and power” (Massey, 1996: 105) that could influence its future in terms of spatial justice? Metaphorically these elements created and still can create different relations and interactions, but it is difficult to believe that it will become a just space.

### Trebević and Sarajevo – contested or re-emerging territory

Trebević and Sarajevo, or Sarajevo and Trebević? In this case, which element is more important—the city or the mountain—was difficult for me to decide. I chose the notion *territory*, which I found appropriate to put them in physical and invisible relation. Besides checking different theories, in the process of understanding the terms *territory* and *contested*, I also relied on research, analysis, and the juxtaposition of elements from the official planning documents, interviews of the citizens, first-person narratives about the city, literature about Sarajevo, Trebević, and the recent war, local media archives, film, music and more. According to Gaffikin and Morrissey (2011: 3), there are two main forms of urban contested space:

One is where dispute and antagonism relate to issues of *pluralism*, and concern rivalries about imbalances in power, welfare and status among distinctive social groups. The other kind is about sovereignty, where are similar pluralist disputes equity, rights, and social entitlement, but these are interwoven with an ethno-nationalist conflict about the legitimacy of the state itself.

The aim of this paper is to explore if Sarajevo's territory could be defined as contested, re-emerging, or a combination of this two; or, if finally it is a re-emerging territory that is contesting the contested territory. André Corboz started his text *The Land as a Palimpsest* (1983) with the words: “Land is trendy.” In this text, Corboz analyses different possible definitions of the notion, and according to him: “The land is not a given commodity, it results from various ‘processes’” (Corboz, 1983: 16), where he was considering both natural and human processes. We could consider the same for the notion *territory*. In 2012, *land* and *territory* are still in fashion and often go together with the word *contested* because even today, “As soon as a group of people occupy it (either in a light manner, by gathering, or heavily, by extraction mining), they establish a kind of developmental or planning relation with it, and the reciprocal effects of this coexistence can be observed” (Corboz, 1983: 17). The notion of territory is often related to its real physical existence, especially in the ongoing or past war conflict areas, even if Jonathan Yovel writes: “territories' proper place is the intersubjective world of communication, imagination, and language, not the physical crust of the earth” (Yovel, 2010: 21). In the case of ongoing war and post-war areas, territory is usually something to conquer and to confirm, in terms of territory of a certain state and nation: “A territory is a given area of land under the jurisdiction of the state, or an organized division of a country that has particular set of powers and jurisdiction” (Tewdwr-Jones and Almendinger, 2006: 10). This is also the case for Sarajevo's territory, but I argue that it is not enough for the analysis of its complexity. I assert that the notion of territory in case of Sarajevo and Trebević contains real and imagery contestation elements that could generate new and different

physical or invisible territories. The map that could demonstrate its division between Sarajevo and East Sarajevo is one of the real contestation elements, which is an official representation of its administrative status (Figure 3).

Sarajevo's territory could be defined as well as a "*Thirdspace* (which) too can be described as a creative recombination and extension, one that builds on a Firstspace perspective that is focused on the 'real' material world and a Secondspace perspective interprets this reality through 'imagined' representation of spatiality" (Soja, 1996: 6). The first explanation of the reason of the contestation of the Sarajevo' territory in relation to Trebević could be related to the last Bosnian war (1992-1996) when territorial conflicts occurred. On the mountain were tanks, mortars, aircraft cannons and other small arms, so that the mountain in the city was turned against the city and its citizens. However, the post-war period of the Trebević-Sarajevo relationship was part of another contestation process that I will try to analyze in the following sections.

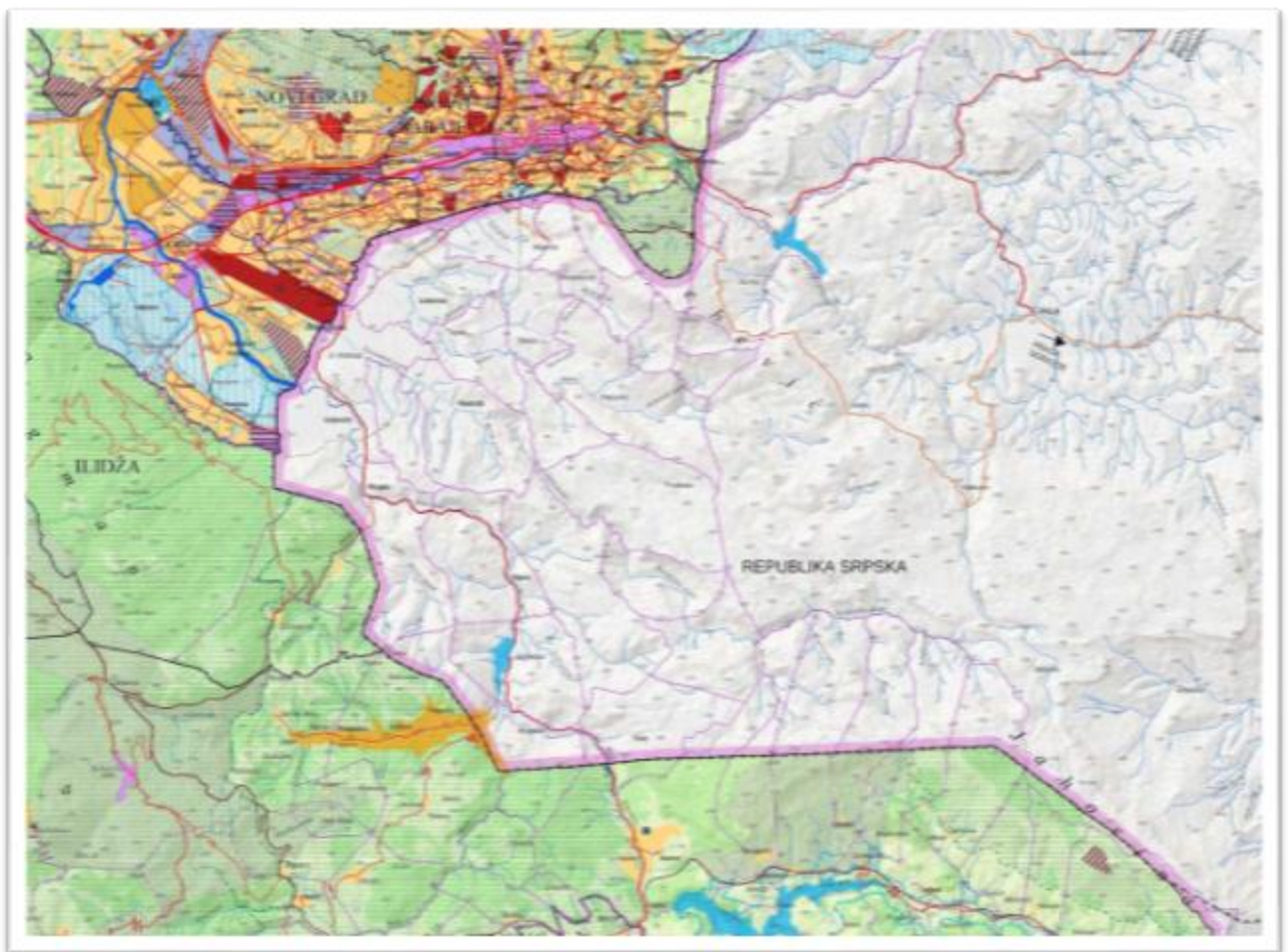


Figure 3: Detail from the map of Sarajevo territory.

The pink line is the Inter Entity Boundary Line between Sarajevo and East Sarajevo.  
Map from the Spatial Plan of the Canton of Sarajevo for the Period 2003-2023:  
[http://zpr.ks.gov.ba/sites/zpr.ks.gov.ba/files/pp/Prostorni\\_plan/PROSTORNI\\_PLAN.jpg](http://zpr.ks.gov.ba/sites/zpr.ks.gov.ba/files/pp/Prostorni_plan/PROSTORNI_PLAN.jpg)



## *Politics in between – assisting and contesting the processes of Sarajevo territory contestations*

Politically and administratively, the Dayton Peace Agreement started the construction of a new Bosnia and Herzegovina based on ethnic divisions. The creators of the peace accord that divided Bosnia into two entities were using a map scale of 1:600,000: “This document defines our constitutional and social identity. A daydreamed division of a Bosnian-Herzegovinian world and Bosnian-Herzegovinian country into two approximate parts, which previously did not exist as a political and geographical expressions of Bosnian-Herzegovinian history, then as a map, defines our present and our future (...)” (Ćurak, 2011: 21). The International community that is still present in our territory followed the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.<sup>4</sup> Trebević has been also divided between two entities so in some documents we can find the term East Trebević that obviously belongs to East Sarajevo in the Republic of Srpska, while Trebević belongs to the city of Sarajevo in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the description of the mountain represented in the documents prepared separately by the respective planning institutions and the East Old Town Municipality (one of the municipalities of East Sarajevo), the signees agree on its political-administrative division, natural beauty, geographical position, Olympic past, and its future tourism potential. In *Spatial Plan of the Canton of Sarajevo for the Period 2003–2023* (Institute for Planning of Development of the Sarajevo Canton, 2006: 34-38), chapter 2.8.1, “Protected Natural Areas,” part of Trebević Mountain was placed in the category of Protected Landscapes. In the future, this planning document is going to deal only with the part of the mountain, which belongs to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The spatial plan for the Republic of Srpska didn’t dedicate any chapter to Trebević, but on the official web site of East Old Town Municipality there is text that indicates that only the part of Trebević belonging to East Sarajevo is considered an important tourism resource. Even if in these documents there are some general descriptions of the mountain as well as projections of the future, by visiting the mountain today, it is clear that whoever made these documents didn’t consider citizens’ imagined uses of the mountain, its actual spatial conditions and its very image. The mountain is covered in garbage and populated by destroyed sport facilities (Figure 4). There are ideas for their creative re-use and re-design; however, the symbolic distance between the Mountain and the city, due to the last war and collective memories associated with that space, creates an urban void.

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<sup>4</sup> Office of the High Representative (OHR) is an *ad hoc* international institution responsible for overseeing implementation of civilian aspects of the accord ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina [http://www.ohr.int/ohr-info/gen-info/default.asp?content\\_id=38519](http://www.ohr.int/ohr-info/gen-info/default.asp?content_id=38519) [accessed 20.05.2012]. The role of SFOR (Operation Joint Guard / Operation Joint Forge) was to stabilize the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This operation was brought to a successful end on 2 December 2005, when the European Union’s follow-on EUFOR was launched. Source: <http://www.nato.int/sfor/> [accessed 25.05.2012].



**Figure 4.** One of the illegal garbage dumps on Trebević (left); destroyed mountain hut ‘Prvi šumar/The First Forester’. Photographs by Zoran Kanlić, May 2012.

On the lower political levels, since 2008 there are examples of collaborations between the two municipalities of the Old Town (from Sarajevo) and the East Old Town (from East Sarajevo). Their projects are related to the cleaning, revitalisation, and maintenance of the infrastructures, such as street illumination projects for the mountain villages, water supply, and roads that are connecting the neighborhoods positioned on the lower parts of the mountain and some roads on the mountain itself. The official documents about the collaboration signed between two municipalities are named “The Agreement on Inter-entirety/Between Municipalities Collaboration.” These two municipalities can only work on the kinds of projects related to the improvement of the infrastructures. All other projects and plans for tourism development, cultural exchanges, education, and so on are not under their jurisdiction.<sup>5</sup> In 2008, the city of Sarajevo started activities related to the reconstruction of the cable car that used to connect the city and the mountain. This project was presented very often in local media, and so many politicians were talking about it. The Sarajevo Cable Car, a monument for future generations, one of the city’s symbols, would soon become a legend or an urban fairy tale. Although it had never been profitable—it covered only around 40% of its costs—it is the subject of unsustainable projects, which envisioned 1,000 passengers per hour, instead of the 400 it used to transport. Today, different tourist maps of Sarajevo are sold that contain a graphic sign for the cable car, so many tourists naturally go to the Bistrik neighborhood<sup>6</sup> in order to get to Trebević. At this moment, the city of Sarajevo is planning that the cable car will launch by the end of 2013. In January 2011, an initiative started to develop the “Feasibility Study on the Strategic Framework for Economic and Tourism Development of Trebević.” The research was carried out by the Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency (SERDA) and developed by the Institute of Economics Sarajevo. The study was presented in May 2012 and the main focus was on environment protection and identification of the potentials for tourism and eco-tourism development. The other recommendation was to develop a brand for the special picnic place located near the cable cars’ debarkment location, overlooking the city: “The Park and Lungs of the Broader Region

<sup>5</sup> Information about collaboration between two municipalities of Old Town from Sarajevo and East Old Town from East Sarajevo are from the interview with the actual mayor of the Municipality Old Town of Sarajevo Mr. Ibrahim Hadzibajrić on 28.05.2012.

<sup>6</sup> Bistrik is one of the neighborhoods of Sarajevo.

of Sarajevo” (Serda, 2012: webpage <http://www.serda.ba/default.asp>). In chapter 2.2.2, “Cable Car and Trebević in Spatial Planning Documents”, an overall analysis of Trebević is presented in different planning documents, starting from the *General Urban Plan of the City of Sarajevo* from 1963 until today in the *Spatial Plan of the Canton of Sarajevo for the Period 2003–2023*. In this analysis only one sentence mentions that the mountain is divided by the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) created by the Dayton Peace Agreement. I observe that, considering the complexity of the administration of divided territories, it would be interesting and necessary to start the analysis of the mountain from its present political, planned and administrative status. By comparing the initiatives of low political levels and the high political levels related to the mountain, it is easy to conclude that collaboration between two municipalities is a positive example; but it’s also clear that their collaboration is very restricted. In different statements shared in the media, the reason given for such municipal collaboration is to improve tourism. But, if we compare the declared aims of these municipalities and the actual situation on the mountain itself, the result would be a planning paradox. And it is important to note that the infrastructures of most of the pre-war buildings are destroyed and dangerous (see Figure 4). An overview of the official documents prepared by the planning institutions and of the activities organized by the two municipalities can prove that Mountain Trebević in relation to the city of Sarajevo is a contested territory. There are so many official activities organized by municipal planning institutions related to the physical and infrastructural connection between the mountain and Sarajevo. Their engagement is ambiguous, without a clear agenda, and aimed at planning a politically and administratively divided territory. There are no activities by any of the above-mentioned institutions that are promoting or organizing events where citizens from both municipalities could be involved. These initiatives perhaps could help the policymakers to realize what was, what is now, and what it could be in the future Trebević, for the city and the all citizens independent from which side of the mountain they live.

### *Searching for territory imageries*

I assume that imagination is a progressive condition that creates individual or collective imageries about certain spaces or events. Imageries are created by all citizens, from popular culture through books, music, film, local media—mostly daily magazines, TV program, radio, certain artistic projects, and so on. Imageries can be represented with visible or abstract forms. I argue that in the post-war areas imageries can help the process of re-appropriating the city’s places and spaces. Examples of that creation process are found in a few articles from Sarajevo’s newspapers about Trebević, which are entitled: “Picnic Place Between the Reality and a Dream” (*Oslobodjenje/Liberation*, daily magazine, 2008), “Sarajevans Will Return to the Olympic Beauty” (*Oslobodjenje/Liberation*, daily magazine, 2008), “Four Young Man Escaping from Trebević” (*Start*, weekly magazine, 2009), “Trebević—Extreme Sports, Spiderman, and Skaters Race” (*Dani/Days*, weekly magazine 2008), “Return of a Symbol of Sarajevo, Trebević Cable Car” (*Slobodna Bosna*, weekly magazine, 2011), and so on. Each of these articles describes the context of Trebević’s many past uses, sometimes mentioning people’s memory of the mountain and the cable car, and then continues with the promotion or description of a certain event or project for the future that is actually planned for that day or week. These events usually fall into two categories: highly political statements or, to the contrary, independent activities performed by citizens as an alternative solution for the re-use of a certain mountain space. One such event was presented in the article “Trebević—Extreme Sports, Spiderman, and Skaters Race” (*Dani/Days*, weekly magazine, 2008), when Red Bull

organized an international competition for inline skaters on the bobsled track originally built for the XIV Winter Olympic Games (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Excerpt from the weekly magazine *Dani*, from the article “Spider-Man i utrka skatera/Spider-Man and Skaters Race”. The author of the article is Edina Nurikić, photos by Irfan Redžović.

In the same period an international graffiti art festival, Balkan Express, was organized, and artists were using the walls of the bobsled to create an open-air graffiti gallery. Today, the bobsled continues to be used by individuals for different extreme sports and as a site for graffiti art. It is important to note that the mentioned events are representing citizen’s imageries about this sport facility that were never considered in the planning processes, but which certainly could contribute to the planning processes for future uses. Another interesting example that could be part of this territory’s imageries is the Observatory Čolina Kapa on Trebević, which was very active before the war and a relevant institution for research in Astrology and Physics in ex-Yugoslavia and abroad. Its existence, from the beginnings of the 1970s, was mostly possible thanks to citizens’ own initiative – they had a strong will to create a place from which they could study the sky above Sarajevo and look at the moon. In 1992, the Observatory was completely destroyed; all its equipment was burned or taken away, including the books from the library, telescopes, and the glass panels that represented Sarajevo’s sky atlas. Muhamed Muminović, one of the founders of Sarajevo’s Observatory, is not sure what happened to the books and equipment.<sup>7</sup> In an interview that Muminović gave for the weekly magazine *Start* named “Through Landmines to the Stars,” he states:

In the past, in our name we had the University Astronomy Association, but now we didn’t wanted to be linked to any kind of political stream or territory, so we changed our previous name simply to Orion Astronomy Association. (*Start*, 2008: 60).

<sup>7</sup> Information about the Observatory is based as well on the interview with Muhamed Muminović, one of the cofounders of the Observatory and local media analysis, daily and weekly journal on 13.05.2012.

This simple, almost invisible act of name changing is a very interesting position that the Astronomy Association took in respect to Trebević, Sarajevo, and the political institutions that are not interested at all in reconstructing the Observatory buildings (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Destroyed observatory buildings. Photograph by Zoran Kanlić, May 2012.

Muminović continues:

At this time, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a dark spot in Southeastern Europe (...). Astronomical research is not only carried out because of some daily directive, or verification of certain physical and philosophical views. Our image of the world is deeply dependent on our understanding of cosmic events. (*Start*, 2008: 60).

Planinarski Kutak (Mountain Corner) is the mountain hut on Trebević, and through its property the IEBL passes. The post-war owner of the place, independent of the administrative status of the mountain hut property, renovated the building with the help of his friends and relatives. As it was reported in *Start*, people didn't care about the IEBL; they enjoyed spending their time in this place. It is possible that many of them didn't even realize the IEBL passed through the property. The building itself represents past and present (Figure 7). On its facades the old walls are still visible, as they were kept during the renovation, probably for economic reasons.

Symbolically, this mountain hut is an interesting example of the imagery elements included in a contested territory, the methods of its reconstruction, and its use by the visitors and tourists that are contesting it. These examples of independent, individual engagement with the mountain space are different from uses of Trebević through political and administrative power. Maybe these examples can contribute to the general discussion of what is a just space. Or, to confirm that: "In particular, quite different imaginaries and engagements of space are mobilized as foundations within political questions" (Massey, 2005: 56). Is it possible to plan a just space, or to convert an (in)just space into a just one?



Figure 7. Renovated mountain hut 'Planinarski kutak/Mountain Corner'. Photographs by Zoran Kanlić, May 2012.

### *Justice, planning, contesting, imagining*

These four words – justice, planning, contesting, and imagining – can be used in relation to our living space. Our living space, by its nature, should be a just space. My utopic position is that we should all be citizens of any city and territory in the world, living and attempting to create a space that is going to be a just space. Are we searching for social justice inside certain cities and territories, or are we continuing a practical exploration of “another type of human right, that of the right to the city” (Harvey, 2008: 23)? From this analysis of the Sarajevo and Trebević territory, I argue that planning so far is a political act, contesting is both political and creative, imagining is progressive and open, and it is contesting an already contested space. Justice supposes and could be a relational element of these three terms. In the introduction to *The Urbanization of Injustice*, the book’s editors, Andy Merrifield and Erik Swyngedouw, quote Friedrich Engels, whose position is that “justice is the organic, regulating, sovereign basic principle of societies” and as such has nothing to do with the present, or with reality I would add. Merrifield and Swyngedouw (1996) begin: “The ideal of social justice is the bedrock of any democratic society within which citizens can actively participate in a free, tolerant and inclusive political community” (p. 1). The title of the book has a contesting nature; instead its beginning is more utopian that could help better exploration of the topic of social and spatial justice and urbanism. Making a small collage of the words from the titles of the articles<sup>8</sup> from this book, we find: “Justice, Experience, Politics, Urban Space, Liberalism, Environment, Identity, Tensions, The Revanchist City, Street Sensibility, Negotiation, Articulating, Difference, Justice/Just Us, Margin/Alia,

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<sup>8</sup> Besides the editors, articles in this book were written by Susan Fainstein, Ira Katznelson, David Harvey, Doreen Massey, Neil Smith, Michael Keith, Marshall Berman, Edward Soja, and Sharon Zukin.

Hegemony of Vision” (Merrifield and Swyngedouw, 1996: v-vi) – we could identify the processes of eventual urbanization of injustice. Creation of a just space would be an exercise of our right to the city that “is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization” (Harvey, 2008: 23). Planning in contested territories is so important that it “is the main instrument for the social shaping of space, planning is unavoidably central to the conflict’s resolution” (Gaffikin and Morrissey, 2011: 261). In the Sarajevo-Trebević example, we could learn that the institutional projects were “planned for people rather than with them” (Gaffikin and Morrissey, 2011: 274). If I again try to place in the existing context my exploration of the relations between justice and planning, the possible results could be gained only through an unlimited number of contestation processes. Finally, my utopian position could be upgraded, where just space is the imagery space.

## Conclusion

When we consider different concepts and theories on justice and urbanism, it is still difficult to place them on a real location. I argue that the Sarajevo-Trebević example of theoretically contested but practically re-emerging territory remains open for further analysis and different uses than the actual political agenda would have us believe. The often-quoted plans and studies about Trebević Mountain use nice words to describe an area that in reality is politically and administratively divided, polluted by garbage, full of bad memories and ruins, all within incredible nature. In the analysis of the present state of the mountain there are no reports that reveal on-the-ground reporting on the location before beginning to write their plans for the future. I tried the same approach at the beginning of the chapter “Trebević: Mountain in the City,” and I can conclude that this way of using only nice words is an attempt to release you from any responsibility for the actual spatial conditions of the mountain. This tactic contributes to the creation of a kind of closed, or finished, system, without addressing real problems and requests for better space. This approach leaves you without any kind of project for the future. How come the territorial planning exercised by the state institutions are operating in this invented manner, copied from the past’s circumstances? Inventing and imagining about the certain city space was almost always part of the popular culture, visual art, music scene, and so on, an exercise done by citizens rather than by institutions representing and planning for their needs. Instead, citizens with their activities have created different proposals for the use of the mountain’s destroyed sports facilities and for the reconstruction of the mountain hut. For them, the actual maps do not represent their territory. The same can be said for the changing of the name of the University Astronomy Association to the Orion Astronomy Association. These examples reveal thoughts for different futures and different spaces, perhaps towards just spaces: “Conceptualizing space as open, multiple and relational, unfinished and always becoming, is a prerequisite for history to be open and thus a prerequisite, too, for the possibility of politics” (Massey, 2005: 59). Citizens’ activities on the Trebević, positive or negative, are reactions against the political and administrative status of

the mountain. Their imageries about this space contest it, give to it new significances and opportunities, and also create new, re-emerging territories while contributing to the “critical imagination of the city” (Senet, 2008: 290). Finally, they offer imagery scenarios<sup>9</sup> that could open up communication between official creators of the city, the territory and those who live in it.

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<sup>9</sup> “Scenarios and strategies (...) are not the ways for representing the ‘weak thoughts’; contrary they are conceptual places, in which are made confrontations between variety of reasons strong among them as a partial or radical opposition” (Secchi, 2000).



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# Recognizing Cultural Heritage for Social-cultural Sustainability: A Spirit of Place Perspective for Urban Renewal – A Case Study of the Park Mirador de los Nevados

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**Abstract:** This article discusses how within the social-cultural sustainability context and through acknowledgement of the spirit of a place for cultural heritage preservation, it is possible to achieve sustainable development processes. The analysis of the creation of the urban Park Mirador de los Nevados for the renewal of the downtown of the district of Suba in Bogotá, Colombia, provides some ideas on how the link between social-cultural sustainability and cultural heritage preservation can bring up a set of processes and practices for the enhancement of sustainable cultural and urban heritage preservation, without leaving aside the environmental and economic elements.

**Keywords:** cultural heritage, social-cultural sustainability, spirit of place, sustainable development

## Introduction

Theories for sustainable development's principal dimensions – economic, environmental and socio-cultural – have not been equally developed and thus their relationship remains unclear. Academic and political approximations have generally been limited to economic and environmental sustainability, while literature about social-cultural sustainability is still

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inchoate. Indeed, social-cultural sustainability is still an under-theorized and oversimplified concept. Nonetheless, in the recent years, social-cultural sustainability has been slowly recognized as a fundamental component of sustainable development. Consequently, it has started to play an increasing role in urban planning and to be included in the governments' agenda (Colantonio, 2011; Manzi *et al.*, 2010).

Sustainable development and heritage planning face a constant struggle between preserving cultural heritage and achieving economic growth and modernization. Currently, approaches for sustainable urban planning are focused on creating liveable built environments, disregarding a holistic perspective for community developments and specifically culture. This absence of social and cultural perspectives is evident in heritage planning research where the physical forms are the main focus (Nasser, 2003). For the viability of sustainable urban and cultural heritage planning it is necessary to emphasize the interaction between citizens, the physical environment, social organization and public policies (Echebarría and Moralejo, 2003).

Social-cultural sustainability “concerns how individuals, communities and societies live with each other and set out to achieve the objectives of the development models that they have chosen for themselves, also taking into account the physical boundaries of their places and planet earth as a whole” (Colantonio, 2011: 24). It involves specific cultural or social relationships, social structures, customs and values, which represent the social constraints of development. In this context, social-cultural sustainability combines the traditional social policies (equity, health, poverty reduction, livelihood, etc.) with emerging concerns about participation, social capital, needs, economy, environment and “more recently, with the notions of happiness, well-being and quality of life” (Colantonio, 2011: 24). These last issues, more intangible and less measurable, involve concepts such as identity, social networks and Spirit of Place. Furthermore, these issues have become more and more important within government and policy-making debates (Colantonio, 2011; Manzi *et al.*, 2010).

In this context, cultural heritage is an essential element of the sustainable development of the city. Nevertheless, research concerning the relationship between sustainable development and cultural heritage plays almost no role in social-cultural sustainability debates (Van Der Hammen *et al.*, 2009). Most studies ignore the social function of cultural heritage and focus on two main fields: sustainable tourism and environmental degradation effects on material heritage. Other studies list monuments, buildings and conservation areas, implying that the worthiness of cultural heritage only relates to the tangible objects (Tweed and Sutherland, 2007).

At the same time, problematically, perspectives on heritage have historically been divided into the material and the immaterial, giving rise to confusions about the meaning of heritage and its social function (Clarke and Johnston, 2008). The social function of cultural heritage concerns social cohesion, integration and education as well as the social and cultural distinction processes in multicultural societies (Alofs, 2008). Presently, besides the preservation and restoration of the cultural heritage, people in charge of cultural heritage management do not give enough attention to the social function of the heritage (Querol, 2010).

To find new ways to interpret the relationship between cultural heritage and sustainable development, the debates regarding cultural heritage should be framed into the social-cultural sustainability studies. From this perspective the importance of the social function of cultural heritage would be recognized not only in theory but also in practice, while at the same time it would be a tool for social-cultural sustainable development. The Spirit of Place theory, which embraces the essential categories for heritage studies – identity, memory and territory – and

its sustainability, offers a model to integrate cultural heritage into the sustainable development paradigm.

Under Spirit of Place theory for cultural heritage preservation, material and immaterial components cannot be divided, as the cultural, social, economic and environmental elements are required to be understood from an integral perspective. This condition is considered essential for the preservation of the communities' identity that has been protected and passed along from generation to generation (Rifaioğlu and Neriman, 2008; ICOMOS, 2008b).

In addition, it is important to contextualize cultural heritage preservation under the sustainable development and urban planning conservation and preservation fields, in which the preservation and conservation of historical and cultural places concerns not just to the importance of the object (the built heritage), but the protection of the social function of the heritage and its cultural representation in the space (Nasser, 2003).

An analysis of the creation of the urban Park Mirador de los Nevados, as part of the renewal of downtown Suba District in Bogotá, Colombia, gives some suggestions on how the link between social-cultural sustainability and cultural heritage preservation – under the umbrella of sustainable development – can further suggest a set of practices for the enhancement of sustainable, cultural and urban heritage preservation without ignoring environmental and economic elements.

The case study presented in this document is not about an urban renewal project executed through the restoration of historical buildings or the implementation of sustainable tourism processes. This is an example of how governmental policies for social-cultural sustainability were implemented congruently with the cultural and social needs of a specific community through recognizing the cultural heritage preservation and its social function. This approach was foundational in developing the Mirador de los Nevados Park and explains why it has become a strong example of a sustainable cultural heritage preservation project. This is an urban renewal intervention project out of which the theory of the Spirit of Place was applied in pursuit of rescuing the cultural heritage for the sustainable development the City of Bogotá is looking for.

This paper analyzes how through the acknowledgement and use of Spirit of Place theory for cultural heritage preservation, within a social-cultural sustainability context, it is possible to achieve a sustainable development process. In this regard, cultural heritage is protected because of its cultural significance and social function in a specific territory and for a specific community. The strengthening of the local identity, linked to the past “not just in the continuity of the built heritage and urban spaces but also in the living culture that created, and is still shaping, the district townscape, or *genius loci*, that characterizes the heritage places” (Nasser, 2003: 468), has no other consequence than the construction of sustainable development processes based on cultural heritage.



**Park Mirador de los Nevados**

Mirador de los Nevados Park is a metropolitan urban ecological park located a few blocks away from the downtown of Suba District in Bogotá and belongs to the Muisca Indigenous Reservation Area. The Park was created in 2002 as an attempt to give recognition to the Muisca Indigenous culture and its efforts to survive in the face of colonization and urbanization in Bogotá during the last century. It was built in a place that for more than fifty years served as a quarry and now is an environmental and ecological protected area. The Park's name literally means "Snow-capped Mountains Watch Point" due to the fact the place is the only spot in the city from where it is possible to appreciate three of the most important snow-capped mountains of the Colombian central Andes ridge: Tolima, Ruiz and Santa Isabel.

The site is one of the cultural and natural heritage places of the city and its architectural design is based on the Muisca Indigenous cosmology. Because of its historical, cultural, environmental and scenic values, the Mirador de los Nevados is an icon of the public space of the city. Furthermore, because of this minority's cultural beliefs regarding nature's protection, this Park also became a platform for environmental conservation and education of citizens. The development of non-formal environmental education strategies through the implementation of the program "Environmental Classrooms" aims to empower citizens and make them able to intervene and promote social actions to improve their quality of life and the environmental conditions of their territory.

It is important to understand the context within which the Park Mirador de los Nevados was created. This site has a direct relation with the first inhabitants of the city in the district of Suba and their memory of the region. The historical and the socio-cultural dynamics that infuse the Park are expressions of its Spirit of Place. The advent of a broad cultural heritage preservation ideal was the key to make the Park part of the city's sustainable development process.

### **Heritage context of the park: Suba district, Muisca community and its cosmology**

The district of Suba is located at the northwest border of the city. It dates back to pre-Hispanic times when the great Muisca family of tribes inhabited this place. These groups subsisted through an agricultural-based economy in which a commercial bartering system helped them exchange their products with other communities within the region. At that time their territory had a rich natural environment covered by forests, rivers and lakes. In 1537, during the Spanish colonial period, the economic and political structure of the native population was dissolved and their lands were expropriated. Centuries later, in 1954, Suba became a district of the city of Bogotá and six years later, due to its location, one of the engines of the city's development. During the 1980s, Bogotá suffered a strong influx of immigrants and people from all over the country came to Suba looking for better opportunities. This created a great cultural and ethnic diversity, but also exacerbated the complex social, cultural, economic and political tensions. In the present, this area has the largest State social offer (health, education, welfare) yet there are high levels of inequity and inequality (AMB, 2004). The district's downtown is the historical location of ancient urban Suba, where the architectural heritage, history and identity remain visible. For Bogotá's Territory Management Plan, this place is considered an area of cultural interest and thus its surroundings receive special legal preservation (IDPC, 2011).

Currently, Suba is one of the most densely populated areas of the city. The ethnic population accounts for 4.5% of the total population of the district among indigenous and afro-descendants. The two principal indigenous groups are Kichwa and the larger is called Muisca. The community of Muisca is divided into two groups: Cabildo Indígena and the “Muisca Nation”. Although only the first group has been officially recognized by the government, projects for cultural minorities in the area of Suba often include both of them (AMB, 2011).

According to some ethnographical studies about the Muisca community in the area, for this indigenous community Suba symbolizes their home: a place full of green spaces, where friends and families meet. This is the place they understand; here they know where are the stores, the parks, the spots where they can find peace: the Park Mirador de los Nevados, the Planada, the central square, etc. It is the place where they were born and live; there, they have the feeling of being someone living somewhere (López, 2005). In this environment, the Muisca, in pursuit of being acknowledged as an indigenous population, celebrate meetings, forums, cultural activities, and other forms of demonstrations in which they express their own identity, their projects and struggles. They inhabit the city while including the nature according to their cosmology and living notions. For them, mountains, lakes and wetlands are some of the most important elements of the relationship between earth and human beings (López, 2005). In the Park, the contributing factor for all of these expressions to be possible is that the Muisca spirit is imprinted in the space. There, the social function of the cultural heritage contributes to the renovation and reproduction of the communities (Gómez, 2011).

Based on this cultural and historical the context of Muisca community, *cultural heritage* is understood as “the indivisible and valued creation that comes from people, culture and place together. It is tangible and intangible, not one or the other” (Clarke and Johnston, 2008: 2). Heritage refers to the set of assets inherited from the past and directly related with the identity and memory of a specific culture in a specific territory (Querol, 2010), which are also in permanent interaction with the present and the future of a particular community. Here the importance of the Spirit of Place perspective lies in its functionality: the recognition of the material and immaterial components as essential elements to preserve the community’s identity is driven by identifying the Spirit of Place for a specific cultural heritage preservation process. Further, it is fundamental to notice how in this same context the social-cultural sustainability approach for urban renewal processes bring the possibility for the heritage, instead of being understood as a static process, to be interpreted as a dynamic socio-historical process (Manzi *et al.*, 2010) where the community and neighborhood are the heart of the analysis.

## Social-cultural sustainability and the park

Under the social-cultural sustainability approach, governmental policies have to be articulated with traditional and more recent social policies involving economic and environmental sustainability, but also the community participation and intangible elements that enrich the soul of the communities (Colantonio, 2011; Manzi *et al.*, 2010).

In this regard, analyzing sustainability requires addressing four principles: equity, inclusion, adaptability and security. *Equity* refers to the opportunities of access to sufficient resources to participate in community; *inclusion* relates to an individual’s opportunities to participate in community processes; *adaptability* refers to the resiliency of communities to respond to change; and *security* includes both the community’s economic security and confidence that they live in environmentally safe and supportive places. These principles are

guided by seven dimensions of action: living, working, playing, engaging, learning, moving and importantly, Spirit of Place. Compared with traditional methodologies and perspectives for measuring welfare, the interaction between those principles and dimensions bring alternative social-cultural sustainability parameters of measures, where “soft themes” such as happiness and Spirit of Place, among others, can be also qualified (Colantonio, 2011).

In Colombia, as part of the national constitutional laws, the government is bound to recognize cultural minorities. The government must promote spaces for the minorities to practice and experience their own cultural, political, environmental and economic path. The creation of the Park and its designation as a natural and cultural heritage site for the city are part of the national efforts to meet this requirement (Gómez, 2011). At the same time, policies for urban planning have been developed by national and local governments under the rubric of “sustainable cities”: where cities should integrate environmental protection, economic development and individual welfare and social development without depleting the natural resources for future generations. The policies for land use, occupation and expansion aim to prevent the expansion of the city into rural or protected areas. Sustainable conservation, restoration and natural resources use will support social welfare and economic development (MAVDT, 2008).

Although within this governmental policies framework it seems that once again environmental and economic issues have prevailed over social ones, in fact, the social-cultural sustainability principle has played a leading role in the instauration of the Mirador de los Nevados Park. Since the Park was conceived the community of Muisca was fully involved. The planners, designers and promoters of the project have consistently worked with community leaders to decide how to protect of the Muisca’s cultural heritage and restore an environmentally degraded area. Thus, the Muisca’s indigenous beliefs about nature guided the “expert knowledge” of the planners for the design and construction of the Park. At the same time, the main elements of the design and composition of the space, such as the trees and fauna, were also determined by the Muisca cosmology. The Park’s environmental educational programs were developed by scientists jointly with indigenous expertise. Since Suba has been the home of the Muisca, during the Park’s creation and implementation, all the aspects related to the recovery, renewal and promotion of the environmental elements of this area were imbued with the cultural principles of this minority. Thus, the environmental protection was framed in the memory and identity of its indigenous inhabitants.

Within this context, the importance of community participation resides in the space given to its members to express their needs and aspirations while acknowledging their conception of the place they live (Colantonio, 2011). The participation processes that take place in the Park are part of the social-cultural sustainability framework in which it is possible for the Muisca people to maintain a contemporary urban, but yet indigenous, identity and memory. During the processes of the creation of the Park, through the implementation of the four principles for social-cultural sustainability (equity, inclusion, adaptability and security), the recognition of the cultural heritage social function was one of the main elements for the Park to contribute to the well-being and quality of life of communities, while also mitigating the impacts of cultural globalization and becoming an incentive for sustainable economic and environmental development (Grażulevičiūtė, 2006).

## Social-cultural sustainability, the spirit of place and cultural heritage social function

### *The park as an urban renewal project*

Urban renewal projects and the way they manage to recreate the space are fundamental tools for the materialization of the Spirit of Place and social-cultural sustainability relationship. This relation has to be imprinted in the urban space for it to be recognized and used by the people, for it to make the cultural heritage an essential foundation of sustainable development processes. Mirador de los Nevados Park is the place where the tangible and intangible Muisca cultural representations interact with social-cultural sustainability elements that Colantonio (2011) has called “soft elements” (happiness, well-being and Spirit of Place). In other words, under social-cultural sustainability approaches, urban renewal is defined as an integrated vision, addressing urban problems by improving social, environmental, physical and economic conditions of the area (Colantonio, 2011), where urban renewal projects do not only intervene in the recreation and the improvement of the public space, but also in the improvement of the social conditions of the population where the renewal process takes place.

With regard to the intervention of the space, due to the improvement of the quality of life of this community and Suba inhabitants, the design of the Park was done based on the relationship between the esthetic, social and spiritual values of Muisca culture. Each of the sections of the Park inside are places that correspond to the understanding of the Place as a specific space characterized by its singular identity (ICOMOS, 2008b).



Its six circle-shaped hectares, 3 obelisks, 7 rounded squares and several natural trails called “astrologic paths” cross the Park representing the cosmic space as the Muisca understand it. The obelisks are placed in the highest parts of the Park, representing the sun’s equinox and winter and summer solstices. They also symbolize the way the indigenous understanding of the relationship between the Earth and sun. From the obelisks it is possible



to see the districts of Suba and Engativa and the town of Cota (*Decreto 069*, 2002; AMB, 2012). The squares names honor Muisca culture: Clock, Astral, Sun (Sué), Bochica, Chiminigagua, Bachue, and Moxa Squares. They are further classified according to specific cosmological functions: (1) Central Squares where the principal attraction is the water mirror which emphasizes the ancient riverbed that disappeared hundreds of years ago; (2) the Observatory Squares from which the aforementioned snow-capped mountains can be viewed, symbolizing peace and the greatness found in the Mother Earth by the Muisca; (3) the Astrologic Squares embodying the astral map used in ancient times by the indigenous; and (4) the Entrance Square, surrounded by trees and plants, is a welcoming to the “Muisca Temple of Nature” (AMB, 2002, 2012).

Here the Park follows Garnham’s (1985) proposals to link people and space, including elements as diverse as architectural style, natural settings, memory, metaphor, image, spatial relations, cultural, history and societal values, public environments and daily and seasonal activities (Kwanda, 2008) – these are also social-cultural sustainability elements. Further, the Park is analyzed as a materialization of social-cultural sustainability and the Spirit of Place relationship. On this basis, the Spirit of Place involves “aesthetic, historical, social or spiritual value of cultural significance” (Rifaioğlu and Neriman, 2008). Spirit of Place is the language that becomes material but dynamic, tangible but ephemeral, and is the expression of the memory, the identity and the cultural heritage.

On the other hand, regarding the social conditions of the population where urban renewal takes place, the achievements of this park project are not only represented in the landscape and design issues. It was also created as a cultural heritage recuperation project to contribute to addressing the social tensions and problems of the area. Up to 2010, the Park has served as a space for social, cultural and educational participatory processes for more than 240,000 people, giving them the opportunity to explore other alternatives for working towards the solution of the social problems they are having in Suba and in their personal life processes. The Park became a place for multicultural meetings and resolution of social conflicts through reconciliation processes and intercultural interchange, among other processes. At the same time, through the promotion of non-traditional pedagogic environmental protection programs, the people interested in that subject increased by 40% in the area (AMB, 2010).

### **Spirit of place: Memory, identity and territory**

According to the Spirit of Place theory for cultural heritage preservation, the place is understood from the perspective of the relationship between the human being and the space’s natural or man-made settings, integrating the memory and the identity of a particular community in a specific place (Seamon, 2011; ICOMOS, 2008). This is also linked to the recognition of the social function of the cultural heritage, which connects the memory, the identity and the heritage (Alofs, 2008).

Place and spirit are constituted by three elements connatural to the human being’s dimension: identity, territory and memory. *Identity* is the set of features of a person or a community that defines what we are and what we are not. *Territory* is the recognition of the place where we are born and inhabit. *Memory* is the way we remember our past. The relationship of these three categories takes place in the construction of the community, which is considered the essential environment for interrelation of every human being.

Contemporary scholars argue that the conceptions of Place are premised on memory, identity and the relation of people to their territory. Thus, *Place* can be understood as the consequence of the multiple discourses, subjectivities, interactions and power relations in

specific time and space (Palacio *et al.*, 2003). It is also defined as a singular fact determined by its space and time, by the topographic dimension, by its form and by its memory (Conti, 2008). Place is where social relationships occur, where everyday life is unwrapped, where the people celebrate, make rituals and other cultural and social constructions necessary for their life (Chávez, 2009).

The notion of *spirit* corresponds to the immaterial elements of a person's relation to Place, composed by the "social and spiritual practices, costumes, traditional knowledge and other intangible forms and expressions" (ICOMOS, 2008). Spirit also encompasses the relationship between tangible and intangible social and cultural mechanisms.

In the Park Mirador de los Nevados, the social function of the cultural heritage corresponds to a citizen construction where heritage is not an expression of what is beautiful to show, but the memory saved as a reference of urban manners (Silva, 2011). Here the cultural heritage is appropriated and represented by a contemporary community, which determines the sustainability of the project. From this point of view, people's well-being is based on the recognition of their memory, cultural needs and cultural particularities, thus they will protect the place as a non-renewal material (Van Der Hammen *et al.*, 2009). Suba was the meeting point for the ritual meetings of the indigenous groups of the region. It was the place where they tried to conserve the Muisca lineage by performing rituals for the moon and the water (AMB, 2004). It is where they have chosen to live and that is why these urban indigenous residents will continue taking care of their territory and their collective memory. This place embraces the social-cultural sustainability principles of equity, inclusion, adaptability and security.

In the same order of ideas, collective memory concerns a social group's conceptions, cultural transmissions and use of the past. It is used to reconstruct the image of the past according to the time and social discourses (Gómez, 2011). When the sustainable development improvements are based on collective memory representations, cultural heritage preservation will be done from a qualitative rather than a quantitative outlook, making possible the "understanding of humanity's place on the planet" (Hopwood *et al.*, 2005: 40). The Muisca community has found their sacred mountains, lakes and wetlands reduced because of urban expansion (López, 2005). Although Mirador de los Nevados would never bring back the rich natural resources the Muisca used to have in Suba, considering this project as part of a heritage preservation processes that not only interacts with the past but also with the present and the future. The Park constitutes a sustainable alternative to the conservation of nature required by this minority.

For the Muisca people their identity is linked to their territory. They have adapted and transformed their way of living and the way they understand Muisca's heritage. They live as any other citizen does: they study, work and take part of the economy. But, at the same time, within their daily life they also uphold their cultural traditions, games and rituals while in contact with nature (Panqueba, 2005). The Park has become an alternative place where, besides the social and cultural transformations of the Muisca community and the territory where they live, their cultural heritage can still be experienced. It is a place for re-creating their cultural tradition through the development of cultural and political activities according to their indigenous beliefs. Mirador de los Nevados is the scene for activities like the Turmequé game, Andean dances, traditional dances, concerts of traditional music, bartering, indigenous sports, mingas, indigenous week celebration and "environmental classrooms", among others. Here, cultural heritage is a fundamental part of the social-cultural sustainability processes, which are related to the relationship between individual actions and the created environment,

individual life-chances and institutional structures, and the creation of social cohesion and participation and justice (Manzi *et al.*, 2010).

Further, Nestor García Canclini<sup>3</sup> established that the modern city is not only a place to live and work, but also a place where cultural heritage expressions become a part of daily life. The Park is a heritage site integrated into the city's public space framework. The public spaces make the cities; it is there, in the open space, in the streets, squares, parks and edifications, where the citizens experience being social individuals, developing their cultural identity and their strategies for public participation (Pardo, 2006). These places constitute the physical support to satisfy the urban collective necessities that go beyond the individual interests. On the local scale, places like the Park are fundamental for the construction of identity and sociability. That is, therefore, a sustainable contribution to the areas of the city with social problems (Díaz, 2007).

The sustainable development processes for cultural heritage preservation requires an understanding of communities' multi-variants (Henry, 2011), where the territory embodies the heterogeneity and complexity of urban life, which in turn requires multicultural recognition (Pardo, 2006). A territory that embraces the historical landscape of a minority's culture, its aural and its visual memory, is a landscape that can be seen, smelled, and heard, full of colors, full of remembrance. Then the functions of the urban space are also cultural heritage (Alofs, 2008) and its sustainability is understood as a socio-historical process (Colantonio, 2011).

If cultural heritage is taken as a component of sustainable development through the social-cultural sustainability approach, it is a huge step beyond the traditional cultural heritage preservation approaches. At the same time, it would place heritage within the socio-cultural components of sustainable development in a comprehensive way.

## Conclusion

The Spirit of Place theory for cultural heritage preservation converges with social-cultural sustainability by linking the people, their natural and created environments, and their "chances of life" in the space. So when it comes to cultural heritage preservation, both theories lean on the protection of the existent relationship between humanity and its surrounding nature and space, rather than on the material elements and the physical objects resulting from this connection. This means the traditional perspective for cultural heritage preservation is inverted: before, it first recognized the object (material features) and then, secondarily, recognized the subject (community). Now, framing cultural heritage within the social-cultural sustainability approach for sustainable development, the subject (community) is recognized as the first component, and the social function of the cultural heritage lies in this recognition of the subject, and then the object is heeded.

The case of the Park Mirador de los Nevados is an example of how an urban renewal project for cultural heritage preservation, rather than starting from the recovery of a physical object, can begin dealing with the socio-cultural representation of a specific community, and then make it tangible through the materialization of the Spirit of Place. The perspectives for

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<sup>3</sup> Cited by Pardo (2006).

cultural heritage preservation do not necessarily need to be based on the material heritage. Instead, this process must be done based on the cultural and social needs of the people living in the area that is going to be protected, preserving the Spirit of Place without splitting the tangible and intangible components of the heritage.

Social-cultural sustainability establishes that to make tangible the immeasurable Spirit of Place for cultural heritage preservation, the inclusion of the community is necessary. The cultural heritage's existence is not represented only by its materiality. The reason of the existence of cultural heritage lies on its constant revitalization through the daily usage by the community. The inclusion of the community into the cultural heritage preservation process has to be focused on the social function of the cultural heritage, which contributes to its renovation. Not considering the habitants, their experiences and values, leads to what Van Der Hammen (2009) calls "shell heritage", cultural heritage conservation processes that are fragile like an eggshell: if there are no people willing to live and preserve heritage in their everyday life, it can very easily be broken.

Another important alternative to shift the traditional cultural heritage preservation to contemporary ones, where the heritage becomes an essential foundation for sustainable development, can be found in the social-cultural sustainability "soft themes" which are also linked to the perspective of Spirit of Place. Although there is a lack of methodologies to assess the intangible expression of the social-cultural sustainability that does not mean these "soft themes" are not fundamental elements for the placement of cultural heritage into the social-cultural sustainability approach. Well-being, happiness, memory and identity seem to be subjective and immeasurable, but when they are connected to cultural heritage processes, they become expressions of equity, inclusion, adaptability and security. The Park has become a fundamental scene for equity and inclusion for the Muisca and the Suba inhabitant to participate in community as cultural and social groups or as individuals. This site is also a tool for the people's adaptability to social and urban changes, and offers a safe and supportive environment.

When the community's identity is recognized and imprinted in the space, its infrastructure and in urban policies, those themes are notorious in the way the inhabitant uses and experiences the space. As well, it can be noticed how the social tensions are reduced. In the case of the Park Mirador de los Nevados, it is evident the impact the Park has had on the improvement of the quality of life of the community of Muisca and Suba. It not just brought public recognition to this minority in the city, but also through the implementation of environmental programs and cooperative associations. It is true the Park itself cannot eradicate the social inequity in the district; however, it offers a space for cultural and political participation where power and control orders can be questioned, and where social and cultural empowerment is possible.

Social-cultural sustainability also concerns the recognition of the particularities of a specific society in a specific place within contemporary globalization processes. The Spirit of Place for cultural heritage preservation is a vehicle for the recognition of such particularities and the authenticity of a society. The Spirit of Place acknowledges the memory, identity and territory of a specific culture and its relation with the space. This guarantees the possibility of having sustainable cultural heritage preservation processes, where the modernization and the economic growth are promoted through the social and cultural needs of a community, then promoting social-cultural sustainable development. In the Park Mirador de los Nevados, the implementation of non-traditional pedagogic tools for environmental education as well as the recognition of cultural heritage as an expression of an urban indigenous and urban minorities

not only makes the Park itself sustainable, but also brought sustainable approaches for the Suba district and the management of social and environmental problematics in this area.

When sustainable development is founded in conventional approaches of traditional social policies – which consider that economic and environmental-oriented sustainability policies are enough to address social welfare and without including particular communities’ conceptions of the space, neither its memory nor identity – it does not imply a socially sustainable process. The Park can be understood as one of the first examples of this approach. Social and environmental sustainability of the Park is nowadays a reality thanks to: (1) the inclusion of cultural heritage, through the spirit of place theory, into the social-cultural sustainability framework; and (2) the coupling of this perspective with the national and local sustainability policies. In other words, cultural heritage and the recognition of its social function was the key to the success of social-cultural sustainability and the rest of the sustainable development processes that consequently occurred following this urban renewal project at Mirador de los Nevados.

Through the approach of social-cultural sustainability it is possible to promote development processes within which the principal goal is not the ultra-modernization of the space, but the development of solutions with cultural and identity contents to solve local urban problems for a specific social and cultural urban space.

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## Lopsided Inclusion: Recognition, Reconciliation, and Reckoning in Postcolonial Vancouver

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**Abstract:** The recent participation of aboriginal people in Vancouver's 2010 Olympics is uneasily positioned in a context of racialized exclusion, social inequality, and historically restrictive colonial policies. Efforts to include aboriginal people in city sociality are entangled in complex (post)colonial tensions. I examine how the public library and an inner city construction training program navigate challenges of aboriginal inclusion in their attempts to intervene in systemic processes that have marginalized aboriginality in the city. While these inclusion projects aim to correct historical exclusion and enhance opportunity and access, I argue that their sole focus on the aboriginal populace limits their ability to involve non-aboriginal residents in these efforts, inhibiting the transformative potential of dialogic forms of recognition, reconciliation, and reckoning.

**Keywords:** Vancouver, (post)colonialism, recognition, reconciliation, reckoning

The 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver were a site of celebrated and unprecedented aboriginal inclusion. Aboriginality infused the Games: Lil'wat, Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh (the Four Host First Nations) dignitaries sat beside Canadian heads of state during the opening ceremony; representatives from their communities raised their hands in an official welcome to the world, joined by dozens of Aboriginal dancers from across the nation; athletes held medals designed by Kwakwaka'wakw/Tlingit artist Corinne Hunt; the official Olympic logo was Ilanaaq, a colorful inukshuk; there were daily aboriginal performances in downtown Robson Square; nearby, Musqueam artist Susan Point worked in public carving shed; Aboriginal Artisan Village and Business Showcase featured moccasins, mugs, and more; Olympic mascots were inspired by coastal First Nations stories; Squamish artist Xwalacktun's designs adorned Hudson's Bay Company products; Musqueam artist Debra Sparrow's designs filled the maple leaf on Canada's official hockey jerseys; dozens of Aboriginal artists participated in Cultural Olympiad events; the popular Aboriginal Pavilion showcased Aboriginal singing, dancing, storytelling, and multimedia presentations every day.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Even anti-Olympics groups highlighted aboriginality as a key feature of their movement: 'No Olympics on Stolen Native Land!' was printed on protest banners and leaflets. Although the No Olympics on Stolen Land campaign is fascinating, it is



This spectacular inclusion of aboriginal people in Vancouver's Olympic Games is uneasily positioned in a contemporary context of racialized exclusion, spatial segregation, and social inequality, and a historical context of restrictive colonial policy and dispossession. Many responses to aboriginal inclusion in the 2010 Winter Olympic Games emphasize either its potential transformational quality (cf. Sidsworth, 2010) or its engineered design serving to appropriate, contain, or otherwise manage aboriginal participation, reinforcing a colonial status quo (cf. O'Bonsawin, 2010).<sup>3</sup> Feminist scholar Rachel Simon-Kumar and anthropologist Catherine Kingfisher (2011: 272) identify these analytical stories as two theoretical streams in the study of inclusion: the social justice story and the story of regulation and control. The authors (2011) intervene in this debate to suggest that neither story is complete nor sufficient, and that in fact a more effective analysis is born of identifying the "productive tensions" between transformation and assimilation. In this paper, I explore the productive tensions that characterize aboriginal inclusion initiatives in Vancouver, British Columbia. Rather than noting their social justice potential or their regulative qualities, I take for granted that my case studies could be told in either frame and instead focus on productive tensions that emerge in the interaction between inclusion and processes of recognition, reconciliation, and reckoning in a (post)colonial moment. Emphasizing the role of non-aboriginal people in these processes, I argue that inclusionary initiatives offer a potential but unrealized avenue for dialogic forms of recognition, reconciliation, and reckoning.

According to Simon-Kumar and Kingfisher, in the last several decades, "'inclusion' has gained increasing purchase as a discursive frame for policy construction and practice, and for a range of social, political, and cultural popular struggles" (2011: 272; see also Young, 2000). In Vancouver, situated in a former colony and contemporary settler state, inclusion initiatives can arguably be identified as "postcolonial spaces: [spaces] where there is a concerted effort to invert colonial power relations" (Kowal, 2008). These initiatives make efforts to address and invert colonial power relations by actively engaging in recognizing, reaching out to, and working with aboriginal people as a corrective effort to historical and contemporary processes that exclude, marginalize, and erase their presence and significance. Serving as contemporary contact zones (Pratt, 1992), these initiatives invite aboriginal people to participate in diverse sites of urban sociality, creating formal and informal spaces for proximity, relationship-building, and other forms of being together.

In this paper, I suggest that focusing these efforts primarily on the aboriginal populace, the *excluded* or *previously-excluded*, without adequately attending to the non-aboriginal *includers* and *already-included* limits the scope and capacity for effecting change in the realms of recognition, reconciliation, and reckoning. Part of the legacy of colonial policies and their contemporary effects is the sheer ability for non-aboriginal people to tune out, turn off, or otherwise avoid their own complex relationships to the colonial project. While aboriginality has taken on its contemporary form through generations of colonial misrecognition, management, and other unequal interactions with developing settler states (cf. Ashcroft 2001; Weaver 2000), non-aboriginal people can disconnect themselves from the

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beyond the scope of this paper to address its complexities and counterpoints to processes of inclusion I emphasize and explore below.

<sup>3</sup> For similar stories about aboriginal participation in the 2000 Summer Olympic Games in Sydney, cf. Elder *et al.* (2006) and Godwell (2000).

colonial project because of the historical and contemporary processes that obfuscate and erase their very connection to it. By focusing inclusionary efforts too narrowly on the previously excluded or marginalized, the includers or already-included can be too easily absolved or removed from their own (active or passive) participation in the ongoing processes of exclusion and marginalization that characterize the colonial and structural forces at work in all of our lives.<sup>4</sup>

The 2010 Winter Olympic Games, with its all-encompassing focus on aboriginality, created great opportunity to reflect on and debate the social location of aboriginal people vis-à-vis the historical colonial project and contemporary local, regional, and national identity, but it did not engage most non-aboriginal people in similar discussions. They remained a largely passive audience to aboriginal performance, art, and partnership with Games organizers. While aboriginal people were invited to participate in a national and international display of and debates around recognition, reconciliation, and reckoning, non-aboriginal people were removed from active involvement in these processes, effectively sitting on the sidelines cheering or jeering and participating in what Charlotte Townsend-Gault (2004) calls “looking relations.” The 2010 Winter Olympics offer a spectacular example of aboriginal inclusion and non-aboriginal disconnect. I turn my attention now to more mundane sites of aboriginal inclusion, examining two case studies from my ethnographic research in post-Olympics, (post)colonial Vancouver. To explore inclusion-as-recognition, I draw on ethnographic research in the Vancouver Public Library’s Mount Pleasant branch. I examine inclusion as reconciliation and reckoning through analysis of BladeRunners, a construction training program for street-involved youth in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside neighborhood.

## Inclusion as recognition

Putting the paradigm of inclusion in conversation with the politics of recognition reveals that inclusionary initiatives can enable individuals and institutes to recognize socio-cultural difference, even with a degree of power exchange,<sup>5</sup> without transforming the political forms in place that inhibit the full realization of recognition and self-determination.<sup>6</sup> In the Canadian context, political theorist Glen Coulthard describes the politics of recognition as “the now expansive range of recognition-based models of liberal pluralism that seek to reconcile Indigenous claims to nationhood with Crown sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identities in some form of renewed relationship with the Canadian state” (2007: 438; see also Povinelli, 2002). According to Hegel and his theoretical successors, recognition relies on a relational and co-constitutive subjectivity: “one becomes an individual subject only in virtue of recognizing, and being recognized by another subject” (Fraser and Honneth, 2003:

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<sup>4</sup> I do not mean to suggest that non-aboriginal positioning and involvement should displace aboriginal participation; on the contrary, I believe dialogic inclusion initiatives would place non-aboriginal people squarely in the arena of the (post)colonial, enabling and encouraging them to learn from, hear, and see aboriginal people *as well as* their own participation in colonial and settler colonial formations. These efforts can be informed by ongoing local campaigns toward self-determination and truth-telling, as well as examples of public commemoration and debate (cf. Olick and Levy, 1997; Kansteiner 2002), apology and reconciliation (cf. Cunningham, 1999; McGonegal, 2009), policy (cf. Watson *et al.*, 2011; Belanger, 2011), and critical analyses of settler mythologies (cf. Furniss, 1999; Robertson, 2005; Reynolds, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> i.e., through community-led projects and meaningful aboriginal representation in decision-making.

<sup>6</sup> Self-determination at the level of governance involves the freedom and ability to govern one’s own group or people. In an individual sense, it means the freedom and ability to determine one’s own fate and/or course of action.

11). Philosopher Charles Taylor (1994) uses this Hegelian insight to support his argument that reciprocal and mutual recognition must be operational within the structures of the state. He states that contemporary liberal states with diverse populations can and should accommodate group-specific rights through processes of recognition, arguing that identities are formed through cultural community and belonging.

Taylor argues that *mis*recognition is also a powerful force in identity formation: “Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning one in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being” (1994: 25; see also Fanon, 1967). Nonrecognition and misrecognition are analogous to forms of exclusion that have marginalized aboriginal people through colonial and settler colonial structures. While the mechanisms of recognition politics often involve the transfer of land, capital, and political power via processes of land claims, economic development, and self-government, they can also operate in other public domains and institutions, such as contemporary inclusion initiatives. These efforts attempt to ameliorate and avoid the debilitating effects of these forms of nonrecognition and exclusion through corrective policies and practices that seek to recognize the marginalized and include them in mainstream processes.<sup>7</sup>

The co-constitutive nature of subjectivity inherent in recognition in a colonial milieu is regularly constructed as the colonizer-colonized or settler-aboriginal binary (cf. Fanon, 1967; Wolfe, 1998).<sup>8</sup> In the inclusion paradigm, these binary constructions merge unevenly with an includer-included relation. Because the motivation of inclusion efforts originates with the structural dimensions of colonial exclusion, contemporary inclusion efforts could theoretically be interpreted as anti-colonial or decolonizing projects. However, in the reimagining of this relation from colonizer/colonized to includer/included, the colonial specificity of the relation is elided. The very structural and socio-historical dimensions that underpin the inclusion paradigm are misrecognized in the discourse and practice of inclusion. This is most apparent when one critically examines the role, agency, and self-consciousness of the includer(s) and already-included in inclusionary efforts that perform acts of recognition. In the context of (post)colonialism, non-aboriginal agents of inclusion can identify or recognize that the previously excluded, the subjects of inclusion, have been affected by colonial processes, but their own affected participation in the structures of (post)colonialism is obscured. In fact, the role of the includer is often de-emphasized as “the bulk of the agency entailed rests not with the state [or other inclusionary agents], but rather with the excluded, who have to do the work of including themselves by means of whatever structures and/or processes of doing so are on offer” (Simon-Kumar and Kingfisher, 2011: 277).

Let me now turn to my case study to explicate some of these concepts. In recent years, community librarians at the Vancouver Public Library have established a community-led Aboriginal Collection, anchored at the Mount Pleasant branch; hosted numerous events

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<sup>7</sup> These efforts are sometimes enabled by state projects in the form of funding or policy direction.

<sup>8</sup> This binary has of course been troubled by many analysts to acknowledge the hybridity and diversity of settler states (cf. Bhabha, 1994; McClintock, 1996; Veracini 2011). Coulthard (2007) also offers a cogent critique of the contemporary politics of recognition, emphasizing the transformative power of *self*-recognition over an effort toward recognition of the colonized by the colonizers. My qualified acceptance of the binary colonizer-colonized construction is used here to highlight the potential limits and possibilities of inclusion in a settler colonial context for the settler population, not to suggest that this binary form reflects the much messier reality of identity politics at play.

focused on local First Nations and urban aboriginal communities, including the First Nations Storyteller-in-Residence program and National Aboriginal Day programming; engaged in community activities by maintaining a regular presence at the central aboriginal service organizations; and supported and encouraged aboriginal patronage of the library through a model of values-based service. These efforts coincide with ongoing processes of serving the generalized public, thus bringing more aboriginal people into contact with non-aboriginal patrons through these multiply acts of inclusion. How do these efforts correspond to recognition and how do non-aboriginal librarians (includers) and (already-included) patrons participate?

To explore one act of recognition, let us examine the First Nations Storyteller-in-Residence program. In establishing the program, library staff recognized that its branches are located on unceded aboriginal lands and that aboriginal people are members of the public the library would like to serve better. The committee responsible for advertising and hiring the First Nations storytellers spoke with representatives from local First Nations and urban aboriginal organizations, acknowledging the existence and importance of local First Nations and the wider urban aboriginal community and consulting appropriately. Although they did not have the power to recognize the rights and territories of these nations, they did exercise their power to recognize aboriginal presence, significance, and protocols.<sup>9</sup>

Reflecting on the trend of inclusion and the impetus behind the storyteller program, one staff person commented:

For sure the trend [to include] has been increasing exponentially in the past little while. And some people *perceive* it might be driven by necessity. [For example], well, we *had* to include the First Nations in the Olympics or we couldn't have *had* them, because they own the land... It's hard to say, you know, broadly, socially, how much of it was because people were genuinely open and curious, and how much was political necessity, and how much was just common sense. (Interview, 02.03.2011)

Different motivations for including-as-recognizing are expressed here, and each has different implications for the role of the includer. There is acknowledgement of land ownership: "because they own the land." Here, the including agent is positioned as a settler on unceded land, owned by the local First Nations; the duty to include or consult is motivated by recognition of this fact. This also relates to the notion of "political necessity" – to include is wrapped up in the ongoing politics of recognition that is perceived as a necessary, if challenging, element of contemporary (post)colonial life. Another motivation expressed is "genuine openness and curiosity" about First Nations. Here the included are recognized as Others that "people" – the generalized public – might like to get to know better. This recognizes the fact that aboriginal people have been marginalized from public knowledge and that the includer can offer a corrective by opening up pathways of inclusion for the good of the whole. Finally, the library staff member suggests that inclusion is "just common sense." Here, inclusion is motivated by recognizing the obvious presence of First Nations people as distinct members of the library public and as common-sense participants in representational and programming projects at the institution. These expressions of inclusion motivations

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<sup>9</sup> The staff person primarily responsible for coordinating the program expressed that she learned a great deal about protocol and respect through this process of consultation. Actively listening to community members, she continually revised her own expectations and the direction of the project.

reveal the library's varied responses to the politics of recognition. It also provides insights into the role of the *includer* in these processes. The emphasis is on the *included* and why they are included more than on the *includer*; there is ambiguity as to who the includer is (the library? the generalized public? the committee?), what their role and responsibility is, and why they are getting involved in the politics of inclusion-as-recognition. The includer is variously positioned as settler, as interested in aboriginal others, and as obvious neighbors of local First Nations and urban aboriginal communities.

In their examination of the analytics of inclusion, Simon-Kumar and Kingfisher (2011) explore not only who and what is included, and how and why, but also to what effect. The effects of inclusion are particularly salient in contexts of (post)colonialism and recognition. As Humpage (2006) has argued, the policies and practices of inclusion can be ill-fitted to settler states unless there is explicit attention to the unique rights and needs of indigenous peoples. While Humpage located her research in New Zealand, where the Treaty of Waitangi and Waitangi Tribunal interpolate with efforts toward inclusion, the uncertain and unfinished business of official recognition in Vancouver, British Columbia, makes the politics of inclusion and recognition a particularly significant and fraught terrain of engagement.

Simon-Kumar and Kingfisher (2011) argue that inclusion efforts are caught in productive tension between inclusion as a process and inclusion as the outcome of inclusionary processes. When viewed as a process, inclusion can “become merely about extending the rights of different collectives to *participate* in processes rather than about securing political recognition or legitimacy [or rights] through such processes” (281). For the library's Storyteller-in-Residence program, the goal and effects of inclusion-as-recognition involved the active participation of First Nations storytellers in the library's public programming, contributing to wider library efforts to include and serve aboriginal community members, thus emphasizing the *process* of inclusion and participation. The library recognized local First Nations and aboriginal communities and therefore included them in the process of establishing a storyteller program; inclusion-as-process was in and of itself the goal, inspired by recognition.

When I inquired about the role of the program in public education, relating the program non-aboriginal involvement and/or recognition of local First Nations' rights and territories, staff members were more ambiguous about their expectations. Library representatives expected the storytellers to garner interest in the aboriginal community. After one event, a librarian expressed disappointment and frustration that turnout had been low and especially that no aboriginal people had attended. Different interpretations of the purpose and significance of inclusionary efforts emerge, however, when one examines the roles and expectations of the previously-excluded. As a librarian explained:

We felt that it was... directly and specifically for the First Nations community and the aboriginal community, to make the library more relevant and responsive to them and their needs... That is a community we don't serve well, and we would like to serve them better, and be more relevant, so we have to find out what relevant means to them, and respond accordingly. That was us – and it didn't matter to us if non-First Nations people got to think outside of the box in the same way. Now, I didn't know this until talking with [the storytellers]. They thought it was *equally* important to reach the non-aboriginal. You know, “People in Squamish Nation already know my stories, and they already respect me! It's more important for me to be out in the broader world!” [So], my assumptions about what's good for the library is not always viewed as important by the community. (Interview, 02.03.2011)

As evidenced by this quote and in their presentations, the storytellers clearly took their role as public educators seriously and used storytelling to express their connections to local lands (and dispossession) and colonial processes (such as residential schools). For them, to be

included in the process was not the sole or primary purpose. Instead, to be included by the library opened a venue not only for recognition and acknowledgement by the generalized public (including members of the colonizing population as well as other marginalized peoples), but also a forum for self-recognition and affirmation (Coulthard, 2007). Thus, for the librarians, the process of inclusion was the sign of the program's success; for the storytellers, there were alternative expectations relating to recognition within and beyond the library as an institution. Focusing primarily on the aboriginal dimensions of the program, the library failed to account for other possible effects and impacts, such as the dialogic potential of recognizing aboriginal people in the public sphere and the rare opportunity for the non-aboriginal public to actively engage in this act of recognition. In a settler-state context, it is important to attend to these myriad motivations and expectations. It is also important to critically evaluate not only who and how to include – the subjects of inclusion – but also who the agents and subjects of inclusion are and how they view their role and agency in the processes of recognition and inclusion. To ignore or diminish the spectrum of political significance of inclusion as recognition limits its ability to serve as a transformational or critical intervention in the very processes of exclusion it aims to subvert. Furthermore, by acknowledging and attending to the colonial foundations of exclusion and addressing these through a contemporary effort to include and recognize, the *includers* must be as acknowledged and implicated as the *included*; they too must be enabled and encouraged to participate in inclusion-as-recognition as active and distinct individuals and groups. This involves direct attention to the ambiguous categories and messy socialities underpinning the includer/included binary that in turn must be informed by colonial relations and their attendant complications.

### **Inclusion as reconciliation and reckoning**

In a (post)colonial settler state context, co-constitutive elements of recognition addressed above involve both acknowledgement of territory and self-determination as well as acknowledgement of past and present forms of misrecognition and exclusion. Actions taken to address misrecognition and exclusion can be framed as the related efforts of reconciliation and reckoning. In this section, I focus my attention on the roles, responsibility, and agency of non-aboriginal people in processes of reconciliation and reckoning. In contrast to many productive and fascinating studies related to formal processes of reconciliation, such as Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (cf. James, 2012), I locate my analysis in more mundane settings of contemporary inclusionary initiatives. Drawing on a story from my third research site, I ask how non-aboriginal people are enabled/disabled, encouraged/discouraged, and included/excluded in processes of aboriginal inclusion as reconciliation and reckoning.

In addition to the library and the Olympics Aboriginal Pavilion, I conducted ethnographic research in the Vancouver office of BladeRunners, a program designed to train street-involved youth to work in Vancouver's construction trades.<sup>10</sup> Over ninety percent of

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<sup>10</sup> BladeRunners, founded in 1994, is primarily funded through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Agreement through the provincial Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Innovation; the program delivery agent for the Vancouver office is the Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society. The BladeRunners model has expanded beyond Vancouver and beyond construction to new media, tourism, and building maintenance.

BladeRunners participants at the Main and Hastings location are aboriginal. In 2011 there were six intakes, sets of twelve participants who enter the programs as a cohort. In recent years, the Metro Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy (MVUAS) has granted funding to the ACCESS program to support BladeRunners. According to the 2011 ACCESS Annual Report, this funding has “allowed us to refocus our training upon that very important cultural component that sometimes gets overlooked in many programs... and ensure[s] that [aboriginal] participants receive the bulk of their instruction under the mentorship of aboriginal trades people, aboriginal facilitators, and an elder who was available for guidance during most of their training” (2011: 40). Additionally, BladeRunners provides hands-on training in the Squamish Trades Centre in North Vancouver, partnering with the local Squamish Nation to offer this service.

I conducted intensive participant observation with two intake sets in May/June 2010 and July 2011 and at one of the construction sites employing a BladeRunner alumna in summer 2010. To explore the limits and potentialities of inclusion-as-reconciliation/reckoning, I offer the following story from my fieldnotes and accompanying analysis:

On the first day of BladeRunners training, in a basement classroom at the corner of Main and Hastings, the Cultural Empowerment instructor introduces himself as a Cree person. Lamenting his limited time with the group, he says, “There’s no way I can get all this across to you in two days, but I’m going to try!” He explains his ongoing education in “Nehiyaw [Cree] psychology”, sweatlodges, and diversity training initiatives, taking out a box of cultural artifacts. He pulls out a small round father: “This is a BA in Indian psychology!” He pulls out a long eagle feather: “This is an MA!” Middle-aged and gregarious, he says, “I’m going to talk about colonization! ... you know – genocide! In 1920 Prime Minister Douglas said ‘Let’s kill the Indian by killing the Indian child within.’ What was in that Prime Minister’s head?” He emphasizes culture, equating it with “feelings” and giving examples of people who and who are not in touch with their feelings, like the Prime Minister. He exhorts the BladeRunners to make a living by making friends. “Feelings create unity.”

He writes “WORK” on the flipchart. “Indian people were never lazy! Work is part of our culture! ... All our BladeRunners who pick up our cultural tools will have work... It’s work and it’s a habit to learn first aid. To get up at 5 a.m.” He encourages the BladeRunners to get up early, take long walks (“put your mind in your feet”), write the word “HEAL” on their walls, and breathe to make room in their lives for spiritual development. He conducts a smudge, lighting California sage and inviting everyone to reflect on childhood joys. We then all walk together to the shores of Burrard Inlet in nearby CRAB Park, site of a historic native settlement. Standing together in a pavilion dedicated to local First Nations, he reminds the BladeRunners that they’re standing on Coast Salish territory.

The instructor continues his commentary the next day. He remarks on students singing “O Canada” in schools. “If you’re really Canadian,” he says, “you should know and respect First Nations history.” He discusses residential schools and their devastating effects on aboriginal peoples. Passing around his status card, he speaks of the 1867 Indian Act, still active today. Addressing the relative lack of historical treaties in British Columbia, he says: “The government officials were smart. There are too many resources here. Treaties would give the Natives too much power. It’s complicated here.” After his wide-ranging review of colonial policies, he states, “It’s important for First Nations youth to know their history, and it’s a social responsibility for all Canadians.”

For our final activity, we watch *Once Were Warriors* (1990). It is a terribly violent and raw film. The parents of an urban Maori family abuse alcohol at home and in pubs; the father erupts in fits of rage, beating his wife. Their teenage daughter tends the house and younger children, reading them stories she has written; one of her brothers gets involved in a Maori street gang and another is removed to foster care. In the face of poverty, addiction, abuse, rape, and disconnection, the characters struggle to find hope and redemption. During an early pub fight scene, several BladeRunners hoot and holler, appreciating the father’s toughness and attitude. When he beats his wife, however, they shift uncomfortably and whistle through their teeth as he busts her mouth and eye. They are captivated by the film, but uncomfortable and tense. The room falls silent during scenes of sexual abuse and suicide.

The instructor asks everyone to share how they could relate to the film. One young man says he could relate to all of it; his mom got beat up, his dad went on drunks, his friends committed suicide, he experienced sexual abuse, and he knows many in gangs. Another BladeRunner empathizes with the youngest kids; growing up, the three numbers he knew were 9-1-1. One said she witnessed similar things in her best friend's family. One of the three non-aboriginal BladeRunners says that his parents partied, laughing about drinking their leftover beer. Another white participant declares that he can't relate to the story at all: "I'm glad it's just a movie." Once everyone has had their turn, the instructor says that we've all been affected directly or indirectly by the actions and processes depicted in the film. "Healing starts when we can say, 'It happened to me.' Why do we talk about healing at BladeRunners? Well, if you wake up at 10 a.m. and you were supposed to be at work at 7 a.m., you may have issues! You may need to heal!"

After watching *Once Were Warriors*, I chatted with the BladeRunners office manager, a young non-aboriginal woman and a friend, and told her about the film. "That's refreshing!" she replied sarcastically before casually checking facebook. The next day, I talked with a close librarian friend, another young non-aboriginal woman, I mentioned the film and she said it's too violent for her to watch. I recalled my own horror watching it for the first time years ago; I had to leave when my professor showed it in class.

A couple of weeks later, the BladeRunners participated in a trial collaboration between their program and the UBC Farm's aboriginal garden. Each day, they traveled from their urban neighborhoods to the campus farm and helped on various projects. There, the cultural instructor continued his efforts to provide aboriginal-specific guidance. A couple of the BladeRunners were resistant and rebellious, sneaking away to smoke and disregarding their instructions. One day, I drove three of them home. While their aboriginal co-participant remained silent, the two non-aboriginal men in the car complained about the "Native stuff" they were being asked to do, exclaiming in frustration, "We're not aboriginal!"

The cultural empowerment component of the BladeRunners training is a recent development, made possible by the program's MVUAS partnership. The mandate of the strategy is to "provide long term investments to support urban aboriginal communities by promoting self-reliance and increasing life choices for aboriginal people living in urban centres" (MVUAS, 2010). Its focus on the urban aboriginal population stems from the systemic processes of racialization, colonialism, and governmental policies that shape urban aboriginal people's lives in unique and challenging ways. Providing cultural empowerment training to BladeRunners allows the program to provide cultural tools and philosophies to aide aboriginal BladeRunners as they endeavor to "heal," "increase their life choices," and become "self-reliant." Through aboriginal-specific programming, the cultural instructor and the BladeRunners covered substantial terrain: public and cultural education, psychological trauma and healing, personal narrative and experience, racial discrimination, colonial and "fourth-world" dynamics. The instructor attempted to locate the pain and personal challenges that many BladeRunners experience in a wider historical and structural context, while also suggesting forms of healing and redress. He argued that the BladeRunners should actively reckon with the challenges they face and position them in a broader context.

I do not wish to debate the impact or value of the cultural component for aboriginal BladeRunners. Instead, I would like to suggest that threads of reconciliation and reckoning processes were interwoven in the cultural instructor's lessons. His decision to show *Once Were Warriors*, for example, conveys his attempt to involve BladeRunners in a process of (post)colonial reflection and critical consciousness development. The non-aboriginal participants, however, evidently did not feel enabled or encouraged to participate in these processes in ways that they found relevant to their lives. By simply stating "We're not aboriginal!" and "I'm glad it's just a movie!", they demonstrated their disconnect from their aboriginal cohort and the cultural instructor's efforts to position contemporary struggles vis-à-vis the colonial project. Furthermore, my white friends' ability to ignore or avoid the intensities of *Once Were Warriors*, as well as my own past decision to walk away from



watching the film, link up with our historically contingent capacity to remove ourselves from the pain and trauma of structural violence.<sup>11</sup> With this ability to disconnect and disengage, how can we as non-aboriginal people participate in processes of reconciliation and reckoning? And how might inclusionary initiatives like BladeRunners, the library's aboriginal projects, and the Olympics create opportunities to do so?

Just as recognition is relational in the Hegelian sense, so too are processes of reconciliation and reckoning. These concepts are multivalent and can operate on different scales, from personal and interactional to institutional and political. Examining the dictionary definition of the verb "to reconcile", for instance, we find that it can mean: 1) to restore to friendship or harmony; to settle or resolve; 2) to make consistent or congruous; 3) to cause to submit to or accept something unpleasant; 4) to check against another account for accuracy; to account for (Merriam-Webster, 2012a). "To reckon" has a range of meanings, but its primary definitions for our purposes include: 1) to count; to estimate or compute; 2) to regard or think of as; to consider; 3) to settle accounts. (Merriam-Webster, 2012b; see also Gordon, 2008). There is much to unpack here when applying these definitions to the sociality of aboriginal and non-aboriginal relationships in the (post)colonial settler society of Vancouver, British Columbia. From colonial era epidemics (cf. Van Rijn, 2006), the residential school system (cf. Miller, 1996), and processes of land dispossession and modern treaty-making (cf. Harris, 2002), to contemporary inequalities (Wilson and Macdonald, 2010; Environics Institute, 2010) and struggles toward self-determination (Belanger, 2011; Bodley, 2008), aboriginal people have been grappling with the legacies of colonialism here for generations. They continue to reckon with this past and present in their diverse efforts toward a more equitable future, as the cultural instructor and the aboriginal BladeRunners demonstrated in their reactions to *Once Were Warriors*. Non-aboriginal people, however, have different relationships with these processes. Some have been active perpetrators of injustice (cf. Razack, 2000), others have themselves been treated unequally by the state and their fellow citizens (cf. Fleras and Elliott, 2007), some have participated in anticolonial and decolonizing endeavors (cf. Freeman, 2000; Regan, 2010), and many more have been passively complicit and complacent in the ongoing settler colonial project. When faced with the structural complexities of (post)coloniality, they might not see themselves in them, exclaiming "I'm not aboriginal!" or simply turning their attention to things that seem more immediately interesting, pressing, or relevant.

As with recognition, reconciliation and reckoning at a political level require the state to actively engage and confront its role in historical and contemporary colonial processes (Turner, forthcoming).<sup>12</sup> At a more grassroots level, however, the diverse non-aboriginal citizenry can perhaps participate in reconciliation and reckoning through the mechanisms of inclusion. For example, the non-aboriginal members of the BladeRunners cohort could be encouraged and enabled to reflect on how and why they felt disconnected from the colonial violence of *Once Were Warriors* or resistant to the "Native stuff" they were asked to do at the farm. Non-aboriginal librarian patrons could be among the targeted participants for the

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<sup>11</sup> This does not mean, however, that we are not aware of other forms of structural power dynamics or the intersectionality of contemporary inequities. In fact, my white women friends and I are all alert to patriarchy, corporate power, and other structural forces that shape our lives and each of us is engaged in various efforts to curtail their effects.

<sup>12</sup> For a reevaluation of the role of the state in this formulation, see Coulthard (2007).

storyteller events. Rather than ignoring non-aboriginal people's specific positioning in favor of focusing solely on the aboriginal-specific dimensions of these programs, a more relational and dialogic approach could be taken to explore the ways the colonial project affects everyone in highly uneven and diverse ways. The roles of aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, as well as the state, in the difficult and always-evolving processes of reconciliation and reckoning can be addressed and examined.

Who and what is involved in “restoring friendship or harmony” and “settling or resolving”? Surely non-aboriginal people must also “submit to or accept [or interrogate or fight against] something unpleasant” when attending to their involvement in (post)colonialism rather than allow this to be the charge of aboriginal people alone (Merriam-Webster, 2012a; cf. James 2012). Creating spaces and opportunities for non-aboriginal people to compare their stories and experiences against their aboriginal neighbors’ (“to check against another account for accuracy”) is a necessary part of decolonizing and humanizing efforts (Merriam-Webster, 2012b; Trouillot, 1995). Additionally, if including non-aboriginal people in processes of reckoning could enable them to actively “regard or think of as; to consider” aboriginal people and colonialism, productive new conversations and approaches toward a better future might emerge that not only “increase life chances” but also enhance the chances of relationship-building, dialogue, and mutual understanding.

## Conclusion

Patriarchy cannot be adequately addressed only by including and empowering women; class struggles cannot be adequately addressed only by elevating the poor and defending workers; structural racism cannot be adequately addressed only by affirmative action policies. Likewise, the problems of (post)colonialism, including misrecognition, inequity, and historical injustice, cannot be adequately addressed only by including aboriginal people in “postcolonial spaces” and recognition, reconciliation, and reckoning processes (Kowal, 2008). To reach the greatest pedagogical and transformational potential of inclusion initiatives, non-aboriginal people must also be included, not as *includers* or *already-included*, but as active participants in dialogic decolonizing processes. Paradoxically perhaps, aboriginal inclusion initiatives are obvious candidates for this work. Although it can be argued that non-aboriginal people are already-included everywhere, I suggest that non-aboriginal people are *not* included everywhere in acts of recognition, reconciliation, and reckoning; indeed, their ability to actively engage in (post)colonial introspection, dialogue, and action is in many ways limited in most arenas of society. (Re)connection to these processes can be realized through more concerted and thoughtful efforts in the “postcolonial spaces” of inclusion.

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## ‘Westies’ No More: Towards a More Inclusive and Authentic Place Identity

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**Abstract:** Suburban development in western Sydney boomed in the area during the 1960’s and 1970’s, and soon thereafter the label ‘Westies’ emerged – a derogatory term used to identify people from the west as Sydney’s ‘other’. Today, there is still a social and economic stigma associated with being from the western suburbs, even though in western Sydney you’ll find thriving creative and professional communities, with the government describing the region’s population as young, diverse, and dynamic. Cultural programs, local government place-making initiatives and the broad span of the University of Western Sydney’s six local campuses characterise a place that is far from the ‘Westie’ stereotype. This begs the questions – how was the ‘Westie’ produced, and what have been its effects as a place identity? In exploring these questions, the aim of this paper is to work towards revealing new identity/ies for western Sydney.

**Keywords:** place identity, participation, diversity, collaboration, cultural innovation

### Introduction

Western Sydney is the name given to a vast region to the west of metropolitan Sydney, Australia. Encompassing a total land area of about 5,400 square kilometres, including national parks, waterways and parklands, western Sydney has “substantial residential, rural, industrial, commercial, institutional and military areas” (WSROC, 2012). Residential development in this region boomed during the 1960s and 1970s, driven by post-war population expansion and the need for affordable housing, the State Planning Authority purchased large parcels of land on the urban fringe and implemented structural plans for new suburbs to draw people from other parts of Sydney. Gwyther (2008) explains that during this critical period of suburban development, the majority of new residents in western Sydney were low-income families from the inner city who found themselves living “out in the sticks” in subsidised government housing estates (Guppy, 2005: 1). Early on, western Sydney became synonymous with economic disadvantage, and the image of dangerous sites of delinquency and dysfunctionality became etched in the local psyche and strongly influenced perceptions of life in Sydney’s

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western suburbs. Soon thereafter the label ‘Westies’ emerged, “a term of division and derision, becoming shorthand for a population considered lowbrow, coarse and lacking education and cultural refinement” (Gwyther, 2008: 1) that over time became fixed as the identity of western Sydney and though to a lesser degree, still has resonance today.

From the onset, community initiative supported by local and/or state government funding strove to produce cultural artefacts that countered negative perceptions of western Sydney, and the focus of this paper is to highlight some of this work, as a way of revealing a new identity for the western suburbs of today and the future.

## ‘Westie’ origins

The ‘Westie’ is an anglo-centric, ugly, loutish, stupid, poor person/s with criminal tendencies and bad taste (Powell, 1993: 3). There is no simple explanation about where the term came from and why the image of the west is so ugly, but Gwyther (2008) notes that the phrase became iconic after Michael Thornhill’s 1977 social realist film *The FJ Holden*, which shows a snapshot of the life of young men in Sydney’s western suburbs, presenting the area as a “cultural and spiritual desert”, a place “where regular bouts with the bottle are the only antidote for lives without hope or direction” (Enker, 1994: 211). Although merely a fictional representation of life in the western suburbs, this cinematic portrayal of the ‘Westie’ was reinforced by subsequent media imagery that consistently depicted a dangerous place littered with public housing estates, plagued by juvenile delinquency, broken homes, and riotous behaviour (Gwyther, 2008: 3). In her book *Out West: Perceptions of Sydney’s Western Suburbs*, Powell (1993) explains that public perceptions of the western suburbs and its people have been strongly influenced by negative media representations. Collecting and analysing hundreds of Sydney press articles, she noted that coverage of western Sydney repeatedly portrayed people who were “living on the edge”, desperate and hostile. Powell explains that “the constant repetition of stories about problems and neglect, about the excess of disadvantage, crime, violence, unemployment and lack of facilities, services, wealth, education and so on, produced an image of the western suburbs as Sydney’s ‘other’” (1993: 12). Reinforcing the role of the media in the production of the ‘Westie’ is Marie Gillespie’s notion of ‘TV talk’ (1995), where media representations – news talk in particular – becomes a valuable resource in negotiating individual and collective identities. Gillespie argues that “our understanding of identity formation needs to account for the role of mass media in limiting as well as enabling individual projects of self-formation” (in Powell, 1993: 110). Powell explains that “over a period of time, the term ‘western suburbs’ came to indicate a social category rather than a geographic region” (1993) and by 1990 the Macquarie Dictionary of New Words listed ‘Westie’ as both an adjective as well as a noun: “of or pertaining to a person who lives in the western suburbs of Sydney usually characterised as unsophisticated and macho” (in Powell, 1993: 2). Pre-dating the contemporary practice of place-branding, through the constant dissemination of western Sydney stories consistently focused on “social problems, life in particular locations, and specific events in the area have reinforced urban folklore surrounding the working class, public housing and the urban fringes of the city” (Powell, 1993: 1) the ‘Westie’ was fixed as the identity of western Sydney.

Agreeing that the media has had a powerful role in shaping public perception of western Sydney, Castillo and Hirst (2000) critically investigated the mainstream media’s coverage, suggesting that the reason western Sydney is such a target for negative media coverage is attributable to their discovery that most of the media professionals they spoke to had little knowledge, let alone experience of western Sydney. They argue that there is no conspiracy

against the people of the western suburbs to serve a particular agenda, that rather, the reason why the negative style of reporting was so prevalent at the time of the ‘Westie’s’ formation is simply because most journalists then were male, Anglo, ‘yuppies’– as demonstrated by Henningham’s comprehensive national study of Australian journalists (1996: 207). Castillo and Hirst suggest that for journalists, the western suburbs were “nothing more than a fertile ground for feature stories of violence and despair, to be read by a faraway audience living under a middle class, well-off roof” (2000: 128). Exacerbated by a newsroom culture with dominant news values of “conflict, drama, human interest and celebrity/notoriety” the combination of these values, the pressures of time constraints and a newsroom culture favouring the mainstream “leads to the oversimplification of news values and complex social issues are reduced to stereotypes, myths and clichés” (Castillo and Hirst, 2000: 130).

However, the reality is that the western suburbs are culturally, linguistically and economically diverse (Collins and Poynting, 2000: 21). Gwyther (2008) notes that as if it were a slight reflection of this diverse fabric of western Sydney, more recently, ‘Westie’ competes with a wider lexicon of derogatory terms used to describe those from the west, such as ‘Westie Bogan’, ‘Westie Skank’, ‘Fresh Off the Boat (FOBS) to denote the area’s ethnic groups and ‘Cashed-up Bogans’ mark the more aspirational of the population. However ‘Westie’ and its offshoots are still used as a “rhetorical device to designate the ‘other’ Sydney: spatially, culturally and economically different from the more prosperous and privileged Sydneysiders of the north and east” (Gwyther, 2008: 1).

## Effects

The ‘Westie’ identity has impacted on how people from the west socially and economically interact with the rest of Sydney. Mehrer (2001) conducted a study in Cabramatta, a western Sydney suburb that is often referred to as Australia’s heroin capital, with a long history of media interest showing stories on Asian migrants, teen gangs, illegal immigration and heroin dealing – a site of many of Sydney’s most feared and exotic ‘others’ (Mehrer, 2001: 107). Thanks to the saturation of news stories about the area, many people in Sydney feel that they know something about Cabramatta even though they’ve never been there to experience it themselves, nor would they visit due to its bad reputation (Mehrer, 2001). Powell (1993) asserts that issues affecting Cabramatta are relevant to many other communities in Sydney’s west, and Mehrer wanted to understand both the negative and positive influences that the public image of Cabramatta has had for residents in their daily lives, engaging citizens through informal but lengthy community discussions. Mehrer discovered that among the people she spoke to, negative media representations of the area were seen as shaping their interactions with other Sydney-siders, “with reactions ranging from fear to disdain to discrimination” (2001: 113). This stigma is also seen as having very practical consequences and one man she interviewed explained:

like when you apply for the job it’s trouble if you come from Cabra matta... I was applying for a job in the city once... and he asked me ‘where do I come from?’ I said, ‘Vietnam’, and he asked me, ‘where do I live?’ I said, ‘Bonnyrigg’, because I was actually living there, and he asked me, ‘is that close to Cabramatta?’ and I said, ‘yes’ and he said, ‘sorry, we can’t hire you’. (Meher, 2001: 113)

Echoing this, Morgan (2005) notes that the reputation of western Sydney and Mt Druitt in particular, weighs heavily on locals, accounting for a conversation he had with Veronica who grew up in Mt Druitt:



It is unfair, because, like, you find it hard to get jobs anywhere – like, especially, they’ll ask where you’re from and the first thing, they’ll look at you funny... It’s like, does it really matter where we’re from?... It’s not like we carry guns or anything like that, you know! That’s what they think, basically, that we shoot to kill! (laughs) You get some people thinking like, you know, ‘Have you got knives in your pockets’. (Morgan, 2005: 5)

‘Westies’ have been regularly insulted in public forums, “by people in privileged positions such as radio announcers, Members of Parliament, prominent surgeons and even by a government department” (Powell, 1993: 2). In 2011 Anne-Marie Taylor conducted a study for the Youth Action and Policy Association NSW entitled *The Western Sydney Research Project* that engaged young people with current or previous connections to western Sydney to discuss their experiences of the area. The findings show that even in 2011 most young people believed there was a stigma attached to being from western Sydney. However, what the study highlighted is that while the participants echoed the frustration of many western Sydney residents who have described the negative impact of the stigma, they also felt that the ‘Westie’ stereotype “provided them with an opportunity to “prove them wrong” and assert their identity as a person from Western Sydney who is different from the stereotype. For a lot of respondents in this study, being from western Sydney was something to be proud of despite the negative perceptions of outsiders” (Taylor, 2011: 24). One participant of the study stated:

People view western Sydney as a ghetto-like area where people of ‘ethnic’ backgrounds are violent and destructive. We are racially profiled and viewed as the arse-end of Sydney. This stigma affects me by motivating me to fight it and represent Western Sydney in a truthful kind of way. (Taylor, 2001: 23)

## Moving forward

It is important to understand that the first generation western suburbanites of the 1970s and 1980s were predominantly low-income, migrating from other areas in Sydney’s metro to far-flung places in the west like Mount Druitt. Encouraged to make the move by offers of government subsidised housing, “the process of settlement represented a process of dispossession and acclimatisation to an unrecognisable cultural landscape” (Guppy, 2005). New residents were vocal, speaking bitterly about their experiences, with news reportage during this early phase of settlement preoccupied with stories of neglect, poverty and unrest, depicting the subsidised housing estates of Mount Druitt and later Macquarie Fields as “suburban ghettos” (in Morgan, 2005: 3) and even though these two places represented only a small proportion of western Sydney’s geography, the negative publicity paved the way for widespread criticism of the western suburbs (Guppy, 2005) and over time validated the atrocities of the ‘Westie’ label.

On the upside, this initial flush of negative attention led to local governments’ recruitment of various experts to “ameliorate Mount Druitt’s problems and renovate its image” (Morgan, 2005: 4). Marla Guppy (2005), a cultural planner who specialises in creative community involvement in the planning process, tells how this led to a number of cultural projects aimed at providing residents with the opportunity to recontextualise or re-enact the suburban landscape. An initiative of the local government, the community arts workshop Garage Graphix was set up in Mount Druitt with state arts funding. In 1986, by then having established itself as a part of the community infrastructure for 7 years, Garage Graphix produced *Mount Druitt: 365 Days – A Community Calendar Project*. With assistance from professional community artists, a series of 12 calendar pages depicted images produced by community groups and local residents that gave an insight into the issues they were experiencing. Guppy describes how the resulting images formed part of a process of self-

definition, and at the same time, the final calendar expressed positive values that challenged the negative perceptions of the area. It wasn't until the 1990s that some positive stories about western Sydney started appearing in the media and (Powell, 1993: 5) and "in its absence the positive imagery produced by community arts projects had a particular status" (Guppy, 2005: 2).

In 1998 a series of community arts programs funded by the state government sought to involve Mount Druitt residents in improving the images of their communities through acts of naming areas that were perceived to be in the middle of nowhere, and Guppy explains that:

The re-working of a sense of place in suburbs that were the recipients of consistent bad publicity formed a large part of this work. Resident-generated banners, logos, posters, videos and t-shirt designs sought to connect suburb names with desirable attributes of suburban experience. (2005: 4)

It is through community-based initiatives like Garage Graphix and the Mount Druitt naming project that cultural identities for western Sydney began to emerge and became recognisable. During the 1990s "western Sydney began a process of redefinition, from the ubiquitous 'other', a place not considered 'cultural' by inner Sydney, to a region with new and distinctive cultural possibilities" (Guppy, 2005: 1). These projects show us how the synergy between local governance, cultural innovation and bottom-up initiative can transform communities from within. However, despite the effectiveness of projects like Garage Graphix were in cultivating community pride and self-definition to combat the outside-in identity imposed by the 'Westie', the media still continued to only "examine the problems in western Sydney but fails to explore the efforts made by the community to fix these problems" (Castillo and Hirst, 2001: 124).

Perhaps as a result of the achievements made by cultural programs designed to challenge the 'Westie' paradigm, today there are visible signs of thriving creative and professional communities in western Sydney, with the government describing the region's population as young, diverse, and dynamic (Office of Western Sydney, 2012). Indeed, in 2012 Sydney Festival, one of Sydney's most revered cultural institutions which is traditionally confined to the inner-city, launched a busy art, film and music program based in the western suburbs, reflecting a growing and culturally hungry population (Schwartzkoff, 2012). Arts writer David Williams (2008) comments that a significant artistic boom is "gaining critical mass across western Sydney", citing a diverse range of initiatives occurring across the western suburbs, including new and revitalised spaces, and new collaborations between artists, community and corporate sectors. In 2008 one such project, *Lattice: Sydney* facilitated by western-Sydney based community arts group ICE (Information and Cultural Exchange), saw established UK-based artist group Proboscis collaborate with 15 emerging western Sydney artists to explore approaches to creatively transform suburban space, "imagining the city through they eyes of people who live in it" (Angus, 2008). ICE runs many other similar programs annually, in partnership with local councils and national arts funding, referring to the work they do as essentially storytelling, to "encourage people to take something from the inside, put it on the outside and share it with the world though digital mediums" (ICE, 2012).

Particular municipalities in western Sydney have also embraced innovative place-making programs that engage locals in the process of transforming public spaces into meaningful places for community to connect with each other. A relatively new practice that hinges on local initiative and community participation in a bottom-up process, the priority of place-making is to create or transform spaces into places that people want to inhabit (Legge, 2008). A part of Penrith Council's Neighbourhood Renewal Program, *Magnetic Places* gives financial support in the form of cultural grants to organisations and individuals in order to

devise community-based creative projects spanning film, photography, music and theatre that “highlight community strengths and build community capacity and connection” (Penrith City Council, 2010). Penrith mayor Kevin Cramer attests that “the program has transformed public spaces into magnetic, creative and meaningful places for people to meet” (in Metcalfe, 2010). More recently, Penrith launched the *Penrith is Here* brand resulting from a collaboration between local community, local business and local government which aims to put Penrith “on the map”, distinguishable from greater western Sydney as its own “destination, place, people” (Penrith is Here, 2012). Penrith opinion writer Michael Todd endorses the campaign, writing:

The ‘Penrith is Here’ brand will drive jobs and economic investment, as well as enhance community pride by changing the way people see the area... we now have a brand that allows you to express your pride in our area. I know I’m not the only one that gets sick of the ill informed stereotypes people have of the Penrith, especially in the city and inner west. I see this as our chance to change these perceptions and all Penrith businesses should get behind the new brand.

The campaign strategy makes use of a multi-channel approach to reaching its audience, including environmental branding, traditional media, and social media, and it will be interesting to chart its progress.

The University of Western Sydney (UWS), with six campuses in western Sydney including Penrith, and a student body exceeding 30,000, is one of the largest universities in Australia (Australian Universities, 2012) with most of its students hailing from western Sydney. UWS comprises nine Schools spanning business, computing, engineering, maths, education, humanities, communication arts, law, medicine, nursing, social science, psychology, science and health, plus seven active research centres and four research institutes. Its graduates include successful entrepreneurs, award-winning artists and journalists, business leaders, medical and legal professionals (UWS, 2012). All of this characterises a western Sydney that challenges the ‘Westie’ label.

## **Towards a new place identity**

Despite being understood as a one-dimensional, generic and unfair label perpetuated by news stories rather than distilled from real life, the ‘Westie’ image has affected how people from western Sydney socially and economically interact with other Sydney-siders. While the word isn’t as commonly heard, it has resonance today, and ‘western suburbs’ still incites negative associations. What early cultural programs such as Garage Graphix showed us is the value of engaging people in the process of re-imagining and re-defining the identity of their communities, strengthening people’s connections to place and each other in the process. More recently the outcomes of arts and research projects, cultural innovations, and place-making initiatives signal that western Sydney is now in the process of transformation, and among individuals, communities, organisations and local governments in western Sydney there is a deep commitment to and belief in the potential of the area and its people. Collins and Poynting (2000) argue that while the history of the western suburbs is one of working-class settlement, in later years the children of these working families became “white-collar workers, university graduates, professionals and business men and women” (p. 20) and today, one of western Sydney’s best assets is its class and cultural diversity. This suggests that while the ‘Westie’ label and its negative connotations may have captured a moment in western Sydney’s history, what we do know for certain is that it is not an adequate shorthand for today’s western Sydney where the “congruence of ethnic diversity and class diversity gives

western Sydney a complex, changing character at odds with the very negative stereotypes that predominate” (Collins and Poynting, 2000: 20).

While it is envisaged that the initiative of cultural programs like ICE, place-making programs like Penrith’s *Magnetic Places* as well as the work of the University of Western Sydney will continue to produce richer and more holistic western Sydney stories and images that capture its unique diversity, unless these new stories cut through the thick haze of the ‘Westie’, this will do little to shift the established negative image and the stigma will continue to affect people from western Sydney in the way they interact with the rest of Sydney.

One of the recommendations of the *Western Sydney Research Project* (2011) is that “the Office of Western Sydney develop strategies to improve the image of Western Sydney to the NSW community through a promotional campaign showcasing the great things about Western Sydney” (p. 33). Adding to this, *Penrith is Here*’s campaign strategy and ICE’s employment of digital media in documenting its projects suggests that there is value in using online participatory content sharing tools such as social media to take control of telling these stories, bypassing the media as intermediary, since it has proved unwilling or unable to retract its previous efforts.

In any case, the path towards a more inclusive and authentic place identity for western Sydney has been carved. The continued combined efforts of community and local government, collaborating creatively to celebrate the strengths of the area will produce new images of western Sydney from the inside. Through this, a new identity will gain definition and positive recognition in the near future.

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## Cultural Organizations and Social Innovation: The Case of Bunker<sup>1</sup> (Slovenia)

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**Abstract:** In the past 5 or 6 years countless numbers of academic publications, reports and statistics on European and international organizations have appeared discussing the role of innovation, culture or creativity in developmental processes. Culture is acquiring a growing functionality in the demands for the transformation of our political, social and economic system, not only because it has the capacity to catalyze innovation, but also because it incorporates a network of values that lead to a new ethical interpretation of social and economic exchanges. In the framework of the European project Sostenuto, the University of Valencia has designed a model that explains the emergence of new forms of economic and social organization and provides clues about how to reinforce the innovation capacity in the cultural sector. The experience of Bunker, a cultural organization, in Tabor quarter (Ljubljana, Slovenia) is useful as illustration of the links between cultural and creative activities and social innovation, urban regeneration and social cohesion.

**Keywords:** social innovation, cultural organizations, urban regeneration, creativity

### Some notes on culture, creativity, innovation and development

There is a growing recognition about how the combination of personal, cultural and creative skills, technical abilities and social relations can play a key role in stimulating development. As the Council of Europe itself recognizes, culture and creativity are closely interwoven. Creativity is at the very heart of culture, and this in turn creates an atmosphere that can enable creativity to blossom. For its part, creativity is at the heart of innovation – understood as being the successful exploitation of new ideas, expressions and forms – and as a process that develops new products, new services, and new ways to do business and new ways to respond to the needs of society.

Thus, moving away from the restrictive concept of development in the economic sense leads us to culture, which finally reveals its ability to harness innovation and set in motion processes of economic growth, and hence development. But in addition, cultural creativity

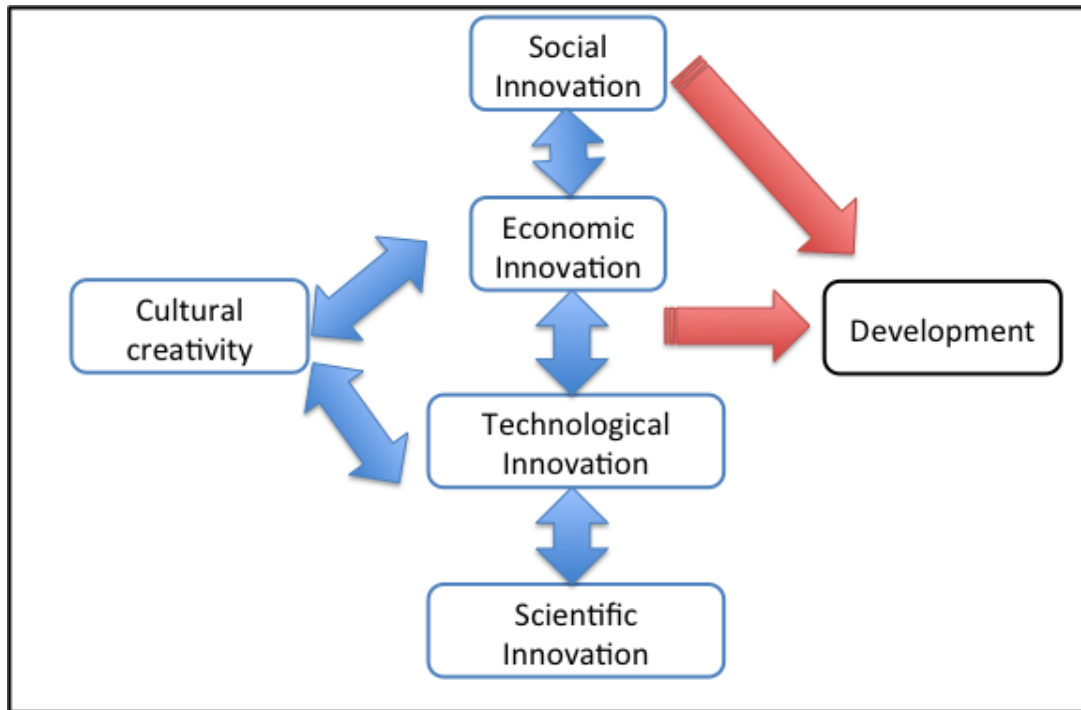
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also has an influence on other spheres of cognitive production, affecting scientific, technological, economic and social innovation as well.

**Figure 1. Cultural creativity and development**



Source: Adapted from KEA (2009)

All these approaches coincide in the difficulty of defining creativity without specifying, (even in the sciences where such studies are the norm) whether it is an attribute or a process. In economic terms, creativity is a renewable fuel, which is constantly enhanced and replenished with use. Furthermore, rather than saturating the market, with creative stakeholders “competence” attracts and stimulates the participation of new producers (Fonseca, 2008).

The novel idea of re-adapting this concept is that cultural creativity also affects innovation processes, which when seen as simple mechanisms for the accumulation of human capital, social capital and relational capital, (Sacco and Segre, 2009) are in themselves development processes.

Expanding the sphere of innovation production means going beyond the idea that innovation concerns what is on offer and the ability to focus on the aspect that what eventually gives new things their value (whether they involve product or process or any other type of novelty), a certain degree of social consensus is arrived at, which accepts the fact that it is not only novel but that it also bears some kind of economic or social value. Furthermore, “social innovation” not only requires a particular creative process to be recognized as the result of a social construction process, but it also needs to have a use or value that can be appropriated by a social group.



To describe this reality, Jaron Rowan uses the expression “social creativity” with the idea of "Innovation in culture: A critical approach to the genealogy and uses of the concept” (YProductions, 2009). Social creativity is considered to be a new resource for development. The work of YProductions classifies the various approaches to social creativity, which are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. Connections between the different types of innovation and the cultural sector**

Types of innovation	Description and adaptation to the cultural sector
Creativity basins (Corsani, Lazzarato and Negri, 1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity basins contain a number of multiple subjects, ideas, knowledge, means of communication, sociability and values. These basins have a creative potential that goes far beyond the capacity of factories and businesses, emerging as a new resource.</li> <li>• Immaterial nature of cultural production.</li> <li>• Organizational models typical of networking setups.</li> <li>• Overlap between lifestyles and productive activity.</li> </ul>
Creative classes (Florida, 2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This refers to the key role played by creative staff in bringing about innovation and three specific attributes of professionals in the industry that are particularly attractive: Technology, talent and tolerance.</li> </ul>
Mass creativity and hidden innovation (NESTA, 2007; Miles and Green, 2008; Leadbeater, 2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading to processes generating research and the production of knowledge within society. The influence of cultural organizations affects three basic areas: promotion of social dialogue (channelled through a critical transformative will typifying the mission of cultural organizations), widespread use of new technologies (promoting them using creative content) and the need to rethink the educational model (inclusion of artistic ability and creative skills).</li> <li>• All those types of innovation happening within society, but which, due to their reduced size and multiplicity, cannot be captured by traditional indicators of innovation. Open and shared production models, the Hacker ethic or the Pro-Am figure are three specific references for cultural and creative organizations associated with hidden innovation.</li> </ul>
Consumer-driven innovation (Georghiou, 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interaction between production and consumption is an obvious risk facing cultural organizations from various standpoints: a role as avant-garde users with alternative lifestyles; the importance of culture being consumed for the benefit of production; the investigative role of cultural organizations and the experimental disposition that characterizes them.</li> </ul>
Social innovation (Mulgan and Halkett, 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “social innovation such as the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) which aim to cover society's shortfalls”</li> <li>• As opposed to the other productive sectors, cultural organizations are characterized by a corporate mission and vision that is relatively more skewed towards social goals and critical dialogue with reality, along with greater involvement in the immediate vicinity (local development). These organizations’ scales of values are integrated in the dynamics of social change feeding such innovations.</li> </ul>
Institutional innovation (Abeledo, 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of culture in promoting institutional innovation is reflected in general programmes such as the international movement of Agenda 21 for Culture, and also in specific activities aimed at modernizing public services. Culture is presented as a resource for local development and its management and planning procedures.</li> </ul>

Basically, culture has considerable potential for its exploratory nature in a context characterized by a new interpretation of the concept of innovation, in which it is seen as the creation of opportunities (Rodríguez, 2007). From this perspective, a concept tied to the

science of forecasting is of particular importance: future scenarios. This concept refers to situations of likely or possible futures, highlighting their application both to innovation in products and services and also to alternative values and models of development. This reinterpretation of innovation means that economic science, and the determination of emerging trends and the future evolution of the markets, are cast in a new light. In this sense, legislation on intellectual property will have a crucial role to play.

### **Innovation and cultural organizations: Main factors for change**

Bunker is a non-profit organization whose main aim is to organise and produce cultural events of the most diverse nature. Bunker produces and presents contemporary theatre and dance performances, organizes different workshops and other educational programmes, carries out various research methods in the field of culture and puts together one of the most well-known international festivals, the Mladi Levi.

The long historical trajectory of Bunker (since 1997) has generated a space of activity characterized by the promotion of artists' mobility in and outside Slovenia, artistic exchanges between disciplines and professional dialogue on best practices and innovative experiments within the framework of local development and global sustainability.

Between 2009 and 2012, Bunker has participated in Sostenuto, a European project in the framework of Interreg Med Programme. Through a series of different laboratories the cultural organizations involved in the project have contributed to provide evidence of the potentialities of creative and cultural activities in social dynamization and territorial development processes. These experiences include a creative business incubator in Marseille (AMI, France), an arts and crafts cluster in Chiusi (Citema, Italy), a set of territorial governance initiatives in Kotor (Expeditio, Montenegro) and Liguria (ZEP, Italy) and Bunker's non-monetary exchange system in Ljubljana. Through these pilot experiences and their own research University of Valencia provides a theoretical model of the placement of culture as a determining factor for social and economic change. The results of Sostenuto are very relevant at a time when the economic crisis is forcing Europe to redefine the traditional elements of competitiveness and reformulate its sustainable development model.

From the research of University of Valencia we can summarize the following key points according to the main specificities of the cultural organizations. This analytical framework is useful to consider the specificities of Bunker as an innovative organization and to analyze later the experience of its non-monetary exchange system in Tabor district.

**Table 2. Links with innovation: Inputs**

<b>PRODUCTIVE DIMENSION</b>	<b>INPUTS LINKS TO THE INNOVATION</b>
HUMAN RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of training of cognitive workers, higher than the economy's average.</li> <li>• Creative skills, talent and tolerance. Importance of divergent ways of thinking, critical skills and imagination.</li> <li>• Technical know-how and ability to integrate several disciplines and languages.</li> <li>• Leadership skills, independence and entrepreneurial attitude.</li> <li>• Greater capacity for teamwork and enhanced value of their important relationship capital.</li> <li>• Lifestyles integrated in professional activity.</li> <li>• High geographical mobility and higher international protection (networks)</li> </ul>
SYMBOLIC RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The production of the CCIs is knowledge-intensive and intensive in the use of symbolic resources.</li> <li>• Symbolic production presents a growing value for competitiveness and differentiation strategies in companies that come under the framework of the knowledge economy.</li> <li>• High interaction between the aesthetic dimension of production and a company's marketing strategies and ethical values.</li> </ul>
RELATIONAL RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social capital wealth and increasing the value thereof in production processes.</li> <li>• The generation, interaction and use of social environments and physical spaces conducive to creativity.</li> </ul>

Source: prepared by the author based on Yproductions (2009).

**Table 3. Links with innovation in the productive processes**

<b>PRODUCTIVE DIMENSION</b>	<b>PRODUCTIVE PROCESS LINKS TO THE INNOVATION</b>
VISION AND MISSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social responsibility values: principles of equality, diversity, solidarity, sustainability, etc.</li> <li>• Basically, not-for-profit orientation (and beyond).</li> <li>• Territorial implication and action from proximity.</li> <li>• Artistic excellence criteria to promote continuous improvement through research and experimentation.</li> <li>• An educational function and promoting access to culture.</li> </ul>
ORGANIZATIONMODEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational values characterised by independence and autonomy at work, voluntary work and working for pleasure, and transparency.</li> <li>• Cultural entrepreneurship as a distinguishing feature.</li> <li>• Importance of organisational behaviour based on hacker ethics: focus on the individual and networking as support.</li> <li>• Open network cooperation through non-hierarchical structures.</li> <li>• Interactive hyper-connectivity as a characteristic feature: potential use of Web 2.0.</li> <li>• Clustering dynamics characteristic of the sector: concentration and territorial networks: effects on social innovation.</li> </ul>
MANAGEMENT MODEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SME entrepreneurial dimension as a characteristic. The shortcomings of entrepreneurial skills as a consequence. Management skills affected by such relevant issues as intellectual property.</li> <li>• Knowledge management is characterised by high levels of improvisation and very short-term planning, given the scenario of high uncertainty associated with cultural markets.</li> <li>• Models of human resource training characterised by the importance of lifelong learning through personalised and informal methods.</li> </ul>
COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The communication function is a tool inherent to cognitive workers: the value of expression, of emotions, of producing meaning, etc.</li> <li>• Information network management, hyper-connectivity and the use of NICTs.</li> </ul>
TECHNOLOGIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interaction between creative content and promotion of the use of the new technologies.</li> <li>• Favourable synergies between the organisational philosophy of the CCIs and the potential of Web 2.0: use of multi-platforms and free content.</li> <li>• Inefficient management of intellectual property rights and negative implications of digitalisation in terms of piracy.</li> </ul>
BUSINESS AND FINANCINGMODEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not-for-profit and beyond-profit organisations</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship and innovative methods of funding: Crowdfunding, business angels, venture capital, etc.</li> </ul>

Source: prepared by the author.

**Table 4. Links with innovation: Outputs and impacts**

PRODUCTIVE DIMENSION	OUTPUTS LINKS TO THE INNOVATION
PRODUCTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cognitive nature of production: experiential, informational, intangible goods; symbolic and emotional production, aesthetic values</li> </ul>
SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spaces for creativity. Workshops on creative work methodologies.</li> <li>Cultural (meta) research, thought and experimentation. Critical analysis. Promotion of spaces for divergent thought.</li> <li>Educational and awareness-raising services.</li> <li>Creative content and communication.</li> <li>Cultural entertainment and social mobility (citizen participation).</li> <li>Internationalisation and integration in territorial networks.</li> </ul>
IMPACTS	
DIVERSE TYPES OF IMPACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audiences: diversity of impacts related to human development (educational, cultural capital development, entertainment, aesthetics, etc.)</li> <li>Promotion of self-employment through cultural entrepreneurship.</li> <li>Territorial impacts: Branding, the use of the cultural resource in planning regional development, inter-territorial cultural cooperation, productive diversification, cultural tourism, promotion of creative environments (public spaces and participative spaces).</li> <li>Development of mass creativity and hidden innovation (integration of artistic abilities in the educational model, promotion of social dialogue and use of the TICs). Environmental sustainability: development of alternative consumer values and lifestyles. Development of consumer-guided innovation (cultural agents as avant-garde users).</li> <li>Fight against social exclusion: Social cohesion, territorial identity and historical memory, cultural diversity, art as a tool for urban renewal and the integration of marginalised groups (crime prevention, promotion of healthy attitudes, etc.).</li> <li>Institutional innovation and optimization of public services: Cultural participation can promote innovation in public services: promote attraction, communication and trust between the public and civil spheres; increase the involvement of groups in risk of exclusion; proximity and interaction with users; participative online systems for suggestions; creative methods of developing ideas; visibility of emerging problems; experimentation and pilot projects, etc.</li> <li>Innovation services in other sectors of the economy: design, innovation in products and services; branding (communication of values; human resource management (creative skills).</li> </ul>

Source: prepared by the author.

According to the contents of Table 3, we can consider Bunker organization as a good illustration of the connections between specificities of cultural organizations and innovation: entrepreneurship and social values, alternative life-styles, creative competences, use of symbolic resources, charismatic leadership, international projection, mobility, social capital... Let's see them in detail.

Bunker's team is characterized by the leadership of its founder, Nevenka Koprivšek, who acquire different intercultural competences through her training in Paris (École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq) and later through professional development in New York. After returning to Ljubljana, she has successfully capitalized these international experiences in her managing job. For eight years, she was the artistic director of the first experimental theatre in Ljubljana, the Glej Theatre. Under her leadership, it became known as an innovative and fierce art centre. In 1997 she founded Bunker and the Mladi Levi festival, both of which she continues to direct.

Nevenka has either been involved in or co-founded many international networks and consortiums such as Junge Hunde, DBM, Balkan Express or Imagine 2020. She occasionally writes, researches, lectures and advises on topics like programming and cultural policy. In 2003, the City of Ljubljana gave Nevenka Koprivšek a major municipal award for special achievement in culture and in 2011 she was honoured by the Government of France as a Chevalier d'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

Bunker began its activity with limited investment and Nevenka's and her collaborator Mojca Jug's will to succeed. Thanks to their knowledge and experience in the industry, along

with their eagerness, professional contacts and effort, the association developed until it reached its current status, with eight full-time staff members. Five of these workers have a regular contract and three have the status of a “self-employed cultural worker,” which amounts to a monthly contract with Social Security contributions being paid by the Ministry.

Various issues can be highlighted with respect to the work team, in which most of the members are female. The competences required are characterized by the importance of the creative skills (alternative discourses), communicative skills (languages) and organizational skills (cooperative strategies). The administrative and economic tasks are also managed by specialized personnel. Working arrangements are heavily influenced by the philosophy and lifestyles of the organization, with a high degree of mobility, coordination and partnership in the distribution of tasks. All in all, we can describe Bunker as a mature organization with practically fifteen years of experience and a relatively young human resources team.

Another one of Bunker’s features concerns the management of a unique space: the Stara Mestna Elektrarna – Elektro Ljubljana. This old power station has an important historical and artistic value, therefore being considered part of Ljubljana’s cultural heritage. It has been refurbished as a technical monument by Elektro Ljubljana and the Slovenian authorities for cultural purposes. Bunker’s programme at the Stara Elektrarna consists of contemporary theatre and dance productions, festivals, concerts and interdisciplinary events, as well as an educational and a rehearsal programme.

The annual contemporary arts festival Mladi Levi is one of the highlights of Bunker’s activities. The festival started in 1998 as an international performing arts festival focusing on young emerging artists and new art genres (contemporary circus, documentary theatre, etc.). Nowadays, the focus of the festival remains the same, but the scope of the programme has broadened to include visual and public art, as well as many participatory projects, where international artists join efforts with local residents. From the very beginning, the Mladi Levi festival has also been the framework of a short residency in which the artists invited to the event meet and exchange ideas with local practitioners and producers.

### **The social innovation experience: Non-Monetary Exchange Systems<sup>3</sup>**

A Local Exchange Trading System (LETS) is an organization model in which goods and services can be traded without using traditional currency. These systems are based in the use of interest-free local credit facilities in which direct exchanges are not necessary. For instance, a member can obtain credit by baby-sitting for another person and then spending it on carpentry with someone belonging to the same network. Transactions are recorded in a central platform (physical or virtual) open to all members. Since credit is offered by members of the network for their own advantage, local exchange trading systems are considered to be mutual credit systems. Through the development of Local Exchange Trading Systems, the objective of Bunker has been to facilitate the territorial regeneration of Tabor quarter (Ljubljana), whose name takes after the neighbourhood where Bunker is located.

In this sense, Bunker’s pilot experience is part of a long-term process: establishing a permanent connection with the neighbours and the local actors. A lot of activities and efforts

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<sup>3</sup> This section has been written in collaboration with Nevenka Koprivšek, Bunker’s director, and Samo Selimović, project manager.

in this direction have culminated in the creation of Tabor Cultural Quarter. Previous local studies have identified as Tabor challenges the lack of green public spaces, fragile social identity and minor sense of belonging. Considering that the spatial concentration of cultural subjects in Tabor is very high and the area has various interesting artistic and cultural spaces – including the Stara Elektrarna, Metelkova (a former military site reconverted into an alternative cultural centre) or the Slovene Ethnographic Museum – building the cultural quarter seemed to be the only natural choice to answer both the needs and wishes of the local population and the aspirations of cultural professionals from the same area who had expressed their will to create that kind of network. There are also not cultural but social or educational organizations that became part of the Cultural Quarter activities, because of their aspiration to work together on common issues and areas of interest. The local elementary school and the retirement home are good examples. The established Cultural Quarter Tabor is therefore a case of a “bottom-up” answer to the concrete needs of residents and local organizations, realized by Bunker through the use of inclusive problem-detection and decision-making methods.

The experience of the Bunker Lab was fully integrated in the so-called processes of social innovation. If we look at the six theoretical stages in which these processes can be divided (Murray, Caulier-Grice and Mulligan, 2010) (see Table 4), the Bunker lab can be linked to the first three stages. It should also be noted that the application already anticipated a concrete method of generating innovations through the LETS, so the second stage of the NESTA classification was predefined to a certain extent.

**Table 5. Six stages of social innovation**

1. Diagnosis. Highlighting emerging problems
2. Fostering creative methods to generate ideas and proposals
3. Designing prototypes and implementing pilot experiments enabling ideas to be tested
4. Achieving sustainability in the long term, making practice part of the routine
5. Disseminating and generalizing large-scale innovation
6. Causing systematic change

Source: Murray, Caulier-Grice and Mulligan (2010).

Bunker activity was focused on producing better pilot activities, developing social networking through activities such as the creation of platforms or the identification and integration of strategic players.

The initial Sostenuto plans envisaged the LETS as a tool that Bunker could use to find a method through which art and culture could tackle economic and social problems. This assumption was put to the test at the beginning of the project with “Street Exchange” and “Line No. 10: The Book.” The Street Exchange was an attempt to modify the classic local exchange trading system to address the challenges and faults we identified during the previous research phase. Bunker connected the idea of local exchange to a cultural event in order to mobilize more participants. Even though Bunker managed to involve a very large number of individuals in the exchange event (ca. 400), the subsequent analysis showed that a large percentage of the exchanges that took place remained unfinished. After several interviews, Bunker came to the conclusion that the “Street Exchange” project was welcomed by the different festival audiences, hence the high participation, but failed to persuade

participants to carry out the exchanges until the end or participate in other exchanges. This fact proved the constraints already pointed out by other LETS researchers, namely the fact that the successful LET systems eventually disintegrate into informal networks of friends and acquaintances that exchange services and goods, while the unsuccessful systems, the ones that are not able to mobilize a sufficient number of people, end up disappearing. These constraints are also the main reason for the shift of experimental focus detailed in the next paragraphs.

Another early experimental project conducted in the framework of the local exchange trading system laboratory was “Line No. 10: The Book” (Proga10: Knjiga). The aim was to promote and standardize the free exchange of books in a specific context (the dead time spent waiting for a bus), arousing curiosity and enhancing people’s receptiveness. To this end, a free-exchange library system was set up at 23 bus stops of the public transport system in the capital. This initiative took advantage of UNESCO’s designation of Ljubljana as the World Book Capital 2010. The initiative was carried out with the collaboration of the Municipality of Ljubljana, the private company Europlakat, as well as institutes, publishers, libraries and other institutions. A broad selection of more than 20,000 books was made available to public transport users, who borrowed the books and (on a smaller scale than we hoped for) returned them after reading. These exchange activities were complemented with specific actions for the priority audiences targeted by BUNKER: namely, the youngest members of the reading public. Hence, a stand with a simpler and on-the-spot exchange was set up at the Metelkova Autonomous Zone to exchange books and promote values associated with this pastime.

Alternative exchange systems were also been introduced to high-school pupils through a series of workshops. During the workshops, in which the alternative exchange systems were compared to the existing ones, Bunker realized that once again they underestimate the possible contributions of the younger generation to the addressing of society’s problems.

Bunker has already mentioned some of the problems or deficiencies of the local non-monetary exchange. Because of them, the Bunker team searched for other approaches with which they could address local problems in an engaged way through artistic interventions.

The social challenges that were to be addressed were identified through previous diagnosis work. Bunker carried out two comprehensive studies about the local territory, its history, and the needs and aspirations of the local residents. The sociological study was focused on the identification of key issues in the local community and was implemented with the focus group method. This helped Bunker differentiate activities according to the specific characteristics of a certain age group. The most important findings of the study were the lack of green areas and community spaces, the lack of a sense of belonging and identity in the quarter, the alienation of residents and the general feeling of the interviewees that all the different cultural subjects should collaborate in some way. The anthropological study was conducted through interviews and data-gathering and provided material and references for the content of the activities, as it was mostly dealing with the quarter’s history, stories and symbolic heritage.

A large range of activities was carried out in the period between 2009 and 2011 in order to develop the workplan. Workshops, talks, events, happenings, and landscaping activities were all conducted with the collaboration of local and international experts and different stakeholders.

In 2009 the Bunker team decided to collaborate with the artistic collective prostoRož, designing a project called “prostoRož09: Street”. During the Mladi Levi festival, held in August 2009, the architects from the prostoRož collective stretched the boundaries of the public space in Tabor: 10 parking spaces were transformed into a space for leisure, recreation, play and different events from the cultural and educational field. The intervention addressed

some of the problems that Bunker had detected in the study: the growing invasiveness of cars in cities, lack of public spaces and urban furniture and the lack of quality community spaces.

Several small-scale projects were produced with the intent of resolving minor local challenges with the help of cultural content. Four urban interpretation routes (A Look by the Way, In Search of the Lost Garden, A Look from the Outside, and Wild Seed) were organized in the local quarter with help from *prostoRož* collective, also with the aim of strengthening the identity of the local quarter. The aim of these routes was to work on the collective recognition of local problems and identify and discuss alternatives to solve them from different perspectives. It involved drawing attention to emerging conflicts (using creative and innovative methodologies such as Walkscape) and promoting alternative paradigms and values for development. National and international experts in innovative models of non-monetary exchange and solidarity economy were invited to participate in these activities, rethinking issues such as the role of the consumer in production processes, the role of the green areas as a public space, or the ways in which the living spaces are perceived. During the summer, young people have very few non-commercial activities in which they can engage. Photography, leisure and Dj-ing workshops were organized for children aged 10 to 16 from the neighbourhood. The closing party of *Mladi Levi* festival was an opportunity to introduce the results of the workshops. These are examples of the ways in which Bunker, besides providing quality art programs for young people, promotes long-term relationships between the festival and the local residents. *Paz!park* (artistic collective) carried out the *Paz!lonček* action, in which the youngsters made pottery and distributed it for free throughout the quarter in order to improve the atmosphere and facilitate interconnections between neighbours.

“Beyond The Construction Site” and “Park Tabor” are two of the activities that deserve special attention. In order to create new spaces that encourage collaboration between people in a broad socio-cultural context, Bunker tackled the transformation of deteriorated public spaces in Tabor district. As these challenges proved to be too large to be addressed solely by Bunker’s staff, they were tackled in collaboration with *ProstoRož* and *Kud Obrat*. The regeneration of the degraded (and according to some local residents, also dangerous) areas through cultural (and other) activities was achieved in a relatively short period, answering needs for more communal activities and non-commercial content in the quarter.

Concerning *Park Tabor*, by the end of the summer, Bunker already had positive feedback from the local residents and observed changes were clearly evident in a very short time frame. A total of 48 organizations and individuals produced 455 events in 131 days. The local residents were able to take part in the transformation and beautification of their neighbourhood and discuss issues that interested them in both locations/projects, but no other project mobilized so many local residents and inspired so much volunteer participation and joint efforts as “Beyond the Construction Site.” Lot of efforts were made in order to obtain an official permit for temporary land use from the *Ljubljana Municipality*. A degraded construction site was transformed into a collective community gardening area – the first of its kind in Slovenia. Apart from Bunker’s engagement and the involvement of *Kud Obrat*, which consisted of coordinating the activities at the site, local residents spent countless hours of work to transform the space from 2009 on. The municipal authorities, as well relevant institutions like the *Network for Space* and other local decision-making structures, acknowledged the importance of that kind of problem-solving approach in urban areas. The project is still ongoing. In addition, similar initiatives are emerging in other districts in *Ljubljana* and *Slovenia*. We can claim without a doubt that these two activities clearly demonstrate the effect that culture can have in society.



Finally, the organization of the “Ready to Change Forum” turned out to be a milestone for both the Sostenuto project and for the Bunker workplan. The purpose of this international meeting was sharing of knowledge and presenting the ways in which cultural actors are coping with social transformations, transformations of public policies and cultural and artistic practices. An open forum was held at the Stara Elektrarna venue (2-4 December 2010) with the participation of more than 200 cultural operatives, mostly from Europe but also from other continents. The forum’s programme was based on three pillars: *Open University*, *Exchange of Experiences* and *Manifesto*.

The *Open University*, which included lectures and debates among intellectuals, researchers, artists and professionals on topics as Social Changes and New Urban Realities, Cultural Rights, Economy and Biodiversity, etc. *Exchange of Experiences* included presentations of specific projects and programs dealing on these questions. The third component was workshops aimed at the collective writing of the final *Manifesto*: “Towards Transformational Cultures: Ljubljana 1.0.” Participants were invited to co-write the Manifesto and a draft was presented at the end of the Forum to a panel of representatives of civil initiatives and politicians. This draft version included points as proposals to rethink common goods, art as a critical process of production of meanings and symbols, freedom of expression, etc.

We can also highlight the use of New Information and Communication Technologies for the documentation and dissemination of the whole process. The majority of lectures and presentations are available at: <http://www.bunker.si/eng/sostenuto-lectures-and-presentations>.

## Conclusions

Cultural and artistic activities serve as a basis for the fulfilment of Bunker’s commitment to connect different local stakeholders (cultural and others) in order to enhance the quality of life and provide the Tabor quarter with a cultural identity. The experimentation conducted through these activities has led to the emergence of a physical and symbolic space, providing a new (cultural) identity for the existing territory through numerous collaborations between different organizations and individuals. Participation and inclusiveness were both goals in themselves as well as the design of successful methods for choosing and implementing the envisaged solutions to local problems. All the projects were answering specific demands or observations identified in the two studies – be it the wish of some residents to spend more time with their neighbours, the absence of quality community spaces or green areas, the strengthening of solidarity amongst local residents or the strong will of the local professionals to collaborate in the creation of a structure that could habilitate the demands and initiatives of both professionals and residents.

Bunker continues to work with the local community, spreading examples of good practices to other areas, defining the conditions and looking for the resources necessary to continue developing the initiatives launched in the framework of the laboratory. The local territory has benefitted to a great extent from these initiatives and now there is a critical mass of local participants enough to extend them. On the basis of the Sostenuto experience, Bunker is also starting similar projects in Maribor, the second largest city in Slovenia and is planning further actions of urban regeneration and social cohesion through artistic activities in Ljubljana.

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## Reclaimed Space: Mapping Urban Assemblages in Sydney

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**Abstract:** Sydney's alternative sector and the management of commercial performance spaces has had a turbulent history, frequently marked by disputes between owners, local residents and councils over sound regulations and licensing laws. This regulation and a range of other factors have contributed to the counter practice of irregular venues within Sydney's underground scenes. The alternative Sydney arts, performance and grassroots community scenes have been operating as a system of unofficial venues that run without relevant licenses. Artists and musicians etch out an existence in these spaces, away from the norms of the commodified licensed venue experience. My research utilises photography to capture these temporal spaces as they shift, relocate and reform in the face of imminent closure or exposure. My research paper will question the ways the fluid, adaptable, creative and alternative dimensions of Sydney's irregular performance spaces can be revealed and explored through my photographic phenomenological investigation. This paper also addresses how Actor Network Theory as a research methodology can contribute to an understanding of both the networks these spaces form and how they inhabit the wider city networks that sustain, nurture but also potentially threaten them.

**Keywords:** irregular spaces, phenomenology, Actor Network Theory, alternative cultures, space/place

### Setting the scene

Australia as a country is often associated with an expanse of space, television adverts and tourism campaigns saturated with imagery of open plains and immense expanses of nothingness. Whilst this may ring true to our rural areas and the vastness of our central desert, the opposite could not be more true about our cities, in particular the city of Sydney. As a relatively new city, we can hardly flaunt our historical character and so we measure ourselves by our geometric excellences, such as the most central, the biggest, the fastest and the tallest (Tuan, 2008). Within a city, so fixated on redevelopment, an increase in high property prices combined with greater surveillance of private/quasi-public property precludes free use of public space and reinforces topographies of affluence within the city. These countervailing forces aimed at maintaining existing geographies of power and privilege (Soja, 2010) result in diminishing performance and art spaces being made available and/or accessible for low-income creatives and artists within the city. The utopian days of counter cultures fleetingly

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inhabiting inner city spaces is little more than a memory (Byrne, 2008). Places inhabited and/or used by counter cultures (under-utilised by definition) have become hot spots of gentrification, “Developments, infill projects and factory conversions are displacing informal and low-income uses, and places in the interstices are becoming harder to find” (Shaw, 2005: 149). Homan and Gibson (2004) note:

Residential developers have played upon the reputation of key suburbs as sites of creativity, lifestyle and “alternative subcultures” focused around main street consumption spaces. Yet, resultant property market rises have threatened the ability of artists, musicians and others employed in the cultural industries to secure affordable housing and spaces for performance. At the same time, Sydney has experienced a decline in live music venues, in part fueled by competing revenue streams for publicans (such as slot machines, trivia nights and karaoke), but also exacerbated by the imposition of more restrictive licensing and regulatory laws. (p. 1)

As a result of this turbulent history, and their displacement from commercially viable spaces, the alternative Sydney arts, performance and grassroots community scenes have been operating on a system of unofficial venues that run without relevant licenses (Rattler, 2010). The illegal nature of a number of these venues has resulted in police and councils attempting to shut many of them down and in some cases, succeeding. The spaces that have struggled to remain opened are now even harder to find, not easily identifiable and addresses are not printed online or on flyers, due to the fact that these venues function on some basis of illegality.

These venues are not purpose built spaces and consist of a range of warehouses, under-utilised buildings, lounge rooms and backyards in private dwellings within Sydney city and inner west suburbs. These irregular spaces are an attempt to subvert the increasingly inequitable, capitalist approach to entertainment and the arts in a successful global city like Sydney. My research maps these venues, highlighting not only the active, but also, the number of closed irregular spaces. The movement and redistribution of spaces is representative of the growth of the capitalist sector in the inner city suburbs and the spread of gentrification that is pushing these spaces towards the city outskirts.

Whilst these irregular spaces often exist or operate in isolation, they are also part of a larger whole; a living, thriving creature, that hibernates, breathes and stirs life into the city of Sydney. I refer to these spaces as irregular spaces. I’ve identified a series of traits akin to these spaces in order to frame an understanding of what makes these spaces irregular. They are characterised by the following:

- A taken-over or claimed venue space that is not native to performance;
- A space that deals with political, experimental and alternative performance subject matter that encapsulates both ‘play’ and ‘resistance’;
- A venue run by artists and creatives whose sole purpose is not for commercial gain;
- A venue that (in a variety of ways) evades traditional legislation affiliated with commercial venue spaces;
- A space that has no visible windows from inside the venues interior, due to various reasons but most commonly to accommodate security and discretion.

## Capturing the scene

### – *Photography as hermeneutic phenomenology*

The way in which I capture and study these spaces is through photography. My research methodologies aim to map cultural actors in urban space and articulate how the practice of urban image making informs the development of a reflexive and critical research perspective. I do this through hermeneutic phenomenology as photography; this is an appropriate methodology as “Phenomenologists seek to promote understanding not explanations” (Cox, 2012: no page). Traditionally phenomenology includes the perspectives of the believers, in my case, the perspective is that of the photographer. Therefore, promoting the use of photography as phenomenological seeing, therefore you experience and see what I, the researcher see whilst attending these events. The aim of this is to help the viewer understand the experiences of what it is like within this counter culture. Capturing and understanding this temporal scene is important due to the extinction of a large number of these spaces and the long periods of hibernation and transformation of various spaces. In this regard, “The camera is not presented as a cure all for our visual limitations but as an extension of our perceptions” (Collier, 1967: 7).

As Gadamer has stated, “Language is the universal medium in which understanding occurs. Understanding occurs in interpreting” (Lavery, 2003: 389). I argue the universal medium in which understanding and interpretation occurs is ‘the image’. In this paper I aim to show that the image can function as a universal medium to assist understanding and interpretation and how it can be used in conjunction with ANT to dictate an alternative understanding of cities.

## Deciphering the scene

### – *Actor Network Theory and temporal space*

### – *Mapping urban assemblages*

My motivation as a photographer in this context is to capture the complete feel of each space. This includes capturing the people and objects within the space. Whilst people do photograph at these spaces, they are most often taking pictures of the performer; I however am interested in capturing the relationships, links and networks between people and things, articulating the ways imagery can contribute to a sense of place and how these images can help to redefine an alternate understanding of cities.

This photographic work is used in conjunction with the research methodology of Actor Network Theory (ANT), allowing me to map the urban networks delineated by the irregular opening and closing of cultural activities. ANT is an appropriate methodology for investigation into Sydney’s irregular scene as it does not preemptively label the scene as a specific social movement or group but merely allows the actors themselves to define the occurrences and connection between entities. This is aligned with the idea that the city is not socially constructed – it is defined by the interactions of actors, the actors themselves define the social not society, culture or discourse. The uniqueness that ANT has to offer is “the delineation of an alternative ontology for the city, an alternative understanding of this messy and elusive object” (Farias *et al.*, 2010: 13).

The city plays an important part within this research, as it is the macro world, which frames the micro world that exists within it. This framing of macro and micro is where my two methodologies intersect. Utilising Photography and ANT together allows me to reveal or track different aspects of the spaces. Photography documents the internal interpretation of the spaces and the mapping of cultural actors, whereas ANT creates a mapping of the urban networks leading me to an alternate understanding of city. Due to the elusive nature of cities, it is important to address what the city actually is. Farias (2010) explains that cities are generally understood and broken down into the following three categories: spatial forms, economic units, and cultural formations.

These kinds of categorisations lend themselves to the city being seen as a static object or “bounded unit” (Farias *et al.*, 2010: 12). ANT allows us to break away from this notion, allowing space to become fluid and temporal. This fluid approach enables the researcher to move between frames of reference to regain some sort of commensurability between traces coming from frames travelling at very different speeds and acceleration (Latour, 2005). This reference to frames and speed makes (for me) an undeniably photographic connection to the capturing of these movements. When shooting these spaces I endeavor to capture all elements of the space, ANT as a methodology places the same emphasis on human and non-human actors, there is no specificity or agency given to any one object over the next (Law, 1999). Whilst this is a unique attribute to ANT and aids my photographic process, it is also the main criticism of ANT that it does not acknowledge hierarchy and order, but merely renders the social world as 2D. I try to combat this critique by reinstating specificity through the use of my imagery, which is descriptive and depictive.

The fluid nature of space is integral to the framing of my project. In my research context, neither space nor place takes precedent and their relationships are irreversibly intertwined. This is partly due to the changing nature of space itself, “space is tangible and intangible and is sometimes most powerful when it does not reside in any one location” (Vanclay *et al.*, 2008:37) Following the works of Massey (2005) this project is an attempt to liberate understandings of space through revealing their temporality and fluidity. Bergson equates change with temporality; Massey (2005) expands on this, connecting newness and creativity to temporality. This inscription of newness and creativity as temporality and as a mark of change is very evident within the temporal spaces within my study. The notion of flux, variation and therefore constant change is an inherent quality of these irregular spaces, and plays a large part in defining them as irregular in nature. ANT accounts for “a radical account of space and time as consequences, effects or even, dependent variables of the relations and associations making up actor networks” (Farias *et al.*, 2010: 6)

The way in which I decipher these networks in Sydney is to physically link elements that I have captured in the visual through mapping exercises. This ensures a traditionalist approach to “ANT as it attempts to render the social world as flat as possible in order to ensure the visibility of links” (Latour, 2005: 16). Similar to that of a cartographer, except in this case, the linkages are a continual and evolving process and hence aim to reflect time and flux rather than constrained and inflexible networks. “Space, scale and time are rather multiply enacted and assembled at concrete local sites, where concrete actors shape time-space dynamics in various ways, producing thereby different geographies of associations” (Farias *et al.*, 2010: 6). The benefits of the ANT approach is that it reveals the sense in which spaces emerge through the time-space dynamics of actors, and that space is not a pre-existing construct or a given in which objects move around, it is made through performance and associations. This challenges traditional conventions of space that define it as a capitalist construct of relations (Smith, 1992) or state strategies (Brenner, 2004).



The implications of my project are that it allows me to see Sydney anew as an object, which is relentlessly being assembled at a variety of concrete sites of urban practice, or, to put it differently, as representations of the limitless processes of becoming (Farias, 2010). This mapping exercise has challenged some of my views of Sydney as a dynamic urban space, a city that encompasses the possibility of volatility and fluidity to track the ‘becoming’ – the emergence – of these spaces. This is important in my research as the scene is constantly changing and has not yet become a fixed entity.

In relation to this methodology, I draw on the words of Italo Calvino where he discusses the notion of the fictional city ‘Ersilia’ This abstract is vital in understanding the process of mapping and linking these spaces together by strings and lines as these networks still remain, even after the space is gone (which is a very possible reality based on the instability of the Sydney scene and the legality issues surrounding these venues).

In Ersilia, to establish the relationships that sustain the city’s life, the inhabitants stretch strings from the corners of the houses, white or black or grey or black-and-white according to whether they mark a relationship of blood, of trade, authority, agency. When the strings become so numerous that you can no longer pass among them, the inhabitants leave: the houses are dismantled; only the strings and their supports remain. From a mountainside, camping with their household goods, Ersilia’s refugees look at the labyrinth of taut strings and poles that rise in the plain. That is the city of Ersilia still, and they are nothing. They rebuild Ersilia elsewhere. They weave a similar pattern of strings, which they would like to be more complex and at the same time more regular than the other. Then they abandon it and take themselves and their houses still farther away. Thus, when travelling in the territory of Ersilia, you come upon the ruins of the abandoned cities without the walls, which do not last, without the bones of the dead which the wind rolls away: spider webs of intricate relationships seeking a form. (Calvino, 1997: 44)

Like in Calvino’s city, my strings are ‘links’ and connections in the form that they map associations that can capture heightened moments of cultural intensity or vibrancy, but they are a material reminder of the volatility of such spaces. At times, the increased connections and links between spaces, people and things can inevitably lead to the demise of the space, due to the fact they function under a blanket of discretion. The more that is known about them, often the more volatile the space; hence, there is volatility in visibility. Despite these cumbersome factors, the temporal and resilient nature of the actors that comprise of these spaces will pick up, relocate and rebuild, determined on achieving a space to house alternate performance and sounds – an integral, yet hidden, part of a dynamic city.

This is just an initial mapping process, which will continue, in finer detail as my project progresses. The varying levels of detail and intensity are limitless as the network can then branch out to other cities and countries and so on. Murdoch (1997) reinforces this idea and discusses how ANT helps in eliminating the issues surrounding duality in studies of human geography: “it [can] extend its influence and reach beyond a single locale into other locales, tying these together in sets of complex associations. There is, therefore, no difference in kind between ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ or ‘global’ and ‘local’ actors; longer networks can simply reach further than shorter networks” (70).

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## Biographies for Artistic and Social Intervention

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**Abstract:** This paper discusses the theme biographies for artistic and social intervention through an analysis of artistic work conducted with a group of young people from the arts education project *Bando à Parte: Youth Cultures, Arts and Social Inclusion* (O Teatrão, Coimbra). How do young people create a voice which may be potentially used to transform their own communities, having as a starting point their biographical path(s)? How can each of us find on biographical courses specific contributions that may interfere with change, and how may these be translated into concrete policies and actions in society? The exploration of these processes through a work of artistic creation, inspired in biographical collected materials, represents a possible contribution to reflect on the issues of memory, identity and community change.

**Keywords:** biographies, social change, arts education, urban communities, citizenship

### Theoretical contextualization

The biographical construction of individual courses represents an approach that may structure a base for individual education, as the biographic process is directly connected with the processes of education (Dominice, 2006), and defines a basis of intervention in society and of our relations with other people in different collective contexts. Biographies work on the existential and subjective perspective of individual identities, giving greater importance to the social, cultural and political aspects of each individual. Therefore, it is an approach that is able to articulate both individual and collective elements of all and every one of us (Josso, 2009), congregating both a subjective and an analytical component.

The *Artistic Society Projects* (ASP), whose approach is used under the arts education project *Bando à Parte*, are here understood as what results from the process of using biographical approaches (lifestories and biographical narratives, combined with different individual perspectives on the social world) in the artistic process of the arts education

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process. These projects represent an effort of building knowledge on social processes and issues, based on the heuristic potential of biographic approaches and its subjective processes, creating, as Elsa Lechner and other authors propose, an interpretation of social history from the subjectivities of individual stories (Lechner, 2009).

Biographies reflect relations of trust between individuals and propose strategies of outreach to and interrelation with differentiated social groups and social worlds. The relation of interaction has a strong pedagogical and transformative power, not only from an individual perspective, as it gives their own subjective perspective on a specific situation (Bertaux, 1997), but also from a collective point of view. The materials collected through biographical and life stories' approaches may generate individual processes of social and cultural emancipation. These processes tend to generate a political process that may give origin to new formats of civic participation and citizenship, as they tend to destroy socially constructed stereotypes and build an individual political perspective on the social world, as well as a specific code of conduct.

We need to take into account the origins of the models of biographical construction, on one hand, and, on the other hand, understand its connections with the education and learning processes (Delory-Momberger, 2011), so as to clarify the relation between art education and social integration (Marshall, 2006). Biography is always a social and cultural construction on the social world and is simultaneously product of the articulation between the objective and subjective richness of the biographical material, as individual stories are always a reflection on the crossing between individual and collective stories and realities (Lechner, 2009). The relation of human beings with their life is culturally constructed and their life courses express models, social structures and cultural approaches. Subjects interpret their lived experiences and produce an interpretation of their lives and of their relation with it, creating an idea of themselves and therefore an interpretation of the world around them. The biographical activity is consequently an essential process on the social definition of the individual in his relation with the society where he is integrated (Delory-Momberger, 2004). It is under this context of reinterpretation of the social world that subjects are created as active interveners on their own lives, influencing their course and, consequently, having a political and reflexive perspective on the development of a specific social, cultural or political situation. It is on this connection with reflexivity that it becomes interesting to analyze the contribution of an arts education project that uses some tools of the biographical perspective to create individual *Artistic Society Projects* (ASP). The process implicates both the creation of knowledge over the specific social, cultural and political situation of the individual, and the reflection, through the means of the artistic practice, on that same situation. The artistic practice incorporates processes that integrate the possibility to re-write life and rebuild identity, proposing structural models to build individual constructions on reality. The process incorporates and individual reporting that assumes the form of an artistic presentation, which is the result of a long process of artistic oriented research, explained further down in this paper, in the section 'Methodology'.

## **The project: Objectives and activities**

The main goal of *Bando à Parte* is the construction of individual identities based on the promotion of individual capacities, on the development of self-trust behaviors and on the promotion of inter-personal and inter-group relationships. On one hand, one of the main objectives is the creation of a culture of civic leadership, the development of reflective behaviors and the capacity of action, with a view to conceptualize and implement *Artistic*

*Society Projects* (ASP). These projects use artistic activities as promoters of positive social change, contributing to change the negative stereotypes that are normally reproduced by a political system that tends to perpetuate the youth disconnection from mainstream opportunities, lifestyles and outlooks (MacDonald and Marsh, 2001). On the other hand, and as an active civil society cannot be envisioned independently from its cultural ties, our approach is also based on the revivification of individual's cultural origins, through the promotion of opportunities to establish inter-cultural relations and to promote cultural reconciliation with urban spaces. The instrument used to develop these objectives is the artistic activity on its multiple disciplines, namely theatre, music and dance. On this context, the project strategy of intervention is the development of youth individual creativity, as an essential instrument for the development of a group of social and individual skills that contribute for the creation of a citizen, able to reflect on social contexts and to have an engaged civic participation.

It becomes more and more important that citizens in general and the youth in particular develop a process of reflection about the society where they live, positively acting over the communities where they are live. The artistic activity in general is an essential instrument to stimulate critical reflection, developing at the same time creativity and establishing connections with other approaches to the social world. The issues that affect youth in their daily lives directly connect us to the main issues that affect society in general. What may then be in this context the role of the artistic practice? What is the role of the citizens in general, and the youth in particular on the construction of what might be nowadays understood as citizenship? How may the artistic practice contribute to the generation of knowledge and innovative social approaches for the construction of a citizen, builder of a local, national and international identity? These are the main questions that set up the terrain of analysis within this project.

## Processes and objectives

This project aims to impact the creation of citizens with a critical attitude, autonomous, with capacity to act individually and as a group and with a deep connection with the urban social space that surround them, as well as with their differentiated belongings and cultural identities.

To achieve that, this project wishes to persecute the following objectives:

- Creation of a structure that supports the creation of *Artistic Society Projects* (ASP), channeled by the artistic and cultural activity. The main goal is to support the development of projects of social intervention that use artistic and cultural tools and which are directly influenced by the social issues that affect youth daily lives;
- Development of youth leadership capacities, stimulating youth potential for the conception and implementation of ASP, based on the cultural and artistic practice;
- Promotion of a relation with the urban space, including natural urban environments, daily life spaces and spaces of built patrimony, by stimulating the research for the ASP in natural or build urban environments of the city of Coimbra;
- Stimulation of intercultural relations by using the artistic activity as a tool of connection between different social and cultural groups, including the work of inclusion through the arts of individuals who are socially excluded;
- Arts Education: promotion of individual artistic skills through the development of a structured program of activities that include the learning of basic tools of the artistic

practice, in different fields. A more formal learning curriculum is complemented with a non-formal learning process where the youth group will establish direct contact, during the two years of the project, with different activities of O *Teatrão*, from rehearsals, production activities, performance setting up, production of artistic events from other groups, evaluation processes and others.

- Interchange Artistic Activities between *Teatrão* and other artistic organizations from other countries that work with youth groups, developing programs of activities where the youth groups have opportunities to discuss, share experiences, develop joint artistic activities and evaluate the different projects from the different countries. The main goal is to identify good practices in the field of youth, arts and social inclusion, establishing a network where both youth related arts organizations and youth may jointly share and propose innovative formats to build youth citizenship in the contemporary world.

### Area of intervention

This project includes intervention on communities and individuals with low levels of social inclusion and/or who are experiencing processes of identity affirmation: youth in general and youth in situations of social exclusion or at risk of experiencing social exclusion.

The area of intervention is the city of Coimbra, namely the social housing complex neighborhoods and other social and cultural peripheral areas of the city: *Fonte da Talha* neighborhood, *Fonte do Castanheiro* neighborhood, *Conchada* neighborhood, *Misericórdia/Loreto* neighborhood, *Rosa* neighborhood, *Ingote* neighborhood, *Celas* neighborhood, *Parque de Nómadas* (Centro de Estágio Habitacional), *Pedrulha*, *Santa Apolónia*, *Adémia*, *Eiras*, *Baixa* and *Alta*.

### Target population

This project wishes to work with communities of individuals with low levels of social inclusion and individuals who are crossing individual processes of identity affirmation, but who are not necessarily in situations of social exclusion: youth in general and youth that are under social exclusion situations (immigrants, mono-parental and disrupted families, youth experiencing educational and personal development problems, etc.), with ages between 14 and 20 years old. The project activities envision the development of initiatives centered on this target groups with the main goal to, through the establishment of local and international partnerships with organization that work directly with youth, develop innovative approaches for building a youth leadership culture, using the artistic activity as a channel of reflection, innovation and social action.

### Diagnostic of social needs

Coimbra's local Social Network identifies specific needs in what concerns the youth population at risk or experiencing situations of social exclusion, as well as in what respects the social, economic and cultural contexts of the district and specifically the most problematic Social Housing Complexes, namely in *Rosa* and *Ingote* neighborhoods. It is in these social contexts that this project assumes growing relevance and may represent an important contribution on the prevention of school absenteeism and school drop-out, on the prevention

of unemployment among youth, on the prevention of addictive behaviors, early experience in labor market and the consequent disinvestment on personal education.

In what concerns schools absenteeism and school drop-out in Coimbra, some causes identified are related with the low importance that is given, by the families, to education, the disinvestment from the educational community over the more problematic students and to the existence of educational strategies that are not adapted to students with low levels of motivation and high levels of being at risk of social exclusion. In general, educational curriculums do not include innovative contents and methods, related to the importance of artistic education and of other creative activities, but instead include general approaches, which cannot be adapted to personal social and cultural contexts of youth. These lacks on the educational curriculums may originate problems on youth development, as well as risk behaviors. It is then clear the lack of innovative institutional responses in Coimbra for youth, at the occupational and formal level. Coimbra's Social Network, through the diagnostic of social needs, assumes that one of main priorities on the field of Education is the need of programs of capacity development, oriented towards the community in general and towards the youth in particular.

Another social need identified is related with the growing percentage of youth unemployment in Coimbra, a consequence from school drop-out, associated to lack of professional qualification and lack of investment on youth by the local enterprises. The main consequences are the risk of delinquency, social exclusion, poverty and life precariousness, related also with migration and emigrations flows. This project wishes to work on the prevention of behaviors that may lead to social exclusion, by minimizing that same risk of social exclusion. In order to accomplish that goal, the project presents a curriculum that attends youth needs in matters related to the promotion of individual capacities, development of self-confidence and promotion of inter-personal and inter-group relationships. These capacities favor the development of attitudes and personal learning capacities, structured to the acquisition of transversal competencies and to the social dimension, oriented towards human development in society.

In the *Rosa* and *Ingote* neighborhoods, two of the neighborhoods where this project is implemented, the problems identified are the excessive concentration of families, drug addiction and traffic, school dropout, school absenteeism and unemployment. The causes of unemployment are the low levels of school and professional qualification, and the creation of social stereotypes related to these neighborhoods. These facts generate a lack of self-confidence and motivation for work. The project *Bando à Parte* wishes to develop strategies of intervention over the youth population, based on arts education and on the artistic practice. The arts develop intrinsic motivation (to work in society) and the individual creativity (as well as his subjectivity), promoting the individuals' relation with society, their capacity as social agents, responsible for their social action.

In parallel, this diagnostic advises the creation of alternative curriculums, in the area of the arts, which include a motivational component, but also dedicated to the multicultural and multi-social reality of these urban contexts, which include youth from different cultural origins (gypsies, youth from Portuguese speaking countries and youth from eastern European countries). These specific contexts, characterized by populations experiencing exclusion or at risk of experiencing exclusion, require curriculums adapted to their specific realities and educative models based on the development of the capacities of interrelation in contexts of social and cultural differentiation, which characterize contemporary societies.

## Strategic approach

*Bando à Parte* envisions to be implemented based on cyclic process for the creation of *Leadership Cycles* where specific youth individuals, after going through a one cycle of two years of *Bando à Parte*, become peer leaders of the participants that integrate the next cycle. Therefore a culture of youth leadership is created through the development of specialized methodologies to approach the artistic practice (Heath and Smith, 1999; Carvalho, 2011). The basic idea is the continuous work with a youth group, focusing on its artistic capacitance, stimulating its social intervention, in order to question social issues, as well as its emotional and inter-social development as promoters of *Artistic Society Projects* (ASP), based on the relation between biographical contributions and reflection on contemporary social issues. Figures 1 and 2 show how the different processes of creating a leadership structure are articulated.

## Strategies of intervention and activity plan: Social and cultural incubation

Social and cultural incubation is based on a model of social development where civil society, civic leadership and critical reflection are presented as essential mechanisms to generate social change. The project envisions the support of *Artistic Society Projects* which use artistic and cultural means, associated with biographical pathways, to intervene over concrete social realities. This type of incubation integrates four approaches, with mutual influence, so that the objectives of relation with the urban space, of promotion of spaces of intercultural dialogue and of artistic capacitance are concretized.

*Creation of Artistic Society Projects:* conception and implementation of intervention projects. Diagnostic of social contexts and individual living contexts and building of original projects, which use the artistic activity, in articulation with biographical materials, to reframe social issues and find innovative solutions. These projects are based on biographical pathways to reflect on contemporary social issues;

*Relation with Public Space:* definition of strategies of relation with urban space. One of the main project goals is the organization of an event or group of artistic events in public urban spaces like parks, gardens, streets, historic centers, squares. The main goal is to reframe the nature of the relation of the individual with public space and to give visibility to the continuous work of the group and its involvement in each stage of production, dissemination, presentation and event documentation.

*Promotion of Intercultural Connections:* definition of strategies to promote intercultural relations between different social groups, essential to secure group identity affirmation. Here is included the possibility of implementation of interchange programs and international seminars, between youth groups from other countries, partners of Teatrão in this type of work;

*Artistic Education:* definition, organization and implementation of an artistic program. The idea is to structure an arts education curriculum in theater, dance and music, which includes both regular classes and attendance to different artistic performances in the cities' different cultural spaces.

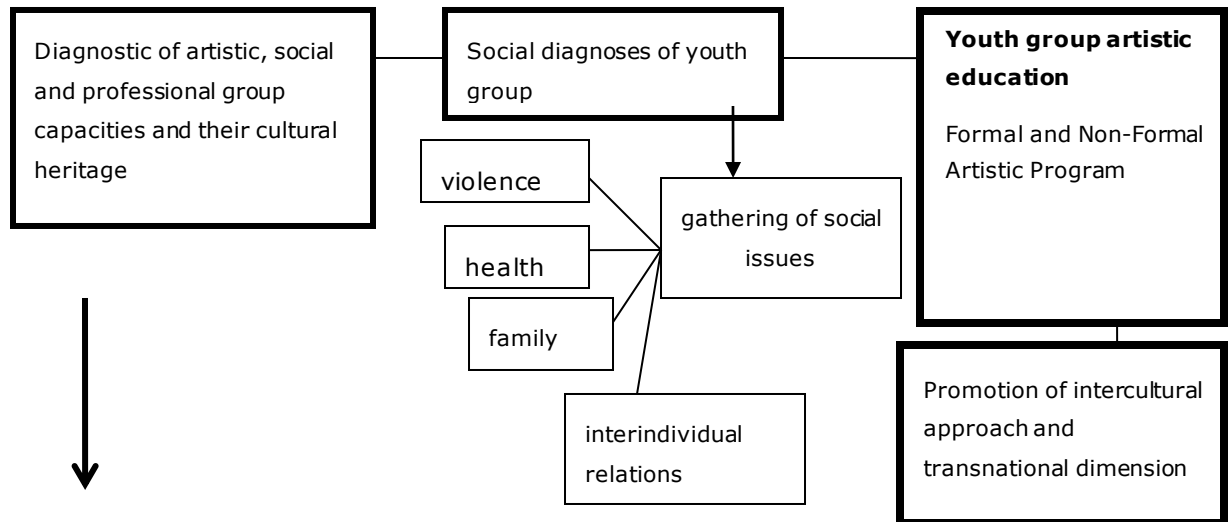
*Relation with Education System and Families:* the project also includes a structured program to follow the relation between the youth and the education system, as well as their integration within their own families, so as to gather more information about their biographical path.



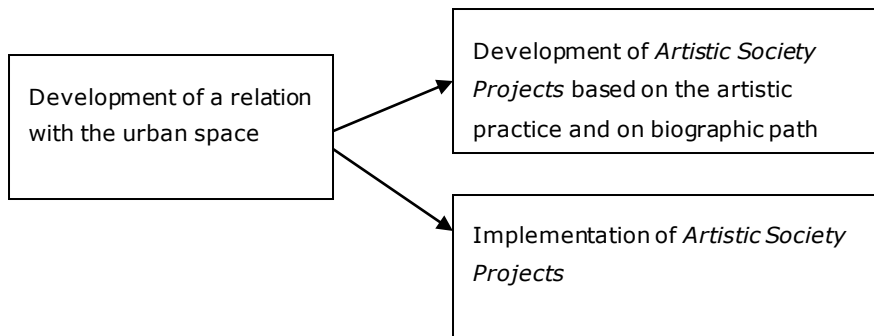
**Figure 1. Leadership cycle – structure**

**Level 0: Project Dissemination and gathering of youth group**

**Level 1: Social Diagnostic, Diagnostic of Capacities and Educational Program**



**Level 2: Implementation of Artistic Society Projects**



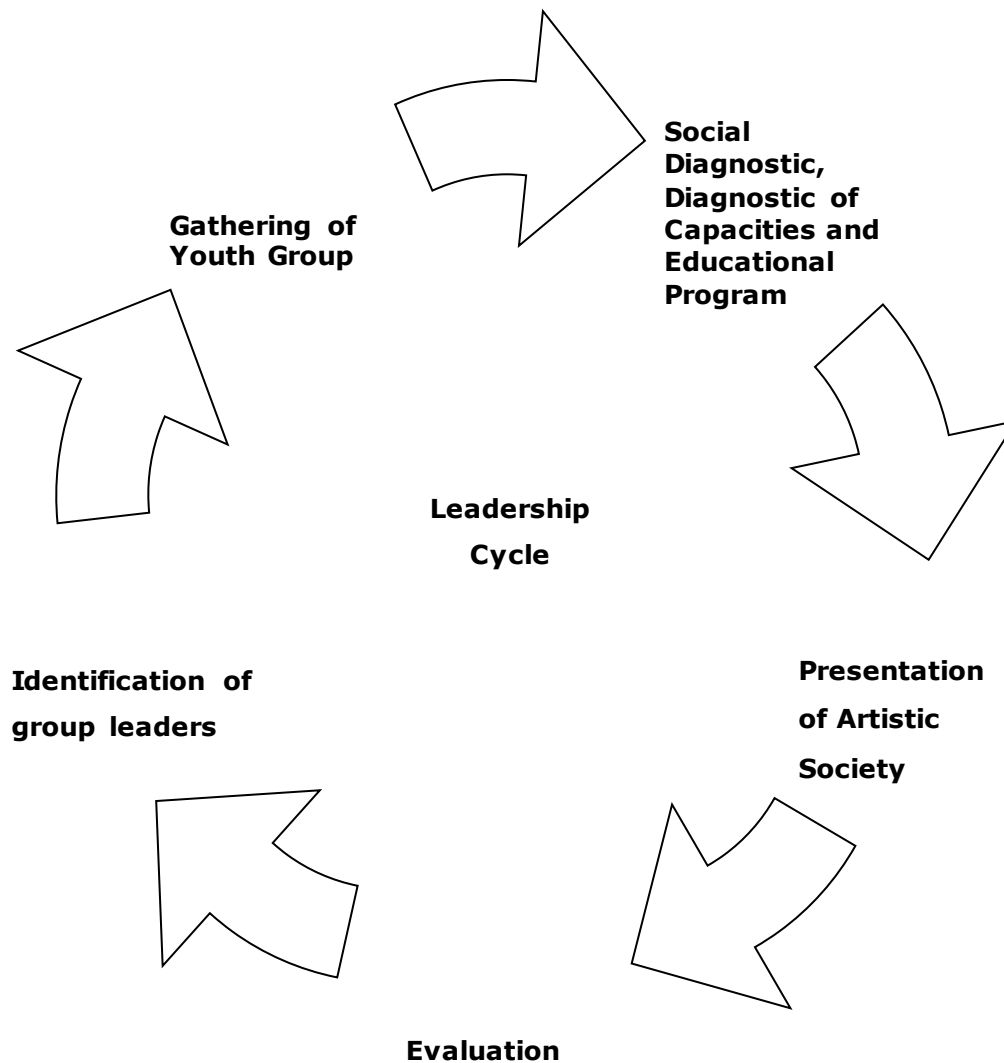
**Level 3: Evaluation**

Joint evaluation between educators and youth group of the all process and work on joint report.

**Level 4: Identification of Leader Group**

Collaboration of youth leader group on the orientation, jointly with the responsible educators, of a new leadership cycle. Structured program of arts education for youth to integrate the new cycle.

**Figure 2. Leadership cycle**



## Methods

This project is understood as an experimental project, not only in terms of the methodologies used, but also in terms of the development of platforms of interdisciplinary and transnational dialogue, representing a continuous laboratory for experimenting new approaches to the relation between the artistic practice and the education activity. This relation is developed on the basis of a grounded research approach on biographical courses, in direct articulation with individual's perspectives on contemporary social issues and individual challenges.

Furthermore, it envisions the contribution to enriching the development of specific research methodologies in the field of the artistic practice and of its possible connections with the arts education processes (Baldacchino, 2009). Following the claim that arts must build their legitimacy by developing their own specific paradigm (Knowles and Cole, 2008), arts must gain their salience by their political importance and, therefore, by their continuous connection with the arts education practice.

In fact, the artistic practice may offer an opportunity to enhance the personal, social and professional development of youth, as the youth become influenced to become active participants throughout the all process of ASP preparation, implementation and evaluation. They experience a model of active participation in the activities. As a consequence, youth prepare the terrain to build a youth leadership culture, based on the experience of the arts. This type of non-formal learning represents, in articulation with a more structure learning happening during the arts education program, an essential component for the work of structuring an active and participative society, one of the main components of a more socially integrated community. Social exclusion, specially the one experienced by youth with few opportunities, may be attenuated through the existence of a structured and active civil society.

The projects are developed in different phases. In the first place, the *Artistic Society Projects* (ASP), in the areas of theatre, music and dance, require individual supervisors who coordinate the all process of project development. In January 2011, during the first cycle of *Bando à Parte*, a meeting took place between teachers and project coordinators, where 12 images and 12 texts were chosen as inductors for the construction of ASP. Each participant chose 1 text and 1 image. During the first two weeks of January, several brainstorming activities were done around the texts and images, with the main goal of creating a basic concept, which could be used as a starting point for the creation of the ASP. From this basic concept, efforts were done for generating questions which were important for each participant. To support the construction of the ASP, each participant starts working on a logbook where individual thoughts, questions and reflective contributions start to emerge, so as to help build the individual ASP. At the end of each group sessions, each participant made a contribution to his/her own logbook. The starting questions for building the ASP wanted to express individual uneasiness's, reflections, worries about their neighborhoods, families, school and friends. Between January and February 2011, individual interviews were carried out with the goal to build individually the starting questions that oriented all the process for the creation of ASP.<sup>2</sup> This phase represented the first approach on how biographies, in direct articulation with reflection on contemporary individual social challenges and general perception on the social world, can be articulated in order to create materials that may work as inductors of the process of artistic creation.

After the sharing of the starting questions between the participants took place, it was defined a structure to work, based on the arts education program. Starting on March 2011, each participant started to focus on their individual ASP. In parallel, the general curriculum on theatre, music and dance continued to exist, as well as interrelation with *Teatrão's* parallel activities. It was also during this phase that each project participant chose an artistic area (theatre, dance or music) where to develop their own individual project. With the participants that chose the area of theatre, it was initiated a working methodology in 2 sub-groups of three people and one sub-group of four people. A creative construction process was started based on the individual starting point defined for each project.

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<sup>2</sup> The starting questions agreed were the following ones: In a mass driven society, alienated, standardized, what may be the role for the individual? In which way can we overcome a society that influences us, leveling us and creating stereotyped references? How can we live our life in a way that we take advantage of all the opportunities? How can I relate my cultural identity with my actual life? In each ways can I be the owner of my destiny? In which way can we try to subvert the common order of things in order to walk toward a utopia? Why do we determine our choices based on what others think? What is a possible equilibrium between tradition and innovation?

In the dance project, the individual motivations were connected with the diversity of individual possibilities (which included opinions, reflections and biographical materials) and after the definition of a precise direction, a work of choreographic research started. Through more technical classes, it was analyzed the choreographic potential of the participant and then, through directed improvisations, the choreographic material was developed. In the case of theatre, it was started a work of construction of each individual project through research on movement, sound ambiences, images and also dramaturgy. The main goal was to build a context for each character, in direct articulation with biographical materials and social perceptions, always trying to articulate the individual as a person and the character as an element of fiction. By the end of each week, discussions were made about the modes of creation and project conception, also at individual and group level.

During the month of April, the individual project in the field of dance included research at home, so that consistency was added to the work, including research on references on movement, sound ambiences, images, texts and creation of short choreographies that could be worked and integrated afterwards. The diary of the project was then completed and gained practical and theoretical substance. In the theatre area, the group started both an individual and a group work. Continuity was given to the work with the individual monologues and with the character building, built from the physicality of the characters and from the proposals for costumes. As the goal was the elaboration of the ASP through a final presentation, a proposal of dramaturgic structure started to be developed. During the month of May, continuity was given to the artistic work with the sub-groups of 3 to 4 people, through exercises of objects' exploration; research work on the consequences of the characters' physical construction; construction of scenes based on the division by units of dramatic action and work on the construction of scenes from excerpts of texts. June was a month used to make an exploration of the group scenes and during the month of July focus was given to the concrete construction of the individual ASP, at the level of the character building, the relation between the different scenes and the building of a structure for the final exercise.

During the month of August, in the context of the theatre work, it was initiated a work of choreographic structure for the definition of the final exercise. It was also started the work of preparation of the group presentation for the International Arts Laboratory, taking place between the 5 and 11 September 2011. The month of September was dedicated to the preparation of the final exercise and to the work of character building for the individual projects (ASP), trying to establish connections between characters' biographical paths in order to structure a collective presentation. A space for sharing of experiences was also created between the different individual projects from the different artistic areas. In addition, during this month also took place the International Arts Laboratory, in partnership with MUZtheater (the Netherlands) and Associazione Marchigiana Attività Teatrali (Italy), which created a space for sharing of experiences, methodologies and approaches between the *Bando à Parte* youth and the Italian and Dutch groups on the building of the ASP.

In the specific case of the music project, the work developed came through four phases: reflection, experimentation, structure definition and consolidation. During the first phase, several resources were used to facilitate the reflection/introspection process, in order to build a solid starting point on the critical analysis of the biographical material. From the different resources that complemented this phase, it is important to mention the use of the internet (and other audiovisual means, e.g. video) and bibliographic references to enrich the individual research process. Under this context, it was created a set of situations lived by a character, who makes a musical journey through out his past, reflecting over specific moments of his life which have transformed him on what he is today. The second phase (May-July) was

focused on the experimentation of sound and musical resources that could add consistency to the project. The starting point was the individual body, the voice and the musical instruments as a sound source. A diversity of musical styles were also explored (concrete music, flamenco, pop, jazz, traditional Portuguese music) and also diverse techniques of music composition in real time (like looping). All the different musical elements, used in the ‘individual musical history’, were defined. The third phase (July-September) was dedicated to the organization (and betterment) of the individual project, including the integration of contributions from other artistic areas. The last phase (September-October) implicated the project consolidation and its integration in the final exercise.

The month of October was a month of intensive work in all the projects of music, theater and dance, in order to integrate them as part of the final exercise *40°11'N 8°24'W*, which happened from the 13-15 October, at the Sala Grande of the Oficina Municipal do Teatro and which congregated the *Artistic Society Projects* of all the participants of the first cycle of the arts education project Bando à Parte 2010-2011.

### Final considerations

In sum, the specific methods used were based on non-formal learning (learning that takes place out of the formal curriculum of schools) and informal (learning with everyday practice). The process of project development includes the direct involvement of youth, suggesting new methods and contributing for a practice of structured dialogue between arts educator and youth themselves, which characterized the project process.

The creation of the *Artistic Society Projects* (ASP), which combined the theatre, dance and music areas, required the collection of and the research on a set of biographical materials and experiences, both individually and socially constructed. This specific methodology brings concrete contributions on how the biographical experiences may be articulated with the proposal to build an artistic exercise that creates a universe of fiction. It is however through this artistic proposal that a reflective and political position is built, initiating a movement that goes from an often limited individual perception of the social world toward a more open and critical reflection about the possibilities of creating change in communities.

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## Stigmatized Communities Reacting to ‘Creative Class’

### Imposition: Lessons from Montreal and Edmonton

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**Abstract:** This paper examines two Canadian case studies of creative and cultural redevelopments with local actors who often are not traditionally included in formal planning and design processes. Through primary resources such as interviews and secondary sources, the actions of the *Save the Main Coalition* in Montreal and the artists of the *Dirt City / Dream City* project in Edmonton illustrate the ability and challenges of stigmatized communities to organize and participate in planning and design processes by formal and informal means. The paper opens a dialogue to allow considerations of the role of planners and designers to foster and support creativity in cities. By examining current theoretical debate that surrounds Richard Florida’s *Creative Class Theory*, questions of art, authenticity, citizenship in public domain and space, and of the role of planning, designers, artists and local actors are raised.

**Keywords:** Creative Class, communities, gentrification, authenticity, participation

### Introduction

As many North American cities confront declining urban cores, policy-makers and planners use the allure of creativity as a reurbanisation strategy. Richard Florida’s “Creative Class” theory is used in many Canadian cities to manufacture refined and profitable tourist-oriented and corporate friendly programming in post-industrial neighbourhoods. Although boosting the urban economy is essential, this strategy often displaces local residents and workers and

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their embedded histories. Stigmatized groups located in these often affordable, yet underinvested neighbourhoods include sex-workers, burlesque and drag performers, along with aboriginal and working-class communities and artists who contribute to the informal and formal economy of the city. Though not always seen as engaged social actors in the planning process, members of these groups do mobilize and intervene to protect their hidden histories and community.

This paper examines cases in two Canadian cities. In Edmonton, revitalization of the Boyle Street area threatens to displace low-income people, including aboriginal and at-risk women. In Montreal, the *Quartier des Spectacles* redevelopment project threatens to displace a working and cultural heritage landscape for sex workers and burlesque and drag performers. While Montreal demonstrates stigmatized groups intervening to maintain and insert their presence into revitalization plans, rather than being further displaced, the Edmonton case considers how the City allows for a representation of the most stigmatized within the official strategy of transformation. This paper raises the question of how stigmatized groups are excluded by large-scale creative and cultural plans in an attempt to reutilize the city, while considered is the impacted population and their actions of mobilization. How can planners balance this? What is the role of planners? The paper begins with a discussion of relevant theories surrounding the Creative Class, gentrification and local agents' role in creating authentic neighbourhoods. Discussed will be the role of planning professionals within this paradigm and the methodology we have used to begin research on the respective cases. Both Montreal and Edmonton's histories surrounding industrialization and deindustrialization will be covered, while problematizing the neighbourhoods in question in the context of development. Preliminary results of initial research are included before offering some important questions for discussion.

## Current debates in theory and practice

Questions of public inclusion continue to preoccupy urban planning practitioners and academics. This section presents some key concepts from the literature regarding Creative Class development, how authenticity in the city requires citizenship, the role of designers and planners in displacing people and how local actors are resisting displacement through engagement, illustrated by creative actions and interventions. The theory raises questions, which will be further explored in the case studies.

### *Considering the public creative class*

Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) raises creativity as a catalyst of regional economic urban growth. Florida argues that cities that are able to appeal to and retain individuals working in creative industries will have more regional economic advantages. "Creatives" form a class of workers ranging from super-creative core members to creative professionals and both of their consumptive capital will drive clusters of economic activity. These clusters can be successful in cities that appear to appeal to inclusivity. For example, cities with a high "gay index" will be more successful at attracting desired creatives.

Granzow and Dean (2009) argue that the distinction between the creatives and service class will transform the unemployed urban poor to be displaced by revitalization efforts, while excluding these service industry people from the creative processes of city building. On Jamie Peck's criticism they note, that the 'no-collar' workplaces described by Florida pay no heed to the divisions of labour within employment, where "there is little regard for those who are on the thin end of Florida's 'thick labor markets,' beyond the forlorn hope that, one day,



they too might be lifted – presumably [by] acts of sheer creative will – into the new overclass” (Granzow, 2005: 756; Peck: 2005: 96). Jamie Peck’s criticism of the Creative Class is often cited, whereby he argues that Florida has failed to show causation between creative clusters and economic growth.

Hoyman and Faircy have found little evidence to support causation in Florida’s argument, and find that “the wide adoption of creative class-based policies “are surprising given the lack of academic validity of Florida’s claims” (2009: 8). They argue that the concept of a creative class, as ‘malleable’ a term as it is, is a problematic strategy for planners and city managers as a strategy for economic growth. Markusen (2006) takes issue with professionals being considered as having a meaningful relationship with ‘creativity’ while Goonewardena (2004) argues that creativity has always been a characteristic of cities, and would be insufficient to explain much of the economic growth of the 1990s that Florida has attributed to the creative economy. Montgomery (2005) likewise has found Florida’s understanding of culture to simply mirror fundamental truths about creative and dynamic cities. As salient as much of this criticism is, Atkinson and Easthope (2009) found that the Creative Class can be a powerful tool for organizing policy, but respondent criticism is overlooked in practice. This is particularly consequential for homeless and marginal urban communities. There has been much criticism of Florida’s understanding of culture. It has been discussed as an explicitly exclusive form of cultural expression, ‘white and middle-class’. As Dean and Granzow suggest, this racial and class-based identity is expressed in particular ways:

It involves street-based cafés but excludes those who eat, drink or sit and socialize on the street outside sanctioned spaces; it involves gallery-based artistic expression, but excludes graffiti/mural art or street-based vendors often noticeable in inner-city neighbourhoods; it involves access to the outdoors but only for those who can afford to participate in sanctioned activities (like going to festivals where consumers are welcome but ‘loiterers’ are expelled. (2007: 95)

Florida acknowledges this creative economy possibly deepens racial divides, further exposing the radicalized and class-based assumptions in this ideology about what qualifies as desirable “culture” (Granzow and Dean, 2007: 97). As a powerful gentrifying tool, the value of Richard Florida’s claims must continue to be set against issues of access, democracy, social justice and authenticity.

### *Designing authentic creative neighbourhoods*

Sharon Zukin (2010) comments on the homogenization of New York neighbourhoods that began in the 1980s and continue today through redevelopment projects replacing the city’s buildings for condos and chain stores, even during the current economic recession. Zukin argues, “these forces of redevelopment have smoothed away the uneven layers of grit and glamour, swept away traces of contentious history, cast doubt on the idea that poor people have a right to live and work here too – all that had made the city authentic” (2010: xi). The questions we raise in this paper try to understand the power of ownership of authenticity, who and what belongs in the city core. Authenticity as a concept is a form of artificial branding of place and a form of power through citizenship (Zukin, 2010). Many neighbourhoods that are branded soon see a shift in their built form and ultimately the population occupying space.

Beth Moore Milroy (2009) considered the rebranding of a downtown Toronto intersection, at Dundas Street and Yonge Street, which saw the expropriation of businesses and by extension neighbourhood members to create a visitor-shopping destination. What stands today is a “mini” Times Square with flashy electronic advertisements surrounding the

square that act as a venue for corporations to promote their products to passers-by while also hosting community events. Moore Milroy, like Sharon Zukin (2010), Jan Gehl (1996) and William Whyte (1980, 1988), notes that it is the mix of people that make places more interesting, as diversity encourages rich and layered culture and promotes creativity (2009: 69). Moore Milroy notes that the role of the city planner in this instance, although not having any specific capacity or knowledge of “dealing with social issues... was called upon to “do something” (2009: 69), because of the perception of the site as being gritty place of crime and sex work. These pressures that planners face in this example are common, where the original intention is not necessarily to push out certain users, particularly those who face “social issues”, but as Moore Milroy (2009) found this can easily become an end result. To understand how planners and designers can be more inclusive in practice, it is important to question their role and actions.

While Richard Florida’s Creative Class opens up the city to consider economic forces beyond the traditional industrial model, it is not addressing the pluralism and inequality that is found in cities; it only encourages capitalization of creativity. By branding itself as a Creative Hub, the city is inherently beginning to define that creativity. The city cannot forget one brand of identity to accept another brand of identity, rather it must accept a multiplicity of identities and offer support for all of its members. In planning large-scale redevelopments one must consider who is allowed in the public domain and who will be allowed to access the public space. As Maarten A, Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp observe “those who have a soft spot for the public domain must account for the fact that many places that bring together a great diversity of public are currently designed, very deliberately, as ‘zero-friction’ environments, as friction-free space...the design is dictated by the avoidance of friction” (2001: 96). Although programmed spaces and themes like creative and cultural hubs can create opportunities for certain users, often they act as controls to avoid having to accept and understand pluralism, to avoid eventual conflicts and to avoid having an open dialogue of change for people excluded from space.

### *Local actors in the public domain*

Authors like Wendy Sarkissian, Dianna Hurford and Christine Wenman (2010) explore participatory methods for genuine community engagement, including using art as a tool for effective planning. Tearing down the divide between professionals is difficult within the existing framework; however, many argue that the role of design and planning is to provide an affordance for a wider range of possibilities and uses in space. As Potteiger and Purinton explain, “because certain symbols and references are context specific, familiar only to certain groups their use can either include or exclude people from reading the landscape” (1998: 17). Here we see the difficulties that come from using just one group’s experience to shape design. Designers must be willing to recognize changes to the notion of the ‘public’. Potteiger and Purinton also notice the policy, planning and design reaction to pluralism and the increasing complexities that come with the changing public domain and processes that move through space, in that “the themed landscape serves a more pervasive nostalgia and compensates for a sense of fragmentation and lack of security outside its bounds” (1998: 18).

Increasingly members of flattened downtown neighbourhoods are pushing outwards to protect or to carve out their own place, countering design and planning processes that systematically exclude them. Theorists are beginning to consider how people are using public space, despite increasing privatization and control. Don Mitchell recognizes that public space actually has not ended or disappeared, as that view is “overly simplistic in that it does not

necessarily appreciate how new kinds of spaces have developed” (2003: 8). Public space is a contentious venue, but by examining the users and those who are systematically excluded from the space, one can better understand how the design of space operates and how public space is changing. Jeffery Hou writes, “No longer confined to the archetypal categories of neighbourhood parks, public plaza, and civic architecture, these insurgent public spaces challenge the conventional, codified notion of public and the making of space” (2010: 2).

Crawford (1999) and Hajer and Reijndorp (2001) consider the public domain not as a space at all, rather as an experience. As Corner expresses, “the experiences of space cannot be separated from the events that happen in it; space is situated, contingent and differentiated” (1999: 227). The discourse of the changing nature of access and of the very concept of public space can also be extended to include participation, where direct actions in either the formal city consultation process, or more assertively in informal and insurgent actions, are taking place. There is more access to technology allowing people to organize, produce and disseminate counter-information by digital cameras, mobile phones computers and social media. Access to these digital tools complements and boosts creative, artistic and theatrical actions in neighbourhoods. Members of groups who have been traditionally excluded from formal public consultation are more directly challenging the notions of public space and public participation by creating their own places of participation, without the help of professionals.

## Case studies

### *Methodology*

This paper examines two case studies in Montreal and Edmonton with examples of creative development projects where local agents resisted and questioned the top-down forces of displacement. The case studies are meant to open up ongoing questions about the value of the thematisation of space, authenticity of ownership, the cultivation of creative spaces and the creative actions of resistance to deliberate creative planning for economic gain. In the case of Edmonton, key informants were contacted initially through a meeting with the artists during the *Dirt City/Dream City* open house. Their participation has been through ongoing interviews via survey-response, as they have built towards a finished product concurrent with this study. Similarly, in the case of Montreal, key informants were contacted through events promoted by the *Save the Main Coalition* and interviews were held in person and via email. A snowball approach was also taken to contact members of the Coalition. Events, local actions and performances, as well as public hearing transcripts and the local media were also a source for data collection, as well as site visits.

#### *a) Montreal*

Although it was difficult to measure who and how many people cultural entertainment districts exclude (Fainstein and Stokes, 1998), in this case study of the Lower Main in the City of Montreal, one can begin to see an example of exclusion of a community of artists and activists from a creative hub. The case shows subsequent and deliberate mobilization actions of this community as a response.

Montreal, Quebec, Canada’s second largest city, is internationally recognized as a vibrant and culturally rich city, attracting musicians, artists, performers, designers and tourists worldwide. Its official language is French, but the city is relatively bilingual, and is also becoming increasingly multilingual and multiethnic. Located on the St. Lawrence River,

Montreal was an important trading port city with rich agricultural land, eventually leading to its quick urbanization and industrialization by the early twentieth century (Government of Quebec, 2012). Although the Catholic church had a strong influence over Quebec, there were many Jewish immigrants to Montreal, who established many of its early businesses and theatres (Fahrni, 2005). In the 1960s with the Quiet Revolution, Quebec pulled away from the Catholic church, and many scholars see this as the start of Quebec's modernization (Government of Quebec, 2012). In the 1960s and 1970s, because of tourist events like the World Exposition of 1967, many of the Victorian era buildings and tenements were demolished to modernize the city (Levine, 2003). Also at this time, there was the parallel effort to preserve some of the heritage of the city, which helped to build a strong civic connection with the material culture of the city (Rantisi and Leslie, 2006). Projects that focused on key areas of the city like the Old Port were the start of Montreal's continuing tourist redevelopment strategies (Levine, 2003).

During the same period, there were many artists, musicians and writers attracted to the city, which started to shape Montreal as the creative hub that it is seen as today. Most recently with the economic recession, the current administration has created policy to encourage investment from developers and corporations. As these events unfold, Montreal is continuing with its popular festivals and development projects, which are meant to further Montreal's image as a creative and cultural hub in order to attract creative industries and tourists.

*The Lower Main: Developer, the City, and saving the Main.* St. Laurent Boulevard, or “*The Main*” as it is popularly referred to is the historic place of multicultural convergence in Montreal (Anctil, 2009). It is known as the east-west dividing line between the French and English communities while also being a place for more diverse immigrant populations (Anctil, 2009; Fahrni, 2005). By the early 1900s, burlesque and vaudeville variety shows had become popular on the Main (Anctil, 2009). As such, the Lower Main was quickly becoming a site of tension between societal and religious moral norms and Montreal's infamous nightlife, with burlesque and jazz bars and a growing Red Light district made popular by visiting sailors and soldiers (Anctil, 2009: 76). As burlesque went out of fashion in the 1970s and contemporary stripping was favoured in the 1980s the lower main lost some of its key attractions, and faced disinvestment (Key Informant, 2012). In the mid-1990s to the early 2000s there was a renewed interest in redeveloping the Main (Key Informant, 2012). Since 1996, the Main has been a federally and provincially recognized heritage site because of its significance as a place of entertainment, cultural exchange and immigrant business ground (Heritage Montreal, 2012).

*Quartier des Spectacles.* The *Quartier des Spectacles* (QDS) development in the last decade is meant to support Montreal's music, arts and culture festivals and events. The recently redeveloped area that makes up the QDS is adjacent to the Lower Main. It covers a square kilometer in central Montreal and promotes itself as having been “in the city's cultural heart for over 100 years” (QDS Press Kit, 2012). According to the official press kit the QDS has over 80 cultural venues, with 80% of Montreal's performance halls. It is the vision for the QDS, according to their website, to promote “**Life, Art and Entertainment** based on the enhancement of the neighbourhood's cultural assets” (QDS, 2012).

Today, the last remaining performance venue from the height of Lower Main's popularity is Café Cleopatra. The current owner has run Café Cleopatra for approximately 35 years. What is particularly significant about Café Cleopatra is not only that it has one of the only

remaining three-quarter stages, ideal for burlesque and has a full floor of dressing rooms for performers (Key Informant, 2012), it is the first place in Montreal to accept trans (transvestite, transgender, and/or transsexual) and drag performers (Namaste, 2005). The Quebec author and researcher, Viviane Namaste (2005) speaks about the significant impact this had on the trans and gay community from the 1970s to today in Montreal. Anecdotally, Café Cleopatra also is the first place in Montreal for contemporary stripping, with bouncers in tuxedos and a more contemporary style of stripping held at the venue (Key Informant, 2012).

Ironically, the last remaining events venue of the celebrated Red Light district, Café Cleopatra was excluded from the QDS plans. The block where Café Cleopatra is located, along with other historically significant buildings on the Lower Main, was set to be redeveloped as a mixed used office complex. The complex would have dedicated a majority of its space, approximately 300,000 square feet, for new Hydro Quebec offices. The development was set to also provide commercial space for “locally made” or “eco” shops, as per the developer’s visions (Montreal Public Consultation OCPM Hearing, May 26, 2012). The City of Montreal in 2009 entered into an agreement with Angus Development to expropriate several businesses and buildings on the site, despite turning out owners, some who had been working on the Lower Main for more than 35 years (Bergeron, 2011).

*“Save our queen, save the Main!” – local actors.* As a response to these early events in the development process, dozens of concerned citizens and performance artists, particularly small, local burlesque and fetish production companies and individual performers came together to try to save the last remaining performance places of the Main’s heyday. The *Save the Main Coalition* was formed to support the owner of Café Cleopatra in his fight against the expropriation of his building by the City and the developer (Key Informant, 2012). The owner took his fight to the Superior Court of Québec to challenge the expropriation, despite many of the other business owners on the block accepting the City’s expropriation offer.

The *Save the Main Coalition* participated in the formal consultation process, but also organized several unofficial actions as part of their participation and as part of formulating their own process. The Coalition held their own meetings to exchange information and to organize, but they also used their performance and artistic planning skills to produce videos and events raising awareness for their cause. An example of an informal participatory action was through attending a protest of a visit by Prince Charles in Montreal organized by Quebec Separatist groups. The *Save the Main Coalition* called out Prince Charles, who is a heritage advocate, to help “*save our queen*”. The Coalition also ran popular Red Light District tours to share the history of the Red Light district, which is now largely occupied by the QDS development. The walks help the participants to recognize the context in which current events and festivals take place in and the ongoing impact the development has on the existing population.

Despite the successful efforts to save Café Cleopatra from expropriation, the buildings between the Monument National and Café Cleopatra were found to be structurally unsafe and were demolished after the City received engineering and fire department reports (Scott, 2012). A key informant speculated that the demolition of these buildings was taking place before the demolition company was brought in, accusing the developer of “*demolition by neglect*”. As part of a final protest of the demolition of the buildings, in May 2012, the *Save the Main Coalition* held a funeral for the site. The mock funeral service had prayers, readings, and hymns. The performers invited speakers to share their feelings about the demolition in a eulogy. Reflecting on the funeral service, a key informant said, “there’s nothing else we can do at this point...I mean, we tried everything, the funeral was sort of a last resort for these

buildings.” Café Cleopatra, although saved from expropriation, is by no means safe from future demolition. With the developer’s failed office tower, there is currently no plan to move forward, as an informant said, “there’s no plan, there’s no design, there’s nothing.” The informant suggested that in Montreal this was a common occurrence for heritage buildings and that a parking lot would normally be built on site until there was another opportunity to redevelop.

#### *b) Edmonton*

Since 1947, Edmonton has been associated with being home to the country’s rich oil and gas reserves, when ‘black gold’ was first struck south of the city in Leduc. Arriving in Edmonton, Canada’s sixth largest city by population, one quickly notes the prevalence of Oil as an identity – “*You’re in Oil Country*” is a slogan describing an association with the city’s decidedly working-class character. While this characterization of Edmonton is appealing and rooted in the industry that has ushered the city through several economic booms (and busts), there exists a parallel history of arts, world-class education and large governmental institutions. This duality has placed Edmonton at an intriguing place in its modern history as Tar Sands wealth flood the coffers of business and industry, the City is looking to urbanize and densify its downtown core, appealing to a younger, more mobile generation of families and professionals. It is in the Boyle Street Area where this process is meeting with the predictable consequences of gentrification.

*Boyle Street and the Quarters.* Located just east of downtown, Boyle Street was once the heart of Edmonton. Though there are reminders of this heritage in the built form, over the past 60 years, the area has dealt with a reputation of being a troubled, with “social agencies coming to characterize the community in the public perception” (Tingley, 2009). While urban renewal and regeneration has long been studied in the area, the disappearance of residents and businesses “excised the living tissue of the community and replaced it with something else” (Tingley, 2009). There are few heritage buildings remaining in the area, as the ‘something else’ that has replaced this rich history often takes the form of at-grade pay parking. The neighbourhood’s population of about 2,400 is now lower than at many points in its history, though people of varied ethnic backgrounds continue to live here.

At this point in the area’s history, social problems continue to haunt and define. The experience of women, and aboriginal women in particular, is troubled in this area. The earliest exchanges between aboriginal and European populations in the area were defined through the fur-trade, the nexus of a relationship of exploitation: residential schools, tenuous land claims disputes and problematic native reservations have ostracized aboriginal groups from the mainstream of Canadian policy (Stout and Kipling, 1998). Often displaced from their own communities as well as the community at large, aboriginal women have long found themselves in at-risk conditions in Boyle Street, with prostitution and violence becoming an all too often condition of their experience in the area (Baker, 2006).

*Public art in Dirt City.* The City of Edmonton is preparing to invest in the Lower East Side, as the Boyle Street Area is often called. Kara Granzow and Amber Dean comment that this “reveal(s) the strategy as one towards a targeted re-appropriation of land and forced displacement of people in the interest of accumulating first *cultural* but ultimately *financial capital*” (Granzow and Dean, 2007: 90). *The Quarters* was conceived in 2005 as a revitalization strategy for the Lower East Side. The plan is championed by Edmonton Mayor

Steven Mandel who has proclaimed ‘art’ and ‘culture’ as priorities for the area, in reference to Richard Florida (Granzow and Dean, 2007). *The Quarters* will employ much of the tenants of the Creative Class model. Granzow and Dean (2007) draw correlation between a ‘revanchism’ at the heart of the regeneration project and a narrow conception of culture imposed through a further resettlement of lands, making the process and “assumptions about class, culture and creativity which underpin it most abhorrent” (Granzow and Dean, 2007: 91). Calling *The Quarters* plan ‘watered down’, ‘palatable’ and ‘less threatening’, the authors accuse the revitalization plan of being a deliberate attempt to gentrify the Boyle Street Area, and offer it as an example of Neil Smith’s ‘revanchist city’. City Planners as well as architect Don Stastny have been caught being insensitive to the local residents as well, cementing the assumptions that *The Quarters* project is less interested in the opinions and immediate needs of current residents. “The area was termed an ‘open pallet’ by the city, and ‘fallow, fertile ground’ by Stastny” (Phillips, 2006: 1).

Public art has the capability to be critical, and engage not only discussion but also participation by residents. *The Quarters Urban Design Plan* envisions a neighbourhood whereby public art will be encouraged to have “the emphasis on green design and the sustainability of the neighbourhood in *The Quarters*, art that celebrates these principles is appropriate” (The Quarters Urban Design Plan, 2006: 81). The notion of appropriate public art reinforces a Creative Class approach and sits in opposition to what some would suggest public art is capable. The Edmonton Arts Council (EAC) and the appointment of the Public Arts Committee will be challenged to be stewards of inclusion as they are tasked to both direct the public art procurement process for the City and play a role in programming public art in the Quarters. *Dirt City / Dream City* is the first project created in the Quarters through EAC’s Transitory Art stream. ‘Dirt City’ is a term used affectionately for Edmonton. ‘Dream City’ then encourages a vision for the area and the title of the project speaks to the instability of what the area currently is. Fifteen Edmonton artists have been commissioned through the EAC to develop and build their installations over the course of several months under curation. Workshops will guide the artists through the area as they complete their pieces to be displayed in the neighbourhood for two weeks from July 20-30, 2012.

While permanent projects are included as part of the broader EAC *Quarters Public Art Plan*, they will consist of 4 contemporary and emerging artists, selected through a proposal process and allocated between 150 and 250 thousand dollars. The opportunity for critical works of art in the Quarters would be more likely procured through *Dirt City/Dream City*. Occurring during the transition phase of the *Quarters* development, the purpose of transitory art according to the *Quarters Public Art Plan* is to “document and examine the redevelopment through art making. The projects will engage the community by stimulating dialogue and new ways of thinking about the changing *Quarters* neighbourhoods while inspiring our local artists and cultivating future public artists and audiences” (Quarters Public Art Plan, 2006: 5). The selection of curator Kendal Henry is encouraging, or perhaps a nascent realization that *Dirt City/Dream City* will be able to engage critically in ways that the more expensive, and permanent, installations will not. *Dirt City / Dream City* describes the project’s aims: “...The short term nature of these projects helps to develop a greater understanding of public art and acceptance and demand from permanent public artworks. This program will stimulate dialogue and new ways of thinking about our neighbourhoods and the public realm, while inspiring our local artists and cultivating future public artists and audiences” (dirtcity-dreamcity.ca, 2012).

## Preliminary findings

In the case of the Lower Main and Boyle Street, major themes are identified. This section presents preliminary analysis of the initial findings. Main themes that are identified raise questions that include, the challenges to citizenship in space through proving authenticity and heritage value, the inclusivity of programmed entertainment space, the definition of acceptable creative practices, and the creation of exclusive and identity erasing desexualized and deracialized spaces for the sake of attracting creative economic drivers and tourism.

### a) Montreal

Reflecting on the QDS development and most recent attempt to remove historic Café Cleopatra from its boundary, a key informant found it difficult to understand how Café Cleopatra would not be included as part of the QDS. For example, the informant spoke about how Café Cleo's was not allowed to have the red spot lights on the building as part of the QDS branding and wayfinding efforts, like other event venues that surrounded Café Cleo. The informant noted, "it's just so absurd to think that they are trying to rebrand the neighbourhood by putting these red lights, to sort of hint 'hey this was the red light district' - but [not] the actual thing that is still is Red Light." Despite the challenge to café Cleo and the performers' right to citizenship on the Lower Main, the *Save the Main* Coalition's actions leveraged Café Cleopatra as a symbol on to itself, reaffirming its place as well as the performers' place. The Red Light Walk was part of a counter challenge to the dilution of the history and current community of the area. A key informant commented, "I don't think you should gloss over history or sanitize it; I think it should just be presented straight up and let the people interpret it for themselves."

When the Coalition also participated in formal public consultation hearings, an informant described the process as being challenging. The informant commented that the developer did not want to discuss sex work or the erotic performances because there would be "no room for nudity or that kind of thing" (OCPM Hearing, May 26, 2009). However by "playing the game" during the hearings the informant found that questioning of the entertainment uses allowed had an impact on the outcome of the hearing, in their favour.

It was the actions of the burlesque performers, fetish night producers, artists, activists and allies, who saved the iconic Café Cleopatra and ensured that they would not lose their performance space on the Lower Main. The alternative plans put forward by the *Save the Main* and presented to the wider community proposed investing in the Lower Main by first understanding the history and community as it existed and building from existing assets, rather than demolishing and rebranding the site into something new. These actions show that this creative community wants reinvestment, but does not want to sacrifice their creativity and citizenship of place to do so. The *Save the Main* asserted their citizenship and inserted themselves into the planning and design process that sought to remove them from their neighbourhood for the sake of creating a new *Quartier des Spectacles*. As the Burlesque performer and member of the Dead Doll Dancers, Velma Candyass said in her eulogy at the funeral for the Lower Main, in May 2012, "it is our collective memories and our history is embedded within these very bricks...it's actually a parade of city life with recurring cycles of change, of poverty, of prosperity, with a strong sense of neighbourhood, rooted in its people."

### b) Edmonton

The *Dirt City / Dream City* project has received some attention in the local media. Fish Griwowsky looks at a previous transitory art project through the EAC with fondness, while



rightly asking if Boyle Street will allow the artists to form a wider spectrum of critiques, by stating, “given the history of violence, racism and homelessness, and the inevitable ghettoization of some its current residents being pushed away from a redeveloped Quarters, the potential for serious questions to be raised by the outdoor art, and discussed, is magnificent” (Griwkowsky, 2012). Megan Bertagnolli, writer in residence for Latitude 53, a non-for profit artists-run centre in Edmonton, though supportive of the *Dirt City / Dream City* project, questioned the diversity of the artists involved, and whether they would be representative of the neighbourhood. Though some members of *Dirt City / Dream City* do identify as Aboriginal or Metis, Latitude 53 has again raised obvious questions of representation. With these criticisms established, we can see that Aboriginal themes are present in the project: Metis artist Aaron Paquette’s *Everyone Is Welcome*, installation and his *My Heart is in the Quarters* painting both speak to a local history before European settlement. Although the *Cities Are Us* conference finished before the installations were presented, it has been possible to anticipate some of the artists’ contributions through the *Dirt City / Dream City* blog, which the project has been maintaining since its inception. ([www.dirtcity-dreamcity.ca](http://www.dirtcity-dreamcity.ca)) The blog has allowed the artists to post semi-regular updates about their individual projects, or their take on the collective experience.

Most of the artists participating in the study considered themselves as ‘outsider’ artists, though this awareness has informed their approaches. *Dirt City / Dream City* artist Holly Newman: “I hope that the project I am developing will challenge those who pass by to see the similarities we all share through heart-break and our struggles to mend it. I see no disadvantages to making work that is so immediately a part of the street-scape, the unknown is all the fun.” One of the artists feels her involvement in the project allows her to be “more aware of the undercurrents in the area, not just its reputation. Before it was easy to think of it in uninformed terms because I had spent so little time in the area.” She praised the workshop experience as emphasizing the members of the community and their issues, while stressing that her involvement is still appropriate given her lack of history in the community. One artist has assumed the identity of an ‘outsider’ artist: “During the workshop I also felt like tourist in my own city, exploring and learning about a community I had not spent the time previously to experience. This artist hopes the project will be able to “start a conversation and bring people together.” Additional study is required to understand how these projects, both in their singularity and as a collective, are interpreted by the residents of Boyle Street and by the City of Edmonton. At this early point, one can observe a diversity of themes have been explored by artists considering themselves as ‘outsiders’.

Some artists on the other hand do not consider themselves as outsiders: “Just because I live in the South end of the city does not mean that I am not involved in this community. I approach this project like any other project I do. I think the trick is doing a large amount of site analysis with the physical aspects as well as talking with the community that resides there.” This artist says the most difficult part has been “Trying to incorporate all ethnicities in the area through one form or gesture.” Another artist, Tiffany Shaw-Collinge, is open to interpreting a variety of visions for social inclusion once development becomes more entrenched. “I think the residents need a hint of what could be in their future – a place to meet and communicate in a relaxing environment...I think this advantage has given us (the participants) a chance to hear the various voices in the community so that we can pick and choose issues that are important to the community and to us, the artists involved.” Shaw-Collinge demonstrates that the *Dream City / Dirt City* project has much potential for reciprocity. Ostensibly, the artists will be able to learn from the Boyle Street neighbourhood, while the neighbourhood can inform their work in new ways. Success will be measured in the

community's reactions to the installations, and the City and EAC's willingness to adopt similar transitory art projects – ones that are as critically engaged as *Dirt City / Dream City* can and should aspire to be.

## Final

This paper reviews two case studies to begin to consider authentic creative spaces and citizenship of these spaces, but also begins to question the role of the planner and designer, when local actors, who have been traditionally excluded from the planning process, organize to resist exclusion and, by their own actions engage in the design process. During the June 2012 *Cities Are Us* conference in Coimbra, Portugal, the main questions of this paper were addressed: What are the means by which stigmatized groups can mobilize in their own communities? Is the application of the creative class theory as a revitalization strategy a means of sanitizing the urban core? How can professionals reconsider public participation strategies in “creative” or themed developments? Among conference participants, there was a sense that art and creative processes cannot necessarily be captured and capitalized on by governments and policymakers because it can confine the art and the artists' political agency. Public art and by extension, development based on creative populations is not representative of all people, since the definition of “public” and “creative” often works to exclude. However, by examining the process in which art and performance, citizenship and creativity, is expressed and used by members of groups that are often displaced by creative class planning policies, design and planning professionals can change how they plan. Future research and discussion is required for each case study to understand how the development projects and the actions of the people resisting the projects will alter the sites of study in the long term.

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## Problem Place, Problem People: Spatialized Racial Discourses in an Urban Planning Project in Hamburg, Germany

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**Abstract:** The Wilhelmsburg neighbourhood of Hamburg is characterized in local media as a ‘crisis neighbourhood’ and a ‘social flashpoint.’ A majority of its 55,000 residents are racialized people struggling with low incomes, unemployment, and low formal educational attainment relative to the city as a whole. The neighbourhood exemplifies what Razack (2002: 6) calls the “spatiality of the racial order in which we live.” It is also currently the focus of a massive urban planning and architectural project, the *Internationale Bauausstellung* (IBA) Hamburg, comprising 50 building projects that aim to transform the neighbourhood. This paper explores how IBA Hamburg’s public education materials discursively produce Wilhelmsburg and its residents as racialized, problematic, and in need of intervention to bring them into the future metropolis. Drawing on theories of production of space through discourse and through use, the paper asks who the city and neighbourhood are for, situating the discussion in the broader public discourses about ‘integration’ and citizenship in Germany.

**Keywords:** race, space, discourse analysis, Germany, urban development, *Internationale Bauausstellung* Hamburg

### Introduction

Discourses, said Michel Foucault, produce the objects of which they speak (Foucault, 2009). This paper will explore how the *Internationale Bauausstellung* Hamburg (“Hamburg International Building Exhibition,” IBA Hamburg for short) produces the island of Wilhelmsburg and its residents as a space and as bodies arranged in space through discourse. I will argue that IBA Hamburg produces a past, present and future for Wilhelmsburg, a temporal trajectory that moves from past uninhabitable emptiness through present uninhabited emptiness to future full integration into the aspirational metropolis of Hamburg. This trajectory is one of civilization and modernization, culminating in discourses of the potential and opportunity for the future of Wilhelmsburg. Indispensable to this production of space is the co-production of its residents, who are paradoxically produced as non-existent and as a mass of foreign bodies in the past and present. The future residents of Wilhelmsburg are produced as quite different bodies all together, white bourgeois bodies, suggesting that in the civilization and modernization of Wilhelmsburg the foreign mass disappears. Spaces of

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education are the exception. This paper will explore the discourses that facilitate the production of Wilhelmsburg as a particular kind of space and its residents as particular kinds of *non-citizens*.

To do this I use Foucauldian discourse analysis to analyze sections of IBA Hamburg's website. Based on Foucault's assertion that discourse refers to "all utterances and statements which have been made which have meaning and which have some effect" (Mills, 2003: 53), I look at text, pictures and maps from the website to explore the content and boundaries of the discourses mobilized and the knowledges contained therein. To guide my analysis also I draw on Hook's (2001) and Jäger and Maier's (2009) elaborations of Foucauldian discourses analysis. Hook emphasizes its utility for enabling critique and resistance, particularly when one is careful to approach discourse as *forms of practice*, as Foucault urged (2001: 522, 530). As forms of practice, discourse is "something that implements power and action, and that also *is* power and action" (Hook, 2001: 532). Discourse analysis therefore entails turning attention to the knowledges and claims to truth that are contained in discourses, and to how those are connected to and productive of power relations and material conditions (Jäger and Maier, 2009: 34-35). To this end, I used Jäger and Maier's steps of analysis to guide identification of discourses and their structures, analysis of typical discourse fragments in detail, and exploration of the meanings, implications, and effects of each aspect (Jäger and Maier, 2009).

I gathered data from the IBA Hamburg website in mid-2011, looking first at English versions and comparing it to the German for meaning. In late 2011 the website underwent an abrupt transformation and, interestingly, many of the sections I focus on here have been modified or removed. The new version of the site seems to be centred on the individual projects comprising IBA Hamburg, perhaps reflecting the advancing stages of the project. I find the analysis presented here no less relevant for its situation within a changing body of discursive production through the project's public education materials.

In this paper I begin with an overview of the IBA Hamburg project and a description of Wilhelmsburg as it is known through local organizations and statistics. I then discuss the theoretical basis for understanding the production of space, followed by an analysis of how the past and present of Wilhelmsburg are produced by IBA Hamburg materials. I then move on to discuss Wilhelmsburg residents, dealing with how they are racially marked and massified and where they are present and missing in IBA Hamburg. I conclude by looking at where the resident body ends up in the IBA Hamburg vision of the future Wilhelmsburg.

## **IBA Hamburg and Wilhelmsburg**

IBA Hamburg is the latest in a German International Building Exhibition tradition that began in the early twentieth century as a means of exploring architectural innovations to address particular and pressing spatial needs at local levels. The 2007-2013 IBA is the first in Hamburg. It comprises 50 projects, including new residential and public buildings, renovation of older housing, transformation of public spaces, and relocation of the Hamburg urban planning department to Wilhelmsburg. Firms applied to have their architectural ideas included in IBA Hamburg, which is funded by the city-state, semi-public and private investors, and supported by complimentary state initiatives. Several IBA Hamburg projects have already been completed, including a €5 million floating "IBA Dock" building that showcases the project plans. The IBA is accompanied by extensive public education and advertising mobilization: newsletters, posters, pamphlets, books, and installations can be found across Hamburg and particularly in the target area. The IBA Hamburg website is extensive and available in German and English.

IBA Hamburg's stated mission is "to show the future." It seems to conceive of itself as both a show and as more than that. Its website boasts: "IBA Hamburg is not an ordinary exhibition, even if it is called a building exhibition: no cut-and-dried solutions are presented – and nothing imposed against the wishes of those affected. Nor is anything being created just for show, no ostentatious façades with nothing behind them" (IBA Hamburg, 2011a). IBA Hamburg aspires to be an extraordinary IBA, solving problems in its target area. It highlights environmental sustainability and participation in its methods, talking of involving local people in decision making. One of its biggest focuses is promotion of an education drive (*Bildungsoffensive*) in Wilhelmsburg, making major contributions to coordination and quality of education on the island. One of the seven criteria for inclusion of a project in IBA Hamburg was "structural effectiveness": projects are meant to contribute to the living, work and recreational situation of Wilhelmsburg (IBA Hamburg, n.d.).

The target area of the IBA Hamburg is the Elbe islands in the south of the city, and the island of Wilhelmsburg in particular. At 35km<sup>2</sup> Wilhelmsburg is the largest river island in Europe. It has 55,000 residents. Wilhelmsburg is characterized in local media as a place with problems, or more accurately as a *problem place*, with terms like "crisis neighbourhood" (*Krisenviertel*) and "social flashpoint" (*Sozialer Brennpunkt*) (Twickel, 2011). Wilhelmsburg as a space is identified and produced through local and broader discourses as racialized, and as Muslim and Turkish in particular. Wilhelmsburg is considered by some to be a classic workers' residential area, where housing arose in proximity to industry and parts of the Hamburg port located on the Elbe islands (Analyse and Konzepte, 2010). Its land use is diverse however, from industrial and residential, including a dedicated Roma settlement, to farm and protected parklands.

Wilhelmsburg is a low-income area relative to Hamburg as a whole, with high percentages of pensioners and racialized people (labelled in German census terms as people with 'migration backgrounds'). 55% of Wilhelmsburg residents are racialized or labelled as migrant, 73% of youth under 18. This is compared to 28% and 42% respectively in the city of Hamburg as a whole (Statistisches Amt für Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein, 2010: 52). At 11.7%, unemployment rates are higher than the city-wide average (Analyse and Konzepte, 2010: 15; Hamburger Abendblatt, 2011) and formal educational attainment is relatively low: 26% of students in Wilhelmsburg leave high school without a diploma compared to 8% in Hamburg as a whole (Analyse and Konzepte, 2010). Every third residential unit in Wilhelmsburg is a social housing unit, and rent in the neighbourhood is markedly cheaper than is typical in the high rent, high demand city of Hamburg (Analyse and Konzepte, 2010: 7). The racialization of poverty and the "spatiality of the racial order" are thus observable in Wilhelmsburg (Razack, 2002: 6).

The project seems to be geared towards acquiring land for capital growth and upper/middle class housing in Hamburg, with IBA Hamburg as the avant garde of the process. Ole von Beust, mayor of Hamburg put it this way at the beginning of the project: "Right now neighbourhoods that are defined as problem neighbourhoods are much more ready to take on new challenges. Sometimes it is easier in such neighbourhoods to spark enthusiasm for the new and for change. If we would have the idea to say 'we're going to



remake Blankenese<sup>2</sup> entirely,' it would surely be a little more difficult" (quoted in Arbeitskreis Umstrukturierung Wilhelmsburg, 2011: 9, my translation). Hamburg's head urban planner Jörn Walter also told a group of visiting Canadian students in May 2011, of which I was a part, that the population of Wilhelmsburg has to be transformed in order to solve the place's problems. I will show that the space and bodies themselves have been produced as in need of the civilizing, modernizing influence of IBA Hamburg. Wilhelmsburg as a racialized space demands restructuring in order to be brought in, absorbed into the future metropolis.

## The production of space

Henri Lefebvre argued that urban planning and bureaucracies are agents that produce a *representational* or *conceived* type of space, through maps, drawings, project plans and so on (McCann, 1999: 172). This representational form of space, argued Lefebvre, is always abstract, existing in conception rather than in lived spatial practices. And yet this abstract space, produced through discourse, has material effects. If, as Foucault asserted, discourse produces its objects, then the discourses employed by IBA Hamburg as an urban planning and design project produce the space and people of which they speak just as surely as they build physical structures.

Space has a dialectical relationship with the identities and performances within it. Lefebvre emphasized that identity, use of space, and the materiality of space are constantly co-creating each other (McCann, 1999: 168). Using the example of black anti-police-violence protests in Lexington, Kentucky, McCann extended this to show how the presence and actions of racialized vs. white bodies are more possible in certain spaces, and threaten to transform other, white spaces by transgressing their spatial and performance boundaries. Blomley (2003: 122) likewise asserted that space is produced by the performances that take place within it, while it simultaneously "disciplines the performances that are possible within it." The plans and actions of IBA Hamburg act upon Wilhelmsburg and its residents within the frame of this dialectic, shaped by residents' identities and spatial practices and shaping how they know themselves as citizens of Hamburg. By seeking to transform Wilhelmsburg as a space, IBA Hamburg seeks to transform what is possible within Wilhelmsburg and who may live there.

IBA Hamburg is very much a mapmaker: a symbolic Cartesian subject that undertakes to map the frontier of Hamburg. The mapmaker, said Kirby, "describes [the land] as much as possible as if he were not there, as if no one is there, as if the island he details exists wholly outside any act of human perception" (1998: 48). For IBA Hamburg, humans and their perceptions appear only fleetingly and then just to illustrate the relationship between the island and the city-state of Hamburg. In order to gain access to the island as available for ownership, it must be produced as an empty space.

IBA Hamburg achieves this in two principle ways: by taking hold of the past of the island and retelling it in a way that naturalizes its uninhabitable emptiness, and by constructing the island as a "metrozone" in the present. A metrozone is uninhabited periphery, border urban

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<sup>2</sup> Blankenese is a very wealthy, mostly white neighbourhood of Hamburg.

space, fallen into disuse and ripe for reclamation (IBA Hamburg, 2011b). It is an urban frontier waiting to be closed (Blomley, 2003). In both the past and present narratives the people living in Wilhelmsburg are not substantially present: they are missing, occasionally in the way, and major events in their history – the history of bodies<sup>3</sup> in Wilhelmsburg – are left out entirely. In this section I will look at these two moves in detail, focusing on the IBA Hamburg website’s retelling of the history of Wilhelmsburg, and then on its depiction of the island as a present day “no man’s land.”

### *Wilhelmsburg past*

IBA Hamburg acknowledges that there is a psychic and physical gap to be bridged if it is to pull the island of Wilhelmsburg into the metropolis. It calls the divide between Wilhelmsburg and the rest of Hamburg “artificial,” but naturalizes certain aspects. The story told is a conflicting one: Wilhelmsburg has been inhabited since the fourteenth century, but is not naturally good land to live on (IBA Hamburg, 2011c). It is described as great luck that the northern parts of the island were only thinly populated, so that the Hamburg port could build its large container ship docks there in the late 1800s. Yet an area of Wilhelmsburg nearest the container yards went from 5,000 residents in the height of industrialization to 850 in the mid-twentieth century (IBA Hamburg, 2011c).

Bodies seem to be there and yet not there in Wilhelmsburg’s history. A chapter on the rise of the discipline of urban planning in Hamburg illuminates this: “the geestland (i.e. the higher sandy terrain) is the natural living area for city development... But the marshland is the natural area for work, as its low level facilitates excavation work, for the construction of docks and industrial canals. Urban development kept to this scheme for a very long time” (IBA Hamburg, 2011d). Bodies that live in a “natural area for work” are labouring bodies, not living bodies. They cannot possibly be European, Cartesian subjects and thus fully human, because they are marked by their physical labour in industry. “The proper, ideal subject is one with property but no body” said Mohanram (1999: 38); people living in natural areas for work have bodies, but little or no property. Thus they are there and yet not there: their presence, when it is counted, is an obstacle to be gotten around, as in a colonial venture (cf. Razack, 2002).

The inhabitants of Wilhelmsburg are also produced as having, at certain historical moments, been dangerous to themselves because they lived in uninhabitable areas. In 1962 a storm surge flooded parts of the north coast of Germany and the Netherlands in the middle of a winter night, and 300 people were killed in Hamburg. Over 200 of those were residents of Wilhelmsburg who lived in the lowest-lying northern parts of the islands, and in low-cost housing that was particularly vulnerable. The flood is still within living memory of many people of Wilhelmsburg, and is visible as a trauma in the life of the space. The event is part of collective spatial and personal memory thus has a role in the production of the space and identities of the residents.

The IBA Hamburg website remembers the flood for its effects on Wilhelmsburg’s relationship with Hamburg as a whole. After the flood the state moved to abandon the

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<sup>3</sup> I use “body” in this paper in a similar sense as Kawash (1998), not to denote the person, nor the actual corporeality of the residents of Wilhelmsburg, but rather a contingent corporeality against which meaning is made.

housing in the most vulnerable, northern part of the island (*Reiherstiegviertel*), and met with extensive and successful local protest (IBA Hamburg, 2011e). The importance of this turning point in Wilhelmsburg's history is that it seems to mark the beginning of the neglect of the neighbourhood by the city-state, and an escalation of discursive production of the island as a problem place: the "backyard" of the city, where waste is dumped and work is done (IBA Hamburg, 2011e). This positions IBA Hamburg as a new and benevolent intervention, one that can civilize a space that has become uncivil over time, not purely through fault of its own.

A major missing piece in the history of Wilhelmsburg is the years of the Third Reich and post-war occupation by Britain. This is a 40-year gap in what is otherwise a decade by decade outline of the island. By skipping these years IBA Hamburg misses dealing with Wilhelmsburg's role as a space of enslavement and disciplining of degenerate bodies, and decontextualizes prominent architectural remnants of the Nazi years.

During the war years Hamburg was an important centre of the war industries. Many of the port businesses, as well as small businesses and even homes "employed" slave labourers, primarily Eastern Europeans taken from their homes and imported for the purpose (Gedenkstätte Neuengamme, 2011). From 1943-1945 Wilhelmsburg was the site of a "work education camp" (*Arbeitserziehungslager*), a Gestapo detention centre that focused on "retraining" slave labourers who had broken rules, resisted, or otherwise not performed as desired. At least 5,000 people passed through and were tortured there. The camp was destroyed in a 1945 bombing campaign (Gedenkstätte Neuengamme, 2011). In the context of the tabooing of race and racism in Germany, it might be interesting to integrate the history of enslavement of racialized people and IBA Hamburg's urban development intervention today, as they exist within the same spatial field. The complexity of Wilhelmsburg would then be 'mapped' in different, and greater, detail.

A second major missing piece in IBA Hamburg's history of Wilhelmsburg is the years of the guestworker program. The program was a key mechanism through which a sizeable minority of Turkish people came to live in Germany, including in Wilhelmsburg (Chin, 2009: 80). Beginning in the 1950s, labour migration agreements were signed between Germany and Turkey as well as other Southern European countries, and by the 1970s more than two million guestworkers had come to Germany (Chin, 2009: 80). Men were recruited to work in the German industrial boom based on their physical strength and health, especially doing dangerous and dirty work in the port industry. In order to deal philosophically and practically with the presence of so many people without the same rights as Germans; guestworkers were considered to be entirely separate from the German social body (Chin, 2009: 83). Racialized Turkish bodies, many of them Muslim, imported for their labour capacity, begin to take up residence in Wilhelmsburg in a period and process that is left out of the history of the IBA Hamburg.

Many Wilhelmsburg residents were formerly guestworkers or have fathers, grandfathers, uncles who were guestworkers. If, as Lefebvre and Blomley asserted (Blomley, 2003; McCann, 1999), identities and performances are co-producers of space, the bodies of guestworkers performing hard industrial work made a significant contribution to the production of Wilhelmsburg materially and symbolically. The temporary migration of guestworkers was a foundational event in the development of separate racial communities in Germany today, and the lack of accompanying social policy and migrant support is considered key in some of Germany's present struggles with "integration" and social cohesion (Chin, 2009). Yet these stories are missing from IBA Hamburg's historical account.

The absence of the people of Wilhelmsburg as acting entities in historical events and processes portrayed by IBA Hamburg reflects the unidirectional endeavour of mapping that is a central function of the project as it produces a representation of space. The relationship between the mapper and the mapped, between IBA Hamburg and the people of Wilhelmsburg, is unidirectional (Kirby, 1998: 48). There can be no information, experience, or detail communicated from the people within the mapped space past and present. In IBA Hamburg major points of impact of the mapped space on bodies – points that brought working bodies to Wilhelmsburg, bodies that would be racialized, and points that enslaved and tortured foreign and degenerate bodies – are left out entirely. This serves to produce Wilhelmsburg as empty and available for the taking.

### *Wilhelmsburg present*

The frontier is the line that separates property and control over the land from an external ambiguity of entitlement (Blomley, 2003: 124). In colonial ventures the frontier advances and moves as white settlers enclose and secure title over land they ‘discover’ and bring under control. The frontier is also the line between the white West and the ‘savage’; the savage always lays beyond the frontier, evicted or killed as settlers take the land as their property. The frontier is thus a spatial construct, a legal one, and one that informs identity: settler versus savage, civilized versus uncivilized (Blomley, 2003). The frontier remains active and important in urban areas. Discourses of property in the city rely on notions of inside and outside, marginal space against which other spaces can be measured (Blomley, 2003: 135). IBA Hamburg constructs Wilhelmsburg today as just beyond the frontier, a ‘no man’s land’ that is neither inside Hamburg nor fully outside.

Mobilization of images like the ‘border’ and ‘urban periphery’ produce Wilhelmsburg as a rough, unfinished place available to be developed. In many cities this marginal space against which property is defined is the inner city: “the inner city becomes discursively constituted as an urban wilderness of savagery and chaos, awaiting the urban homesteaders who can forge a renaissance of hope and civility” (Blomley, 2003: 125). In IBA Hamburg the urban wilderness is defined as a “metrozone” and symbols such as borderlines and rough edges are used in text and images to produce Wilhelmsburg as potentially *of* the future metropolis but needing to be drawn *into* it. The metrozone is defined like this: “Many European metropolises have spaces like this, often on the edges of the inner cities: derelict industrial sites and workers’ housing, long since abandoned by the workers. These areas offer completely new opportunities for urban development” (IBA Hamburg, 2011b). The run-down parts of Wilhelmsburg stand in for the multi-faceted whole. Derelict and abandoned space is highlighted, and extensive active industrial sites and inhabited workers’ housing is left out, not to mention farm and parklands, and other community uses of space. Wilhelmsburg is thus emptied of its residents and produced as a ‘no man’s land’. This is an exercise of enclosure, as per Blomley (2003): a no man’s land is negative space, unused, uncultivated, and thus both available and required to be claimed as property of the city-state by IBA Hamburg.

Goldberg (1993: 185) and Razack (2002: 3) have both emphasized how the creation of myths of emptiness has been essential in the conquest of racialized spaces. The doctrine of *terra nullius*, empty land, supported British colonialism and allowed colonizers to pull off the double move of claiming the empty land as their property while simultaneously defining those who would be outside of the colony – those who were not Christian, commercial, agricultural, et cetera (Razack, 2002: 3). Goldberg (1993: 185) drew on the example of South Africa to make the same point: “Conquering space is implicated in and implies ruling people. The

conquest of racialized space was often promoted and rationalized in terms of (where it did not itself prompt) spatial vacancy.” IBA Hamburg’s interventions in Wilhelmsburg are promoted and rationalized on the same terms: the land is not currently put to valid use, has not been properly enclosed and put to use in the past, and the people who live there are not fully part of the Hamburg, Germany body politic.

The invocation of urban marginality through the concept of the metrozone signals part of IBA Hamburg’s development strategy for Wilhelmsburg. The peripheral space is to be eliminated, “wiped away” both materially and symbolically (Goldberg, 1993: 189). The periphery will be drawn into the future metropolis and into modernity through IBA Hamburg. Lefebvre names this process in another way, as absorption of difference and heterogeneity: “sooner or later...the existing center and the forces of homogenization must seek to absorb all such differences” (Lefebvre, 1991: 373). He seemed to suggest this would be an inevitable event. In the following section I will demonstrate how this is a racial project that sets the terms of inclusion and eviction from the Hamburg, Germany body politic.

### **Foreign bodies: The residents of Wilhelmsburg**

The way in which IBA Hamburg discursively produces the residents of Wilhelmsburg present and future interlocks with the production of the space to shape a planning vision of what needs to be done on the island, and to signal who the citizen is who will live in the Wilhelmsburg of the future. Current residents are produced as a racialized mass in terms of diversity, culture, and foreignness. They are linked with conflict and superfluity (Mbembe, 2004) and marked for education as a way into modern, German personhood. In IBA Hamburg’s vision of the future, these racialized bodies appear only in spaces of education, and the bourgeois white subject takes the central position.

Racism in Germany today thrives primarily, but not solely, in a cultural guise. Though Chin and Fehrenbach (2009: 13) argue that continuity can be traced through Nazi-era racism right up to the “cultural racism” of today, which is likewise rooted in ideas of immutable qualities and unbridgeable difference, racism today is typically treated in mainstream discourse as an entirely different, and less dangerous, entity. Rasmussen (2011) situates modern Western European racism within a biopolitical field, and traces its cultural focus back to the pan-German movement from the 1800s. Pan-Germanism, while also steeped in anti-Slav, anti-Jewish, and anti-African racisms, embodied an “auto-referential” racism concerned with the “composition, reproduction and development of the population” (Rasmussen, 2011: 38). This was interconnected with the concurrent colonial drive to protect and reproduce white, bourgeois subjects, while maintaining the exploitability of ‘savage’ populations (cf. Stoler, 1995).

Today’s ‘integration debate’ in Germany is full of auto-referential concern with protection of the body politic, with definition of Germanness, German values, and the possibilities of integration and assimilation of cultural and religious others (Ehrkamp, 2006: 1675). It is a racial, racializing and often racist public discourse. Schiffer (2010) argued that one of the central, dangerous follies in how this discourse circulates is that people’s worth is talked about in terms of “usefulness” (*das nützliches Mensch*). Anti-immigration arguments are countered with claims of the potential contributions of immigrants to Germany, basing human and dignity in capacity to labour (Schiffer, 2010).

In the materials on IBA Hamburg’s website, Wilhelmsburg residents appear in two main discursive forms: as a racialized, abstracted mass, and as a handful of token bodies in ethnic costumes. In both of these forms they are linked with conflict and social segregation. The

following excerpt of IBA Hamburg's (2011g) description of its guiding "cosmopolis" theme is typical of how Wilhelmsburg residents are obliquely represented:

As the diversity of cultures in our cities increases, so too do the conflicts: and segregation is a close companion to diversity. But where different cultures and lifestyles come up against each other, at the borderlines and rough edges of the urban community, opportunity beckons: The combination of different views and ideas creates something really new – new ideas, products and attitudes to life. For that to happen, the divides that threaten to appear in the metropolis must be overcome. The Elbe islands, where people from over 40 different nations share 28 square kilometres, can show how different cultures and viewpoints may develop a common civic pride.

As most of the website, this excerpt is a portrait of IBA Hamburg's vision of Wilhelmsburg, of itself as a project, and of the future metropolis. In it the people are marginal, on the edge of the urban community. Residents of Wilhelmsburg are marked within the "diversity of cultures," and within the "different cultures and viewpoints." They are positioned as inherently prone to conflict and as divided. The spectre of "segregation" is a particularly powerful symbol that needs only to be gestured to to produce Wilhelmsburg residents as isolated by country of origin, speaking only their mother tongues, not participating in German society. This image of the racialized other has great currency within German public discourse including in Hamburg through the threatening concept of the 'parallel society' (*Parallelgesellschaft*).

IBA Hamburg mobilizes the discourse of the 'parallel society' to support its interest in creating "new ideas, projects, and attitudes to life." Drawing attention to the racially marked mass it is engaging with, it signals clearly but without detail that its project is racial in nature. This excerpt in particular is a beautiful illustration of restrictions and rules of discourse after Foucault (see Mills, 2003: 54): diversity, cultures, internationality, can all be discursively linked with conflict and segregation while the taboo against talking about race and race relations is scrupulously observed.

Wilhelmsburg residents appear as real, visible people only in occasional photos in which they are depicted performing in costume, either dancing, parading, or playing music. The visual discourses are of the exotic and colourful, at the level of superficial cultural difference. Below a photo of young girls dancing in ethnic folk costume reads the caption: "Graceful and foreign. Some people are bothered by the customs and demands of various ethnic groups – 'Cosmopolis' promotes tolerance and inter-group ties" (IBA Hamburg, 2011g). It is the bodies of little girls that are marked here as foreign, demanding, with bothersome customs; they stand in for the bodies of residents more generally. The female body encodes boundaries and reveals difference, to use the words of Mohanram (1999: 61). The "foreign" marker deserves special attention because as well as being racializing, it also marks practical legal exclusion from the German body politic. As entitlement to German citizenship is based primarily on *jus sanguinis* – citizenship based on ethnic descent – many of the residents of Wilhelmsburg (33%) are not German citizens (Ehrkamp, 2006: 1673; Statistisches Amt für Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein, 2010: 52). Thus the Wilhelmsburg resident as a marginal non-citizen is a mixture of symbolism and literal material reality.

When it comes to envisioning the future, IBA Hamburg depicts two possibilities for the residents of Wilhelmsburg: disappearance or education. Of fifty IBA Hamburg project drawings, only one shows bodies that resemble the racialized Wilhelmsburg resident. All of the architectural drawings seem to be occupied by white, bourgeois subjects identifiable by their colour, clothing, and symbols of wealth. The education centre is the one project in which people of colour and women in hijab are visible. Interestingly this centre will be called the "Gateway to the World" (*Tor zur Welt*) a motto often used for the city of Hamburg. The

educational drive seems intended to be the engine of IBA Hamburg's imagined social transformation and problem-solving capacity. This is what they have in mind when it comes to solving "the major social issues of our time," and building more than just "façades" (IBA Hamburg, 2011a, 2011h). At first glance the project's diagnosis and prescription for addressing these major social issues seems extremely vague and undefined. But perhaps IBA Hamburg has in fact set out quite a clear problem definition by connecting "cultures" and "diversity," with "conflict" and "segregation." They have defined, in not so many words, a racial problem connected to the residents of Wilhelmsburg. Through this lens the accompanying prescription is also clear: what is necessary is the education and disciplining of racialized bodies. The population will be transformed through retraining as well as through attraction of white, bourgeois subjects (urban homesteaders) to settle on the island and transform it themselves. "Whiteness," said Mohanram, "has the ability to move... the ability to move results in the unmarking of the body. In contrast, blackness is signified through a marking and is always static and immobilizing" (1999: 4). It is the marked body that is visible in IBA Hamburg's descriptions of Wilhelmsburg. Residents are marked as diverse, as cultural, and as foreign. These bodies are not immobilized in the sense that they cannot leave Wilhelmsburg – they may very well have to as a result of the transformation of the neighbourhood into a bourgeois, more expensive neighbourhood. But the bodies of Wilhelmsburg residents are *discursively* immobilized: they do not seem to act, but solely to be present in proximity to other people. They are marked by a quality of inherent difference, inactivity and marginality.

This quality is what Mbembe (2004) calls "superfluity." He argues in the context of South Africa that black bodies are completely expendable and yet indispensable to the production of wealth (Mbembe, 2004: 374). The first section of this paper noted the elision in IBA Hamburg of the importance of the labouring body even to the industrial history of Wilhelmsburg. Yet racialized, labouring bodies have been indispensable to the development and production of wealth in Hamburg. They have also been expendable: employed in dangerous jobs, killed and tortured during the Third Reich, sent home after a few years as guestworkers. These bodies remain indispensable as the other against which the "German" continues to be defined, labouring in undesirable industries, continuing to provide service and wealth, and serving as a constant counterpoint to the health and integrity of the German body politic. Expendability is the marked body's co-condition: not present in the imagined future, exposed to death through poverty and neglect, always in danger of complete expulsion as non-citizens.

## Conclusions

Fusté (2010) offers an example of how ideas about the qualities of residents determined a planning strategy in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Discourses about the degeneracy and incorrigibility of racialized, impoverished bodies informed the planning and building of housing geared towards their betterment and disciplining. Power-laden knowledges about who the racialized poor were circulated in discourse and shaped the planning and realization of spatial projects targeting them. Government attempted to "'modernize' residents through architectural design, planning, and social betterment programs. Because [they] did not address the structural causes of inequalities of poverty and wealth...they failed in lifting residents out of poverty" (Fusté, 2010: 41).

Something similar seems to be happening with IBA Hamburg. Through discourses of emptiness, racialization and the problematic nature of diversity, the project creates a need for

itself. Instead of a hopeful and exciting picture of investment to solve the structural inequities faced by the people of Wilhelmsburg, including their location on the wrong side of the colour line, IBA Hamburg's vision seems ultimate poised to either "civilize" or push residents out. If IBA Hamburg is indeed "showing the future" as they claim, it is not a future where the people of Wilhelmsburg have a better place than today.

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## Urban Negotiations: The Case of Delhi

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**Abstract:** Following the history of its past and the trajectories of its present, it's clear that Delhi is a city composed by fluxes and influxes of migrant people: born from the fusion of seven old small villages, the metropolis is a fascinating and unique mixture of cultures and identities. The city presents today a social complexity identifiable in the multiplicity of compositions and manifestations of its urban pattern. Indeed, Delhi was able to rise up from the wrong input of the urban crisis that invested the city before and during the sportive event of the Commonwealth Games, which ended on October 2010. The crisis was expanded by the blind strong economic interests that seem to be responsible for the development of her fragmentation, which has increased in the latest years. A solution to recompose this fragmentation can be read on the rising mixophilia: the cultural situation present in the city, which originates particular reactions and situations that can be sources of social innovations and inclusiveness. The paper will treat the systems of integration and interconnection of people and places, particularly in the small neighborhoods: actions that naturally can influence the future of the city, from the punctual to the macro level. They are underlined by systems of communication among diversities that in certain cases are reactions against official exclusion and in other cases are proposals springing from incredible resources that must be recognized.

**Keywords:** social and cultural negotiations, mixophilia, new urban heterotopic places, inclusive city, overlapping of times and of speeds

The contemporary city is composed and crossed by visible and invisible fluxes able to modify behaviours on a daily basis: forms, roles of the people, objects and architecture. There are movements strictly interlinked to the economic interests, which like magnetic poles, with their attractions or repulsions, are responsible for the modifications of all kinds of relations in the world of contemporary globalization. Interventions focus on the invisible and energetic fluxes able to modify the city without the citizens realizing it. Observing the contemporary Indian metropolis, it is evident that they have many levels of social interactions, which are conducting the considerable cultural subdivisions generated by their diversity of origins. The

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streets and the public spaces are the main stages for these transformations. The consequent material fragmentation of this divergence of interests can be experienced in the city passing through the different level of density and consistence of the architecture and of the urban paths: specifically from one neighborhood to another but also zigzagging across the areas where the gradient of the concentration's visibility and control varies.

Regarding the concepts of control and visibility, it is necessary to explain here that I'm referring to the deep interrelation that this two entities are interweaving, subjected to the combination of: the relation of power between the governmental and political decisions, the wishes of the urban tribes (ethnic group, religious minority, new rich, etc.), and the unpredictable movements of all the other citizens.

Visibility and control are two of the main protagonists of the new fundamental negotiations present in the super contested society and the speech regarding them is always subject to the unpredictable combination between mainstream and minor movements. The public is not simply the mainstream. So, how do mainstream and minoritarian different rhythms coexist? How are the public, the communitarian, the subcultural and the oppositional created at the intersections of different rhythms of attention and centripetal social energy (Brighenti, 2010)?

This statement is more deep related with the wide reflection of the author on the publicness of public space: a concept that is day-by-day more linked with the necessity of the construction of a commonly based knowledge built directly by the everyday life of the citizens aiming to create a shared platform where urban modification can happen consequent to the negotiations between the various actors in the public domain. All these actions are demonstrations of the invisible relation of power inside the city capable of giving birth to a new modality of imagination to enhance future possibilities.



Informal street vendors in the Delhi traffic. Image by Claudia Roselli.

The development of future views geographically moves itself in the new existences of kinds of urban areas, daughters of social urban transformation. Some of them can be indicated under the definition of commonalities, building and sharing ideas and common values in theory, which consequently are generators of practical public solutions (for example, public spaces that are treated indistinguishably by all citizens such as public gardens, self-built

spaces, small collective area, etc.). Commonalities are another parameter to understand the possible directions of future urban development, concentrating particularly on the interactions on the public sphere. The complex articulation of these different actions leads to an indispensable negotiation of roles, which conducts new negotiations of future landscapes and refers to the multiple ways to interpret the public.

Consequence is the extensions of the negotiations of individual and collective imagination, negotiations of the use of the space, and protection of the places from excessive use, which sometimes can become abuse or a misunderstood use of the publicness. Publicness that is under the interference of social and cultural levels always requests experimentation of new kind of interrelations with institutions and the diverse realm of politics. It's not easy to define today the real interpretation of the space: it is a question of negotiation between the uncontrollable morphological energies of the urban and semi-urban areas and the prevalent characteristic of certain globalized fluxes that are dominating the spaces of consumption.



**Fringes on the informal area in Delhi. Image by Claudia Roselli.**

My dissertation on the public, contextualizing this analysis in India, will be influenced by the changing meaning of sacred spaces and powerful places. The change of the value of sacrality and power, that has happened in recent years, linked with the way of looking and interpreting society, is deeply significant: sacred can be the biggest shopping mall, if who observes is a consumer or addict shopper, and powerful urban spaces can be the industrial areas, from the point of view of rich investors interested in global economic development. From another point of view, to interpret the urban changes: sacred spaces can be the new informal areas where people are re-empowering relationships, exactly where sacrality and power are strictly connected with the human values, and these have another kind of thermometer to measure the importance for the public and for the urban policies. Linked to this, the daughter of a sensitive observation of social changes follows the urgent consideration

of the necessity to re-appropriate the street, like an important public arena to fight for the right of dwelling.

In the particular case of the Indian people, the discourse is completely apart because they never abandoned their streets and the limitation between public and private it is not so well defined: often the streets are extensions of the houses and sometime are the same houses. Fringe areas, urban nomad camps, transitional and uncertain use areas are the metropolitan tracks analyzed through the lens of magnification of the everyday struggle, dressed by an indelible poetry.

It can appear quite excessive to speak about everyday poetry, if we are to focus on the real and desperate fight for daily survival enacted by the heavy art of getting by along the Indian streets: it is a consideration obtained by a long time of personal studies, which have arrived at this conclusion mixing the sensitive observation with the considerations of the local literature. To explain the concept better: certain academic literature addresses, for example, how necessary it is to preserve the existence of the vibrant life of the poor in the street of the metropolis to provide a continuation of its real identity, because the poor are capable of conserving indispensable cultural action-reactions which are substantial for the resistance of the urban fights aimed to respect the rights of all the common citizens (Baviskar, 2007; Friedman, 2009; Bhowmik, 2010). The objects and the details of the streetlife are able to present: emotions, dreams, lead thoughts, details to create stories, and strong practical utopias for the city, which will be immortal until a spontaneous movement will be able to resist the anti-city.



Teenager in the market along the road in Delhi. Image by Claudia Roselli.

## Daily life along the street in Delhi

Delhi is considered a complex city, a multilayered and dangerous urban conglomerate that can be experienced in a different ways: spatially and socially. Spatially, it means to feel the city from the ground level or from the level of the sidewalks: where ephemeral wooden benches can become shelters, beds, or an improvised kitchen. All kind of deities face the passers-by in gold faded images, incense sticks smoke in the corner of the streets for daily prayers – observing the Indian street, it is possible to create a “stories without words”, as mentioned in Michel de Certeau’s book, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Stories are developing themselves across the presence of objects able to evoke an interior vision translated in the temporal and spatial dimensions. Gestures and repetition are unconscious parts of the daily rituals.

Rituals are embedded and invisible to the majority of people, because rituals occur only in the absence. Possibly pertinent here is the “heterotopic dimension” described by Stavrides in the book *Towards the City of Thresholds* (2010). He sustained that urban porosity reinvents cities like a network of thresholds to be crossed, places of passage that mediate between the existence of different urban cultures. This dimension can be also interpretative of Foucault’s statement that heterotopia is a fatal plot between time and space, like condensation and the overlapping of two entities that can manifest itself in a physical and particular moment of the individual life of each person, a moment that can refer to the highest peaks of well-known rituals of passage from one status to another.



Sacred corner: improvised altar. Image by Claudia Roselli.

Foucault theorized that the heterotopia is a sort of place that is located away from all other places, but for this reason it is not less real than other places that are geo-referencing and localizable inside a determinate grid or urban weave. The heterotopia provides a crossing

of defined thresholds that only for the point of representing a limit not always walkable to all, provides an access to a special part of the city, like a passage in the not common daily life. Often the heterotopia can refer, in a big scale, to the illusory or compensatory systems that the city develops to answer to certain short-circuits which are denying its sustainable development.

The concept of heterotopia, translated on the contemporary metropolis, helps to individuate the boundaries between places and not places. Paradoxically, it seems that modifications and heterotopic sprouts that have taken place in the not-well-defined zones finally can be identified and called with this name. These thresholds, more or less visible or invisible, are real possibilities to create places: zones of confine and doors for crossing dimensions.

The city of Delhi is poised to receive near 20,000 additional inhabitants and, in the more general previsions, seems that this can arrive at 30,000 inhabitants, probably in less than ten years. The urban struggle today is between social and economic levels, in the relations and in the interrelations between persons. Dynamics are engendering reactions to the substitutions and to the interruptions of the urban web and are giving energy to the jumble and to the articulations of a new full and new emptiness of the city. The resistance to the negative urban transformations and the routes and the alleys associated with them can be weighed as values. There are several examples of how groups of people in Delhi, mostly in the last ten years and spontaneously, reacted to the imposition of choices dictated by the blind economical interests. This paper would like to open a question on the proper balances between the institutional, the semi-institutional and the public decisions that are influencing the future forms of the city. Of course, to understand the different elements that are important in the determination of the new rights to the city, it's necessary to make reference to the ideology of Lefebvre and David Harvey. The first is a Marxist social scientist and the second a neo-Marxist scholar, and both of them underlined the necessity of considering participation and democratic control as the pillar of the battle for the rights of the city.

In India, following the perspective of the right to the city and underlining the multiple violations of human rights, it is an evident and continuous struggle for the expansion of the human rights net (Kothari, 2011). The aim is try to increase inclusion, respect, freedom, tolerance and social justice. The Indian heterotopia is a meeting point to give visibility of the "other city": the city of symbols, of mute reports, of unsaid things, of potential places, the city of those who survived noise by repeating melodic litanies. The Indian inhabitants, who still largely remain distant from global and speed trajectories, continue to follow other rhythms, other streets and draw invisible lines of connection with the real identity of the ancestral genius loci. Parts of the city speak only if they are observed from unusual angles.





**Delhi: work of infrastructural renewal.**  
Image by Claudia Roselli.



**Broken grid inside the housing plot.**  
Image by Claudia Roselli.

### **De Certeau wrote that to live is *narrativization***

In India, the corners and the sidewalks of the public streets can be read like visual phrases of poems: to arrive to the statement that the surviving strategies are poetic ways of resistance. To intuit the future evolutions of the poetry of living, the changes in the making and the ephemeral solutions, it is important to observe the arising relationships among sites in rapid modification: the transformations imposed by the new global trends and, oppositely, the resilient metropolitan style of living. It is a way to pick up histories of residential urban spontaneous resistance through everyday public street actions: to sit down, to create a place, to pass through, to invent trajectories and hypothetical new crossings. The urban negotiations are a mirror of the changing economy.

There are several activities and actions, that daily are addressed to mould the use of the spaces; these activities are staging how to control the public space and how to mediate between the needs connected with the life of the poor, sometime illegal, and the rules of civic authorities. The resultant urban life is more and more complicated by the appearance, in the city's life, of the new groups and new cultures, sons of the contemporary phenomenon of mixophilia.



Street life in old Delhi. Image by Claudia Roselli.

## The results of urban mixophilia:

### Interconnection of cultures and integration

Well underlined in Delhi is the opposition between the concept of the global economy, one of the relevant causes of urban exclusion, and the local inclusiveness of the “cosmopolitan neighbourliness”.<sup>2</sup> Particular forms of openness to difference are produced within neighbourhood spaces in the squatter settlement of Delhi where, through non-predictable interactions, difference is constructed as a normalized aspect of everyday life. Such normalization is possible only in the discursive construction of a “mongrel city” (Sandercock, 1998), which in its intensive “mixing” produces a condition where the “other” is not just familiar but also where the “self” and “other” becomes interchangeable (Datta, 2011). This complexity of layers that composes the city is more intriguing if interpreted deeply, and that means to translate the mix composition from the public to the private level: I suggest that attitudes towards difference and otherness in the urban slum are shaped through a set of relational constructs between the city and the squatter settlement; between the urban public sphere and the less “public” neighbourhood sphere, and between the city and the left-behind village (Datta, 2011).

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<sup>2</sup> An example can be cited by the author of a case study of a multicultural neighborhood where, living together, are migrants from Europe, Africa and East Asia, mixing behaviors and necessities and giving origin to a new way of dwelling.

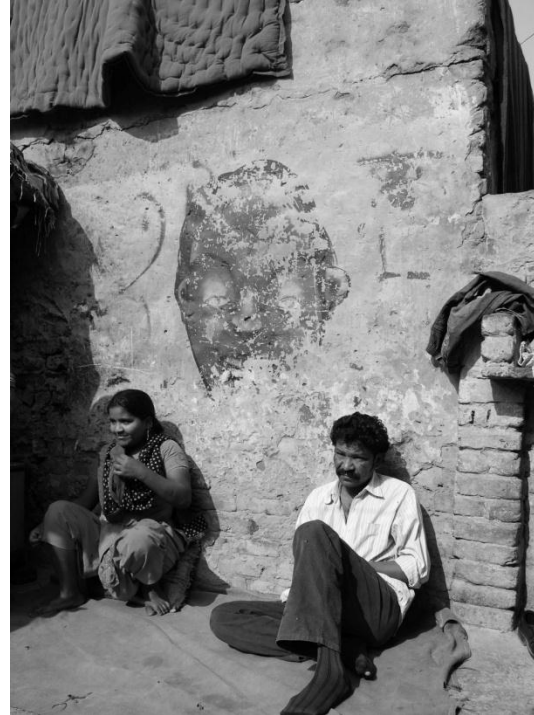


African people in an Indian restaurant specialized in Chinese food (!). Image by Claudia Roselli.

The social complexity can be identified in multiple patterns of urban expressions mostly at the level of voluntary segregation and the level of forced segregation, the communities spontaneously generated in a climate of a cultural mixité, or urban mixophilia. If, from one side, this phenomenon is responsible for the generation of special cultural innovations, it is also true that it can be the cause of decisions of social separation, reactions to the fear of social diversity.

Gated communities or enclosure colonies, enclaves for rich and high-income people, are voluntary forms of segregation, usually created with the aims to ameliorate the life standard of the inhabitants. Contrarily, forced segregation can be identified as consequence of the forces of the unequal political and social motivations that produced apartheid communities: slums, urban ghettos, ethnic enclaves and all of these places that are known as spatial containers for diversity and the neglected. Trying to imagine how to re-draw the urban composition of today's Delhi and her several paths is not so simple because the future imaginations for the Indian capital necessitate a negotiation between the visions of the 2021 Master Plan and the normal events of the urban daily life, which constantly move themselves to undefined points, sometime with the consequence of changing reality unpredictably. The result will probably be a city drawn with a not fluid configuration and visually not easily penetrable, like a fragmented urbanity that can be also interpreted like an interrupted answer of the nonlinear development of the timeline.

Reading the temporality like another plan of the fragmentation, which composes and individualizes the heterogeneity of its actual character, one finds the contemporary drive to break, tear, shatter, explode, crush, divide, rip, in other words, to convert to pieces. Disorder is the sum of a temporal order that seems complex. The unfinished imposes itself: order is incomplete and mutable (Jacques, 2001). The Jacques description is understandable as the temporal politic and cultural parentheses are the beginning of urban changes to design part of the city without prevision in a long-term view.



Delhi: Less sphere in the left behind village. Images by Claudia Roselli.

To explain the changes and the actual composition of the contemporary Indian capital from the point of view of the fragmentation caused by new urban requests and also from the grounds of the society caused by a new economy and global social changes, it is necessary go deep with a reflection on how ephemeral big mass events can affect the future of all the inhabitants in terms of inclusiveness and exclusiveness. It is necessary to consider the proposals, the solutions and the consequential echoes and resonances on all the different urban groups. To discover and underscore the interactions that follow the public events is another way to follow the development of new urban official and unofficial negotiations that are connected to specific time and spaces and can affect the entire citizenship, with evident consequences on the customs of dwelling, mostly in a long-term view. To put attention on the new systems of integration and interconnection of cultures that are born in the small neighbourhoods, that spontaneously react to the official exclusions, it is very useful to understand the contemporaneity and to compare similar situations in other intercultural global cities, a valid system to know the diversity of reactions and communications among diversities. These tracks are good signs for finding answers for a future of urban negotiations in the direction of sustainability.

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## Walkscapes of Children's Participation in a World of Common Things

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**Abstract:** This paper introduces a *pedagogic, urban* and *political* adventure experienced by the authors with a group of pre-school children. Contemporary European children tend to live *private lives*, tend to be destitute from *the world of common things* (Arendt, 1958) and kept inside public/specialized services. Recently, Revel (2008) argued for a shift from the *public* to the *common* as a stronger political departure point for imagining new ways of living and participating. Rancière (2010) proposes to take *equality* as a starting point and not a goal in human relations. We triggered a “poor pedagogic” adventure (Masschelein, 2008): we chose to make use of common practices (like walking together) as a way of engaging in the common world. The practice of walking has been reinvested in different areas: walking as aesthetical practice (Carreri, 2002); walking as research a methodology (Teixeira Lopes, 2007/2008); and walking as community building strategy (Cowel, 2010). Considering this framework, we propose a more attentive look at the physical practice of coming out.

**Keywords:** children, participation, pedagogy, common

### Introduction

I would argue that the street, the urban street, as public space is to be differentiated from the classic European notion of the more ritualized spaces for public activity, with the piazza and the boulevard the emblematic European instances. I think of the space of ‘the street’, which of course includes squares and any available open space, as a rawer and less ritualized space. The Street can, thus, be conceived as a space where new forms of the social and the political can be made, rather than as a space for enacting ritualized routines. With some conceptual stretching, we might say that, politically, ‘street and square’ are marked differently from ‘boulevard and piazza’: the first signals action and the second, rituals. (Sassen, 2012: 6)

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Walking in contemporary urban streets is filled with expectations and possibilities. One of the possibilities is signalled by Sassen's (2012) perspective about the "global street" as a place for the making of new forms of the social and the political. We argue that Sassen's perspective of the conflicting and co-existent spaces and modes of democracy is highly consistent with Santos' (2012) conceptualization of citizenship. It is our understanding that the "boulevard and the piazza" are proper places for fully fledged citizens to engage in ritualized and traditional ways of democracy. On the other hand, the "global street" is also the place for the excluded, for the ones who are not proper citizens and that bring within the possibility of emergent modes of democracy.

In our work, we seek to understand children's possibility for acting in the global street, and thus widening or questioning the concept of citizenship. It is our understanding that children's place in the global street allows other uses and appropriations and makes possible a (re)creation of *other* forms of the social and the political in the city. In this sense, we propose an attentive look at the concept of citizenship through a *transgressive* approach (Santos, 2012) that shows citizenship as a producer of non-citizens and reproducer of inequality and exclusion.

The view of citizenship based on the non-citizen observes and analyzes criteria of inferiority that precede citizenship. Accordingly, it establishes an equality that hides inequalities that existed before it. From a framework of analysis that shows the contradictions and tensions generated in the concept of citizenship, Santos defines three types of non-citizens: non-human, sub human and human dysfunctional. The author considers that children and teenagers may be defined as sub humans, as they are victims of forms of exclusion, based on inferiority criteria. The arguments that justify minority, protection or security, as well as the power relationships, usually established between child-adult, produce forms of exclusion of this group. It also determines its participation in limited and controlled contexts, often created in the image of the adult world. As we will develop ahead, children's civic education tends to focus on their introduction to social rules and rituals. In fact, even recent participatory projects and programs targeting children tend to make them imitate adult modes of participation – e.g., children's parliament or children's participatory budgets.

In our work, we consider the relevance of re-thinking streets and cities *also* as children's places – and thus for children's adventures and educational processes (see Gomes, 2011, 2012). Among many other things, cities are *also* sites made of public places and common things that allow unpredicted events and experiments. Tonucci's (2004) laboratory for a "children's city" endorses children's ability to trouble and annoy adult-centred ways of using cities' and organizing other uses of cities' places. More than participating in rituals in delightful and adult-like ways, we wonder about children's freedom in un-ritualized ways – in this case, by *wandering* with them:

- Do children have a place in the world of common things or must they live in antechambers in order to be ready for engaging in human affairs?
- Can participation be a feature of everyday life? What happens if we take participation as a feature of everyday life?
- What are the political possibilities of making common things (e.g., walking together)?

Our paper is an approach to these questions through the description and theoretical framework of an ongoing project with three groups of pre-schoolers in a city-centre Lisbon neighbourhood.

## The framework

### *Pedagogy: The making of citizens and the need for interrupting it*

In a most stimulating book about the invention of the modern self, Popkewitz focuses on different cultural and political projects that, throughout the twentieth century and all across the world, centred on “making and remaking of society through the educational process to form the child as the future citizen” (Popkewitz, 2005: 4). As Ó (2003) and Popkewitz (2005) argue, the making of the citizen or the reforming of the child in order to reform society are complex mechanisms lying on power and knowledge, and not only on strong and coercive techniques. This means that the education of children as the future citizen was developed both by inhibiting undesirable behaviours and statements and by endorsing ways of thinking and being. Since the American and the French revolutions the birth of the modern nations has been lying on the fabrication of national and reasonable citizens out of a mass of indistinct children. Emerging clearly in the twentieth century, the “modern self” can be seen as the decisive example of this mechanism: “[the modern self] is a particular historic invention of one who plans and orders actions in a rational way to bring about progress in a world of uncertainty. (...) The pedagogical notions of child development and Dewey’s concept of action embody such a notion of planned life in a sequence of regulated time” (Popkewitz, 2005: 4, 16).

The citizen to be made through compulsory and growing stays in schools is taught to believe in a sacred connection between progress and reason built on a positive science, endorsed by Dewey’s pragmatism as an element of what Popkewitz (2005) considers a ‘travelling library’ grounding education policy and practices around the world in the twentieth century.

In this sense, the making of the self of future citizens is deeply rooted in a conception of time that obscures present time and events, highlighting past idealisations, fears, and conceptions as references for future life. Working with time conceptions, Osberg (2010) makes an interesting theoretical analysis of the mechanisms of educational directionality underneath the making of future reasonable citizens. She considers that traditional education and common trends of theorising it ground educational directionality in mechanisms of justification of future goals through a past justification of needs defined by power instances.

As an alternative, Osberg (2010) proposes a conceptual approach to education as a present-dependent process that must rely on justice more than on justification. Keeping attentiveness to present events allows exercises of freedom, disrupting the focus on previously defined normality and desirable identities.

A pedagogy of interruption is not a ‘strong pedagogy’; is not a pedagogy that can in any sense guarantee its ‘outcomes’. It rather is a pedagogy that acknowledges the fundamental weakness of education vis-a-vis the question of subjectification. This ontological weakness of education is at the very same time its existential strength, because it is only when we give up the idea that human subjectivity can in some way be educationally produced that spaces might open up for uniqueness to come into the world. This is what is at stake in a pedagogy of interruption. (Biesta, 2010: 91)

Making room for a *pedagogy of interruption* emerges as a turning point event for theorizing children’s education and learning. Children’s education has been conceptualized within a very narrow perspective that encloses children in their role as pupils and reduces their education to what happens inside school premises, or even the school classroom. On the other hand, as Gerwitz (2008) reveals, the lifelong learning paradigm, that has been pervasive



in all age ranks and learning mechanisms, tools and environments for children and families,<sup>3</sup> is spreading all over Europe. Acknowledging the distance between children's education and learning in what concerns practices and theories, we have been arguing for the need to reshape educational research about children in order to better comprehend current practices (Gomes, 2011, 2012). In this sense, we believe that the openness of Biesta's (2010) concept of 'pedagogy of interruption' sets the reader into a search about the fixed dimensions of education and about ways of disturbing them. This approach to educational theorising provokes *interruption* (Biesta, 2010) and *dis-continuity* (Larrosa, 2000), introducing demanding theoretical gestures that allow re-thinking the already-known and the all-ready said. By bringing into the conversation a theory about (civic) learning alongside his work on (democratic) education, Biesta's approach allows attributing a deeper meaning to the generative dimension of education and to bring an ethical focus on learning events. It is from this position that we work with Biesta's theory on civic learning, in its relation with interruption as a tool for children's civic learning within a subjectification conception.

### *Political: Questioning children's private lives*

European children's presence in public and common life became an absence. This absence is grounded on paternalistic and pedagogic discourses about children, mostly perceived as pupils, as people still to become. So, as schools have become omnipresent, and compulsory schooling time has been ever-growing, children's current daily life is enclosed inside schools, leaving them with few occasions to engage in the common world. In fact, even though the majority of European children live in cities, their lives tend to be organised according to a separation criterion based on age, separating them from their own family members (see Qvortrup, 1999) as well as from other adults – other than specialized professionals like teachers or paediatricians. Currently, in Europe, children are either too protected and shielded inside all kinds of specialized services (schools, day-care, playgrounds, after-school clubs...) or exposed to diverse forms of poverty, violence and abuse.<sup>4</sup> In this way, everyday encounters with others as well as participation and engagement with affairs bigger than their own life have been inhibited. This why we argue that children live "private lives":

For the individual, living a private life means, above all, to be destitute of things essential to a truly human life: to be deprived of the reality that comes from the fact of being seen and heard by others, deprived of an objective relationship with them arising from the fact of relating to others, and separating from others, through a world of common things, and deprived of the possibility of realizing something more permanent than life itself. (Arendt, 2001: 74)<sup>5</sup>

Arendt (2001) claims that education has to do with the ways people, institutions and society respond to nativity, to the presence of newcomers. Taking children as one of the newcomers, we argue that little room is opened for them in the world of common things.

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<sup>3</sup> The author refers to the specialized apparatus for controlling children's development since the mother's womb and also to the growing products for stimulating learning and development (e.g., all the edutainment tools and toys) at all places, from the pediatrician's office to the library and the shopping mall.

<sup>4</sup> For further data on children's situation in the urban world, please see UNICEF (2012), available at [http://www.unicef.org/media/files/SOWC\\_2012-Main\\_Report\\_EN\\_21Dec2011.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/media/files/SOWC_2012-Main_Report_EN_21Dec2011.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Author's translation of the Portuguese edition of *The Human Condition*.

In diverse countries, participatory experiments are being conducted with children, especially visible after the ‘Convention on the Rights of the Child’, which clarified children’s participation rights – e.g., children’s participatory budgets or participatory city planning. A set of very diverse and local projects is being developed under UNICEF’s (2004) guiding program of “child friendly cities”,<sup>6</sup> which pursues the goal of assuring children’s rights, namely participation rights. Also, in southern countries these projects frequently occur within projects supported and/or endorsed by The International Association of Educating Cities (IAEC).<sup>7</sup> From a different perspective, we witness the appearance of education services and/or projects targeting children in diversified sites, from museums to science centres, parks or archives. In Portugal, there about 40 cities enrolled in the IAEC, promoting their will to become educating cities; also, most cultural and scientific institutions have educational projects or services working with schools.

### *Urban: Walking as knowing and participating*

Everything that is personal it’s political also – and walking transports – literally and allegorically – the intimate and private dimensions to the public sphere. (Lopes, 2007/2008:73-74)

When deepening the concept of “worldly space”, Biesta (2010) considered plurality and difference as its main characteristics – which may be found in some urban public spaces. However, following Arendt’s conception of the “public domain”, he argues that it: “should not be understood in physical terms – it does not necessarily coincide, for example, with a street or a shopping mall – but denotes a particular quality of human interaction” (p. 84), that allows freedom (as beginning and not as sovereignty) to emerge.

If the uses of public spaces are part of the competences /power of citizens, walking in the city can be understood as practical knowledge, not only as a mean of travel, and, at same time, a way to participate in a world of common things. The practices and uses of the public spaces by children could retrain and re-establish ways of children’s participation in the city.

Lopes (2007/2008) shows walking as a practice that transforms the walking subject into a speaking subject. Talking about the specificities of a multiple urban time associated to walk in the city and the appropriation of public spaces calls the plurality and multivocality of everyday experience. Furthermore, the walk time could be seen by another point of view: the urban space interaction provides an intense learning. The author proposes a typology to define and characterize the spaces’ diversity and specificity. He argues that “*free* [in opposition to programmed], unexpected, *concrete* [opposed to virtual] and *peripheral* [opposed to central and touristic] public spaces can sustain a re-enchantment for urban life” (Lopes, 2007/2008: 71).

Careri (2002) also proposes “walking as aesthetical practice” that focuses on the centrality of walking as a way to know and to relate with the space of the city and to its spatial language. In this sense walking could be used as a critical tool that makes possible a different way of urban intervention. We faced an experimental praxis by appropriating and changing

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<sup>6</sup> Please see <http://www.childfriendlycities.org/>.

<sup>7</sup> Please see [http://www.bcn.es/edcities/aice/estaticues/angles/sec\\_charter.html](http://www.bcn.es/edcities/aice/estaticues/angles/sec_charter.html).

the sense of the public space. Cowel (2010) propose “walking as community building strategy”.

We do not use a “rich methodology” since we are aiming for a “poor pedagogy” (Masschelein, 2008). A poor pedagogy aims at attentiveness that “makes room for a possible self transformation, that is, a space for practical freedom” (Masschelein, 2008: 36). In this way we attempt to displace our perspectives and our place in the experienced situations in order to see what is there to see. It is a generous pedagogy that gives the time and place for the experiment.

The space of the city accommodates a broad range of political activities that become visible on the public space. Sassen focuses on “street-level politics” and talks about the potential to create “new types of political subjects who do not have to go through the formal political system” (2012: 7).

## The project

Our project is named after a Portuguese song called “Com a cabeça entre as orelhas... crianças na cidade”/“With the head between the ears... children in the city”. It is an ongoing project developed in a public school located in a central Lisbon neighbourhood, and we have been working with three kindergarten groups (three heterogeneous groups of 20 to 25 children between 3 and 6 years old).

In all the dimensions of the project’s development, we chose to make use of *common* practices. *Common* are practices that take place in ordinary ways, rejecting specialised techniques. In addition, common refers to what people share, to what people put between them, that both allows setting the distance and establishing communication (Arendt, 2001). *Common* refers also to un-ritualized events that are neither shielded in the private sphere nor formalized in public and state-like institutions (Revel, 2008).<sup>8</sup>

In our project, we chose to walk and wander with children because it is both a common practice and a complex one (Gonçalves, 2009). This is so because walking as wandering is *dynamic*; it occurs in an open *system* as it is composed by a *multiplicity* of elements; it is *recursive* as it feeds on itself in its own ongoing process changing its dynamics; and it is generative as it allows provoking *unpredictable* unfolding and outcomes. Since our walks were a goal in themselves, all these characteristics are enhanced. Thus conceptualised, walking emerges as our key strategy, core to a *poor pedagogy* (Masschelein, 2008) and to engage in public life and common events in cities.

Our *adventure* lies in a set of characteristics that make us all *strange*<sup>9</sup> to the context and to the audience:

- We are not kindergarten teachers and we are working with three groups of kindergarten children;

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<sup>8</sup> Recently, Revel (2008) argued for a shift from the *public* to the *common* as a stronger political departure point for imagining new ways of living and participating.

<sup>9</sup> Biesta (2009) considers that “making the familiar strange” is one of the central aims of theorizing, specifically in the field of theory of education.

- We are not researchers or professionals of urban planning/urbanity and we are promoting children's presence in urban spaces (some were made for children, others were not);
- We are not children and we are interested in playing and experiencing time and activities in childlike modes;
- We are not doing participatory research with children and we are interested in what they think and how they prefer enjoying outdoor time;
- We don't have specific objectives about children's learning and we are engaged in educational events;
- We *care* about children and we enjoy wandering in cities' *public* spaces – and that is what we are doing with children.

Given these premises, we developed our project within a set of interconnected axes developed through walking in the school's neighbourhood:

### *Enjoy*

Simply being in public spaces and discovering how to use them was a very fruitful experience. The children are used to be inside places and spaces that have clear borders and obvious activities to be made. So, our first approach was to leave school premises and walk for a few minutes reaching the neighbourhood playground (Figure 1) and children were delighted and felt safe. In this space, our attention is always asked in order to solve minor conflicts or to promote some game or joke.

In addition we wandered in other less programmed spaces. Figure 2 shows children climbing a centennial tree where they all would amazingly fit. This was a mysterious semi-public space: it is in the forecourt of an emblazoned house where a big family lives keeping the gates always opened allowing the brave ones to get inside and make a time travel. This worked as an un-programmed place for children and so they wandered around trying to do things and to enjoy themselves: never too safe, never in danger, always in a thrill. Never crossing a street but going through the back of the neighbourhood, we arrive at a garden inhabited by elderly and dogs (Figure 3). Here children ran and screamed and engaged in conversation with strangers and provoked elderly smiles and laughter.



1. Playground with carpet and fence.

2. Ancient tree in a forecourt across the school.

3. Garden above underground parking

## Observe

To enhance observation of and **curiosity** about urban places is one of our strongest goals. We started it by reading *The Curious Garden* (Brown, 2010) to children. It tells the tale of a boy who enjoys the city and out of his curiosity finds a curious garden in an abandoned railway track, and decides to take care of it. Even if from the pedagogic point of view this was a failed session – the story was too long and we didn’t master storytelling techniques – it did set the scenario needed for wandering and observing. The frequent walks around the same neighbourhood demanded to direct and re-direct the eyes and the ears and so we observed a lots of things: the mushrooms growing and then dying, the traffic lights and signs, the recent Lisbon parrots, cars parked on the sidewalks, the damaged pavement, the garbage left around and the worst enemy: dog poop in the gardens.



4. Observing a damaged pavement marked with graffiti ink



5. Noticing dog poop left all-around gardens and side-walks

## Know

Being it in the form of open-air classes, in the form of informal meetings, by walking we allowed learning some knowledge about the city life and history to occur. Obviously, we reinforced rules and procedures about walking around, but also we directed children’s attention to toponymy and connected it with Lisbon’s and Portugal’s history. Reading the street names and trying to understand what they meant – from naming previous places to well known writers or physicians; as Steiner (2005) puts it, European people live in antechambers of history and culture – was an unknown exercise to children who barely knew their own address or their school’s address.

In addition, we approached the issue of ownership and responsibility for public spaces: Who owns the streets and the gardens and the playgrounds? If there is something wrong with them, who is responsible for taking care? Who is allowed to take care? Being that these and other similar questions are very complex ones, we decided to make use of what was around, reinforcing common practices and the common world. Bearing this in mind, we made use of the Parish Council’s headquarters in the neighbourhood and were introducing this idea of a common place looked after by one of us when suddenly the Chairman parked his car just in front of us. While he was stuttering about how difficult it was for him to explain to children what his work was, one of the girls kept repeating: “What about the water in the playground?”

Why doesn't the tap work?" Fortunately, in that same afternoon we came across the 10-year-old sister of one of the pre-school boys who made this explanation much easier.



copyright ana bruno

6. The statue named "conception" and it's details



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7. Meeting the Chairman of the Parish Concl and one of the child's sister.

### *Participate/intervene*

First we (both of us and the children) noticed how all the street and public signs are of the adult world. Then we noticed also how children did have ideas about things of the common world. Then we proposed: What if we make our own signs? What if we spread them around? What if people knew what children think? What should the signs be about?

In order not to be too directive about the signs' content, we set only the strategy: marking the street as our common world, making use of it, revealing children's presence in the street. We prepared the physical support and offered them to each child to draw and, since they are pre-school children, we volunteered to write the strongest idea of their sign. Then we did it as Figure 8 shows: we invited parents and pre-school teachers through placing an announcement in the school door, we crossed the streets with our signs, we placed our signs in gardens and sidewalks and we had lots of fun and lots of conversations about the most frequent signs made by children – the dog poop around, a common problem in Lisbon as Figure 9 shows.

Moreover, some weeks after, we did manage to show the children other children's demands about this same problem in other Portuguese cities and in different Lisbon neighbourhoods.



8. Children placing their signs in the neighbourhood's gardens.



9. One of the signs: "Lisbon city is full of dog-poop."

## Concluding remarks

"It is easy to treat people as if they were sub human, we continue to do it every day."

Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2012)

Taking this paper as a tool for re-thinking the urban and also our own actions in the urban spaces, places and occasions, we highlighted possibilities and difficulties, tensions and contradictions, of creating a space for children's actions in the common world. As we stated in the introduction, we were not seeking for ritualized ways of promoting children's citizenship. We were rather seeking opportunities for *children's* actions in the *street* – in the physical and metaphoric senses defined by Sassen (2012). However, adult-children relationships are marked by hierarchy grounded on children's minority and inferiority, which was stressed by schooling processes that kept children inside specialized antechambers. In this sense, by refusing to play the traditional adult, our role became *impossible*, as we had no references and mechanisms to hold on to. We expected to embrace our quest for "a community to come" as Agamben (1993) defines it. However, the *emergentist* character of this attempt led to some key questions:

- Do these processes of co-construction of children's participation in the city point to a path of *disobedience, resistance*?
- Is this exercise of focusing on children's participation, and thus reimagining ways of acting and relating, a way of thinking citizenship from the empirical perspective of the non-citizen?

In fact, one of childhood's strongest features is the need to obey; to obey elderly, parents, teachers, pediatricians and any other relevant adult. Consistently, one of the most visible battles of traditional modes of education – as stated above – is to avoid resistance, both by preventing undesirable behaviors and by endorsing adequate ones. So, should we think of *disobedience and resistance* as relevant dimensions of children's actions towards more inclusive citizenship? We argue that children should not be engaged in any other form of resistance and disobedience; nevertheless, people (regardless of their age) should be ready to

question rules and orders targeting particular groups (like children) and to interrupt them whenever and wherever rules are becoming self-evident and not connected to justice. If not, we will keep treating children as if they were sub humans.

By exposing the concept of citizenship to its fragilities – namely, to its exclusivist dimension based on age (Santos, 2012) – we intended to open up other possibilities to approach and think about the nature, practices and spaces of children’s participation in the city. We wish to see the alternatives that arise when we try new and different understandings of citizenship and participation of children in a common world.

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## The Misfit Eye: Scoping Space Inequality, Planned Obsolescence, Isolation and Commodification through the Eyes of Contemporary Art

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**Abstract:** Why have the problems of dwelling, urban living and built environment become intrinsic to a significant part of nowadays' artistic production? Why do so many artists use space as their medium and interact as creative users of space with the redundancies and contradictions of lived space? How can artworks ranging from portable objects, fixed images and built environments give an assessment of the reification of space in post-Fordist societies? I conjecture that through a critical inquiry into many of modern architecture's values, Contemporary Art (or, more materialistically speaking, the visual arts produced in our time of existence), has been, in a productive and creative way, addressing built spatiality, the physical awareness of space-time, the length of movement and stillness, and the problems and contingencies of belonging and indeterminacy, of permanence and isolation, of placement and displacement. I argue that the visual arts field has inquired, reconceived and reinterpreted the human dwelling, the tectonic and anthropological processes of construction and montage, with a clear perception that architecture works as a life mediator and lever, a purveyor of power and a far-reaching image of power. I have been studying a set of art works developed between 1960 to the present day by artists like Constant Nieuwenhuis, Claes Oldenburg, Hans Haacke, Gordon Matta-Clark, Kristof Wodzicko, Dan Graham, Vitor Burgin, James Casabere, and Angela Ferreira as examples of a bottom-up poetics which deals with such relational concepts as community, street, dwelling and utopia and also as examples of a deferred cultural counter-measure against the colonization of the public domain by the holy alliance between "Bureaucracy and Property" (Benevollo, 1979: 26), what David Harvey (2003) characterizes as "accumulation by dispossession" (pp. 145-152). In this paper, I debate the artworks developed by some of these artists claiming they are strong visual analogies of many of today's "dynamic orders and disorders"<sup>2</sup> (apud Atlee, 2007: 11) of urban space.

**Keywords:** Modernism, dwelling, architecture, ruin, monument

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<sup>1</sup> Pedro Pousada (1970) concluded his PhD in 2010 and teaches since 1999 at the Architecture Department of FCTUC. He is also a researcher at CES (Centro de Estudos Sociais, University of Coimbra). His current research interests deal with a set of works from advanced contemporary art that have highlighted the colonization of the symbolic and the aesthetic by dominant economic forms. He is also a visual artist with extensive experience in the field of contemporary drawing and an advisor of the Círculo de Artes Plásticas de Coimbra (CAPC).

<sup>2</sup> Gordon Matta-Clark: Notebook, estate of Gordon Matta-Clark, on deposit at the CCA, Montreal, as referred by James Atlee in *Towards Anarchitecture: Gordon Matta-Clark and Le Corbusier*, Tate papers Issue 7, 2007, p. 11 (PDF page number) (consulted on 09.03.2012, retrieved from <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/towards-anarchitecture-gordon-matta-clark-and-le-corbusier>). Gordon Matta Clark applies this wording to explain his methodological approach to the space problem where improvisation, un-planning and random decision became keystones next to the trained skills of studio designing.

## Introduction

Like in the Greek Anphionic myth where the walls of Tebas were lifted by the melodies Anphyon played, in modern times the visual arts became the spiritual and playful source from which architecture took its prime-matter in the sense that the optical, tactile and sound bites of artistic modernism predicted (in a reflexive and catalyst sense) form and space building, later experienced and developed by the polysemic apparatus of architectural modernism. In his renowned and canonical book, *Space and Time: The Birth of a New Tradition* (1941), a guide book for modernist thinking, Siegfried Gideon balances as a kind of ontology of modern space-making, the cubist painting done by Picasso, *L'Arlesienne* (1912), next to Gropius's Bauhaus building (1925-26).<sup>3</sup> Overlapping transparency and space-time as a fluctuating porosity, he would suggest,<sup>4</sup> had their foundational and pictorial beginning in the Bateau Lavoir's studio. Canvas was the Pandora box where cubomorphic design and spatial formlessness came out from, turning illusion into knowledge, concreteness into lightness and ornament into structural integrity.

On the antagonistic side of the International Style account, in the North American early 1970s, *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972), Venturi, Scott Brown and Iznevor's reading of urban sprawl as a visual environment made out of Fordism and consumerist icons (function following or even obeying media) takes, as Venturi later on admitted (Dryansky, 2006: 129), as its basic role model the early 1960s re-worked photos produced by Edward Ruscha on the Los Angeles's sprawl.

In a certain sense, these examples reflect one side of the reciprocate exchange, the two-way traffic that has been running ever since media, as Beatriz Colomina (1992: 126; 2006: 21-30) put it so bluntly, became the main building block of advanced modernist architecture. Trained architects such as Eisenstein, Lissitzky, Friederich Kiesler, Roberto Matta-Echaurren, Gordon Matta-Clark, and Absalon stepped down from what they felt as a personal dead end into the poetics of the art field in the same way that artists like Tatlin, Malevitch, Theo van Doesburg, Mondrian, Fernand Léger, Moholy-Nagy, Kurt Schwitters, Constant Niuwenhuis, Robert Smithson, Hans Haacke, Walter de Maria, Daniel Buren, Vito Acconci, Dan Graham, Cildo Meireles, James Casabere, Ilya Kabakov, Thomas Demand, Julain Opie, Jacobo Castellano, Los Carpinteros, Andrea Zittel, Pello Irazu, Ângela Ferreira, and Rodrigo Oliveira, in a specific moment of their artistic biography, looked deep into architecture (built, lived or just media) to provide them with the answers they could not find in their own training.

If, in the early heroic roundabouts of modernism, advanced architects took the non-Euclidian reframing of pictorial depthness and the destruction of conical perspective as a source for new unbalanced and eye-catching ideas on three-dimensional visuality and real-space perception, in the last 40 years the process has reversed. Travelling from a narrative

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<sup>3</sup> Concerning this account, see Mertens (2006) and Colomina (2003).

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that later on Colin Rowe (*Perspecta*, Vol. 8, pp. 45-54) would overpass Siegfried Giedion and Gyorgy Kepes' conceptualization of architectural transparency, pointing out that it was founded exclusively in the "physical qualities" of construction materials (glass, plastic) and kept that same superimposition in the limits of the optical experience of a passing observer receiving visual information rather than one moving and filling the built space with his presence; the experience of transparency was offered by the glazing nature of the Bauhaus and less by its spatial organization whose layers were not multi-directional, Rowe argued.

format to a structural autotelic object, from this to a process and eventually a contextual encasement, Contemporary Art or, more materialistic speaking, the visual arts produced in our time of existence, have addressed spatiality the physical awareness of space-time, the length of movement and stillness, and the problems and contingencies of belonging and estrangement, of permanence and isolation, of placement and displacement.

And by different paths artists have reached the doorstep of architecture. So, today, many artists can be related to the concept of “illegal architect” proposed by Jonathan Hill (2003: 135), a somewhat by-product of the kind of conscious/creative user and doer that Henri Lefebvre was probably discussing when he claimed in his spatial triad (Lefebvre, 1972: 154-155; 1991: 33) the need to reinvent the duality citizenship-urban space beyond vertical decision-making and the social readymade, and the need to go beyond the representation of space into developing space as a topology of practices and representations.

Why have the problems of dwelling, urban living and built environment become intrinsic to a significant part of artistic production nowadays? And again, what leads so many artists to use space as their medium? And here this practice doesn't only point towards the now mandatory white cube, the self-indulgent, abstract and depleted whiteness of exhibition space, but lived, used, transformed, grounded, geographical, and political (here in the broader sense of *polis*, of rooting and convergence) space.

I would put forward as probable cause the fact that for a variety of artistic endeavors Architecture, both as a professional activity and an historical reality, works as a life mediator and lever, a purveyor of power and as such it has become a far-reaching image of power. In general, artists speak of Architecture as a strong depiction of civilization and for many it is not just the vessel that carries the meanings and dialectics of Civilization as a memory bank but the Being itself: Human condition expressed in its totality. Malevitch, for one, foresaw back in 1923 as his ‘blind’ Architektons and Planitas shapes were being developed, that Architecture had an overall social horizon that the remaining visual arts were yet far from achieving; Architecture became for modernist artists and still remains for contemporary artists the place where extremes like a philosophical speculation or a childhood memory, institution and encampment, live their days in a built humanized environment, in a *maison close* with transparent walls or walls of images (Colomina, 1992: 126-128; 2006: 22).

Built environment mimics the properties of the cultural time of its development and in some way it works as a strong oxymoronic image where ideology never fades out; sometimes it answers and to others it asks to whom does the world belong to, who is master and who is servant, who decides and who obeys. A building besides being an autonomous object (aesthetics, durability and efficiency in real time action) is also evidence to a number of features such as:

- a) the class-oriented possession and use of space with its subsequent economic and political ranking and zoning,
- b) the perception of lived space (public and private) as a medium originated by repetition and agitation inside power dynamics,
- c) the unconscious, deterministic or antagonistic accounts of space that describe it as an anthropomorphic and gregarious concept, and
- d) the behavioral response expected from built form (function inferred as a finality or form becoming redundant and scaling down the need for a one-way body of purposes).

We could paraphrase Baudelaire argument that architecture is a mnemotechnic of the human, of its complexities and contradictions, as much as Art still prevails as a

mnemotechnic of Beauty (Baudelaire, 1976: 290; see also Foster 2002: 67, 71). Modernism in the visual arts as well as in architecture became a process where this return, this memory practice (buildings becoming subtexts in the life of other buildings), was intensified by displaying the gains and losses of industrialization and of Taylorism (turning sometimes what was flat and dull into something significant, essential). This technique of remembrance happened by both fetishizing and refusing progress in the same creative act, by overdetermining or by rejecting the primal scene, the natural instincts, and the ‘carnality’ of the individual in favor of the visual vibrations of mass culture (the savage mind exposed to the billboard and the commuter timetable) by re-dimensioning objects as living things and making machines and artificial environments gain an antropogenetic core needed and celebrated as conveyors of a new barbarism.

Today we look at the twentieth century modern built space as a dialectics between form and experience; a course that maintained a productive relationship with its high and low anthropological achievements. The development of a more-than-natural *modus vivendi* embodied by the Americanization of urban life, the reification of human work as self-control and assembly line obedience, is also observed in the shelves of the drugstore or in the arm’s length of the *Frankfurt kuchen*, the separation between workplace and dwelling so dear to modernists (whether positioned in the arts or in architecture) and the overlapping of countryside by suburbia – all these facts exist as collateral, sometimes unexpected and others planned, traces of routine modern building. One could argue that abstraction (geometry, cosmos, beauty had a savage outcome: serialization. But, on the other hand, the realism that was brought out of the physical and creative design experience of architects established new parallels between what we call life and the ongoing condition of Art. Abstraction, one could argue again, this time in collusion with History, had a Janus-faced productive outcome: the merger of the subjective and the social. So Le Corbusier’s contemplative voyeurism, the outside world looked upon from the window, enhancing a picturesque, dream-like worldview, was also the edge from where subjectiveness was summoned to its correspondences in the social realm. So the four-dimensional synthetic cubism (essence and object narrative), despite being projected into space-time entropy and into the panoptics of the workplace, was given the chance to turn the beholder, the user, into a disbeliever, to encourage a misfit eye towards the accepted, the naturalized. Translucency, playing hide and seek with the empty and the full of new buildings, exposed the cultural and economic crossroads between property and privacy: gentrified possession (of the world, of identity, of legitimacy) is far more complicated to dislodge when a closed door becomes a screen. The androcentric vision of the bourgeois home as experienced in the photogenic observatory of Le Corbusier’s Villas or in the “internal” Domum Theatrum of Adolf Loos (Colomina, 1992: 80) or even in the Farnsworth “skin and bones” aquarium works as a strong reminder of a gender (and also racial and cultural) unconscious in the process of space-making. Space is a human object; the functionalization of the street as space of speed and production, or in antithesis, a space of chance and unproductive actions, as modernist accounts so many times sanctioned and also vilified, actually relates in the mileage of its scarcity and abundance (the synchronism of cash corners and retail strips) to the impoverishment of public space as a democratic tool and to the ever (but not inevitable) dominant entente between state bureaucracy and property.

Architecture acquired greater significance as a dynamic stage from where many contemporary artists question the conditions of material existence and creatively transcend the fragmentation of everyday experience from within. Architecture became a spiritual subject, a built ‘discourse’ of how art occupies and fills community life through image and theatrics, through productiveness and leisure environment. It has also become a target because, as

viewers, dwellers and users, artists have appropriated the subject of spatial organization and spatial practices, so architecture became sighted as a short-lived form shaped by space-time and shaping it (shaping the multitude of perceptions, shortcutting the distance between subject and object) through the metabolism of place (of former life, of lived experience and memory). Clearly, for artists, this paper will argue, Architecture became raw material and poetics, worldview and incompleteness.

Focusing on this theme, I will address a group of specific artworks produced by North American artist Gordon Matta-Clark, (b.1943-d.1978), *Conical Intersect or Etant donné pour locataire* (Paris, 1975), and Portuguese/South African artist Ângela Ferreira, *Khayelitsha* (1991) and *Maison tropicale* (2007). These artworks provide the material evidence to argue that advanced Art can confront in the public sphere the role performed by Western aesthetics, class differentiation, serialization, property laws and bureaucracy in the making of our lived environment without falling into *agit-prop* rhetoric or into the realm of congratulatory marketing and ornamental passiveness.

### Case Study no. 1: Gordon Matta Clark: “you have to walk...” or the gymnastic realism of the cutting edge

The metapsychology of Gordon Matta-Clark’s art was to embrace the abandoned. He worked in old buildings, neighborhoods in a state of rejection. He would nurture a building that had lost his soul.”

Les Levine

Gordon Matta-Clark (1943-1978) was a North American artist best known for his performative and surgical subtraction of space on condemned buildings. A “mezzy minimalist”, as John Baldessari would call him, a fearless character of an unofficial “Urban agit-prop”, as described later in a 1985 article by artist Dan Graham.

An artist, I should point out, whose primary artifacts no longer exist. In her monographic study, Pamela M. Lee (2000) defines Gordon’s (henceforth referred to as G.M-C) artistic rationale as a “mode of production (...) bound up with the work’s destruction” (Lee, 2000: xiii), yet she separates the sacrificial finality of G.M-C autopsy cuts on buildings that could never grow old, from the demolition culture associated with the violent will power of real estate economics. The anthropological and non-productive negativity play that he developed (construction/destruction as a process of creating phenomenological ‘room’ [*raum*] out of the alienation of urban fabric) was in a clearly opposite path than the negativity played by the capitalistic processes of space alienation by time. He was not ‘talking’ about the collapse stage of a dead building (actually none of his cuttings triggered any *tabula rasa*). In fact, the process was more unclear since his interventions had simultaneous foresights: from one perspective, observers could relate the space appropriation/alteration to resuscitation, a rebreathing that allowed the buildings of his “enactments” to endure beyond any mournful stillness, beyond even the daily routine of transience and concealment. From another perspective, G.M-C played within the limits of construction and deconstruction. From his fieldwork, sawing, cutting, extracting, removing, and opening, he made an experience on the idea of *irreversibility*: looking at the exact moment when built becomes unbuilt, such as Robert Smithson had done with his *Partially Buried Woodshed* (Kent, Ohio, January 1970),

questioning the built object as an absolute and exposing its unfinished and metabolic materiality.

The “*ruinments*” (G.M-C own wordplay) were a five years’ enduring experience, the physical expression of a perseverant and self-reliant force of nature; his building cuts experience was full of ups and downs, of misinterpretations; it started with *Bronx Floors* (1973), went through his work manifesto *Splitting* (1974), and finally ended with the *Circus or the Caribbean Orange* (1978) project, which was interrupted by his premature death with pancreatic cancer.

Yet his provoking and sometimes poorly understood sculptural statements are intertwined with many other features; he was an activist of a neighborly and communal use of the city, he strongly advocated and practiced – and this is a focus point that relates to this symposium – the concept of *a city for all made by all*. He was deeply involved in the gathering and consolidation of an alternative artistic community, an open and progressive perception and praxis surrounding the link between citizenship and urban belonging. *Civitas Augences* (the city as a productive magnet for a plurality of beings) and multitask social interactions were the melting pot of many of his collaborations, such as the Food artist-run canteen (1971-73); the 112 Greene Street gallery project; the Anarchitecture loosely organized group (1973-74) casted by Suzanne Harris, Richard Landry, Tina Girouard, Jene Highstein, Richard Nonas and many others; his *Fresh Air Cart project* (1972); or his abstruse acquisition of small and impossible to build parcels of land in New York City, Queens boroughs, which he would call *Reality Properties: Fake Projects* (1974).

The wordplay *Anarchitecture* is somewhat metaphorical of Architecture double bind as Art (space as object) and ‘place-making’ (space as time and history). Through aesthetics, i.e., photogene and appearance, architecture keeps out the context of social demise and reification but as place making, it uncovers the rejected, the hidden, it becomes memory. Anarchitecture is the hidden and collateral damages of humanized environment becoming architectural and anedoctical surrogates: the disintegrative, the annihilation, the entropic, the overpowering of commodity, the “cosmogonic intranscendency of human creations, the surmounting path of disorder and fragmentation by accumulation”.

His interest on space and specifically built and structured space relates also to the fact that he was a trained architect formed at Cornell, “this prison on the hill” as he would describe it early on his staying (Papapetros, 2007: 72). He studied during Colin Rowe’s tenure (which spanned between 1962, G.M-C’s freshman year, and 1990), a controversial and prolific academic period when Cornell’s architectural teaching became known as *Académie Corbu* since Rowe’s allegiance to scoping Le Corbusier as an historical continuity of classical architecture was such that he would picture him as the modernist version of Palladio.

G.M-C’s slow path to architecture, however, was not a child dream coming true but a crossroads and shared decision with his father. His perseverance on the course was somewhat guided by extrinsic influences and G.M-C’s remorseful feeling that people expected some kind of success from him (Papapetros, 2007: 71). His father’s insistence, in a decisive letter where he insisted on the idea that “nowhere” could also be read as “now here”, and that the sense of loss and disenchantment of G.M-C could be corrected by a cognitive and conscious positioning – you don’t know where you’re going but you know where you stand, know what you’re capable of doing, know your dislikes and fears; so architecture was not a passion but just space-time positioning, a *know who you are* but make sure you get a degree.

As a student between 1962-1968 (with an one year interruption in 1964) Gordon Matta-Clark was probably exposed to the paradigm of abstract functionalism (as well as its many nemeses, namely Rowe’s interest on nineteenth century Eclecticism and on more aesthetically

attentive and pluralist architectural production), which enticed the logocentric and isotropic zonification of town and the critique of the *flâneur* and of the unproductive roaming streetscape. He probably heard also about the Athens charter, the modern architecture manifesto, where the separation between car and walker became paramount to any possible human development; and where autopia, Fordism, *horizontal and vertical suburbia*, formal austerity – in which form tracked everything but itself – and open space were viewed as a new form of panoptics, a new way of looking inwards and outwards which had a cubist and Bentham utilitarianism descent; a new way of keeping a vigilant eye on the neighbor, on the co-worker; a new form of self-censorship. All these factors were in motion in many of the new landmarks being built in the New York area; surely in the curricula lectures he would hear about the modern house concept, how structural lightness, window spanning and unity between detail and totality made living spaces more alive and more livable. And he himself, a child of the 1950s, would include in that porosity and transparency a new window and *omnibus* set, the television. Probably he heard ambiguous accounts about how wrong, outdated, slow and autophagic historical towns were becoming (How did he relate that to his New York hometown ups and downs under Robert Moses? Or, later on, how did he react to Lower Manhattan passing into the realm of the omnibus and monumental WTC?) and how the inner city, the old urban settlement, was in urgent need of being saved from real estate developers and “routine-functionalists”. The year 1964, the year he spent away from Cornell, was also a special year at the MoMA as Bernard Rudofsky would curate an exhibition of vernacular and non-Western built architecture which was named *Architecture Without Architects* – was G.M-C a visitor? If so, what were the impacts and the questioning it enhanced on him about modern building design and the role of popular culture in the production of space? Could it be that, like Derain and Picasso in Trocadéro back in 1908 marveled at African plasticity and visual force, he wondered if these were not the real processes of place-making?

He probably got some early sound bites on contextualism, collage, and was aware of dissent and discrepancies within the C.I.A.M’s participants and a sense of incompleteness and disagreement between paper and reality focused by some of Rowe’s critique on modernist urban fabric – although G.M-C described in a 1976 interview with Donald Wall, Rowe’s pedagogical philosophy as a kind of priesthood (Papapetros, 2007: 72). He could also sense on the drawing board the dilatory distance between creative design and corporate decision-making (Buckminster Fuller would deplore this commodification of the architect as early as 1968); this can work as an hypothesis of the conceptual and agonistic cloud where his schooling was produced (Owens, 2007: 163-173).

Can we exclude from his future work the heterodox indoctrination of his early academic years? Dissent is a word we come about when we learn that the partial and surgical disembodiment of dead buildings was performed by someone who was trained to construct, to organize space, to assemble things together in a coherent and performative way so culture, economics and family could continue their own achievements beyond alteration – and we now know that all breaking apart in modernism was produced by someone who used to be a believer and an expert or still was one in an unconscious way. From Picasso’s *Les Femmes d’Alger* (1907) to Constant’s *New Babylon* (1953-1974), whether the crisis of depicted reality or that of urban form and the way humans live, the prevailing fact is that authors were less interested in the future and much more interested in relearning the past so they could adjust and correct the inner contradictions of the present.

So here we refer to dissent in an ontological sense, a mix and match between praxis and poetics, as Gordon Matta-Clark’s operations were very much related to primordial concepts of



human space: he drilled, excavated, expunged, subtracted, cut, dismantled but also filled in, occupied the thingness of an artificial resource in the same way that early human communities would explore and transform the topography and mimic nature so that they could stay and survive.

Gordon took the urban building in the same way a mountain, a landscape or even a climate disability was addressed creatively by nomadic or enduring communities; the boiling fact was that for a late twentieth century nomad, the real lived landscape was the urban space, the city, its interstices and hideouts, its passageways and unplanned playgrounds, its anonymous, filled or emptied, spaces. This late modern New Yorker Amphyon didn't need to build from scratch so he decided to display the already built – a mixture of bio-constructivism (the volumetric imitation of nature's erosion and depletion processes; change as slow disappearance) and readymade (as found object and recontextualization) can be detected here.

We should also consider another biographical element, already somewhat referred; i.e., a few facts that might us help understand G.M-C's critical stance before the "storm of progress". He was the son of Chilean surrealist painter and former architect Roberto Matta-Echaurren; he was nested in the exiled and nonconformist surrealist New York community, he knew people like Duchamp (his godfather), Kiesler, Breton and many other agents of surrealism, not just from the bookshelves or museum and gallery walls but from real live experiences.

For surrealism, building is a poetical metabolic exploration of the organic and the inorganic. The city (*la ville*), the aggregate of buildings and streets, is esteemed as an disjunctive *cadavre-exquis*; it is from this discontinuous corpse produced by estranged authors, from this mixture of brothel and communion mess, as Baudelaire would put it, that planners and bureaucrats like hasty housewives try to break away by "correcting" and "cleaning" out the ever pervading dust and inadequacies of real indeterminate and unproductive forms of life and of space occupation, by imposing "quantitative spatial practices" (Stone-Richards, 2005: 256). Yet the city is, above all, the place where those who conceive life as a far from imaginary caesura of conventionality are active and approachable.

Surrealist novels like Louis Aragon's *Le Paysan de Paris* (1926) or André Breton's *Nadja* (1928) explore the "undoing of space (*dessaisissement*)" (Stone-Richards, 2005: 256) as an effective mean to experience place through the symbolic and iconographic deciphering of chartered and organized space, specifically through the erotic collage of dream into the urban fabric.

There is also in G.M-C's artistic attitude a Baudelairian grip closed in to the surrealist valorization of the outmoded as raw artistic material. Baudelaire was a disbeliever of the idea of progress. He sensed that modernity was a collusion of two storms: permanence and novelty, playing and struggling in an uneven game. Change existed and dwelled in a world covered by conventions and traditions; everything new had to become and come from an environment of things and ideas already made. It was just a question of inverting or adjusting the paradigms: marrying love with carnality, *Aufklärung* and bourgeois ideals with Satanism, family with Sapphic love. It was just a question of looking into the glamourized picture of modernity for what was mutant and altered, for what did not react to the aesthetics of progress.

G.M-C's building cuts are reflexive captions of this physical and material sense of disorder; his works also nurture an informal (a calculated absence of form) and an anthropological perception of urban isolation, voyeurism and physical bareness in the space-time conjuncture of late modernity. No longer seen as an absolute entity, space becomes unclear. Like the double-faced cubist portrait where wholeness is displaced (Mertins, 2011:

51), G.M-C's cuts turn the wholeness of built fabric into a multifaceted open yet illegible construct.

This can be seized in the twofold experience of his 1975 Parisian intervention, *Conical Intersect or Ettant donné pour locataire*. Production and reception, the making of and the concrete experience of his project showed how ruin, entropy as built form, can reach new meanings, i.e., "remain alive" through creative and intelligent artistic interventions, but it also showed the contextual limits of these interventions.

In a counter-clockwise almost agonistic rhythm and depending mainly on his workforce and traditional construction tools, G.M-C produced a conical and ocular centric concavity; this was done in a tight schedule between September 24 and October 10, 1975. However, unlike his previous New York cuttings, in particular the Day's end (Pier 52) "indoor water park" experience (as he called it) which forced G.M-C to elope to Europe to avoid some serious legal problems with the New York Port Authority, this extraction was done within the law but not without some backdrops (initially G.M-C proposed a radical intervention in the then-already-iconoclastic building site of the CNAM – the Beaubourg project designed by Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers). *Conical Intersect* appeared as a clearly identified and legitimized artistic contribution to the French Biennale. However, he was not aware of the past life of plateau Beaubourg and how local passersby, preserved from the glories and mundane credits of advanced art research, saw his conical excision as a metaphor of the enduring gentrification and modernization of the Halles and the 4th arrondissement. The hole that could be seen opening and exposing the inner and secluded parts of the building (architectural volume no longer working or existing as a shell to be filled with closed rooms but as the "dematerialization of all solid traces" dividing what is hidden from what is visible, an unheimlich reading of *Le Plan libre* [Free plan] and *La Facade libre* [Free façade], Le Corbusier's spatial concepts originally voiced in a brochure edited for the 1927 Stuttgart Weissenhoff housing show) reminded viewers of the famous *Trou des Halles*, the lunar landscape produced by the demolition of the Halles Market and Slaughterhouse and its neighboring working class dwellings and low-income retail shops (see Lee, 2000: 185-197).

In his re-scaling and deliberate extracting of significant tectonic parts of two anonymous seventeenth-century bourgeois households waiting a definite and compulsory demolition, G.M-C enhanced a hidden problem for theoretical voyeurs and short-time users of the Parisian background: its governing powers were still exerting the commodification and aesthetization of space initially inaugurated by Baron Haussman, the controversial 'partisan and designer' of Napoleon III urban renewal.

So the discourse of the historical city as a 'lost paradise' enters the neo-cubist abstract empire of the inorganic and the immaterial and one cannot avoid observing that this path turns the conical figure into a visual counterpart of Louis Aragon's 1928 *Le Paysan de Paris*, his poetical-journalistic-symbolic inquiry to another condemned Parisian urban environment, *Le Passage de L'opera*.

G.M-C addresses in a different and intricate tactic the figure-ground spatial relation developed by Western visual arts, in particular, by cubist and post-cubist pictorial forms (Crow, 2003: 113-114). In a sense, this absent three-dimensional geometrical figure, *Conical Intersect*, metaphorically indicated by secondary images (the cuts) puts in evidence and showcases in a inwards-outwards dynamic the decisive factors behind the social production of the modern urban environment: as *figure*, the houses explore the eyewitness-voyeuristical nature of the baudelairian flaneur; as *ground*, Le trou des Halles stands for amnesia, non-image, mass extinction and mass production, in short, the context becomes a noun, a moving and talking picture, or, as Louis Aragon would put it, a "moving tattoo". *Conical Intersect* can

also be read as an unexpected *social condenser* (a term coined in 1928 by Soviet architect Mozei Ginzburg) that frames in the artistic event, the social complications of urban renewal and the communicational limits of public art objects and pure visuality.

## Case study no. 2: Angela Ferreira's spatial metaphors

Unlike Gordon Matta-Clark, Portuguese-Mozambican-South African artist Ângela Ferreira (b.1958), whose art works have been a recurrent presence in my research (Pousada, 2009; Pousada, 2011), doesn't have academic training on architecture. Yet we can clearly scope in many of her works, such as *J.J.P.Oud/Two Houses* (2001) and *Maison Tropicale* (2007), a critical and imaginative approach to the retroactive effects of modernist architecture in the sense that she sets them within our contemporary perception and interaction with urban space's rhetoric: oppression, obedience, cooperation, submission, dissent, contradiction and upsurge can embody built forms and have a dynamic purpose in the metabolic processes of urban space.

Angela Ferreira's artwork reassesses how contemporary sculpture can mediate/deal with *subjectivity* (in her specific case, the critical perception of the readymade speech that envelops modern architecture as an impossible narrative; her own questioning of the crustaceous and die-hard aspects of colonial ideology, Lusophonia, in the making of Portuguese modern identity and its unconcealed present existence) and *narrative* (storytelling about an object [her parents' house in Mozambique] a community, even about the demise of a community self or the suppression of memory – African of European origin and their diaspora) without becoming a surrogate.

She's been an attentive outsider focusing on European modernism tensions and unresolved polarities. One recent example of her "factography" on the casting of lived space between utopia and historical context is her *Maison Tropicale* (2007) project. As in other previous experiences (*J.J.P. Oud/Two houses*, Oporto-Rotterdam, 2001), she takes as material base to her work the misadventures of an architectonic object; in this particular case, the nomadism *fin de siècle* of three replicas of a one-family prototype dwelling developed by the talented master of pre-fabricated constructions Jean Prouvé (*Maisons Portiques*, Issoire, 1939-40; *Maison Standard*, Meudon, 1949-50) and his brother Henri Prouvé. These replicas were designed to be sited in tropical and subtropical regions still under French colonial administration, respectively in Niamey, the capital of Niger, and in Brazzaville, Congo's capital. Mechanical construction (an operational relation between static frameworks and climate control), transport logistics (the *maisons* were fabricated in France and travelled by flight to Africa) and business opportunity (to promote the French metallurgical industry of aluminum) were defining vectors of this architectural project but, in the long-run, post-colonial Niger and Congo saw the decay and engulfment of these high-tech structures. They became ghosts of a modern past where the words uttered in 1931 at the first French congress on colonial urbanism by Albert Sarraut, "(...) for now on the



Ângela Ferreira, *Maison tropicale*, 2007. The neo-cubist framed corridor (details); a video still showcasing one of Prouvé's Prototypes standing in New York. Photographs taken by the paper author at the 2008 Angela's exhibition *Hard Rain Show* in Berardo Museum, Lisbon.

European building will be supported by colonial pilotis!” (functionalism adapted to passive tropics) never came around. Migration flow and speculative rescue, Judith Rodenbeck calls it neocolonial repatriation (Rodenbeck, 2010: 108), by a French businessman excised these buildings from their ruinous post-mortem reality and turned them into real estate super-valued trophies, exhibited in the Seine and Hudson riverbanks, as newly found archeological artifacts of an unfinished and outmoded dream: the modernist architectural dream.

Her creative answer to this event was an art project originally exhibited at the 2007 Venice Biennial which embraced two sections: the first had an anthropological reading developed through the audiovisual and photographic material that Ângela Ferreira produced during her visit to the Prouvé’s prototypes original backgrounds. In this travel and inquiry she was accompanied by filmmaker Manthia Diawara, who directed a small documentary disclosing in their promenade on architectural absence and everyday routine on the historical and spatial epilogues of the estranged buildings. Finally, this research materialized into an object with neocubist vibrations, the corridor/container (see Figures 1, 2, and 3). It’s with this object that Ângela Ferreira poetically represents the thingness of the *maisons tropicales*, disassembled and numb, resting, waiting to become a conceptual baiting on the relation between truth and power, authenticity and disguise, memory and commodity. In many of her works, it has become evident how advanced architectural design and artistic achievement have accommodated, willfully or unconsciously, urban planning politics, becoming not only aesthetic recipients where ideology finds its way but a far-from-dispassionate partner in the top-down decision making concerning the routines of space and the serialization of intimacy and privacy.

Far from finger pointing as an armchair general the wrongdoings – the “you asked for it” of modernist idealism – what one infers from her “visual analogies” is a productive questioning of the *a priori* concept of “architectural autonomy”. She posits a valid disbelief on the conceptualization of architecture as a thing in itself, as something that intensifies and persists in a closed territory (the architectural form and its variations and mutations). She reviews a contradiction already detected and debated by the twentieth century historiography on modern architecture. From Manfredo Tafuri to Beatriz Colomina, the historical accounts consent that the new ways of living dreamt, designed and built by Adolf Loos, J.J.P. Oud, Walter Gropius, Richard Neutra, Le Corbusier, Bruno Taut, Ernst May, and Mies Van der Rohe, new ways thought as facilitators of historical change, thought to overcome the separation between living space and working space, and the millenary opposition between town and countryside, provided instead a space-time ground for the naturalization of bureaucratic and economic reification, social control and social isolation, colonialism and, in nowadays post-Fordist societies, gentrification as a role model for urbanscaping. She does that review in the context of her own positioning as an artist born in a former European colony (Mozambique) where modern spatialization lived next door to non-Western modes of space production and where the modern built environment was the public image of colonialism. The fact that she lived and studied in South Africa during the last years of the Apartheid regime is also a significant fact, as will be shown as *Khayelitsha-sites and services* (1991-1992) and the *Werdmuller Centre-Studio version* (2010) are discussed.



Ângela Ferreira, *Sites and services*, pictures taken by the artist in Khayelitsha, Capetown, S.A. 1991-92. Photographs taken by the paper author at the 2008 Ângela’s exhibition Hard Rain Show in Berardo Museum, Lisbon.

Her originality has a double nature: The first one is the way she short-circuits the borderline between architectural spatialization and non-architectural/artistic spatialization by producing objects that work as material and iconographic interpretations of the after-effects, whether haptic, cultural or anthropological, of space design and space decision-making. Her work is a clear-cut example of Robert Smithson's Non site concept: "A metaphor (deprived of any expressive or naturalistic subjects) between a syntactic construct and a composite of ideas" (Smithson, 1996: 295).

The second one is the way she relates modernist built form with her own autobiographical perception of urban life as a fragmented and erratic hide and seek game between property laws, racial laws, post-colonial trauma, productive citizens, and creative use of space, family memories and unfinished identity. Two significant references, Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, rise up in her art works in the way she weaves phenomenological transparency and its neo-plasticist genealogy (*Duas Casas/Two houses*, J.J.P. Oud, 2001), modern space as the kinetics between inside and outside (*Random walk*, 2005) and "skin and bones" pragmatism (*Khayelitsha, sites and services*, 1991-1992 [see Figures 4, 5 and 6]; and *Maison Tropicale*, 2007).

Yet they appear not just as decisive references for the ideological contextualization of European utopian design thinking inside her artistic work, but as supporting actors for her specific study on how built form relates to the dispossession of individual autonomy in community dialectics (her own account as a living witness of the post-colonial endeavors of African Europeans, specifically Portuguese migration to South African Apartheid in the mid-1970s). Mies and Le Corbusier, as well as Donald Judd and Anthony Caro, provide her with a "clean drawn (...), clean countoured (...) Good Design" (Greenberg, 1995: 180, 184) apparatus, with the formal surplus that she fills in with a serious questioning of how patriarchal and parochial visions of life framework and hands tie the way we relate emotionally and mnemonically with built space and already non-existent space. In short, how material emancipation is alienated from spiritual emancipation.

*Khayelitsha-sites and services* (1991-1992) and *Werdmuller Centre-Studio version* (2010) are two of her art projects/works with interesting features to be addressed in the context of this discussion. They both relate to the same urban spatiality, Cape Town, South Africa, and to a gentrified reading of space where architectural content and altered, unpredictable human context were treated as separate constructions. Both urban placements were originally designed as immobile objects, iced images.

*Khayelitsha-sites and services* refers to a particular place in the space-time continuum: the abstraction/gestalt of functionalist/Fordist urban planning migrating into a real space based on the political economy of Apartheid and the prescribed urban movements and dwelling logistics of its racist Group Areas Act. The almost formless planar field seen in Figures 4, 5, and 6 is located in the township suburban rings of Cape Town, South Africa (on Google Earth we can still perceive the grid behind the Babelic occupation of the Township). The word itself comes from Xhosa and it means "new home". This designation underscores, in the Group Areas Act political context, such concepts as segregation, pass books, limited urban circulation for non-white, curfew, displacement, forced removal, tribalization of the non-white education system, racist leveling of the non-white curriculae and criminalization of non-white working skills. The area was originally built and prepared in 1985, in the western outskirts of Cape Town, which was then one of the most segregated cities of South Africa. Its main function was to redirect through compulsory measures the Xhosa migration into Cape Town. The area was provided with a rudimentary water supply infrastructure and with some sanitary facilities localized at strategic points. In 1991, Khayelitsha stood in the pictures

depicted by Ângela Ferreira as an empty, stilled territory; nowadays, it stands as one of the fastest growing and poorest suburbs of Capetown, with almost half a million residents.

Khayelitsha's monosemic and low-cost industrial-built materiality became an object-subject with a dualist presentation: a group of documental photography, laconic, reduced to a post-human, austere and anti-narrative perception, and small-scale, portable and composed three-dimensional built objects.

This sculpture experience offers a set of visual impressions that recall the codes of Donald Judd's *Specific objects* (1967-1968), yet we should not fall into hasty conclusions: in the small floor objects there is clearly a reasoning between Khayelitsha as place, as a discernable social reality, and Khayelitsha as pure physicality, as a built, unconscious and unexpected statement. It is the latter which Judd reiterates in his seminal text (Judd, 2005: 184-187) about the thingness of the built artistic object and where he challenges the otherness, the subordinative content locked in European modernism. This concreteness and behavioral response to the phenomenological and syntactic features of the artistic object become primary outlines.

The next of Ângela's intervention/assertion, a rotating scale model, a kind of metaphor on space-time, concerns a retail and office building, *The Werdmuller Centre* (1969-76) designed by South African modern architect Roelof Uytendogaardt (b.1933-d.1998) and bounded by a different part of the same urban environment where the Khayelitsha "ready-made" gridded township surface was raised. Both structures are legacies of the Group Areas act which was launched in full power over the Cape Town metropolitan area in the initial years of the shopping center opening. One, Khayelitsha, is a consented legacy of Apartheid and the other, The Werdmuller Centre is an unplanned damaged victim. This paper's thinking is also construed from the video recording of Ângela's contribution for the international panel discussion at Tate Modern, "After Post-colonialism. Transnationalism or Essentialism?" (Tate Modern, London, 08.05.2010).

The building is sited in Claremont Main road and has been for many years a love and hate story ranging from a 'non-functional, doesn't get out of the way, icon' to a 'piece of activism, a moment in world history where sculptural design embraces the aspiration of a democratic South Africa'. A failed retail project motivated, some would argue, by design problems (poor space and logistics management for would-be shoppers) and by periods of commercial decline and slow, this was a hulking development that turned this Cape Town area from a middle-class retail strip into an informal commercial center mainly targeting the low-income commuters of the Claremont railway station. Communications project manager Carole Koblitz (Tolly, Haikman and Berman, 2007: 6) describes the Claremont Main road as a "San Andreas fault separating success from economic disaster".

The programmatic objectives of Uytendogaardt's architectural thinking had a clear Le Corbusier fingerprint best exerted by his famous five points conceptualization of modern architecture (pilotis, free façade, free plan, horizontal ribbon windows, terrace garden). *The Werdmuller Centre* (1969-76) was supposed to work as an inclusive non-segregated space whose ambiguous relation with street life, which was expected to persist into the building's inland, and labyrinth interior organization were supposed to work as catalysts to this objective. Yet many point out the difficult, uneasiness physical experience of walking through

a shopping center with loads of dark, damp crannies and dead ends”.<sup>5</sup> The historical architectural context surrounding the building had also suffered what experts describe as “tooth gapping” with the demise of the original colonial colonnade architecture.

The Werdmuller Centre won Ângela’s interest and curiosity as an art theme probably because, as in many other of her case studies, it was a strong example of how good design, non-referential aesthetics and a self-governing and utopian sense of public space were unable to prevail over the space as commodity culture of post-industrialist space planners, specifically those that under the Apartheid regime defined, for years to come, the timeline of urban accumulation and demographics for that specific Cape Town environment. The sense of an anticipated yet long-run ruin was probably a defining factor. Despite the surplus value that the ‘right’ form, the ‘right’ poetical attitude towards space, the ‘right’ playful and anti-bourgeois view of the outside world though striving conceptual properties ‘furnishing’ this building with Bauhausian and Le Corbusier’s stamina, these properties were not tangible in the mass of everyday experience lived by the assorted people using and working in Claremont Main road.

The epilogue of this disability reached a bureaucratic conclusion when in 2007 a Draft Heritage Statement signed by Peter de Toll, Henri Haikman and Andrew Berman recommended an agreement to begin demolition to be granted to the building’s owners. Meanwhile, the architectural community of Cape Town began a struggle to protect it; they claim that the building was condemned from the start, not because of its unpleasant and unfriendly approach to the user’s scale or even the unheimlich behavioral pattern developing between random walk and prescribed movement, erratic disorientation and menu promenade, but because its owners never tried to adapt the building to new and different functions. Function was always an inadequate partner of this structure where city and building, encasement and suppression of privacy, were identity prints. As we look at the photogenic nature of its beautiful multifaceted and sculptural shape, one cannot avoid recalling Constant Nieuwenhuis’ New Babylon Models and ask how communities can deal with memory and preservation of modern architecture without turning this heritage into a passive useless ghost in the understanding and re-making of urban spatial relations, in other words, how to turn them into “social condensers”? When beauty does become a cenotaph culture, i.e., a criterion to protect and extend the life of failed buildings, can we use its holocaust as a guidebook against repetition and entropy?

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