CITIES TO BE TAMED?

Standards and alternatives in the transformation of the urban South

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Abstract Section 2

Characterised by wealth concentration and social polarisation, cities in the South of the world are also typically subject to a dual mode of transformation. On the one side, we assist to the everyday reshaping of the urban environment, spontaneously performed by a number of inhabitants and in most cases referring to long-lasting conceptualisations of space, nature, society; on the other side, governmental institutions display planning discourses – namely visions and programmes – which tend to rely on stereotypical notions of development and sustainability, fixed at the supranational level and often detached from cultural milieus in terms of problem assessments, objectives and solutions.

By whom and for whom are visions conceived? How do global agendas affect local territorial transformation? Can different rationalities converge in setting priorities and excogitating ways to improve the quality of life in urban environments? Can vernacular rules of transformation provide valid alternatives for addressing the challenges posed by contemporary urban growth?

Good Intentions:
The Production of Urban Public Space in eThekwini, South Africa

Theresa Gordon[1]

During apartheid, the public realm was subject to an array of legislation stipulating who could use public space based on race. Post 1994, academics, planners, urban designers and architects have advocated the creation of accessible, memorable urban places in which social and political voices can be heard and in which opportunities for social inclusion could arise. How are these new urban spaces created?

Urban public spaces are not a stand-alone artefact, they are part of the delivery of a range of different urban landscapes, such as the state's large-scale infrastructure projects, township renewal programme, state-subsidised housing projects and the private sectors' creation of gated housing estates, shopping and leisure complexes and office parks.

A tentative typology of new urban landscapes in eThekwini Municipality, South Africa will be outlined, in order to identify the characteristics of these landscapes and the ways in which they contribute to city-building.

Keywords: Public space, Urban realm, Strategic spatial planning, Urban landscapes.

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Introduction

This paper focuses on the production of public urban space in contemporary South Africa in the city of Durban, also known as the eThekwini Municipality. [1] This paper uses as a starting point that public spaces are socially produced, form an integral part of the public realm and contribute to the possibility of a public life.

During the apartheid years, the public realm was subject to an array of legislation stipulating who - based on race - could use public space. The impact of social segregation and modernist land use zoning that shaped eThekwini during the apartheid years is prevalent. Post 1994, the South African Constitution (1996) sets the framework for a public life based on citizenship, respecting diversity and promoting tolerance. Given that urban public spaces are socially constructed, both as a physical product and through socially negotiated interactions, how then are urban public spaces conceptualised in policy and implemented on the ground in post 1994 South Africa?

The macro-scale policy approach to city-building and spatial planning, in particular, in South Africa is dominated by the compact city approach; the reality of what happens on the ground is much more messy and contradictory. In order to consider the nature of production of urban public spaces within its context of a wide range of city-building events, a typology of new urban landscapes is outlined and the production of the urban realm discussed in relation to the metropolitan Municipality of eThekwini.

Strategic spatial planning in South Africa

The morphology of South African cities has been shaped by the apartheid policies of the National Party government, in power from 1948 to 1994, and the application of imported modernist town planning principles (Dewar 2000). The racially-based segregation policies dovetailed with modernist planning notions of city-building: a central business district consisting of government operations, commerce and services surrounded by suburban areas and connected by a hierarchy of roads based on the primacy of the car, the separation of land uses into mono-functional zones - using buffers such as rivers, railway lines, industrial areas – was deployed through the Group Areas Act (RSA 1966) into racially-based spatial plans.

Apartheid was managed and operationalised through legislation that constrained people's movement and choice of place to live and work based on categories of race. A comprehensive set of laws constrained public life: for example, the allocation and prohibition of the use of social facilities and public transport was based on race. At a micro-scale level, municipal by-laws curtailed social behaviour such as prohibiting the use of pavements by cafes and restaurants for the sale and consumption of alcohol in public places[2.] These legal constraints on public life no longer exist, but the history leaves a strong imprint on the contemporary social production of space.

The compact city approach was posited as an approach to address the ills of the fragmented, segregated and inefficient South African city structure inherited from the apartheid years (Dewar 1984, 2000). Mabin (1995: 193) noted as early as 1995, 'If there is an emerging orthodoxy concerning the necessities of shaping South African cities to match the necessities of the post-modern, post-fordist phase, it is the idea of the compact city.'. The applicability of the compact city model in South Africa has been contested. The

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[1]   The city's geographic place names are Durban and Thekwini/eThekwini; whereas the political boundaries and local authority is referred to as the eThekwini Municipality. For the sake of consistency and brevity, 'eThekwini' will be used.

[2]   Restaurant or cafés are still not allowed by law to serve alcohol on a public pavement in front of their establishment.

cultural and institutional obstacles to implementation in the South African context has been raised, as has the advantages of low density settlement patterns on the urban peripheries which accommodate a range of survivalist strategies (Schoonraad 2000, Todes 2003). Watson (2009) points out that the compact city approach needs more work in consideration of the very different contexts that exist in the South. She points out that Curitiba, a frequently-used exemplar of compact living, has had the advantage of sustained commitment and leadership from the local state and that these characteristics are not prevalent in all large cities of the South (Watson 2009).

In addition to, and overlapping with the above contestation, a substantial body of research has been concerned with the failure of spatial planning in post-apartheid South Africa. These concern the translation into implementation of spatial objectives and to direct market trends (Watson 2002, Todes 2008, Harrison, Todes and Watson 2008), the persistence of urban sprawl and the implications thereof (Dewar 2000, Breetzke 2009) and the withdrawal of the well-heeled into the exclusionary spaces of gated communities (Ballard 2005, Lemanski, Landman and Durrington 2008).

At national level the objectives of spatial restructuring is reflected in 'A Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Sustainable Human Settlements' (2004) and 'The National Development Plan Vision for 2030' (National Planning Commission 2011). One of the key objectives of 'A Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Sustainable Human Settlements' is the use of 'housing as an instrument for the development of sustainable human settlements in support of spatial restructuring' (2004: 6). In the 'National Development Plan Vision for 2030', strategic priority is given to large-scale infrastructure projects and to addressing the spatial impacts of the apartheid era. The latter is to be achieved by providing viable public transport, investment and job-creation close to existing dense townships and improving the livability of cities (National Planning Commission 2011).

Notwithstanding these critiques, strategic spatial planning is required from each municipality in South Africa and the concepts that underpin the compact city approach, specifically densification and mixed use corridors, continue to appear in strategic spatial plans. Public realm decisions are impacted upon by the application of these strategies in conjunction with substantial housing and infrastructure challenges, as will be outlined later in this paper.

Urban public space: a theoretical point of departure

South African academics, planners, urban designers and architects have advocated the creation of accessible, memorable urban places in which social and political voices can be heard and in which opportunities for social inclusion could arise (Dewar 2000, Southworth 2003, City of Cape Town 2003, Mammon and Paterson 2005).

Amin (2008) posits that urban pubic space is a site for civitas – for social life, not just as a possible site of interaction between strangers, but as a site for the intersecting dimensions of social life: the signals of how to behave and the materiality of the space in its surfaces, architecture and public art. It has enough flexibility; it can accommodate a level of the unexpected, the chance encounters and the spectacle that is urban life.

Amin argues that the engineering of public space is 'normatively ambivalent and … has a role in shaping of public behaviour or indeed even a sense of the commons' (Amin 2008: 7), but it may or may not achieve this, depending on a whole array of factors. He disagrees with the fear of commodification of public space and argues that this has not 'displaced the inquisitiveness, enchantment and studied regard for others nostalgically reserved for the city of great public exhibitions, flanerie and public deliberation.' (Amin 2008: 7).

The term 'urban public space' may refer to pavements, suburban parks, nature reserves within the city, public squares, mass transport interchange points, pedestrianised roads, waterfront promenades. Urban spaces in which the right of admission could exercised are referred to as privatised urban spaces, for example, shopping malls, art galleries, communal spaces in gated housing estates, casino complexes, foyer spaces in hotels and office complexes.

The term 'urban realm' has wider application. 'The public realm is comprised of, amongst other elements, public facilities, public spaces and institutions that provide venues to address critical issues such as health and healing, education and social development, collectively. It is also the venue for people to congregate and interact outside the confines of their private domains. ' (Mammon and Paterson 2005: 2). In essence, it is the terrain we traverse between our domestic spaces and workplaces, spaces that we travel along or move through, meet in, relax in and where we encounter a broad spectrum of society; this constitutes the context for a public life.

Profile of the eThekwini Municipality

eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality is a port city in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal; it is the largest container port in Africa. It contributes 9% of the total economic output in South Africa. The city is 2297 km² in extent and houses approximately 3.5 million people (eThekwini Municipality 2012a). It is one of nine metropolitan municipalities in South Africa, and is expected to grow mainly through rural-to-urban migration.

In 2009, approximately 53% of the Municipality's working age population were employed; this includes people working in the formal (fourth-fifths) and informal (one-fifth) economic sectors (eThekwini Municipality 2012a). Youth unemployment is a key concern; only one in eight people within the 15 to 24 age group is employed (South African Cities Network 2011: 27). Poverty levels are high; in 2009 '41.8% of eThekwini's population were subject to conditions associated with poverty' (eThekwini Municipality 2012a: 19).

The city faces significant challenges; job creation under conditions of low economic growth, low skills levels and existing high levels of poverty is a key concern. In addition to this, the municipality has identified in its Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for 2012/2013 the following key development challenges: addressing the housing and infrastructural services backlog, containing and managing high crime levels, containing and managing high levels of HIV/AIDs, dealing with environmental issues in order to ensure water quality and food security in the short term and climate change adaptation in the medium to long term, ensuring energy supply, upgrading ageing infrastructure and improving municipal efficiency (eThekwini Municipality 2012a).

Within the framework of the national mandate to deliver developmental local governance (RSA 1998a), the eThekwini Municipality's IDP reflects three approaches to city-building: firstly, the compact city approach; secondly, the competitive cities approach; and thirdly, environmental sustainability. As outlined previously, the compact city approach is reflected in mixed-use corridor planning, densification strategies and the delineation of an urban edge.

The competitive cities approach is clearly visible in the landscape transformations in eThekwini that preceded the World Cup in 2010. Rapid improvements to the urban public spaces were one of the outcomes of the large-scale investments such as the stadia and related transport interchanges. 'Post-2010 Durban hopes to be a successful (s)port city able to host future Olympic, Commonwealth and continental games.' (UN HABITAT 2010: 233). The current IDP is focused on infrastructure logistics, with the focus

on the port and freight relationship with the inland economic core (eThekwini Municipality 2012a) and on capturing the interests of investors and the tourist market.

The city's environmental department has been instrumental in communicating the environmental consequences of the city's current growth trajectory and, more broadly, the anticipated global impacts of climate change. The main environmental spatial plan takes the form of a Durban Metropolitan Open Space System (DMOSS), 75 000 Ha in extent, which focuses on protecting environmentally sensitive areas and biodiversity. This translates into stringent requirements for sub-divisional layouts to incorporate environmental buffers protecting streams, rivers and wetlands.

These three paradigms have had a direct impact on the morphology of the city, the public realm and on the types of urban public spaces that are prioritised or valued in the city.

Policy documents and plans in eThekwini Municipality

The national planning objectives cascade through provincial strategic plans to the municipal level of strategic plans, in the form of the eThekwini Municipality's Integrated Development Plan, which includes a Spatial Development Framework, a suite of sector plans, budgets and performance management requirements (RSA 1998).

In eThekwini, the Spatial Development Framework (eThekwini Municipality 2012b) aims to promote a compact city form through intensifying development along existing 'high accessibility routes and spines', implementing densification strategies in relation to new residential development and in-fill in existing residential areas, as well as limiting and containing the 'urban development footprint' (eThekwini Municipality 2012b: 106). The 'Urban Development Line' indicates the outer line to which urban development will be restricted and aims to 'promote a more convenient, efficient, equitable and sustainable settlement form' (eThekwini Municipality 2012b: 97). However, the political will to support this sustainability- and economically-driven concept is weak. Breetzke (2009) points out that existing bulk infrastructure in the core areas is underutilised, yet developers would much rather develop peripheral green-field sites than inner city brown-field sites. "In many cases the lack of political and senior management support has meant that there has, in many instances, been acquiescence to developers' demands rather than 'standing firm' in support of the SDP' (Breetzke 2009: 13).

The Spatial Development Framework promotes the creation of social facility clusters with shared public spaces in order improve the quality of the urban realm, especially in new housing developments (eThekwini Municipality 2012b). However, planning practitioners in pursuit of the benefits that a social facilities clustering could deliver, have been frustrated by the inability to implement such ideas. The provision of social facilities through line-function provincial and municipal departments with different funding streams, has often resulted in un-coordinated and dispersed location of schools, community halls and clinics (Breetzke 2012).

Explicit statements about urban public space are made in the eThekwini Housing Sector Plan. With reference to the negative impacts of a fragmented low-density morphology, this plan identifies, amongst others issues, 'underused public space, which contributes to security and urban quality issues.' (eThekwini 2012c: 51).

The plan posits that addressing fragmentation and low-density form could achieve spatial integration and an 'Increased probability of cosmopolitanism, diversity of class and diversity of urban form.' (eThekwini 2012c: 51). The plan advocates an increased emphasis on urban design: 'Wherever housing projects contribute to the densification of the city, there is a need to pay attention to urban design issues.

Urban design ought to concentrate on public places, the interface of social facilities with the community, public transport stops and interchanges, and streetscapes.' (eThekwini 2012c: 54). This statement notwithstanding, the densification strategy does not raise the potential impacts of densification, nor the significant role that urban space plays under conditions of intense urban activity.

From a practitioner's perspective, the good intentions that are imbedded in the municipality's plans are laudable but unrealistic in a municipality that struggles to maintain its sprawling urban fabric, bulk infrastructure and passive and active open spaces.

Whilst the goal of spatial restructuring runs clearly through macro-scale planning policy documents, the importance of the public realm and urban spaces is not articulated. Issues pertaining to urban spaces begin to be prioritised at the level of the Spatial Development Framework and at the more detailed sub-metropolitan Spatial Development Plans, albeit in broad terms.
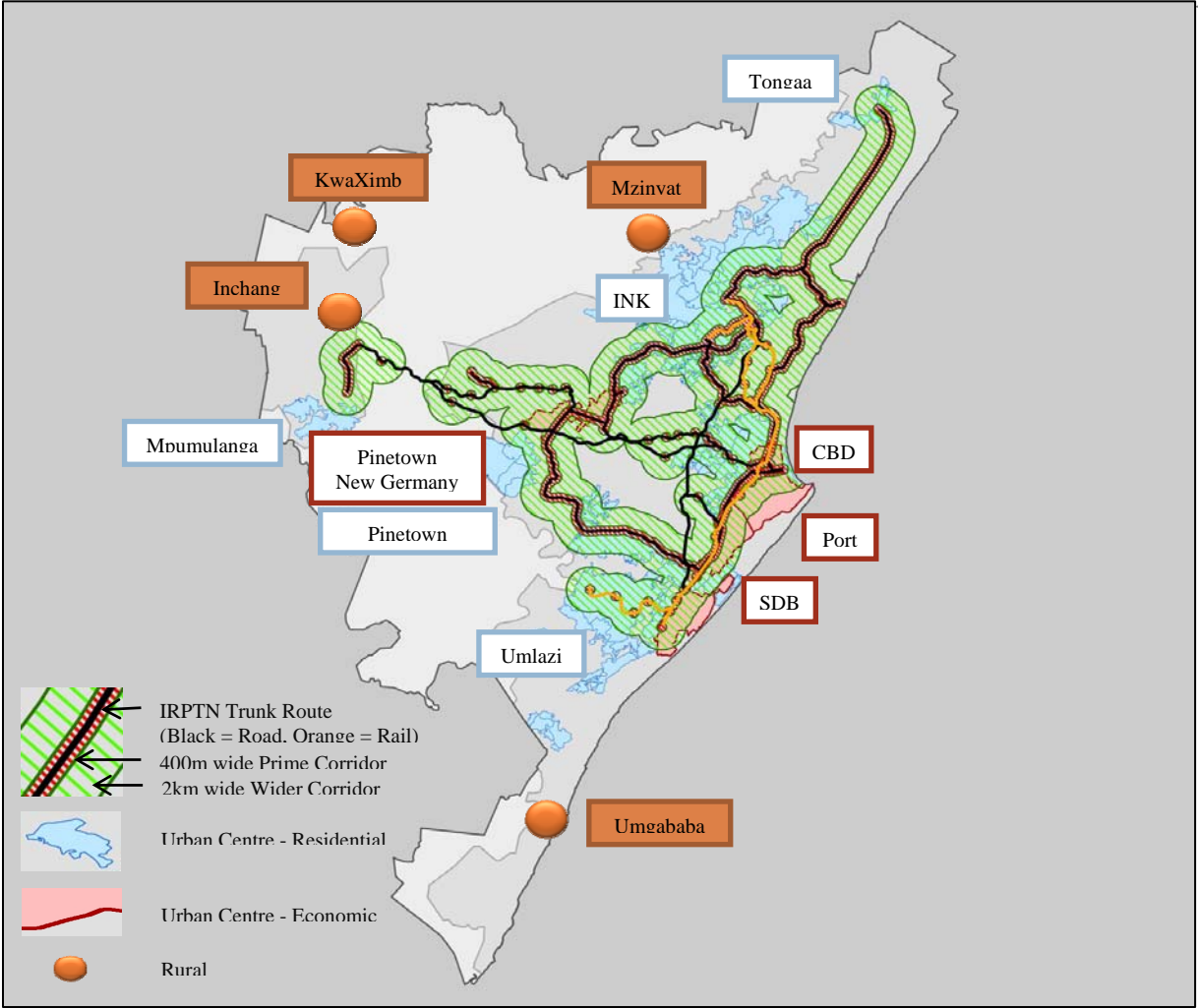

Figure 1. eThekwini metropolitan scale spatial strategies. The plan indicates corridor development in relation to existing nodes. Source: eThekwini Municipality 2012b.

Morphology

The term morphology is used here to denote the form - in intensity, impact, uses and presence - of the different landscapes of the city.

The very hilly topography of hills and sharply incised river valleys contributes to its fragmented spatial form. Two national routes create an inverted T-shape; the N2 connects the coastal settlement of the province, the N3 connects the city with the Gauteng conurbation. Figure 2 illustrates the settlement form in broad terms: the formal settlement is closely aligned to the major routes, which is flanked to the north and south with informal settlement, with dispersed traditional settlement on traditional land tenure beyond.

The city is poly-centric with a pronounced inner city core formed by the Central Business District (CBD), high-rise residential, commercial, retail land uses and higher order services. The inner city includes the beach front, its main tourist attraction, which is adjacent to the port and in close proximity to the extensive Southern Industrial Basin, the location of the bulk of the city's industrial activities.
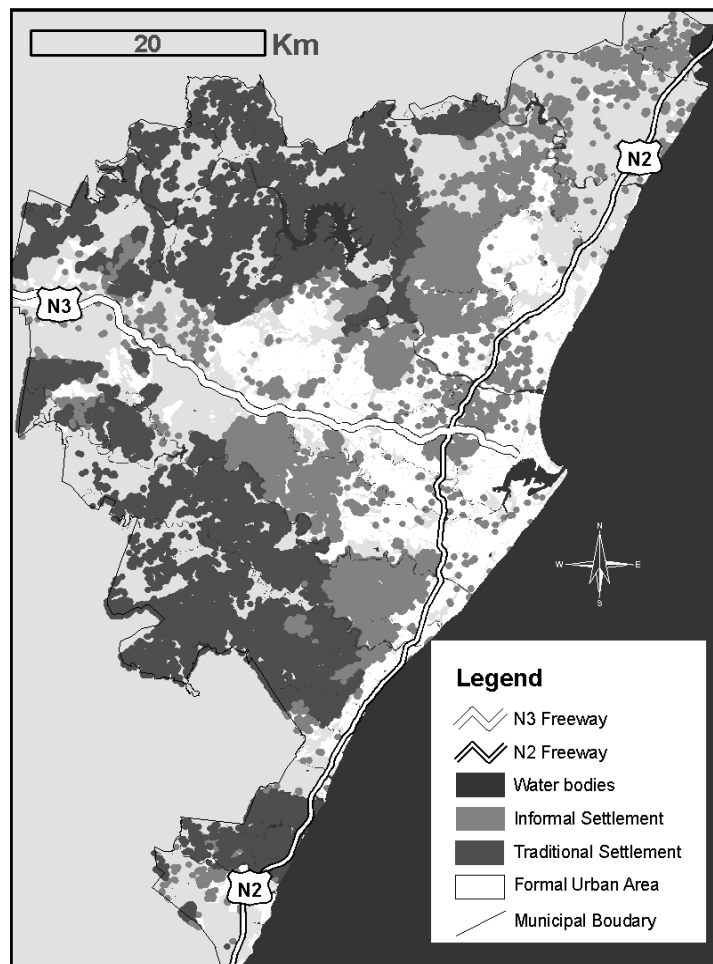

Figure 2. Main settlement typologies for eThekwini Municipality. Source: Province of KwaZulu-Natal 2009, eThekwini Municipality 2007.

Density

The municipality consists of three medium-to-high density nodes; that of the inner city as mentioned, and, beyond the ring of suburbs surrounding the inner city, that of the northern townships node and the southern townships node with a density of 20 to 40 dwellings per hectare (du/Ha), but with pockets of high density of 40 plus du/Ha. In addition, there are a further eight smaller urban nodes of medium density (South African Cities Network 2011: 66, eThekwini Municipality 2012b: 65). These nodes, including a largely informal residential periphery, fall within the Urban Development Line. The nodes contain transport ranks and interchanges and retail and commercial services, often in the form of shopping centres, but there are some street-based nodes, usually older nodes. There are a few specialist industrial and office parks located in close proximity to metropolitan routes.

The municipal boundaries include a large area that is described as rural and that falls beyond the Urban Development Line; here more than 55% of land houses less than 20% of the city's population, at a density of less than three du/Ha. Apart from agriculture and residential uses, it accommodates a range of uses unwanted in urban areas, such as waste disposal sites and sewerage treatments. Similarly, large scale land uses, such as warehousing, and the airport are located beyond the urban periphery.
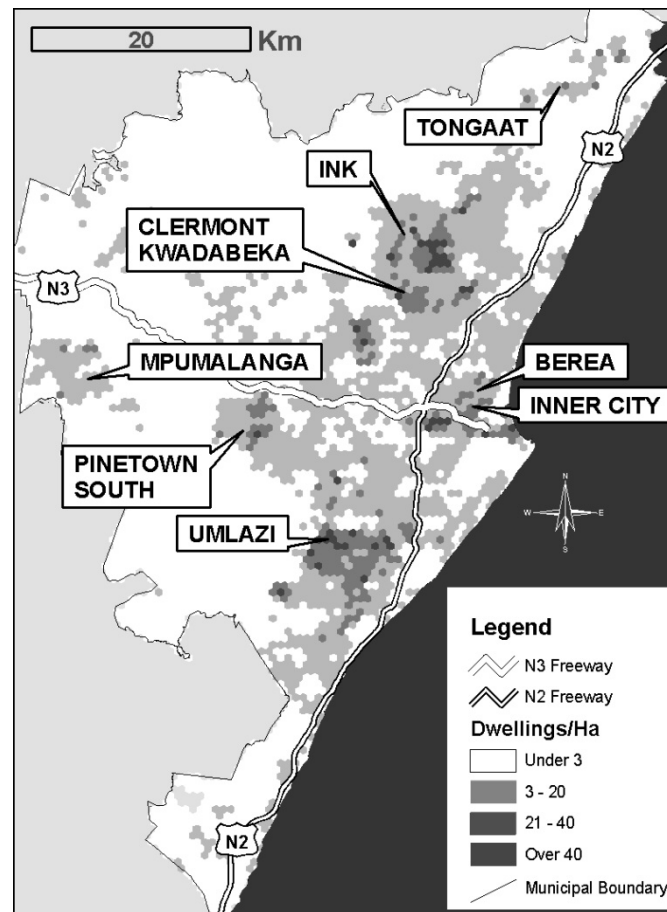

Figure 3. Household densities in eThekwini Municipality. The plan illustrates the poly-centric configuration of the city. Source: eThekwini Municipality 2012b.

The city's housing typology illustrates the complex morphology of the city. The most significant features are firstly, that approximately a third of the population live in informal housing, mainly on the urban periphery, but also in significant pockets within formal urban areas and secondly, approximately 85% of the formal housing stock is a free-standing dwelling. Broadly speaking the city has 945 919 dwellings, of which 55% is formal, 34% is defined as informal and 11% as rural (which includes a small percentage of formal housing) (eThekwini Municipality 2012c: 67).

The formal housing typology ranges from medium and high rise flats in the inner city, to a combination of high-rise flats, old 1940s medium-rise flats, duplexes, two-storey and single-storey housing within a range of six kilometres of the inner city.

The next ring of residential housing within a 12 km radius is largely low density single houses, housing low to high income inhabitants.

In the last two decades upper income households have moved from central and suburban locations to existing 'old' high-income areas on the urban periphery.

These new typologies have taken the form of gated housing estates – containing luxury housing for the very wealthy which 'sells' in the basis of its indigenous landscape. The larger ones often have a range of housing typologies and some open space provision, golf estates, that is, dense clusters of houses set within a golf course with very stringent architectural rules, and more recently, eco-estates. The bulk of formal housing being built is government subsidised housing, which, with few exceptions, takes the form of a single dwelling on a site.

Approximately one in ten people live in state-subsidised housing in eThekwini (South African Cities Network 2011: 50). These new 'townships' are located mainly on the urban periphery, due to land availability and land cost. Informal settlements are mainly on the urban edge, supported in many instances by basic state-provided services in the form of surfaced main routes, communal water standpipes and street lighting.

Urban open space allocation

In eThekwini the Town Planning Scheme designates the type of use and the development controls attached to each zone indicate the bulk of development.

This legal document regulates the uses through a scheme plan based on a zoning system as stipulated in the Planning and Development Act (Province of KwaZulu-Natal 2008), which directs and regulates planning and development in the Province. Table 1 refers to typical public open space zones that are used as a checklist for sub-divisional plans.

PARKS		
Type	Standards provided	Definition
District Park	YES – in combination with community parks and all developed parks	Usually a large park with a variety of recreational spaces. Serves the needs of several surrounding local communities/ or suburbs. People may travel some distance to access. Cater for a range of age groups. Generally multi-functional. Can include active and passive recreational facilities, informal sports facilities such as kick-about areas, multipurpose hard surfaces and playground equipment. Can include a special interest component such as a river, water body, wetland or biodiversity area.

Community Park – incorporating neighbourhood parks	YES – see above	A smaller scale park, serves the needs of the immediate local community or neighbourhood. May include active and passive recreational areas, small scale kick-about areas, multi-purpose hard courts and playground equipment. Cater for two or more age groups. In its simplest form this category may be no more than a couple of items of play equipment.
OTHER MAIN OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL TYPES		
Greenbelt	NO	A greenbelt usually follows the route occupied by natural watercourses or man-made canals (including retention ponds) and is often associated with areas rich in biodiversity or heavily planted with trees. Can form part of DMOSS.
Sports Facilities	YES	Includes sports fields, stadia and indoor halls.
Undeveloped POS	NO	Land zoned but that has not been developed (for whatever reason). May form part of planned allocation of other types but not part of current provision.
Cemetery	YES – separate standard provided	Land falling under the jurisdiction of Municipal Parks Department and set aside specifically for burial purposes, e. g. cemeteries, crematoria and mausoleums.
Coastal Amenities	NO – subject to local context	Usually linear public open space and amenities along coastal regions, which are managed by Municipal Parks Department and may include high profile tourist facilities.
Road Amenities and other amenity servitudes	NO	Land zoned 'road reserve' for which municipal Parks Department has some maintenance responsibility. Other amenity servitudes in same category. The road/amenity reserve may be unmade, alternatively Municipal Parks Department could be responsible for maintaining trees, shrubs, grass or elements of hard landscaping. These areas are sometimes not fully accessible to the public, but contribute to the visual attractiveness or environmental amenity of an area. Some may be suitable for use as food gardens in the medium term.
SECONDARY CATEGORIES OF OPEN SPACE		
Biodiversity Areas	NO	These are usually sub-sets of one of the main categories of POS and indicate areas containing a high concentration of endemic vegetation types (biodiversity of local populations of endangered species).
Servitudes	NO	Pedestrian access between private properties. Servitudes may be jointly managed with other service branches as they may provide access to mountainous regions, provide vital pedestrian links between high and lower level roads or provide a route to underground services.

Table 1. Types of Open Space: Typical categories used in allocation of Open Space Zones
Source: CSIR 2011: 41

All open spaces are delivered in terms of the required standards and are maintained by the eThekwini Municipality's Culture, Parks and Recreation Department. The National Environmental Management Act (RSA 1998b) has a very strong bearing on approval of development proposals and requires various levels of environmental impact assessment to be done.   In eThekwini Municipality the requirements to protect watercourses and wetlands with 32 meter buffers has resulted in relatively small residential subdivisions in green-fields developments with generous passive urban spaces that preclude any active use thereof. This raises concerns by planning consultants that these swathes of land will be invaded as new arrivals in the city search for land near basic services. There is anecdotal evidence from planning consultants that this has already happened in many instances (Kirby 2012).

New urban landscapes in eThekwini

The distinctive spatial features of post-modern urbanism are visible in South African cities: the poly-nuclear, fragmented city form; the sprawl at the edge of the city; event-based glamour projects in the form of sport stadiums and international conference centres; the persistence in car-dependent low density sprawl, the barricaded gated residential communities, privatized public space in the form of office parks and shopping centres.
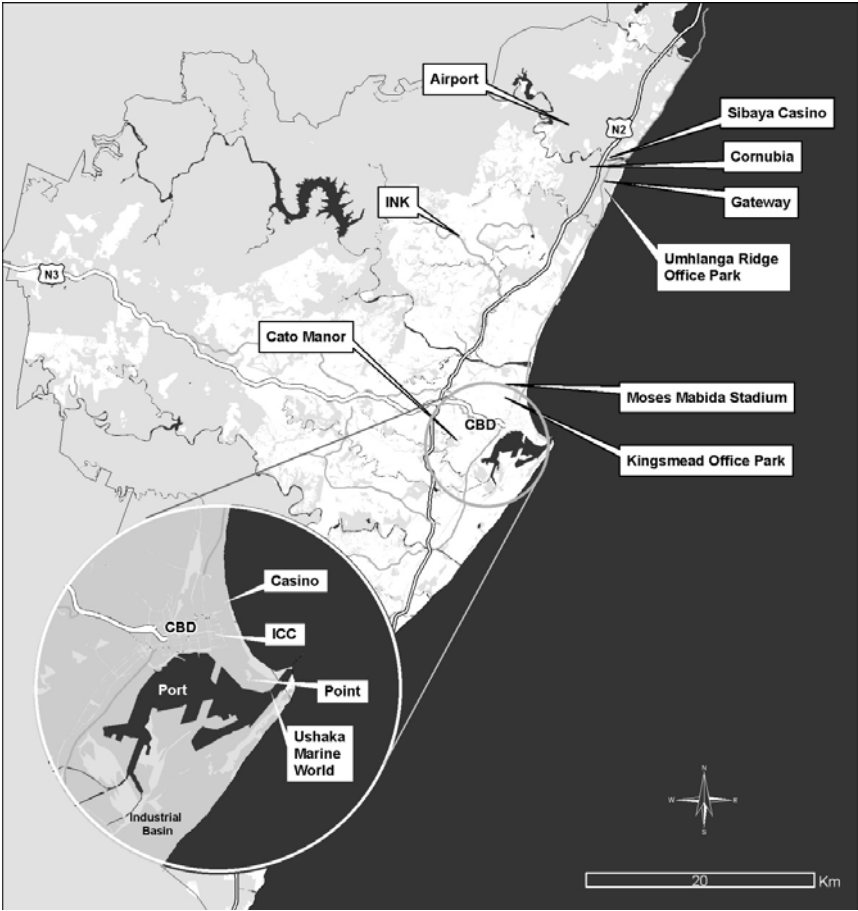

Figure 4. New urban landscapes in post-1994 eThekwini Municipality. Source: Main settlement typologies for eThekwini Municipality. Province of KwaZulu-Natal 2009, eThekwini Municipality 2007.

These characteristics are prevalent in large cities in the global economy and are manifested, interpreted and modified in different ways. Murray (2004:9) suggests that 'What needs to be investigated is how ordinary cities – and this category includes aspirant world-class cities, 'late developing cities', postcolonial cities and 'third world cities' – adopt, borrow, pillage, incorporate, mimic and flaunt the characteristic features of post-modern urbanism'. Some of these adoptions and borrowings will be discussed in the following sections.

In order to categorise eThekwini Municipality's new urban landscapes, Gospodini's (2006) framework for portraying, classifying and understanding the emerging landscapes in post-industrial cities is used as a point of departure; its European roots is acknowledged. The intention is to identify and differentiate, rather than 'univeralise' the morphology of eThekwini Municipality. Gospodini reflects on the impact of late 20th century economic globalization on urban systems and there is a strong resonance with the emerging forms of city-building in South Africa, with governance that focuses on "amenity growth" (Gospodini 2006: 311). The creation of place identity to encourage investment were clearly stated objectives (UN HABITAT 2010) that lead to the landscape transformations in eThekwini that preceded the FIFA World Cup in 2010.

The main components of recent episodes of city-building in eThekwini are considered in terms of location, land use patterns, density and form. Gospodini identifies two main categories of classification: firstly, the 'signifying epicentre' in the inner city which is described as creative clusters forming new urban islands and edges, that consists variously of high level financial services, knowledge and technology-intensive firms and leisure-focused developments such as waterfront developments, museums and clusters of restaurant and clubs (Gospodini 2006: 325). These urban islands are mostly the products of episodes of urban redevelopment, replacing obsolete industrial land uses and technologically out-of-date commercial buildings. The second broad category is that of 'diffused urbanity' in the urban fringe (*ibid.* 325). These 'dispersed built episodes' take the form of 'exurban new centralities and housing dispersal' (*ibid.* 321).

Table 2 provides a summary of the new urban landscapes to be discussed below. Gospodini's framework is adapted and extended to include informal urban landscapes and to distinguish between the inner city and other urban cores within the urban perimeter.

LOCATION	STATE PRODUCTION	PRIVATE SECTOR PRODUCTION	INFORMAL PRODUCTION
Inner City. 'Signifying epicentres' (Gospodini 2006).	Moses Mabhida Stadium with public urban spaces integrated into pedestrian and cycling routes connected to the beachfront.	Sun Coast Casino on the beachfront, with its circulation spaces connected to the beachfront.	
	Proposed port expansion.	Ushaka Marine World, a tourist theme park, with a series of pedestrian paths connecting retail shops, restaurants and the beachfront promenade.	
	International Conference	Office Park (Kingsmead	

LOCATION	STATE PRODUCTION	PRIVATE SECTOR PRODUCTION	INFORMAL PRODUCTION
	Centre	Office Park). A small cricket pitch forms part of the internal semi-public spaces.	
	Beachfront regeneration features a refurbished promenade that links the various beaches, with a range of activities and food outlets.	The Point mixed-use medium density residential and commercial development with stringent architectural design guidelines to ensure well-designed canals, parks and pedestrian paths linked to the beachfront promenade.	Small pockets of informal settlements within the urban fabric, usually on marginal land. Pedestrian paths and roads double up as public space.
	Social housing: new construction in Cato Manor and the refurbishment of old building stock in Albert Park supported by old open space provision.	Redevelopment of large residential sites into medium density clustered townhouses in existing residential areas, often gated. Depending on the scale, public spaces form part of the layout design.	
New urban centralities outside the inner city, inside the urban perimeter.	INK urban township renewal, formed by three townships, that of Inanda, KwaMashu and Ntuzuma. Substantial investments in station upgrading, infrastructure and social facilities have been made.	Umhlanga Ridge Office Park, an extensive medium rise office park that is in sections publicly accessible, with stringent architectural design guidelines, a high quality urban realm with extensive indigenous planting, traffic circles to regulate speed.	
The urban periphery. 'Diffused urbanity' in the form of new centralities and housing dispersal (Gospodini 2006).	State-subsidised housing (bulk of provision). Standardised public open space is provided.	New nodes: Gateway Shopping Centre with surrounding new urbanist development with detailed and nuanced urban public spaces.	Densification of existing informal settlements with substantial variation in age, size and pace of densification.
	Proposed Cornubia 'new town' will form a new 'exurban centrality'.	Large scale gated housing estates (La Domaine, Plantations), golf course estates (Mt. Edgecombe), with privatised parks and open spaces.	

LOCATION	STATE PRODUCTION	PRIVATE SECTOR PRODUCTION	INFORMAL PRODUCTION
Outside the urban periphery - leapfrog development. 'Exurban new centralities' (Gospodini 2006).	Aerotropolis: Dube TradePort and King Shaka International Airport. Large-scale integrated urban public space system.	Casino (Sibaya Casino)	
	Large-scale infrastructure provision such as landfill sites and sewerage works.	Gated housing estates with privatized parks and open spaces.	Densification of existing informal settlements, mainly on land under traditional tenure.

Table 2. New urban landscapes in eThekwini Municipality
Source: Adapted from Gospodini 2006

In eThekwini, the 'signifying epicentre' is exemplified in the Moses Mabhida Stadium, the International Conference Centre, the Sun Coast Casino on the beachfront and the Point redevelopment at the harbour mouth. These glamorous urban islands are in contrast with the older sections of inner city that, in places, are run down and display a high degree of informality in the form of street traders and informally converted office buildings to residential accommodation. The spaces in between these urban islands and well-maintained beach-front edge offer a range of opportunities to a spectrum of income groups; for example, accommodation in the form of up-market hotels and holiday apartments, as well as social housing apartments, apartments for the aged, illegally subdivided offices used as apartments, shelters and hostels.

The pursuit of a global identity is exemplified in the Moses Mabhida Stadium within the Kings Park Sports and Recreation precincts. In the years preceding the FIFA World Cup event, eThekwini built a stadium, developed a new railway station, renovated the beach-front infrastructure, well-designed facilities and created new urban public spaces. A major advantage of these large-scale capital investments was the opportunity for city planners to leverage significant funds to upgrade the public realm that would be in the global gaze (Breetzke 2012).

The opportunity to invest into the public realm, given the context of housing and services backlogs, does not present itself often. As a case in point, there has been a 30-year gap since the last upgrading of the beach front. (Peters 2010).

As Gospodini (2006: 322) points out, the 'external new centralities' such as shopping centres, business parks, theme and amusement parks and hospitals have a profound impact on the city as a whole. The development of a town centre in Umhlanga on the urban perimeter and alongside the National freeway has fundamentally shaped the city. The town centre consists of Gateway, a regional shopping centre with surrounding 'new urbanist' apartments, mixed use, a large-scale retail park, specialist facilities such as the Umhlanga Hospital and Medical Centre, hotels and offices and a variety of well-designed, high quality public urban spaces. Part of this 'new centrality' on the urban edge is the Umhlanga Ridge Office Park, which became the locus of offices fleeing from the perceived crime and grime of the Central Business District in the early 2000s. The proposed Cornubia, across the freeway from the Gateway town centre node, is a planned new town on the northern urban periphery of eThekwini, the conceptual plans and

layout of the first phase emphasises the importance of the public realm; it remains to be seen whether these concepts and plans will be executed.

The King Shaka International Airport started operating in 2010, in time to capture the visibility that the FIFA World Cup media coverage and influx of tourists would bring. The Dube TradePort hub, of which the airport forms part, was conceptualised as an aerotropolis. The master plan for the complex includes a detailed open space system. The airport is located well beyond the urban periphery and has significant implications for the direction and form of city-building in the next twenty years (Hansmann and Ralfe 2010).

One of the major nodes in the city, formed by the three townships Inanda, KwaMashu and Ntuzuma (INK), is the focus of the national urban renewal programme. Substantial investment in the KwaMashu Town Centre, station upgrading and social facilities have been made. The urban realm has been improved through installation of basic urban furniture, paving and planting.

A third of the population of eThekwini lives under conditions of informality, which with little exception provides no public goods in the form of urban spaces. These informal settlements continue to grow incrementally, in the form of steady accretion at the urban periphery. This fine-grained, organic densification of a low-rise housing morphology is in stark contrast to the impact and visibility of large-scale infrastructure projects and medium-scale housing development at the urban periphery.

In the formal state subsidised housing, the provision of public space is hamstrung by the very stringent requirements to protect the natural environment, leaving planners to make the difficult trade-off between the size of individual residential sites and active and passive public space provision (Kirby 2012). Most of the state-subsidised housing forms a distinctive morphology of single dwellings on the urban periphery, with some different housing typologies beginning to emerge as planners battle to raise the densities in these projects within the funding parameters.

The relatively small amount of mixed-use new urbanism developments at the Point and the Gateway nodes deliver a medium rise cohesive morphology with a range of public spaces that is controlled through architectural design guidelines. The new urbanism medium-density mixed-use redevelopment in the late 1990s on the Point, a brown-fields site on the harbour-mouth, has missed the opportunity to incorporate history into this redevelopment project. These finely grained urban landscapes provide some precedent for alternative residential-commercial land use mixes that is the current norm, but tends towards a 'homogenised' environment that limits memorable place-making (Carmora 2010b). This good quality urban realm is within the public domain, but aims for a small housing market sector that targets middle- and upper-income buyers.

The morphology of gated housing estates and golf-course estates at the urban periphery are usually controlled through architectural design guidelines (the degree of resultant architectural homogeneity varies between developments) to provide privatised and carefully designed communal spaces, often with indigenous planting. These gated urban landscapes are car-dependent, exclusionary spaces that contradict the notions of accessibility and integration espoused by the compact city model (Lemanski, Landman, and Durrington 2008). As Carmora (2010a: 131) points out, this precludes the very process of civility that supports the voluntary controls that keeps the public peace.

Conclusion

This exploratory paper outlines the macro-level policy context within which city-building takes place in eThekwini. The typology of new urban landscapes presented here provides the context within which urban spaces are designed, constructed and used.

This preliminary typology is coarse-grained and requires further research and elaboration in order to build a more comprehensive analysis of how urban spaces are articulated within the old and new urban fabric of eThekwini Municipality.

The new urban landscapes catalogued above, is a starting point towards developing a framework for classifying, cataloguing and assessing the urban realm and more specifically, public space. The expansion and detailing of this typology is the subject of further research. The consideration of older forms of city-building, land ownership and land markets would produce a more rigorous typology.

A more nuanced reading of the micro-scale spaces would extend and modify some of the observations made above and a historical analysis of public space provision would considerably add to an understanding of how and why urban spaces are used.

A comparative study of the different types of urban space provisions in the large South African metropoles would constitute a persuasive body of research to begin to influence thinking on the urban realm and in particular, the making of memorable, exciting urban public spaces.

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Tianguis shaping ciudad.
Informal street vending as a decisive element for economy, society and culture in Mexico.

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The paper aims at showing culture as a feature capable of shaping urban environments, both promoting specific phenomena and making a stand to transformation attempts. Tianguis, the informal Mexican markets, appear as a demonstration of this shaping ability, being relevant not only for informal economy, but also for urban settings and social networks created by their presence. On the other hand, the phenomenon of Walmart spreading – now diffused in many growing countries (e.g. Brazil, China, India) – is opposing a totally different model of commerce and even lifestyle that tries to tame traditional forms of trade replacing them in their usual settings. Such a relevance is also proved by the attitude of institutions, which are unable to face the problems set in the political agenda but also passive when receiving proposals from external actors.

Keywords: Informal street vending, Social capital, Culture of poverty

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Introduction

How does culture contribute to shaping cities? The first part of this paper builds a theoretical framework mainly based on the role of culture and behaviour in defining space features that - in Mexican informal markets – works on three different levels: a process of appropriation (see Lefebvre 1974), an insurgent practice (see Sandercock 1998) and a contrast to globalization. Then, there is a focus on the history of *tianguis* and the description of their social, economic and urban features: each of these elements is useful for a deep understanding of this phenomenon. Next part is dedicated to the analysis of policies developed by local institutions that try – with ambiguous results - to tame this example of informal trade. Finally, the conflicts between Walmart and *tianguis* (and their different work cultures) are outlined.

Culture(s) in practice(s)

The influence that culture has in determining behaviours, practices and – consequently – appropriations of the space, cannot be reduced to an obvious concept. The stress on the relevance of cultural elements tries to reduce the emphasis often attributed exclusively to morphology, but still has to take into account the articulated relationships that culture has with space and society. Moreover, culture results as an element which is complex and differentiated (even internally; see Augé 2007), both for individuals and communities.

Interpretations on the significance of cultural influences differ a lot, even if it is possible to recognize some key aspects (Fukuyama 2001): it may determine production and consumption modes, but also institutions and social networks (as shown in the Mexican case). Culture appears as a feature that can shape an economic system, but also public policy (Wildawsky 1987) and individual behaviour. But behaviours, and consequently practices, influence space, too. Henri Lefebvre introduces two key concepts of space: dominated space and appropriated space. The first one is transformed by practices and technologies, which introduce shocking new forms into a pre-existing space; the second one is drawn on Marxist vocabulary and connected with the modification of natural space in order to serve the needs and possibilities of a group (Lefebvre 1974). Appropriation is the typical expression of the influences of behaviour on space, in some way it is natural and continuous phenomenon: the simple and habitual use of space implies and determines a change into the forms, functions and structures.

Taking into account different theoretical perspectives, various hints are given on the role of culture in addressing individual behaviours and collective practices, together with their spatial declinations (as can be noticed observing actions and appropriations related to the Mexican *tianguis*).

A first element is the possibility to define *tianguis* as what Sandercock defines 'insurgent practices', bottom-up situations that 'already exists, and not only in the interstices, the cracks on space and time, but in the very face of power' (Sandercock, 1998: 157). What often moves these practices is a knowledge of the places which is typical of local communities: in fact 'processes that occur in cities (…) can be understood by almost anybody. (…) Inductive reasoning is something that can be engaged by ordinary, interested citizens, and again they have the advantage over planners' (Jacobs, 1963, p. 441). Specifically, *tianguis* have a peculiar cultural background rooted in Pre-Colombian populations.

A second aspect is the attitude of institutions, which mainly rely on a technical-rational approach to planning. Planning itself originated as a tool of modernization, aimed 'to the attainment of well-established societal (modernist) goals' (Yiftachel 2002: 535), believing in 'the idea that human progress would be achieved by harnessing science to create technology for the achievement of human ends' (Schön 1991: 31).

This attitude, summarized in the Positivist philosophy, promoted technical rationality as the only suitable method for planning, 'reifying space and objectifying people' (Escobar, 1992: 133); the approach can be noticed in the way local authorities frame the issues of informal street vending.

Instead, it is more difficult to recognize cultural instances in Walmart: 'Wal-Mart locates its stores in places where it expects to be profitable' (Basker 2007); yet, the retailer shows a utilitaristic and neo-liberist attitude, which is reflected both in its strategies and in the consumption model exported across many countries. The interventions of Wal-Mart, as well as those of multinational corporations, go far beyond the simple exercise of power (Sassen 1994). Therefore culture, together with other elements, prompts different perceptions of individual and collective issues, leading to different appropriations of space.

Observing the tianguis

History of tianguis

A convincing definition of *tianguis* is given by the Mexican Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (2010):

Enshrouded in scents, colors, flavors and meanings, markets are more than just buying and selling space for daily supply, they are a synthesis of culture and history of a region, as well as trade relations having it with other populations.

Tianguis are deeply rooted in Mexican culture and history, this word probably comes from the Pre-Colombian words *tiantiztli* or *tianquiztli* used to identify the marketplace. Thanks to the memoirs of some conquerors or missionary, we can read the description of these traditional markets. One of the most beautiful illustration of *tianguis* was written by the conqueror Bernarl Diaz del Castillo in his *Historia verdera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (1632):

The moment we arrived in this immense market, we were perfectly astonished at the vast numbers of people, the profusion of merchandise which was there exposed for sale, and at the good police and order that reigned throughout.

In short, every species of goods which New Spain produces were here to be found; and everything put me in mind of my native town Medina del Campo during fair time, where every merchandise has a separate street assigned for its sale. After the Spanish conquest, Mexicans partially adapted their behaviour to the colonial life style. One of the main influence was in trade: at the beginning of 17th century a spatial division of the different types of activity was imposed mainly in Mexico City and so the traditional model of trade was weakened. In the 18th century it is possible to recognize three different forms of market trade in Mexico City. The first one is a sort of 'noble' stable market in the city centre, the second one is made up of stable market spread in the periphery and the third one is the *tianguis,* that is widespread in a lot of different streets and squares also because it did not use fixed structures.

Social and economic features of tianguis

According to this description, *tianguis* appear as a peculiar informal phenomenon, that tries to fill two different kinds of voids: the first one is related to the absence of strict regulation on public spaces, while the second refers to those large shares of market not absorbed by formal economic activities; in this sense, they can be considered as insurgent practices (Sandercock 1998).

This kind of experience is generally considered as an expression of the 'culture of poverty' that, according to Oscar Lewis (1966: 176), 'provides human beings with the design for living, with a ready-made set of solutions for human problems, and so serves a significant adaptive function'. Informal economy appears as a negative element for the stability of developing communities because it does not guarantee the possibility of planning personal life projects and provides only short term economic perspective (Eclac 2010). This approach seems to explain *tianguis* simply as a reaction to poverty and material needs, but from a local perspective, which is able to provide a wider representation of the phenomenon, it is possible to observe the relevant role informal markets have in structuring local economies (as well as urban settings; see Vélez-Ibañez 1983).

The Mexican federal government itself recognizes the unavoidable role of *tianguis* in complementing the formal schemes for the supply of basic products (such as food, crafts, second hand goods… see Peña 1999), covering shares of markets which are ignored by the ordinary trade. Beside this commercial function, informal markets also represent a significant percentage of national economy and guarantee a large number of jobs: therefore *tianguis* do not perform only temporary survival solutions, but rather constitute an effective occupation, which in spite of being out of ordinary economy provide a stable income for about half of the Mexicans (Peña 1999; Avimael Vázquez et al., 2011). *Tianguis* appear so as a complex phenomenon that cannot be explained by simply referring to 'culture of poverty' because of its fundamental role in structuring Mexican economy (Sassen 1994).

According to a Mexican federal analysis of occupation (Inegi 2012), in the second trimester of 2012, informal markets are an effective occupation for 2.197.414 people (about 4.5% of total employers), of which about 32% are male and 61% are female; concerning the age, more than 7 % are under 20 years old, about 61% are between 20 and 50 years old and the remainder (32%) are over 50 years old. Many studies about Mexican informality underline that it is characterized by high social and political contents, such as the distribution and use of public space and the relationship between the actors like hawkers, their families, leaders of commercial organizations, local authorities, shopkeepers, customers and inhabitant. The presence of many actors is also consequently connected to the need of social network able to structure the relations: Gómez Méndez (2007: 42) underlines that 'for different groups of people living in informal trade in public space by social networks appears as a fundamental constant for entry and stay in this activity without them [individual construction of interpersonal ties; A/N] access is very difficult'.

This social networks, formalized in an alliance between street informal vendors organizations (which are social networks themselves) and local authorities, are crucial for two different reasons: the first one is linked to the demand of more stability and certainty of this informal job and the second one is connected to the need of increasing economy of scale. Street vendors organizations are – probably - the most important social networks themselves, as underlined by a poll of street vendors in which the 51 % of them 'believe they benefit from being members because the organization negotiates on their behalf with local government authorities' and the about 30 % 'believe that they benefit from the organization because it is a mechanism to address the problems of distribution of work spaces in the market' (Peña 1999: 367). According to these results, the author identifies two different roles of this organization: negotiators (or deal-makers) and managers. The first key role – organizations as negotiators or deal-makers – is aimed to ease the relationship between street vendors and local government, because the organizations are able to work as a sort of trade union and have a strong power of bargaining; as Peña (1999) underlines, these benefits are not without cost: street vendors are obliged to pay a fee to the organization and they have to support the candidates from specific political party.

The second key role is connected to the management of informal property rights, which are the fixed location in the street where they operate their business; this role is played in a coercive way by the leader of the organization and mainly for the administration of the correct distribution of stalls and of justice in case of conflicts. According to Peña (1999) and Gómez Méndez (2007), street vendors organizations are the most important example of social networks in Mexican informal markets because they play a crucial role not only for the entry into this kind of job, but also for the permanency in it. Finally, street vendors organizations represent, as already said, a mediator between street vendors and local government, but also at the same time an obstacle for the diffusion of public policies concerning *tianguis*.

Urban features of tianguis

Social (and economical) relationships lead up to a certain type of urban habitat, which results as a product arising from the sum of different kind of dimensions: social, economic, political, urban, historical, etc. *Tianguis* is a form of production of space, as an appropriation (both in common and Lefebvre's sense), that gives sense, content and shape to public space, without which there is a sort of *tabula rasa*; informal markets are one of the most important public situations in popular neighborhoods that modify (giving sense, content and shape) 'the anonymous, ephemeral, transient and partial space that constitute the core of the dimension of the modern age' (Duhau and Giglia 2004: 184).
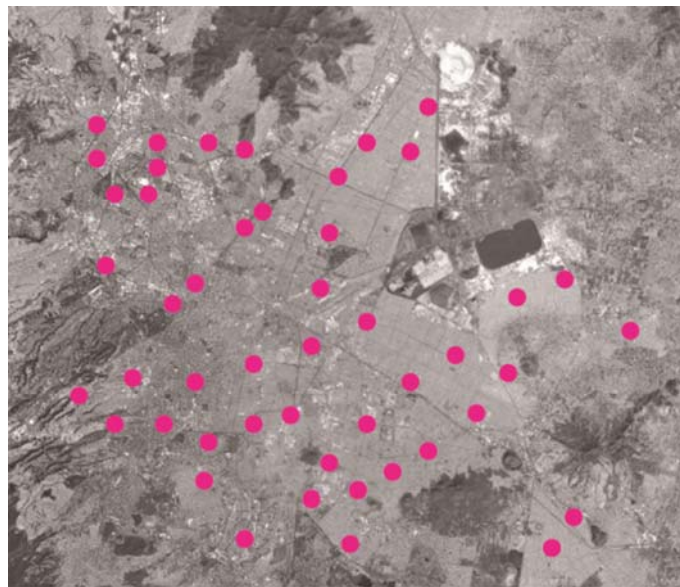

Figure 1. Tianguis in Mexico City. Distribution of tianguis in Mexico Federal District.

The first step, for an urban analysis of informal markets, is a spatial and quantitative census about the diffusion of this phenomenon in Districto Federal (which is the main federal state of Mexico, where the capital is located). In ill. 1 (a map on 5 km scale) each pink point is a *tianguis*, it is clear that they are widespread mainly in the periphery of the urban area, where the economic and social conditions of people are less solid and therefore there is more needs of a low capital job, but with some presences in the border of historical centre, where informal markets are up for tourists and public projects (Avimael Vázquez et al. 2011). Inegi (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía) determines that in 2011 in Districto Federal there are 1.415 *tianguis*, which are about 0,95 per 1 km (calculating, as surface, 1.485 km²).

Figure 2. Tianguis in a regular structure neighborhood. Google Maps

Figure 3. Tianguis in a regular structure neighborhood. Google Maps

Figure 4. Tianguis in an irregular structure neighborhood. Google Maps

Figure 5. Tianguis in a huge empty space. Google Maps

Figure 6. Tianguis in a little empty space. Google Maps

The importance of *tianguis* in Mexico City is more impressive in a lower scale (like 1 km). As it is possible to see in Fig. 2, informal markets are very recognizable mainly thanks to the colorful sheets (pink, red, light blue or yellow) used as cover for the counters or simply for the goods. In these illustrations it is possible to see that it is not possible to identify a unique manner of distribution of *tianguis* and precise way of relationship between *tianguis* and urban shape, mainly because they are characterized by informality that is intrinsically without precise and fixed rules. Informal markets adapt themselves to the shape of urban areas in which they are settled; it is possible to identify three main types of appropriation of space by *tianguis*:

- in *Figure 2* and *Figure 3* they follow the regular structure of neighborhood and they settle in the streets because of the absence of voids;
- in *Figure 3* in which the irregular structure is also characterized by the absence of void and so *tianguis* assume the shape of a snake;
- in *Figure 5* and *Figure 6* they fill up the empty spaces, both little (in the first one) and huge (in the second one).

A change of the phenomenon: a question of policies

Giving a brief policy framework about interventions on the street vendors markets phenomenon, an overview linked to other similar situations can be useful. In many countries informal markets are considered as a big issue for the city, for several reasons that are well explained by scholars (Steck 2008 on West African countries). Even if these activities are crucial for the economy (a fragile economy) and contribute to the functioning of the 'intra-systems' of the city, more and more developing countries are now trying to tame these informal activities by using a better control, moving and possibly replacing them. Two main logics are beyond this choice: a socio-economical on one side and a spatial-environmentalist on the other. They include several issues in the city, such as inability of controlling new activities (and tax them), difficult land management, spatial disputes, complicate coexistence of resident and street vendors. These are the main themes worldwide detected, but different are the policies chosen in response of it, even though with similar uncertainties and failures.

Generally the common features of this phenomenon, and the countries where it can be identified, are disparity and total lack of spatial justice. In this case the reconsideration of such a big phenomenon should involve negotiation, attention to the special needs of the population and involvement of many actors. In the last decades, the municipal institutions of the main Mexican cities developed a number of actions and programs addressing *tianguis*. A reconstruction of the actions adopted in Mexico City can provide useful elements to understand how governments have approached informal markets and how these approaches relate with this framework.

The Federal Government of Mexico City adopted the first *Programa de Apoyo a la reubicación del comercio popular* in 1993: since then, at least seven attempts have been made to tackle informal markets (Avimael Vázquez et al. 2011).

Mexico City Federal Government	Years	Adopted programs
Manuel Camacho Solis Manuel Aguilera Gómez	1988 -1994	Programa de Apoyo a la reubicación del comercio popular (1993)
Oscar Espinosa Villarreal	1994 - 1997	Programa de Apoyo a la reubicación del comercio popular, segunda etapa (1995)
Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano Rosario Robles Berlanga	1997 - 2000	Programa para el Comercio en Vía Pública (1997)
Andrés Manuel López Obrador	2000 - 2006	Programa de Reordenamiento del Comercio en la Vía Pública (2001) Programa Parcial de Desarrollo Urbano Centro Histórico (2003)
Marcelo Ebrard Obrador	2006 - 2011	Programa de Reordenamiento de Comerciantes Informales (2006) Programa de Apoyo para la Reubicación del Comercio Popular del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México (2007)

Table 1. Policy interventions for informal markets in Mexico city. Source: Avimael Vázquez et al. 2011

The institutional approach developed in over a decade has focused on the regularization of *tianguis*, considered as a part of the local economy needing specific legal and spatial adjustments; this attitude has characterized all the programs adopted throughout the years, even if the initial strongly repressive approach was partially and gradually replaced by a more participatory attitude.

The gradual evolution of policy thus has revolved around two main concepts: regulation and relocation (Peña 1999; Avimael Vázquez et al. 2011). On the one hand, the government tried to tighten the control on informal markets, introducing licenses for the commercial activities of street vendors and attempting them into a 'legal' business. On the other hand, a transition from the streets to more 'formal' places was promoted, introducing covered markets (called *plazas*) where to concentrate the (former) street vendors, in order to rationalize both the use of public spaces and the supply chain.

The evolution of policy interventions against *tianguis* shows an enduring element: the attitude towards urban issues (and problems in general) as conveyed in the adopted programs. The Federal Government always maintains a rationalist attitude based on problem solving. Problems are something given and clearly definable, to which specific solutions can be applied: if the issues are mainly insecurity (in a broad sense: from unauthorized uses of space to criminality) and deterioration (both of public spaces and neighborhoods), then the solutions are regulation and relocation. Policy interventions thus are moved by a technical – rational approach, according to which every problem has its solution. Yet, in order to have problems that match with the proposed solutions it is necessary to set them in a specific way, providing descriptions that depict informal markets as a problematic phenomenon which requires a specific (repressive) treatment.

The rational approach underlying this kind of institutional initiative can be observed in the simplistic descriptions of phenomena, to which correspond simplistic solutions. The presence of *tianguis* is considered just as a source of insecurity and deterioration and not as a complex socio-economical phenomenon with deep cultural roots, leading to a repressive approach aimed at reshaping informal commerce in new places and with new rules. However, despite providing clear solutions to clearly defined issues, all the institutional attempts made against informal markets (the last was the *Programa de Apoyo para la Reubicación del Comercio Popular del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México* dating 2007) succeeded partially only in the historical centre, failing in the intermediate and peripheral areas of the city where *tianguis* are widespread. Most of the vendors in fact occupied again the streets where they used to work just few days after the introduction of the program.

What appears from Mexico City case is that the deep background of informal commerce is decisive when facing *tianguis*, making impossible to consider only token aspects such as deterioration or insecurity. In particular, street markets are a *sui generis* form of urbanity (Duhau and Giglia 2004) characterized by complex social and economic structures in between the formal and the informal, the legal and the illegal.

A partial explanation of the roots of *tianguis* may refer to the role they play in Mexican economy: informal commerce is not simply an endemic phenomenon related to a peculiar historical background, but rather an irreplaceable economic system involving (and feeding) a large number of Mexicans. Together with the economical aspects, some socio-political features are fundamental to fully understand the strength of informal commerce.

As previously described, informal commerce in Mexico is structured by vendors' organizations, that manage the distribution of work spaces and negotiate with institutions; often based on abuse and violence (Castillo Berthier 2005), their power succeeded in gathering the vendors and acting on their behalf. Organizations became thus suitable interlocutors for the corporatist Mexican government (Stamm 2007), leading to a situation of clientelism made of reciprocal practices of favouritism. On the one hand, street

vendors seek a benevolent institutional approach towards *tianguis*, while on the other hand politicians need the political support that can be provided by the critical mass of informal traders. This helps to explain why some coercive actions failed (e.g. markets relocation), while other measures were the result of a negotiation between vendors organizations and politicians (Avimael Vázquez et al. 2011).

The concurrent presence of a strong informal socio-economic system and of a weak institutional structure helps to understand why *tianguis* have been able to make a stand to institutional repressive interventions (up to now, at least). However, the structural institutional weakness and the complementary strength of the informal sector are increased by the ongoing crisis of Mexican democratic system (ascribable to corruption and drug trafficking, opposed by popular movements like Yo Soy 132; see Raveggi 2012).

A change of the phenomenon: a question of trading

Using some few words by Lorenzo Meyer, 'US is shaping Mexico in economical, cultural and political terms', giving new meaning to everything that has a relationship with trading, selling, working. Two different working cultures collide and represent the expression of distant historical and socio-economical path: on one hand the global(ized) US market and on the other hand the Mexican traditional model, with its own roots and rules, considerably shaped by a tough culture of poverty. Mexican traditional model is now changing, facing global challenges and trying to increase competitiveness on other markets. The peculiar aspect of this double relationship between US and Mexico is mainly the dependence of the second to the first: indeed the vast majority of the exported goods from Mexico are generally intended for the US market and not for South America or Asia. On the other hand United States are currently not just exporting their goods to Mexico, but their market platform as well (with different rules, work strategies and concept), so that they can make the emerging markets adapting to their needs, and not the contrary. This is mainly due to the lack of strength in the emerging countries institutions or in the strength that the offer shows.

The case of Wal-Mart can easily epitomize this theoretical situation, showing the massive impact of such a different model on the Mexican economical asset, the cultural concept of work and the shape of the city. Such a diverse model can surely impact on the way the space is perceived, on the way people think and use it, on the size and perception of it on the human relationships. If *tianguis* dialogue at a low scale, Wal-Mart works on a wide range scale, considering that the company strategy is to move as much products as possible by reducing costs and times, cutting in particular external and internal costs, such as the cost of work.

On the other hand, as we have widely underlined, Mexico culture of commerce is fulfilled with sociality, close relationship with the neighborhood, self-made job and small economy, at the border with informality and a self-sustaining strategy typical of the so-called culture of poverty. In contrast with this traditional model is the wide culture of global commerce that underlies the marketing strategy of Wal-Mart, nowadays spread all over the US and in the emerging countries (for instance China and India), often in deprived neighborhoods. Its entry into the Mexican market dates back to 1991, with the name of Wal-Mex. In 2011/2012 Wal-Mex opened 441 new stores and plans to open as many in 2013, in addition to the incoming strategy of supporting the opening of small bank units all over the country, the so called *Banco Wal-Mart*, whom main aim is to offer credit to retail customers. Nowadays Wal-Mart is Mexico's largest private employer, with 200.000 staff and an increasing power perceived by its closer and closer relationships with the central and local authorities. These relationships have recently been monitored by US media with the result of serious charges against Wal-Mart of having paid bribes to speed permits for new store openings all over Mexico (The Economist 2012).

Tianguis in itself does not represent a model of equality, fair work and social justice, since informality is at the basis of this system, but shows the result of a cultural path linked to a self sustaining economy that has been crucial for many years in Mexico: indeed it represents a source of income for many inhabitants of Mexico City, as well as for the other cities in the country. Moreover, we can assume another important theme that links *tianguis* to culture, and we are specifically considering in this part the work culture.

We are enlarging this definition, focusing in particular on the 'workfare system' (Peck 2001) as a structure of welfare-to-work policies and employability, besides a wider conception of rights in the labor market. It seems paradoxical to use these issues as part of further analysis of the phenomenon and its implications, since, as stated above, it is often essentially borderline situations between informality and illegality, where there are no welfare policies, no guarantees in the workplace, no safety. By the way, is this model far enough from another new incoming model of precarious workfare? Essentially the labor culture claimed by the different strategy of Wal-Mart is the representation of a quite similar model in which there is the same perception of instability, the same 'feeling temporary' (Peck 2001), just enclose in a box in the outskirts of the big Mexico City district, instead of the big *telaraña* all over the neighborhoods. Mexican institutions by using planning instruments, economical instruments and market policies operate a considerable control. Control through planning is often explicit in post-colonial societies characterized by ethnic dominations, while implicit in Western countries, where the resulting market outcomes may discriminate social classes, gender groups or ethnic minorities (Yiftachel 2002). Planning as control deals with crucial dimensions such as space, power and wealth, influencing so social and economic externalities, which Wal-Mex case could be a clear example. The controversial path pursued by Mexican institutions in facing a phenomenon widely spread in its forms and features, such as the *tianguis*, is now leaning to a form just as damaging as the previous, in terms of access to the market, self upgrade of families through small business. This consequence could lead to a stronger discrimination, in a market already largely marked by the scourge of corruption in a country that is still lacking in suitable strategies able to protect from poverty and exclusion.

Conclusion

As showed in the previous paragraphs, *tianguis* prove to be a peculiar element of Mexico: not only because of their widespread presence, but also (and more importantly) for their deep link to the local cultural heritage. Informal street markets are more than a reaction to poverty, appearing as an expression of the popular need for an effective occupation that fits with traditional practices. The markets are thus a phenomenon with a strength of its own, capable to shape the city as a shared space (Lefebvre 1974), an economic system (Fukuyama 2001), a social structure (Sassen 1994) and a political ecosystem (Wildawsky 1987). The rootedness of *tianguis* is proved by the unsuccessful institutional attempts to tackle them; but in this sense, the strong contrast with Walmart (and globalised commerce in general) is more relevant, given that the retailer present itself as an alternative model of production and consumption (as perfectly expressed by the chosen name: Wal-Mex).

Further studies could examine in depth the relationship between culture and the socio-economic aspects previously outlined, but in conclusion the Mexican informal street commerce appears as a significant example of how culture can shape the evolution of urban contexts, fostering specific phenomena that can obstacle the dominant strategies. In a way, *tianguis* unhinge the traditional dichotomy between formal and informal, legal and illegal, showing how culture can foster alternative forms of space appropriation in competition with each other.

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Hot Spots of hostility, hospitality and the well-tempered environment. A case study of Nazareth, Israel-Palestine

Els Verbakel[1]

Characterized and often interrupted by conflict and violence, the urban development of cities in the Middle-East challenges our current understanding of the role of collective space in the contemporary city. Drawing from an investigation of different forms of collective space in Nazareth, Israel, this paper questions the connection between physical configurations, spatial mechanisms and socio-political constellations in the contemporary middle-eastern urban condition. In an heterogeneous urban environment the city's physical configuration drifts toward disconnected and segregated urban realms, producing as a side effect a host of undefined open spaces, no-man's lands, urban voids and cross-roads that may or may not become the grounds for new types of spatial mechanisms affecting existing socio-political constellations.

Keywords: Conflicted Cities, Public Space, Urban Voids

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Introduction

Characterized and often interrupted by conflict and violence, the urban development of cities in the Middle-East challenges our current understanding of the role of collective space in the contemporary city. Looking at different forms of collective space in Nazareth, Israel, this paper questions the connection between spatial mechanisms and socio-political constellations in the contemporary middle-eastern urban condition. As recent scholarship on Middle Eastern cities has pointed out, concepts such as traditionalism and stagnation have often obscured 'emergent urban configuratios' (Rabinowitz and Monterescu 2007, Said 1979). Therefore this study attempts to look beyond the traditional forms of Nazareth's urban spaces. In an heterogeneous urban environment the city's physical configuration drifts toward disconnected and segregated urban realms, producing as a side effect a host of undefined open spaces, no-man's lands, urban voids and junctions that may or may not become the grounds for new types of spatial mechanisms affecting existing socio-political constellations.

The spatial mechanisms of collective space in Arab cities in Israel are a result of their geopolitical context, challenged by ethnic, religious and political conflict, and the mediterranean and middle-eastern ecological and cultural environment. In spite of the problematic urban development policies of Israel's right-wing government, collective spaces in these cities have become fertile grounds for investigating new constellations of public versus private, of claiming ownership and temporary privatization but also of new opportunities of cultural exchange.

Arab cities in Israel often appear in urban studies as 'mixed cities', a category employed by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics and a topic of academic research in sociology and political science. I argue that the term 'mixed' is deceiving and does not reflect the actual condition of most of these cities where inhabitants belonging to different ethnic and religious backgrounds live in varying degrees of co-existence but also very much of segregation and conflict.[2] As mapped by Malkit Shoshan's *Atlas of the Conflict* (Shoshan 2004), the demographic shifts that took place after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 signal a structural transformation in the urbanization of the territory, from a dispersed pattern of Arab setllements and a few Jewish centers to the opposite spatial distribution where Jewish settlements sprawled out and the Arab population that remained within the initial borders of Israel concentrated in cities such as Nazareth and Jaffa.

This dramatic change led to a split identity for Arab inhabitants, maintaining the Palestinian identity, yet adopting Israeli citizenship. During the Ottoman period, Nazareth counted 1500 inhabitants reaching a peak of 68% Christians by the 19th century. With the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the city became a refugee town and the ratio Christians-Muslims changed to 60% Muslims until today's 80,000-inhabitant city. Nazareth grew significantly from the influx of Palestinian refugees and became the largest Arab city within the initial borders of the Israeli state, yet Israel's planning attitudes to the city demonstrated an attempt to diminish the increase of a strong Arab urban presence. In the process of developing official planning tools for Nazareth, the Israeli government named the streets of the city by anonymous numbers while the city's inhabitants continue operating by the collective memory of unofficial street names. New neighborhoods for refugees from all over the region were built with inadequate planning tools, lacking basic infrastructure such as roads, collective spaces, public buildings and more and soon turned into poor and underdeveloped parts of the city.

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[2] See also Yacobi, H. (2008) Separate and unequal. Israel's mixed cities have become a two-fold discrimination trap for their Arab residents. *Ha'aretz Newspaper,* Oct.17 and Yacobi, H. (2004) 'In-Between Surveillance and Spatial Protest: the Production of Space of the 'Mixed City' of Lod,' *Surveillance & Society* 2(1): 55-77

Figure 1. Population distribution in 1947, Left: Distribution of Palestinian Population, Right Map: Distribution of Jewish Population, From Shoshan M. (2010), *Atlas of the Conflict Israel-Palestine* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers)

Figure 2. Population distribution in 2010, Left: Distribution of Palestinian Population, Right Map: Distribution of Jewish Population, From Shoshan M. (2010), *Atlas of the Conflict Israel-Palestine* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers)

In 1954, in a nation-wide effort to contain Arab presence within the country's borders, the government built a settlement of 300 Jews on the hill adjacent to Nazareth. The newly established Nazareth-Ilit, meaning Upper Nazareth, grew with immigration flows until the war of 1973, after which population declined again. Today the relationship between Nazareth and Nazareth-Ilit is double-sided with Nazareth-Ilit's municipality following the national policy of providing a counter-weight to the Arab identity of Nazareth (Rabinowitz 1997).
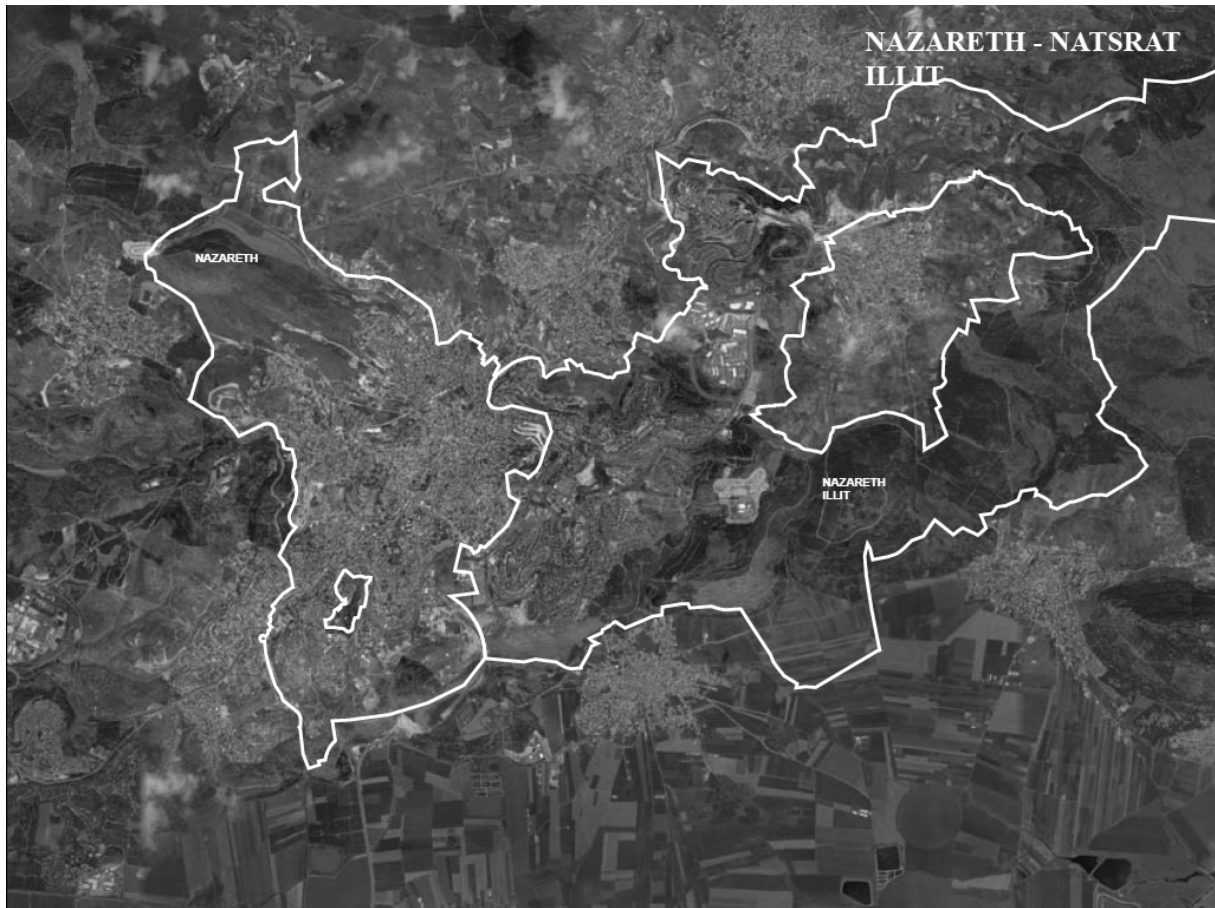

Figure 3. Aerial View indicating borders of Nazareth (left) and Nazareth Ilit (right), Orthophoto 2012, Courtesy of Nazareth Municipality

On the other hand, real-estate values in Nazareth have risen because of a lack of available land due to a combination of strong topographic limitations and a land ownership situation whereby the majority of land is owned by churches and by the Israel land authority. This situation has encouraged Nazareth's inhabitants to migrate to Nazareth Ilit's more attractive housing stock, combining lower densities[3] with more recently constructed buildings and better accessibility.

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[3] 1322 people per square kilometer in Nazareth Ilit as opposed to 4666 people per square kilometer in Nazareth

Figure 4. View from Nazareth to Nazareth Ilit and the Court of Justice Building overlooking Nazareth, photographer: Yuval Tebol, 2012

The same conflicted identity can be perceived in the evolution of collective spaces in the Israeli Arab city. While the origin of Nazareth's collective spaces inherent to the provision for basic needs such as shade, water, trade and protection from intrudors, the meaning of collective space shifted with the added layer of religion and myth, turning into symbols and spaces of representation. From the Ottoman rule to the British Mandate and finally the establishment of the Israeli state, the city's collective spaces transformed and challenged the notion of embedded collective spaces into complex and varied forms of voids, ranging from a centrifugal 'space of risk' (Jabareen 2006) to a junction of temporary moments of exchange and a neutral and well-tempered environment.

In the last few decades, Nazareth's local municipality together with the Israeli government have initiated a series of urban design projects re-imagining the city's collective spaces from infrastructural changes to redesigning public spaces. These initiatives have largely disregarded the city's intrinsic spatial characteristics. In parallel and partially due to this, these spaces have become the stage for conflict, political disputes, religious tension and violent actions.[4] In what follows, I will expand on the spatial mechanisms of a conflicted city and how this has led to a propagation of new forms of collective space. Zooming in on three prototypes of contemporary collective space in Nazareth, I will consider three distinct frameworks of collective life and their meaning for a city of conflict.

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[4] See David Harvey's argument that public space has political repercussions only when public, quasi-public and private spaces are interconnected., and 'contestation over the construction, meaning and organization of public space' only happens when it affects and transforms private and commercial spaces (Harvey 2005)

City of Gods

While Nazareth is considered a city in statutory terms under Israel's jurisdiction, at many levels it lacks basic components to ensure urban coherence due to a high degree of deficiency in infrastructure, transportation, distribution of services and accessible collective spaces. This intricate lack of continuity has led to a physical fragmentation which appears to be a suitable habitat for a wide variety of religious communities including Copts, Greek-Orthodox, Greek-Catholic, Roman-Catholic, traditional and progressive practices of the Islam and in adjacent Nazareth-Ilit secular, Orthodox and Haredi Jews. Based on a series of interviews conducted with inhabitants over the last two years, the neighborhood unit appears to be the strongest entity of belonging, and is measured by ethnic-religious identity of its inhabitants, the period in which it was built, the building typologies, its regional accessibility, its religious center and the reachability of the commercial heart of the city, Paulus VI street. Each individual or group operates according to a distinct urban constellation associated with a different religious belief. Therefore we can consider Nazareth as a patchwork of urban entities, an urban patchwork of many Gods, each with their own, often dysfunctional, urban structure. A map of Nazareth from the Ottoman period visualizes this city of Gods, then still clearly organized in religious quarters, monasteries, an orphanage, churches and a mosque.
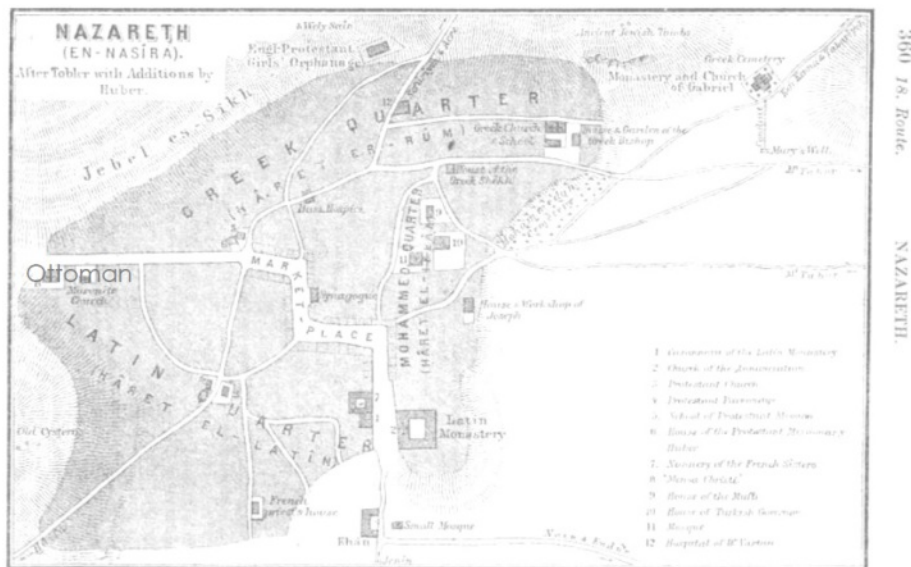

Figure 5. Ottoman Map of Nazareth, indicating religious quarters, from the Municipal Archives.

This historical Ottoman structure has now developed into a more complex urban constellation, from quarters to religious patches that overlap and interfere. As an additional 'layer' to this patchwork, religious tourism predisposes the city's urban development in preference of the simulacrum, a symbolic representation of a variety of imagined pasts. With 100,000 visitors per year, Nazareth is underequipped to fully take advantage of the influx of tourists, mainly pilgrims, who usually stay only a few hours, due to inadequate tourist infrastructure and a lack of information. Despite its underdeveloped accessibility and transportation infrastructure, Nazareth functions in many ways as the 'capital' of the Galil, attractive to both Arabs and Jews as a commercial center, a culinary destination, and more recently a center for Israeli and international backpackers and secular tourists lodging in the old city's Ottoman townhouses.

The simulacrum serving religious tourism thereby coexists alongside a palimpsest of historical authenticity on the base of which urbanity still thrives, a condition that is very rare in the Israeli urban landscape, in which historical traces have been wiped out, turned into ruins, or transformed into artificial commercial destinations. In addition, the Arab population in the Galil region has developed itself as an attractive grounds for the Israeli hi-tech industry, providing affordable and highly skilled human resources in the fields of IT and programming for which Nazareth has become a center. More recently, the Israeli Ministry of Higher Education approved a plan of the Nazareth Municipality to create a new academic campus that will provide higher education in Arabic, currently non-existing within the borders of Israel. These projects of science, technology and education provide a unique opportunity to re-consider Nazareth's collective infrastructure and think beyond its potential as a pelgrims' destination.

The Question of Public Space

In today's Nazareth, visitors, passers-by and inhabitants continuously experience the city's urban voids, left-over spaces in-between a multiplicity of urban patches, sites that have been under dispute, that belong to many or to none. Sites where construction has started but was interrupted, and frozen in time. Properties where the family owning the land has grown so big it becomes impossible to reach an agreement on future plans. Fields of a wild and uninhabited landscape interrupting a dense and vibrant urban context, sometimes re-claimed temporarily by informal construction, graffiti, or wild growth of local species. Are these spaces the fertile grounds on which new metropolitan-scale urbanity can be imagined?

Nazareth's rich history of collective spaces can offer a clue for re-visiting the possibilities of these terrains. In a study of Mediterranean urban and building codes, Besim S. Hakim describes the *fina,* 'an invisible space about 1.00–1.50m wide alongside all exterior walls of a building which is not attached to other walls, and primarily alongside streets and access paths (Hakim 2008: 28)'. Extending horizontally but also vertically alongside a building's walls, the owner has rights and privileges over this outdoor space.

This margin between the public and the private realm can be traced back to pre-Islamic history in Arab cities and re-appears in Muslim jurisdiction and in Near-Eastern, North-African and Spanish literature. Although the *fina* itself remained invisible, its special status came to expression in 3-dimensional additions to building facades, not necessarily claiming the public realm but rather creating an inhabitable public space, with built-in benches, planters for vegetation, balconies, bay windows and rooms bridging streets.

Hakim's account of the Mediterranean urban code adds an important aspect to the meaning of collective space in Nazareth, as a space that is hosted and supported by the private realm and cannot exist without it. Therefore we can ask whether and if so in what format collective space in Nazareth can exist without the strong support of a surrounding and nurturing private urban realm.

To answer this question let us further investigate three motifs that guide the genealogy of Nazareths collective spaces: water infrastructure, well-tempered environments and spaces of exchange. From the original agricultural village until today's complex urban patchwork, water has guided the city's urban development, from a primitive water well located at walking distance from the center of the village, to a hamam (bathing house), to the source of holy water from Mary's Well and during the Ottoman period a system of underground watering and irrigation canals, from an elementary need for human existence (drinking and washing) to a religious icon and eventually a network of urban and agricultural infrastructure.

A second motif are the open spaces that exist within the dense urban fabric, as enclosed inner courtyards and walled gardens, an urban condition where open collective spaces exist on private property, owned by tradesmen, churches and mosques.

Figure 6. Photograph of Fina Space in Nazareth's Old City, Photographer: Yuval Tebol, 2012
Figure 7. Map of Landownerships in Nazareth, Archives of the Nazareth Municipality

The spatial configuration of collectivity being hosted by privately owned space exemplifies a unique characteristic of the Middle-Eastern city, which should be understood in connection to the severity of the desert climate where human existence means a constant search for the well-tempered environment: shaded, ventilated, and protected from intruders. In addition, as can be seen on a plan of land ownerships in Nazareth, Churches own the majority of the city's open spaces, with the Israel Land Authority coming in second.

Thereby most potentially collective spaces are in private hands and only partially accessible for the city's inhabitants. A third component of Nazareth's collective spaces is that of exchange, moving from the Ottoman souk or street market, a junction of vendors and customers to other forms of exchange of information and knowledge, with the more recent development of a hi-tech campus and a new academic campus. These intrinsic motifs of Nazareth and I believe of the Middle-Eastern city at large: water infrastructure, well-tempered environments and spaces of exchange have been challenged by more recent attempts to organize the city's urban spaces. In addition, recent projects promoting religious tourism and pelgrimage, funded by European church communities, continue transforming the actual space into an imagined simulacrum, representing a Nazareth that never existed.[5]

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[5] See the recently completed Holy Mary Visitor's Center, a sequence of interior spaces using the latest hologram technologies to evoke life in Nazareth during the period of Holy Mary.

The story of Nazareth's collective spaces is not unique and fits in a wider discourse on the crisis of public space, whereby a new 'normativity' coming from the private realm invades the public sphere and thereby denationalizes formerly 'national state agendas,' or in this case collective spaces (Sassen 2008 [2006]). Yet in the case of Nazareth, the normativity of a private realm hosting collectivity is not new but rather embedded in the city's urban condition. The forms of collective spaces that existed here and the ones that replace them can contribute to recent scholarship on public space in that borders between private and public have always been challenged in Nazareth's collective spaces. In studying public space in the contemporary city at large, we have realizied that contemporary urban conditions require more complex definitions of public space, to accurately describe 'chance encounters, temporary spaces of gathering, partially accessible meeting places, commercialized and themed entertainment' (Segal and Verbakel 2008: 6). One first step has been to replace the all-encompassing concept of public space with a more flexible idea of collective space, which can take place indoors, or on private property, or as a moment in time. Moreover, 'the public' today is to be understood as a fragmentary composition of several stakeholders, individuals and collectivities. Habermas' idea of a public sphere as a place where one can reflect on opinions and ideas about society and the state that had emerged from 18th century Bourgeois society therefore requires rethinking in a consumption culture of individuality and privatization[6]. With this privatization of public space, democratic governance has diminished and given in to the predominance of consumption-oriented collective spaces such as shopping malls and lifestyle centers.[7] In a discussion on the question of the disappearance of public space, Stan Allen argues that public space in its traditional understanding should be approached with skepticism in the context of the American city. Allen argues that we should first replace public with *publics* and their 'spatial practices', a notion taken from Michel De Certeau, who distinguishes between space as an abstract notion, while place is practiced space. Therefore we should search for the potential of 'public places', a more bottom-up notion whereby the public creates its own public realm (Allen 2008). Not only in the American context scholars argue that traditional notions of public space no longer hold ground. Marcel Smets writes that public space has become an 'individual yet shared experience' and proposes a less ambitious definition of spaces where people meet people, which does not erase the concept of public space but rather multiplies it and transforms it into a temporary event. (Smets 2008). Sarah Whiting goes further by argueing that we should 'drop the false narrative of an original, 'pure', wholly public sphere and accept that (…) the public sphere is always very much intertwined with the private one' (Whiting 2008: 103). A study of non-Western urban conditions such as the Middle-Eastern City where public and private realms have always been intertwined, and where a multiplicity of publics has always existed, can give more insight in the arguments raised above.

In an effort to revive Foucault's concept of heterotopia, Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter argue that in a postcivil society public space as we know it no longer exists yet new forms of spaces for collective use have appeared in private spaces, such as shopping mals, sports centers, wastelands and parking lots.

"The contemporary transformation of the city displays a profound redrawing of the contours of public and private space, bringing to the fore an equally treacherous and fertile ground of conditions that are not merely hybrid, but rather defy an easy description in these terms". (Dehaene and De Cauter 2008: 3)

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[6] See Calhoun C., ed. (1992), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press).

[7] See Kohn M. (2004) *Brave New Neighborhoods: The Privatization of Public Space*, (New York and London: Routledge)

Dehaene and De Cauter propose to re-examine Foucault's concept of heterotopiaas a 'crossroads of the lines that shape public space today.' In a world characterized by privatization, the crisis of the city means that the original polis which aspired an equilibrium between oikos or the private realm and agora or the public realm. In a postcivic society characterized by an advanced state of privatization the equilibrium no longer exists in what they call an 'economized public life.' Thus according to Dehaene and De Cauter, heterotopia can become a strategy to give meaning to spaces of otherness within a privatized environment. However, it remains unclear how a theory based on otherness can be sufficient to adequately grasp the complexity of collective spaces in cities of conflict. Otherness still implies a condition of sameness interrupted by the other as an exception. As David Harvey suggests, Foucault's theory of heterotopia remains superficial and in the end reduces itself to the theme of escape, leaving behind the promise of criticality, emancipation and libration (Harvey 2009). Cities of conflict develop on a premise of heterogeneity from the start, and thus the interruption of its hegemony requires a more precise definition. This study of Nazareth's collective spaces is an attempt to widen the idea of collective spaces that suspend dominant systems of control without necessarily providing ground for an identified otherness.

In what follows I will examine three significant prototypes of collective space that characterize Nazareth's urban condition each demonstrating a different relationship between spatial mechanisms and socio-political constellations.

Hot Spots

The three prototypes of collective spaces I will describe below are a result of recent planning efforts by public and private, local and national stakeholders and start with the plan of *Nazareth 2000*, a large scale urban renewal plan for Nazareth's Old City.

Figure 8. Plan for the *Nazareth 2000* project indicating the area to be treated. Rahamimoff, A (1995), *Nazareth 2000; Plan for the Development of Touristic Infrastructure 1995-1999,* (Nazareth: Nazareth Municipality & Ministry of Tourism)

Hostile Urban Voids

In 1993, the leftist government led by Itshak Rabin together with Nazareth's mayor Tawfeq Zayad initiated a seventy million US dollar project titled *Nazareth 2000,* in preparation of the millennium celebrations. The plan included a makeover of several streets and squares in the old city and entailed considerable changes in the infrastructure of the old city, replacing water and sewage pipes, communication and electricity lines and lighting systems. On a triangle of public land between Paulus VI sStreet and Casanova Street, adjacent to the Roman-Catholic Church of the Annunciation, the Nazareth 2000 plan proposed a redesign including an area for outdoor events. The proposed design provided a central square for the city both for inhabitants and visitors, and an entrance square to the Old City.[8]

Figure 9. Design for Central City Square, from Rahamimoff, A (1995), *Nazareth 2000; Plan for the Development of Touristic Infrastructure 1995-1999,* (Nazareth: Nazareth Municipality & Ministry of Tourism)

However when construction started in 1999, the square's location, adjacent to the shrine of Shihab-el-Din, nephew of Saladin who ousted crusadors eight centuries earlier, caused the Muslim community to protest, claiming that the land belonged to the Waqf. On April 16 1999, riots broke out over the municipal plan on the square leading to clashes between Muslims and Christians.

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[8] See Rahamimoff, A (1995), *Nazareth 2000; Plan for the Development of Touristic Infrastructure 1995-1999,* (Nazareth: Nazareth Municipality & Ministry of Tourism)

The Israeli government decided to compromise and to allow the construction of a mosque on the square yet soon after the laying of the first cornerstone, Russian president Putin, American president Bush and eventually the Pope intervened and construction of the mosque stopped.

In this process, Jabareen argues, the city square became a space of risk, a public space where inhabitants feel low levels of trust, defenseless and vulnerable. According to Jabareen, the plan itself caused such a change in levels of trust and brought into being a new type of public space, caused by an incongruence between conceived space and lived space, according toLefebvre's theory.[9] I propose to add another dimension to this definition by arguing that the feeling of risk led to a lived space that turned into a hostile urban void.

Figure 10. Claiming the Square, 2010, Photographer: Nick Verbeeck

While *hostile* refers to the very often negative and sometimes violent actions of some religious communities against others, *void* stems from the building of an urban space that does not grow from its surrounding urban fabric, neither does it replace the lack of connection with built space.

Therefore I will expand Jabareen's argument, and claim that it is also the specific form of the proposed square that caused the space to become a void, an un-hosted open space, and therefore a hostile void. The architects responsible for the design of the *Nazareth 2000* plan based their drawings on typologies of medieval, renaissance and 19th century European urban space: piazzas, fountains and tree-lined streets and boulevards, thereby forcing an artificial layer of alien urban spaces upon the existing city fabric, not taking into account the intertwined relationship between private and public spaces of the existing city.

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[9] See Lefebvre, H. (1992) [1974], *The Production of Space,* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell)

Figure 11. Panoramic View of the Central City Square in 2008, Photographer: Yaacub Nweisser

Figure 12. Panoramic View of the Central City Square in 2008, Photographer: Yaacub Nweisser

Figure 13. Aerial View of Mary's Well Square and the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, Orthophoto 2012, Courtesy of Nazareth Municipality

Figure 14. Mary's Well Square, Photograph by Yuval Tebol, 2012
Figure 15. Mary's Well Square Christmas Market, December 2011, Nazareth Tourist Association

The Junction

A second collective space included in the *Nazareth 2000* project provided an alternative connection between the city's main commercial spine Paulus VI Street, and the Old City. The design included an open space in front of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation bordered by commercial street facades, a traffic node leading cars from Paulus VI Street into the Old City, and an open space around Mary's Well, bordering Paulus VI Street and the Ottoman Hammam or bathing house.[10]

Today, this series of collective spaces has transformed into a vibrant city center, where tourists arrive and enter the Old City, but also where locals meet at bars and coffee places. Furthermore, the space has become the center for a lively program of events for locals and tourists ranging from a yearly Christmas market attracting tens of thousands of visitors to music events and trade fairs.

Figure 16. Mary's Well Square Music Festival 2012, Nazareth Tourist Association

[10] See Rahamimoff, A (1995), *Nazareth 2000; Plan for the Development of Touristic Infrastructure 1995-1999,* (Nazareth: Nazareth Municipality & Ministry of Tourism)

Even though significant parts of the historical city were altered, excavated and changed by building a new collective space here, the design of a continuous open space, connecting the main commercial and traffic artery of Paulus VI Street with the square in front of the Greek Orthodox church, and further into the streets of the Old Ciy, has allowed every segment of the collective space to be intertwined with a street edge of public, religious, touristic or commercial functions and has facilitated a continuous vehicular and pedestrian flow.

Figure 17. Panoramic view of Mary's Well Square, 2008. Photographer: Yaacub Nweisser

Thereby, perhaps unintentionally, the collective spaces created by this plan almost seamlessly continue the urban memory of Mary's Well into a junction where the metropolitan region and the Old City meet.

The tempered space

In July 2009, 6 years after the completion of the *Nazareth 2000* project, the city of Nazareth inaugurated the BIG Fashion shopping center at an exclusive cocktail party with speeches and ribbon cutting. Hundreds of people from the Arab community raised the glass to celebrate the 24,000 square meter complex, including 12,000 square meters of retail space, housing 90 stores, built by a consortium of developers including the Israeli chain BIG shopping centers, real estate giant Africa – Israel and Nazareth based B.S.T. development and construction.

Figure 18. Aerial View of the BIG Fashion shopping center, Orthophoto 2012, Courtesy of Nazareth Municipality

The center was built on property of the Greek Orthodox Church, who will earn eighteen percent of the center's revenue. The shopping center is strategically located on a site at the express road serving both Nazareth and Nazareth Ilit, and can easily be reached by a new access road and tunnel system from the South of the Galil region. Thereby the center aims at all communities in the surrounding metropolitan area. As BIG shopping centers' president notes: 'The center sits in the heart of the Arab Israeli sector, and serves people whose religious days of rest are Friday, Saturday and Sunday. We gain benefit from all of them.'[11] Here the private market benefits from promoting coexistence and heterogeneity. As Alex Wall argues in a study of the lifestyle center as the twenty first century continuation of shopping malls, developers took on the task of building collective spaces where public authorities were unable or unwilling to do so. Looking at European and Souteast Asian case studies, Wall questions whether private development can take responsibility over the public realm (Wall 2008).

Figure 19. BIG Fashion shopping center in its urban context, taken from the website of BIG shopping centers.

The design of BIG Fashion shopping center creates a very tempered, neutral space without being completely interiorized and artificial, by organizing sequences of shops around four partially shaded courtyards that meet in a central collective area. Employees in the center come from all religious sectors, thereby encouraging the profitable heterogeneity aimed at by the initiators of the project. Field work at different points in time over the last year have shown that most areas in the center are visited by all communities of the surrounding neighborhoods, Jews, Muslims and Christians alike. In an interview with architecture journalist Noam Dvir, Moshe Tzur, architect of the BIG Fashion shopping center explained how the design aimed to provide a piece of urban fabric, that relates to the character of Nazareth, even in the choice of materials including natural stone and local trees. (Dvir 2009). Tzur's plan includes a wider and a narrower street, the latter as a reference to the souk in Nazareth's Old City.

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[11] See Friedman, R (2009) Country's first open-air shopping mall opens in Nazareth, *Jerusalem Post, July 17*

Rather than a sterile simulacrum, disconnected from its context, the BIG Fashion center puts forward a hybrid between a neutral, well-tempered compound and a – be it superficial – understanding of Nazareth's urban memory. In 2012, a children playground was added on the roof of the shopping center, thereby enhancing the potential of the complex to be more than a commercial center. Nevertheless, while the complex provides a well-tempered neutral environment of exchange for visitors from different cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds, the design of the space remains limited as a self-sufficient enclosed and introvert environment. The complex does not relate to its immediate or remote urban context.

Furthermore, the collective spaces' primary purpose is commercial and falls short in providing a base for non-commercial social interaction and exchange. Nevertheless, the economically very successful experiment opens up a wide range of possibilities for win-win situations where socio-cultural heterogeneity benefits the private market.

To conclude, the three collective spaces described above can be considered prototypes for the future urban cohesion of the city of Nazareth, each one in their own way a 'hot spot,' from easily inflammable, to an area of exchange and eventually a tempered micro-climate. Their different degrees of success, whether social or economic and a spatio-temporal understanding of their connection with the city's complex spatial mechanisms provide a very compelling set of challenges for developing future urban design strategies.

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Beyond urban informality: Housing Markets as hidden side of Planning.
A case study of Ahmedabad, India

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Housing studies from the North and South despite differing in research traditions have to ultimately answer the question how to analytically break down a market into its constituting elements. The dominating way in the North uses price as ultimate value tool but never won grounds in developing countries due to practical and theoretical limitations. By reviewing existing literature, the author puts forward a more operational way to break down housing markets. Following the concept of an informality-formality continuum a multidimensional understanding of housing supply is put forward. To fully grasp the dimension of housing it is proposed to conceive its market in the widest possible meaning including urban planning, land preparation, housing construction and its ultimate allocation.
The case study of Ahmedabad is used to illustrate the robustness of the proposed taxonomic structure which captures well on ground reality. Future research should aim to develop the categorizations further.

Keywords: Urban informality, Housing market, Planning, Ahmedabad

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Introduction

The cities of the South have moved back into academic scrutiny (Al Sayyad and Roy 2004; Roy 2005). Contrary to former periods of intensive concerns the recent engagement with cities of the developing world is increasingly informed by scholars from the South applying carefully adjusted theories from the West or putting forward newly developed theories from the South. Investigations into housing markets, a fundamental topic to investigate how cities of the South and their explosive unequal growth patterns may be tamed in the future, have to ultimately find an answer to the great theoretical tension of the field: how to account for local conditions in its greatest possible diversity while enabling a comparability among different forms of housing. Adding to this general scale tension is the peculiar nature of housing being at the crossroad of economic and social science: Housing is important to people and national economies alike. Real estate (of which housing represents the largest share) is the dominant stock of wealth in any country and one of industry with the greatest multiplier effect (due to the amount of attached industries). In India alone there are 250 ancillary industries attached to the real estate sector. At the same time housing covers some fundamental human needs, such as being a shelter and home to its users, or an economic and social safety-net to amortize shocks. It has been identified as one fundamental pillar of poverty reduction initiatives in urban environments (Moser 1998). Consequently the analysis of housing markets requires (or enables) to deal simultaneously with two interwoven aspects: a social/redistributive and economic/liberal dimension which both constantly challenging the positioning of the state and its local political substrates.

There are many different ways to classify a housing market. The most obvious is by using their differentiation in prices. Although this approach is popular far beyond mainstream economic thinking, there are serious shortcomings to this practice of flattening heterogeneity. Prices should undoubtedly play a role in any market analysis but to avoid comparing apples and oranges additional information has to be included. Within a brief review of literature we distinguish two different systems of defining a housing typology. While in the West functional and physical considerations rank first, systems in the Global South concentrate on different housing (or more narrowly land) supply processes, notably along formal – informal lines.

Research on Housing Markets

The down below is a selective literature review on housing markets. Existing discourses are fragmented along many disciplines and/or topics. Housing has been subject of anthropological-architectural investigations (particular self-help), research in the line of legal-political science (informality, policy, and titling discourse), environmental (resource, sustainability and health), social-anthropological (home, security, community, sub-markets), architectural-geographical (morphology, typology studies, land-use changes), and economic discourses (markets and price modelling, finance). The multiple engagements with housing have led to a discourse fragmented in space, time and matter. The greatest cleavage are between studies in developed (focusing traditionally on housing markets) and the developing world (dealing more with tenure security and slums). The following paragraphs give a broad brushed overview on the literature on housing and land markets in the developed and developing world that serves as a basis to reconcile the different discourses.

Mainstream Economics

Research into housing markets in the West have been dominated by mainstream economic contributions which can be almost equated with mathematical models that use price as ultimate and singular expression of value.

There are two underlying axioms: All characteristics of a house (and its surrounding) can be translated into monetary terms and secondly markets are in equilibrium at least on the long run.

The first economic models (David Ricardo in 1809, Heinrich von Thünen in 1826) analyzed land rents (prices) in relation to their distance from the urban centre. This mono-centric city model is still a basic assumption of most economic calculations nowadays. Since the late 1960s, hedonic price models expanded land rent models to capture the greater diversity of housing supply that cannot be solely reduced to distance from the city centre (Malpezzi 2003; Sheppard 1999). These regression models allow calculating the relational influence of multiple variables, such as attributes of the housing unit on price formation. With a strong Anglo-Saxon weight, the research identified characteristics such as housing type (flat, detached, semi-detached) size (floor space, number of sleeping rooms, bathrooms), and physical characteristics (presence of fire places, gardens, and balconies) as positively impacting sale prices. Also more complex relations which do not follow a singular axis of influence, such as age or building materials could be integrated.

Undoubtedly hedonic regression delivered great new insights into price formation and accounted better for the greater fragmentation and spatial explosion of post-war urbanization. Nevertheless there are serious limitations to this method. The most worrying shortcoming is that mainstream economic approaches are incapable to integrate instability their calculations (markets are seen as inherently stable, Schneider and Kirchgässner 2009:322). With the latest global financial crises such shortcoming put these approaches under extreme pressure.

In addition to theoretical doubts there are practical shortcomings to regression in the developing world. The biggest problem for a larger application is that requirement of large data sets to be able to provide robust results. While such information is constantly becoming more available in the West, developing countries persistently suffer from a chronic data shortage. Besides some studies sponsored by International Agencies, the modelling discourse is almost non-existing. However it is important to note that mainstream models still shape the way planning professionals in the South think about markets and cities.

Academics on the contrary tried shifting focus on aspects of housing markets that do not face the same information constraints. The largest body of research looks on the one side at land tenure and informality on the other side.

Land market/ tenure discourse

The body of research on informal tenure systems is large and diverse. With roots in the 1970s it was writings of academics such as Shlomo Angel, Peter Ward and Alain Gilbert (more on Latin America, Gilbert and Ward 1985) as well as Alain Durand-Lasserve and Geoffrey Payne (larger on the developing world, Durand-Lasserve and Royston 2002; Payne 2002) that casted a light on forms of land transformation that were highly unacknowledged at that time but accounted for the greatest part of urban growth. Within the existing discourse two groups may be distinguished: scholars interested in certain sub-markets, its agents, and physical product (slums, rent sector, land lords, etc.) and a second group more concerned with the consequences of such activity: non-formalized land titles and policy.

Among the most important research findings are the identification of the important roles specific agents play in the access of low-cost housing and the importance of tenure for personal investment efforts: not legal tenure but the safety from eviction, so called de-facto land tenure is crucial.

A later important discursive extension has been done by De Soto, who situates at the border between discussions about land tenure and informality.

His writings gave another impetus for policy reforms towards informal housing (de Soto 1989, 2003). In his famous line of argument slum dwellers are creative entrepreneurs that only require formal property deeds to unlock their dead capital and participate in the market economy.

Informality discourse
The concept of informality is very complex and not tightly linked to housing. Since the 1940s and 1950s and the first appearance of the term, informality has become an object of study by different disciplines. Informality has been consequently investigated by anthropologists and sociologists, lawyers and policy makers, economists and architects who all have put emphasis on different aspects of the informal, resulting in detached discourses split into different social-cultural, political, economical and spatial dimensions of informality.
The largest body of literature is linked to the concept of informal economy and informal housing construction. The term of informal economy can be traced back to Keith Harts work on the second economy of Ghana which theoretical underpinning was directly adapted by the ILO (International Labour Organization). In its initial meaning informal economy described activities in Ghana that were forms of employment based on petty capitalism/self-employment with an ease of entrance and no formal security (Hart 1973).
The informal housing debate is unmistakably linked to the work of John Turner (though there are several conceptual forefathers). His influential publications informed the first generation of World Bank projects - and with the construct of the Washington consensus ultimately UNCHS (United Nations Committee for Human Settlements, former UN-Habitat) and IMF (International Monetary Fond) - and thus had a major impact on the developing world. Turner's contribution was to see the traditional construction practices of the poor as a cost-effective way to solve the problem of low cost housing (Turner and Fichter 1972; Turner 1977). While being subject to a different procedural logic (here the useful extension of Paul Baróss may be mentioned, Baróss and van der Linden 1990) the state can easily assist their efforts and thus save costs as other way of publicly provided housing options are by far more resource intensive.

Shortcomings of the current state of literature:
Conceiving the three shortly elaborated discourses as a whole, our knowledge on housing markets in the developing world appears rather limited. While mainstream economic thinking did not manage successfully to adapt its methodology to the context of the developing world and consequently simply ignores the ground reality of informality, research into land tenure and informality do not manage to put forward a theoretical framework analyzing housing markets in an integrated manner.
 It appears that the attraction of the concept is at the root of its major shortcomings. The broad success of informality across different disciplines has not only led to a softening of its definition but also to a serious conflation of different meanings.
For example informal economy was often used interchangeably with illegality and marginality characterized by small enterprises substituting the formal economy and marked by pollution, insecurity, unreliability and law-evasion. Similarly the housing debate revolving around Turner directly links with terminologies of illegality (squatting), poverty (slums) and traditional construction processes (self-help). Even this plural understanding of informality seems to be incomplete. In reality informality is not confined to the poor, consists of more than illegal activities, and is far from being marginal.
The major reason for the current shortcoming of the academic discourse of informality is linked to its intrinsic character.

The hitherto definition leads to a negative conceptualization (understanding through its opposite) of informality. In other words informality is what is not formal. Post-colonial scholars have pointed out that the domination of Western thinking in the literature led to the proliferation of binary concept of opposing realities (similar to black-white, inside-outside, etc.). In this line of thinking binary oppositions have to fulfil the condition of being mutually exclusive. The dichotomy of formal-informal solely conforms to this condition in its theoretical reduction. All informal activity in the consulted literature (which could not entirely be stated in the referenced due to length restrictions to the paper) cannot entirely be attributed to the opposite of formality. The intertwining of both 'worlds' is also omnipresent in the case study.

Despite this flaw, concepts seeing informality as the flipped side of a formality coin dominated discourses in the past, only recently new concepts thrive to break binary opposition. While Ananya Roy argues for decolonizing the informality discourse by putting it into the larger framework of standard city models (and not as a Southern sub form of world urbanization,Roy 2005), other authors propose a scalar thinking of a formal-informal range: 'it turns out that formal and informal are better thought of as metaphors that conjure up a mental picture of whatever the user has in mind that particular time' (Guha-Khasnobis et al. 2006:3). How this should be done practically remains unaddressed to date.

To break with the initial pathologies of subject fragmentation inherited from past sector-based approaches I propose a careful dissection of different aspects of informality implied in the diverse disciplinary discourses. Past approaches did not discern carefully enough between the qualitative dimension, legal condition of the informal and its underlying processes. By using multiple criteria both school of thoughts, the binary and the scalar can be accounted for. Similar to economic regression, the identification of constituting categories that can be broken down into formal-informal is sought for. The combination of these results in the elaboration of a degree of formal-informal housing options.

Towards a Taxonomy of Informality

Informal in the sense of traditional processes

Informality in terms of a traditional way of activity is apparent in the influential housing taxonomy developed by Drakakis-Smith who discerned between formal (formal public, formal private, formal co-operative) and informal (consisting of squatter, illegal subdivision, low income rental housing) provision systems (Drakakis-Smith 1981). While houses developed through the former group are mainly 'using semi-industrial to industrial mode of production utilising wage labour, modern industrially produced materials and being relatively capital intensive' (Keivani and Werna 2001:72), a structure that is informally provided applies 'a traditional mode of production which is relatively labour intensive, utilising a large input of self-help labour and indigenous and traditional materials' (ibd). Informal and formal is thus equated with modern vs. traditional and commercial vs. self-sufficient. This aspect of informality seems to increasingly disappear with the penetration of market logics. While squatting in the 1950 and -60s often was still depicted as spontaneous and unregulated activity (Turner 1968), free of additional cost, increasing urban pressure resulted soon in a professionalization of such access to urban land (Berner 2001).

Informal in the sense of non-compliance to standards and rules

The major reason for the proliferation and success of informal activities around the world is the strategic breaking of laws to cut cost and increase competitiveness. Strictly speaking an important aspect of informality is illegal. The avoidance of such term is more due to political correctness than methodological consistence.

Whether by not respecting work safety regulations, social security, construction standards or minimum living spaces, informality reduces costs in a perfect neo-classic thinking of efficiency: profit maximization beyond ethical considerations (this links directly to point 3.4). The non-compliance to rules also includes with the breaking of formal processes and organizational paradigms. The example of community saving/micro-finance groups shows that non-orthodox institutional set-ups can provide more successful financial schemes. The constant evolution of what are formal standards and rules illustrates the very dynamic nature of informal-formal.

This aspect of informality forms the core of the discourse on informal economy but is also largely present in the land tenure debate. In perspective of housing, the non-respect of building codes and safety standards are the major characteristics of informal land development.

Informal in the sense of absence of legally recognized status

Informality has another often stretched characteristic, not being recognized by institutions from the other side of the spectrum. This is what ultimately defines the informal (though our categorisation shows that informality is so much more). It has been common practice in the developing world that planning bodies left informal construction blank areas on maps and official urban plans. The consequence was a that services were never extended, and if these area had not already slum-like conditions they surely would degrade slowly to these due to structural exclusion to the city.

Although the strict version of such practice has mostly vanished, the largest share of cities in the developing world is still unregulated and informal.

The focal point of land tenure research is to show the diversity of agreements of tenure where recognized titles are missing. Further with the popularity of regularization programs the recognition of informality is an interesting superposition of formality on informality. As we shall see in the selected case study some informality is recognized - entitled for regularization - others are not, leading to a widening of the formal-informality degree.

Informal in a sense of off the book or in violation of moral standards

This is probably the most problematic but also the most present dimension of informality. The informal is created by the way formality is defined (its rules, standards, tools). This formalization of processes also generates a behaviour codex with implicit moral conceptions. The difference among countries what is considered as formal or informal depends also on their relation to local moral standards. One telling example is squatting in some Islamic countries. The appropriation of vacant land is allowed according to the Ottoman law, however this fact seldom entered constitutional texts leaving a grey zone of informality, accepted by moral standards but in violation to official laws (Bukhari 1982).

Also the institutionalization of corruption in some governmental institutions of the South makes the drawing of a formal-informal border impossible. Nepotism a largely faced reality in governments around the globe, are very differently judged, generally being more culturally accepted in Islamic than Christian societies.

Summarising the above written we propose a framework to analyze real world informality to attempt a alignment and refinement of theoretical constructs and on the ground reality. Just having ample space to give a short illustration of the informality-formality degree that exists in Ahmedabad the author refers the reader to the annex and the elaborated taxonomy.

The Case Study Application

Inefficiency in the Indian Housing Market
The housing backlog of India is more than 26,53 million housing units which can be seen as a very strong expression of unmet demand (there are almost 100 million slum dwellers in India, Mahadeva 2006). According to mainstream economic thinking these millions of missing housing structures are only possible because the market is inefficient or better said because the market is hindered from operating efficiently. To them efficiency is in the nature of markets. Here we reach the limits of mainstream thinking. Even if information of housing prices, land supply, and regulation (like zoning restrictions) would be available to establish a comparative study to numerate the impact of regulation it would hardly be capable explaining why a nation is short of 15 percent of its total housing stock.

The planning context in Ahmedabad: towards greater effectiveness
Ahmedabad is the largest city in Gujarat India with around 6 million inhabitants. Once called the Manchester of the East due to its textile mills, the 1970s and 80s showed a constant demise of the manufacturing sector with impoverishment of the population (concentrated in the Eastside of the Sabarmati river) and an increasingly powerless local government.
Due to macroeconomic changes and several national political and financial crises India started to decentralise its governmental structure. The liberalization of the Indian economy started in 1992 with the 74th Amendment Act. Gujarat a state reputed for its entrepreneurial population has always been on the forefront of reforms and was quick in grasping the potential given by the central government to create a pro-business culture. Several deregulating reforms were passed that aimed to attract investment (first national, then international), strengthen the legal framework for enterprises and reform the local government structure.
Administratively, following the Gujarat Town Planning and Urban Development Act of 1976 (short GTPUDA 1976) the urban agglomeration and its surrounding are divided into an urban core, the AMC (Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation) and AUDA (Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority) that is assigned to areas with strong current growth and future expansion axes. The AUDA is also in charge of the urban planning with issuing city development plans every ten years (large scale master plans) and town planning schemes (TPS, smaller and more detailed planning on demand basis). Legal and procedural modifications have altered to urban planning process from a slow, corruption ridden exercise to a more participative and fast engine (though corruption is still present and speculative interests are very influential).
Ordered urban expansion is guaranteed by an innovative land pooling/readjustment mechanism. Agricultural land owners receive smaller but urban plots within the same TPS. Later construction activities are monitored and sanctioned by two sets of permits (construction, building use). While the process is described in the GTPUDA, the specific standards and rules are outlined in the Gujarat Development Control Regulations (GDCR).
As part of a doctoral research the structure of the housing market has been investigated during several months of field research (from 2010-2012). The housing market in Ahmedabad has considerably benefited from the Indian deregulation policies. The enabling position of the local urban body has created a positive sphere to multiply the engaged housing actors including state, non-state, and market actors with diverging interests and often conflicting agendas.

Housing in Ahmedabad: from Informal to Formal

We shall illustrate some examples along the range of formal-informal housing solutions currently existing in Ahmedabad to aliment the theoretical discussion of the former chapter with ground realities.

Informality is present in basically every housing project. Within the field research no project has been found that has been completely conform to the building regulations. Smaller violations of margins and density excess are common and go in pair with bribing of government officials to get permits in time. Common as well is the payment in black money (at least a partial amount). However the difference between lower and the middle-higher end of the housing price segment is the greater penetration of informality in the former one. Middle and high-end housing have formal materials, services, and planning.

On the low-cost segment we can observe a great variety: 'chawls', slums, notified slums, governmental EWS-housing, NGO induced projects, in-situ upgradation and the slum network project.

Slums have per definition at least two categories of informality: irregular land tenure and sub standard housing conditions. There are already three different official statuses of slums in Ahmedabad: notified slums, non-notified slums, and 'chawls'. The latter are nowadays substandard housing units that once have been formally constructed by industrial employers to house their workers. With the decline of the 1970s and 1980s these buildings were left to its occupiers and with the missing maintenance degraded rapidly. Situated in the historic centre of the city they form an important housing stock for low cost rental solution. 'Chawls' often have a sort of formal servicing and are more often than not according to the national building code and the GDCR as both apply exceptional standards to buildings in this area (similar to urban villages). As for formal titles a large array of situations can be observed: from official title to completely unresolved situations. While for years the legal tenure was less of an issue as de-facto security was high the rising interest in land in prime location have multiplied tenure conflicts. The possibility to resist envisioned land transformations or at least benefit from their profits is directly linked to the details of tenure.

A similar development can be observed in notified slums. Notified slums are areas that fell under the definition of slums as written in the Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act of 1956.[2] These areas have been officially recognized and delineated as such. Only notified slums may benefit from attaining a document for tenure security or benefitting from any governmental intervention. The inclusion of market actors into slum upgrading led to another differentiation within the category of notified slums. Only those in prime location attracting enough real estate interest find themselves in a powerful situation to negotiate the nature of the free housing units developers are obliged to deliver in turn for using a part of the existing land for other purposes. Generally the in-situ provision of housing uses formal construction materials, labour and servicing. Also the land tenure is ultimately formalized. However the entire process of planning and negotiation is following highly informal practices including forms of violent enforcement, corruption, and nepotism. Such informality is not confined to low cost housing but so common in India that it is almost socially accepted or at least widely tolerated.

Even in the NGO-induced low-cost housing projects bribing of officials is a necessity to obtain the required permits. Within the last years several NGOs have started large scale housing projects at the South, and South-Eastern fringe of the city. While the entire execution is done by formal companies, the planning and saving is based on informal dynamics.

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[2] In Section 3 slums are defined as areas that '(a) are in any respect unfit for human habitation; or (b) are by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement and design of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangement of streets, lack of ventilation, light or sanitation facilities, or any combination of these factors, are detrimental to safety, health or morals'

Community participation to define the units to be constructed, and a grassroots organization created to inform lenders, individualise and assist saving plans and collect the instalments both managed to reconcile the mistrust and different logic of formal and informal embedded agents. The pioneering work of such informal negotiations has been the widely published Slum Network Projects. Started in the ending 90s, an NGO approached the city and local industries to join forces for slum up-gradation. The result has been a project base collaboration between market actors, NGOs, governmental institutions and slum dwellers. Materials were industrial standardized and purchased in bulks. The land tenure remained unresolved (slum dwellers just received a promise of 10 year tenure security). Surprisingly however it is this type of housing where the least informality is present in the negotiation with public authorities. As sizes of SNP projects remained small with a direct interest of the AMC to succeed, nepotistic tendering or bribing is practically absent. On the other hand with this missing grease, the operational machine is considerably slow: despite a promising concept the SNP did not manage to scale up.

Conclusion

This paper attempts to put forward taxonomy of informal-formal housing options that could be applied in the Global South. Based on different characteristics a finer grained understanding of informality may account better to the large variety of different compositional logics of formal and informal practices that can be observed on the ground. The taxonomy has been exemplified through research carried out in Ahmedabad.

This research should be seen as a first step to a more comprehensive categorization of the informal-formal degree. Future investigations could further decompose the categories and analyze their constituting elements. In doing so it is hoped to advance our common understanding of urbanization in the developing world and inform formal planning mechanism to better frame and tame the exploding inequality of our cities.

Appendix

PROJECT TYPES IN AHMEDABAD							
	Existing Slums	Notified Slums	Existing Chawls	SNP	Slum upgrading	EWS projects	NGO projects
Traditional Processes							
- way to build	-	+	+	+/-	+	+	+
- materials	-	+/-	+	+	+	+	+
- land	-	+/-	+	+/-	+	+	+
Non-compliance to standards							
- materials	+/-	+	+	+	+	+	+
- land	-	-	+/-	+	+/-	+	+
- services	-	+/-	+	+	+	+	+
Absence of legally recognized status							
- tenure	-	-	+	+	+/-	+	+
- wealth	-	-	+/-	+	+	+	+
Violation of moral standards							
- corruption	-	-	-	+	o	-	+
- fraud	-	-	-	-	-	+/-	+
						+ formal, - informal, +/- both, 0 not enough information to date	

Table 1. The informal-formal taxonomy

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The Dynamic Roles of the State as a Provider, a Supporter and a Catalyst in Community Development? Case Studies from Thailand

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The transformation of the global housing policy from a providing paradigm to a supporting paradigm defines new roles and relationships amongst the state, the private sector, civil society and the experts. This paper focuses on the dynamic roles of the state, with case studies from Thailand. The paper explores 4 community development cases which the state plays different roles – a provider, supporter and catalyst. First, mainly as a provider, the state launched a nation-wide housing programme for the low-income. Second, mainly as a supporter and slightly as a catalyst, the state supports a nation-wide participatory slum upgrading. Third, as a supporter and a catalyst, the state support a capacity building workshop for architectural students related to community development. Finally, as a supporter and a catalyst, the state support a seed fund programme for catalytic community projects. Challenges of each role are discussed.

Keywords: Participatory design, Community architecture, Community development, Empowerment, Participation

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Introduction: the role of a provider, supporter and catalyst

> "[T]o carry out a revolution *for* the people… is equivalent to carrying out a revolution *without* the people, because the people are drawn into the process by the same methods and procedures used to oppress them".
>
> (Freire and Ramos, 1972: 108)

In 1950 the only 2 cities that could claim more than 10 million inhabitants were New York and Tokyo (United Nations, 2004). Today there are 20 such mega-cities. Unlike before, most of them are in the poorer parts of the world including Mexico, India, Brazil, Argentina, Indonesia, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt, Nigeria and the Philippines. In the next 30 years, the global number of slum dwellers is expected to increase to about 2 billion if no firm and concrete action is taken to address that trend (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2003). UN projections have suggested that over the next 30 years all of the world's population growth will be in the urban areas of low- and middle-income countries (Garau et al., 2005).

The term 'slum' had been introduced in the 1820s and was used to identify the poorest quality housing and the most unsanitary conditions, also a refuge for crime, 'vice' and drug abuse, and a source for many epidemics that ravaged urban areas." (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2003) At the end of the 19th century, slums continued to be perceived as having the 'vicious' characteristics. Between the 1890s and 1930s, slums were authorized to be eradicated through the imposition of technical and legal standards. At the same time, social movements tried to rename the socially stigmatised characteristics of 'slum' with words such as 'neighbourhoods' or 'communities.' (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2003)

Table 1-1 (Tovivich, 2011: 12) below illustrates the changing paradigm in global housing policies for the urban poor. Different perceptions of the government and the experts around 'slums' reflect different approaches of urban poor housing policies in the transition from a 'providing' to 'supporting' paradigm. The early stages of the supporting paradigm concern the withdrawal of control by the government and more participation from civil society and the market. The current stage of the supporting paradigm concerns the partnerships amongst the state, civil society and the market. The transformation of global housing policies for the urban poor since the 1970s from a providing paradigm, in which the state and the experts perceived themselves as providers and the urban poor were the passive recipients, to a supporting paradigm defines new roles and relationships amongst the state, the private sector, civil society and the experts (Fiori et al., 2000, Hamdi, 1995).

In short, the state, the private sector and the experts become supporters and the poor become active agents, solving their own problems and making decisions for their own situation and future. People-participation and empowerment in the process of community development are central. Blackburn and Holland (1998) proposed that in the participatory planning process, development practitioners should act as 'catalysts' and 'supporters', although with ambiguous definitions. The author's previous research (Tovivich, 2011) explores the dynamic roles of community architects as the provider, supporter and catalyst. In conclusion, first, the values of an architect as a provider focus on 'controlling'. Their roles are to determine basic infrastructure and facilities for communities, design community houses and site planning according to building regulations and standards. Second, the values of an architect as a supporter focus on 'supporting and learning'.

Their roles are to facilitate dialogue amongst stakeholders, balance individual and collective needs of community members with inputs of architects under their organizational policy in a participatory design process, build up local capacity of community members towards basic architectural design principles, support people-organization development and support community bonds and expanding community networks. Third, the values of an architect as a catalyst focus on 'empowering and learning'. Their roles are to raise awareness and self-confidence of community members, encourage community members to collectively act for themselves and encourage community members to reflect on their action.

Developing after the author's previous research (Tovivich, 2011) this paper focuses on the dynamic roles of the state, with case studies from Thailand. The paper explores 4 cases related to community development, which the state plays different roles. First, mainly as a provider, the state launched a nation-wide housing programme for the low-income. Second, mainly as a supporter and slightly as a catalyst, the state supports a nation-wide participatory slum upgrading. Third, as a supporter and a catalyst, the state support a capacity building workshop for architectural students related to community development professionalism. Finally, as a supporter and a catalyst, the state support a seed fund programme for catalytic community projects.

Table 1. Housing Policies for the Urban Poor (Tovivich, 2011: 12)

'Baan Eua Arthorn' Programme and National Housing Authority (NHA)

The *Baan Eua Arthorn* programme is implemented by the NHA aiming to provide 600,000 ready-to-occupy housing units for low-income people across Thailand at subsidized rate within 5 years. The programme was launched in 2003 by the Royal Thai Government at the same time with the *Baan Mankong* Programme, which is a participatory nation-wide slum upgrading programme implemented by the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI). The CODI aimed to reach 300,000 low-income households around Thailand within 5 years. Focusing on the NHA background, the housing supply provided by the state and private sectors in Bangkok could not meet the housing demands of the rapidly increasing urban population in the city. In 1960, there were an estimated 740,000 people living in overcrowded communities in Bangkok (Askew, 2002). The first eviction took place in 1963. Slum eviction was a part of the second Thailand National Economic and Social Development Plan (1967-1971). Despite the political will of the Thai Government to set up four separate agencies responding to the emergence of slums – the Public Welfare Housing Division (1940), the Housing Bureau (1951), the Government Housing Bank (1952) and the Central Office for Slums Improvement (1960) attached to the Bangkok Municipality (Senanuch, 2007, Chiu, 1985) – the problem of inadequate housing provisions for the urban poor remained. One reason was because each unit was attached to different departments and their work was isolated from one another. Therefore, the government established the NHA in 1973 in order to respond to the housing demands of the poor and lower-to-middle income groups. Clearing slums and resettling community members affected by the clearing operations was one of the original objectives of the NHA (Chiu, 1985).

From the early 1970s to the mid-1970s, the aim of the NHA remained the same since it was originally established in 1973 – to build ready-to-occupy low-cost housing for the urban poor with intensive government subsidies. Afterwards, the NHA experienced financial problems. By 1978 the NHA stopped its subsidized housing programmes because of a lack of government funding, and slum upgrading and sites-and-services were incorporated into NHA's Accelerated Plan for 1979-1982. However, the NHA's slum upgrading projects in 1978 focused mainly on physical improvements. As a result, the appearance of slums began to change, yet the insecurity of land tenure remained the same (Askew, 2002). Sites-and-services was introduced and promoted by the World Bank. During 1979-1982, the NHA received loans from the World Bank and applied its policy through the promotion of sites-and-services housing programme in Thailand. The NHA encountered numerous failures because the projects were not appropriate to the lifestyle of Thailand's urban poor who actually did not want to invest their energy, money and time in unfinished structures. The location of the projects was also too far from the city centre.

In parallel, from 1978, NHA proposed hire-purchase housing schemes for middle-income-earners, especially civil servants, and conducted resettlement and flat building projects for the poor. "The NHA's forced abandonment of the high-subsidy approach to low-income housing… did reflect the state's capitulation to the forces of the urban land market…" (Askew, 2002: 66). However, the efficiency of the NHA was low, constructing only approximately 6,000 low-cost housing units per year. At the same time, after the early 1980s when Thailand was hard hit by the oil crisis, the economic growth was incredibly improved in 1986. Therefore, the government decided to decrease financial support for the NHA and shifted support to the private sector to build houses for low-income and middle-class groups.

Referring to Dowall (1992), between 1984-1988 the public housing built by the NHA accounted for only 3.3% of the housing stock. Large scale / developer built housing produced nearly the half of the housing stock.

However, the supply of low-cost housing by private developers could be described as being relatively insignificant for the urban poor.

The demand for low-income housing in 1988 was 130,000 units and the output of low-cost housing by developers in 1988 was estimated at close to only 4000 units: 600 units of row houses and over 3000 low-cost condominium units. Therefore, the supply gap was about 70% of the demand. At the same time, there was an over-supply of medium- and high-income houses. This is not surprising since only 10% of the developers built low-cost housing given the financial constraints of land prices and building materials (Seik, 1992).

From 1973 to 2004, the NHA provided 451,222 residential units. Amongst these, 71.8% were in the Bangkok metropolitan and greater Bangkok area and 28.2% were in regional areas.

With respect to the types of housing projects, 56.5% were slum upgrading, 30.5% were housing community projects, 11% were for governmental officers and 0.71% were 3,221 units from the *Baan Eua Arthorn* programme. In 2003, in response to the great demand for low-income housing, the NHA primarily focuses solely on the *Baan Eua Arthorn* programme.

It is important to note that it took the NHA approximately 30 years to develop approximately 450,000 residential units. Comparing the figure with the quantitative aim of the newly launched *Baan Eua Arthorn* programme which aimed to produce 600,000 residential units within five years, it is not surprising why the programme could not accomplish its aims qualitatively and quantitatively.

The *Baan Eua Arthorn* programme aimed to provide standard residential units for low-income, junior civil servants and government employees earning less than 22,000 Baht per month per family.

The programme aimed at land ownership rather than house/room renting. The rent-to-own per month was supposed to cost approximately 10% of the family's income, with a flat-rate price of 390,000 Baht per unit. The government provided subsidies of 80,000 Baht per unit to cover the construction cost and public utilities. It cost approximately 420,000 Baht to build each unit.

The margin was NHA's administration cost. There were four types of houses – the detached house, the attached house, the row-house and the condominium (24 and 33 square metres.) A financial feasibility study was conducted to specify which house type was affordable in a given location. After the clients passed a financial credit check, they received loans from two commercial banks. In 2009, the whole programme had been stopped by the new government due to many problems – efficiency, effectiveness and transparency. By the year 2007, 348 projects and over 600,000 dwellings units under the *Baan Eua Arthorn* programme were planned.

Three problem themes were identified (NHA, 2007):

- 65,293 completed projects encountered problems, because either the clients did not pass the banks' credit check or the projects had too many empty units.
- 334,352 units were under construction. More than 40% of this is due to delay. There were many problems, such as inappropriate location, fake demands in the pre-sale period, overlapping demands from other nearby *Baan Eua Arthorn* projects, inefficiency of private contractors and many clients failing to get loans from banks.
- 209, 417 units were not yet signed and contracted by the house owners. The NHA was afraid that if it took responsibility for all of these units, it would lead to organizational bankruptcy. There were plans to decrease the amount of units and to transfer responsibility to local authorities.

Figure 1. Example of houses in *Baan Eua Arthorn* Programme

'Baan Mankong' Programme and Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI)

In 1990, there were approximately 1.55 million residential units in Bangkok. The majority or 55% were constructed by the private sector, 22% by ordinary people, 12% were slums, and only 8.5% were provided by the NHA and 2.5% by others. It was clear that the NHA could not meet housing demand. Government policies during 1992-1996 focussed more on low-income groups especially for those living in slum areas.

As a result, in 1992, the Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) was established under the NHA and became the CODI in 2000. The UCDO started with a US$50 million capital budget to make loans available to organized communities. The interest rate was much lower than other loan sources pursued by the urban poor, but high enough to sustain administrative costs. With the establishment of the UCDO, there was an attempt to bring together different groups of people into its executive boards – senior governmental staff, academics and community representatives.

The Eighth Thailand National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001) aimed at sustainable development by shifting the focus from economic development to human development (Viengsang et al., 2005). The slum dwellers' struggle was transformed from having to deal with *ad hoc* solutions to setting more sustainable long-term plans that drove changes at policy levels. By the 1990s, it was evident that slum dwellers negotiated their survival space with a more complex approach through continued lobbying, networking and partnerships.

In 2000, the UCDO merged with the Rural Development Fund to become a new public organization called the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI). The CODI continued the programme of the UCDO but had its own legal entity as a public organization. The organization is no longer under the NHA.

The work of the CODI primarily dealt with the poor's problems on a large scale and at the policy level. In 2004, the CODI had a fund of approximately 2.8 Billion Baht (US$ 70 million) of which 1.9 Billion Baht (US$ 47.5 million) was directly loaned to community members through four types of loans for community organizations (1) loans for housing and land; (2) loans for community enterprises; (3) loans to networks for holistic development; and (4) flexible revolving fund loans to savings groups or networks.

In 2007, the density of Bangkok reached almost 30 times that of Thailand as a whole. In many ways, Bangkok continuously reflects the dichotomy between itself and the countryside. From 1990s, the problem of slums and urban poor housing became serious and continues to grow. Referring to data from the year 2000 (CODI, 2004), there were 5,500 urban poor communities in Thai cities (7.75 million people, 1.5 million households). Of this total number, 1,750 urban poor communities (1.62 million people, 0.36 million households) had no serious tenure problems while 3,750 urban poor communities (5.13 million people, 1.14 million households) had problems with their tenure (37% located on private land, 36% located on public land and 26% located on mixed land). There were 1.5 million poor people (0.37 million households) living outside established communities (labourers, room-renters, homeless and temple dwellers). In total, there were approximately 8.25 million urban poor people in 1.87 million households. This comes to about 37% of Thailand's total urban population of 22.3 million people.

CODI (2004) stated that after the Asian economic crisis in 1997, approximately 62% of the working members in Thailand's urban poor communities earned less than 10,000 Baht a month. Twenty six percent of the urban poor communities paid nothing at all for their housing and those who paid spent an average of 12% of their monthly income on housing. Access to the lowest level of private sector housing options cost at least 2,000 Baht a month, but the ability of the urban poor to pay for housing was that 54% could afford to pay 1,000 Baht a month or more (CODI, 2004). The figures clearly show a big gap between what the market could provide and what the urban poor could afford.

Therefore, the focus of the *Baan Mankong* programme is on the people's empowerment with an emphasis on the people's power to make decisions for themselves. The programme aims to liberate poor communities from a bilateral patron-client relationship. This involves three levels of dialogues in the *Baan Mankong* programme process. First, the programme allows communities to see their problems related to the city structures within the bigger picture. Second, the programme changed the usual negative perception of the outsiders towards slums. Third, and most importantly, the programme allows poor communities to see their own capacity and believe in their own power and potential. This involves a self-actualization process of oneself (Boonyabancha, 2005). The third aspect relates greatly to Freire's *conscientisacion* and it supports the poor to develop their 'power from within'.

CODI offers the following five options for community improvement (1) on-site upgrading; (2) reblocking; (3) land sharing; (4) reconstruction; and (5) relocation (CODI, 2004). CODI's (2008) *Baan Mankong* progress between January 2003-March 2008, 512 projects were fully completed or were being implemented. This figure covers 1,010 communities in over 260 cities involving 54,000 households. It is important to note that 78% of the households were upgraded in the same place or on land nearby. In addition, 83% of the households secured long-term land tenure security; 44% of them had cooperative land ownership; 39% of them had long-term leases for community cooperatives; 9% had permission to use land; and 8% had short-term leases (less than five years) for community cooperatives

Not only does the *Baan Mankong* programme aim to bring benefits to non-financial outcomes, but it also attempts to employ this pro-poor housing approach to trigger many other sorts of economic investments. As one of the keys of the programme is to support genuine partnership, the programme aims to be a win-win solution benefiting all partners – civil society, the government and the market.

First, the programme generates money flow into the local economy. The CODI estimated that only 20% of economic activity came from government capital. The other 80% came from communities. Second, the people receive more valuable assets when they get access to land tenure security. Third, the land value in near the area being upgraded also increases. Fourth, in many cases local authorities invest in infrastructure improvements (CODI, 2008).

The *Baan Mankong* project employed five main tools in an attempt to uncover the energy and creativity of the urban poor communities (CODI, 2008). The first is flexible and accessible finance in the form of housing and land loans and infrastructure subsidies. The second is the use of a savings group as a crucial catalytic force. These were employed to link people together and to support them to work and think collectively. Third, collective decision making and acting collectively in land, finance, management and welfare matters is key. Fourth, horizontal information exchange amongst poor communities is important and information on such activities as project visits, workshops and inaugurations needs to be accessible. Pilot projects are closely linked to self-empowerment for the poor because tangible changes are what the poor need to see. Fifth, *Baan Mankong* provides technical support by involving community architects, planners, architectural schools and design students to assist communities in developing their new settlement plans.

Figure 2. Example of houses in *Baan Mankong* Programme

'Sweet Dreams Community?' Workshops and Office of Contemporary Art and Culture (OCAC)

OCAC, under the Ministry Of Culture, funded 'Sweet Dreams Community? Workshop.' The workshop aims to build up capacity – values, knowledge and skills – of architectural students related to participatory design and community development work. Conducted over a short period of 3 days, the 40 people participating in the workshop were architects, and architecture and urban planning students from various educational institutes, each playing a role of a member of a community to help create their own 'Sweet Dreams Community' under different briefs of limitations. The workshop employed seminar, small-group working, role-playing, collective decision making, model making and action planning as tools, which are the actual design methods of many architects when working on community projects.

The workshop began with a lecture and a discussion session. Afterwards, participants were divided into small groups to exchange their own definitions of dreamed 'house', 'community' and 'city'. It was interesting to see how each group projected images of their ideal community that distinctively reflect romanticized fantasies of the bourgeoisie - from the peaceful green rice fields, farming, backyard gardens, with animals and pets, living together under a considerate agricultural community, and the presence of an electric train for a glimpse of urban comfort. The task was later adjusted where the 40 participants were placed in a simulation situation, in which they were role-playing the lucky community members chosen by a make-believe government to design and create a prototype project called 'Sweet Dreams Community'. The participants had to create a model with the scale of 1:75 in 2 hours, and figure out the planning of a community on a make-believe piece of land where on one side is a beautiful canal and on the other side is a dumpster.

The result was that the groups who finished the planning first choose the plots next to the canal, while the latter groups unwillingly took the plots located next to the dumpster. The participants questioned the reality of the situation of how no one would want to live next to a dumpster unless it included other compensations, such as a bigger piece of land, or the location was nearer to a communal garden. The romanticized notion of the concept of 'community' was questioned continually. The final task was the expropriation of some of the land in the community to build a new expressway announced by the make-believe government. The participants had 5 hours to create new models and readjust the plan. It was interesting to see future architects and urban planners, who were playing the roles of members of a community, deciding to throw away their 'dream house' models and readjust the whole plan to suite a more limited space. The participants organized themselves into groups to make decisions about the new planning of the community and the new rules that everybody has to live under. Representatives were chosen, people sounded out their opinions and sub-groups were created, to find as many solutions as possible. Increasingly, it became obvious that the participants were immersing themselves more and more into their roles as the community's members. The tasks, the pressure and problems became the force that pushed everybody to think and figure out solutions together, which is no different from actual community development work. It is very common that a community that is under some sort of pressure can be united much more powerfully than a community where people live their lives separately in peace.

The final plan was a banal looking, with small, equal plots of land and straight lines of street and roads. Two prototypes of house were made to create a more harmonious appearance, and the space under the expressway was turned into a green area. Everyone agreed not to follow the existing set-back regulations as there would not be enough space. It turned out to be interesting to see how architects and urban planners take off their professional 'hats', and while they don the hat of a community member laws become more negotiable if a particular case holds appropriate reasons. Many of the participants said that they spent most of the time designing the process rather than designing a house. The complexity of the adjustment lay in the negotiations between different individuals and sub-groups, as well as discussion, arguments, exchanges of ideas, collective decision-making and design process, and categorization of working groups according to each person's interest and expertise.

There is no doubt that community development work contains many complex issues, and it requires the knowledge, abilities and creativity to design a practicality of the outcome as much as the process. The period of 3 days for a workshop cannot do more than stimulate future architects and urban planners to start to question the knowledge and the tools they are accustomed with when they design a 'house', 'community' and 'city'.

At the very least, what they have gained in return is the ability to learn how to work with a community through a simulated situation where they became a member of a community, as well as the ability to question the romanticized notion of what so called 'community'. After all, a community is not a place where everybody is considerate, loving, harmonious and agreeable, so all the challenges lie in the ability to create the right balance of different needs and finding the most compromising space where everything can meet.

Finally, wearing a hat and playing the role of the 'other' should somehow open new perspectives and expand the existing frames of how one thinks about and answers questions with more possibilities. It is not that the confidence and skill of experts are not important, but learning to listen to what other people have to say might take a longer time, and in the long run it may help to find more diverse alternatives of designs that can provide answers to the problems in a much more sensitive and effective manner.

Figure 3. 'Sweet Dreams Community?' Workshop

'Design Hero' Workshop and Thai Health Promotion Foundation (THPF)

THPF is an independent state agency set up according to the Health Promotion Act 2001 and funded by 2% surcharge tax of tobacco & alcohol excise taxes. It funds over 1,000 projects a year, including a project 'Design Hero'. The project is a design competition initiated by the THPF and Art4d magazine. The project encourages young designers who wish to develop local communities using 'design' as a tool with dedication and sincere spirit for the greater sustainable good. The project lasted for almost 6 months, welcoming ideas and proposals submitted from students from various fields of design. The selection process resulted in 20 teams who had the chance to participate in a workshop led by an experienced staff of architects and designers, with a support of professional connection from the art4d magazine. The proposed ideas and designs showed great enthusiasm to initiate developments in the environment, products, media and small-scale architecture. Each team displayed great attention to detail and invention to suit the community environment of their choice.

A budget of 10,000 Baht (approximately 200 Pounds) was given to each of the 10 finalists who had to create prototypes. The winners would receive 100,000 Baht (approximately 2,000 Pounds) and the opportunity to bring their proposed ideas into reality. The award is not merely money but a chance to create something in action.

During a 4-5 week period the 10 final teams went to the actual working sites, got to know the physical and social environments of the community they choose, initiated discussions and formulated exchanges between members of the community and themselves.

The finalists were all students from different educational institutions and their projects covered a wide range of ideas such as Bangkok Yai community guidebook which aimed to transform banal reality of its physical environment into beautiful hand-drawn images and a walking map of Chakrabongse Mosque which was collectively conducted with local children and teenagers in the local community. Both turned local tales and stories into interesting information design projects. Another example is a design proposal to support Don Gratai community's products from recycled waste. The 'Trading the Surplus' project proposed a fun and creatively interesting activity for a local market with the aim to reduce problems of unsold products from the daily fresh market.

The decision for choosing the winning team was based on the level of possibility the project could achieve by being a part of the community and its practicality and sustainability. The eventual winner was 'The Ground of Union' by the 'Like Sa Ra' team . Their project proposed the development of an empty space in front of the market in Jom Somboon Community which plans to turn the site into a multifunctional activity ground for the community.

The design was not the most architecturally complex design, however, within a few weeks their project was able to persuade members of the community, who were once strangers to one another, to participate in several communal activities such as cleaning the site, art workshop from scrap materials, cooking competition and collectively designing the communal space. What the designers of the 'Like Sa Ra' team achieved was the ability to unite the spirit of the people and initiate collective contributions from the community.

An interesting aspect about the 'Design Hero' design competition is that it gives a great deal of consideration to the participation of the community. Such a challenge requires designers to have great time management skills throughout the design process and still be able to come up with interesting and practical designs. Their contributions to the competition will be a significant part of every participants' experience as a designer, enhancing their ability to work in the actual world of community design. It is a challenge to create designs that resonate with communities and society as whole.

Figure 4. 'Design Hero' Workshop

Conclusion

The four examples from Thailand show how the state can play various roles when dealing with community development – a provider, supporter and catalyst. Each role has its opportunities and challenges. First, as a provider, the government through the NHA body provides nation-wide standard infrastructure and facilities for communities. The challenges are in the intensive subsidy versus the scale of slum problems and how to create a sense of community after the houses are finished. Second, mainly as a supporter and slightly as a catalyst, CODI believes in capacity of community members and promotes nation-wide slum upgrading. CODI plays a role as a 'coach' providing platforms and facilitating dialogue amongst stakeholders, balancing individual and collective needs of community members with political and technical supports from CODI networks, building up local capacity of community members, supporting people-organization development and community bonds, expanding community networks and also coordinating with local universities and local authority in order to solve the slum problems at scale. At the same time, CODI's accomplished projects also work as a catalytic force. Third, OCAC and THPF play the roles as a supporter and catalysts by initiating short-term workshops which aim to promote community participation and empowerment in a longer term by educating young professionals related to the issue. The workshops aim to raise awareness and support young professionals to learning in action and encourage them to reflect on their learning, with an attempt to transform their professional values of controlling to enabling.

The current approach of community development is complex. Partnerships mean more than a collaboration of different stakeholders who play a rigid role. The four examples show how the government can play dynamic roles. At the same time, the government collaborates with other stakeholders who can also play dynamic roles. Further studies and practices which explore the relationships and professionalism of other stakeholders should be conducted, in order to understand how to solve low-income community problems at scale.
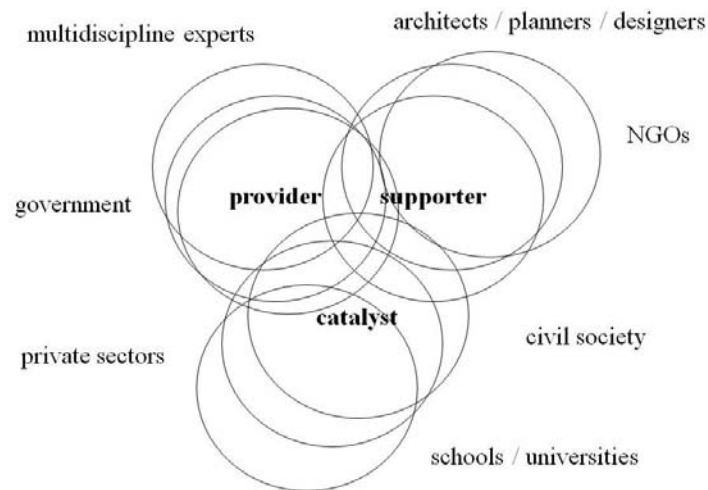

Figure 5. Dynamic Roles of Different Actors in Community Development

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Ramallah :
from '*sumud*' [resilience] to corporate identity

Natasha Aruri[1]

Ramallah stepped into the twentieth century as a village and by the 1990s it was the small city in the shades of Jerusalem. During the first Intifada (1987-1993) it assumed the role of political command center, where the governing motto of the streets was Sumud, means 'resilience', 'steadfastness', and within that fold popular unity. Upon the launching of the Peace Process Ramallah gradually gained increasing power as the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority. Today it is the uncontested political, economic and cultural center of the OPTs, performs under a consumption-oriented neoliberal economy, and is growing at an alarming pace. This paper examines the change in the perception of the city and its community through primary testimonies; narrating the social and spatial transformations that took place since 1994 as perceived by various typologies of residents. These perceptions are exampled hand-in-hand with the urbanization pattern in the specific colonial context.

Keywords: Oslo Accords, Ramallah, Otherness, Individuality vs. Collectivism

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Introduction: From Oslo to Ramallah

This paper falls within the scope of a larger research which is examining the socio-spatial shifts resulting from the development processes that have been taking place in the Palestinian city of Ramallah since the signature of the Oslo Accords (OAs) in 1993 between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). During the course of the study it became increasingly evident that what started as secret negotiations in Scandinavian Oslo with rosy promises; that promise has become a confusing predicament for a town that not knowingly turned into the *de facto* capital of a non-existing state. The OAs came as a result of a seven-year popular civil disobedience by the Palestinians against the Israeli occupation, which lasted from 1987 to 1993. This period is known as the 'First Intifada'. It was characterised by non-violent resistance rooted in communities of high social cohesion and solidarity under the collective goal of achieving freedom in the form of statehood.

The OAs are the first agreement to be signed between the Israeli Government and the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. It was envisioned as an agreement that marks the beginning of a five-year interim period, during which the PLO builds state institutions in the form of a Palestinian Authority (PA) that would govern and cater for the needs of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. This process of transition of power was to be funded by the international community.

Today in 2012 and eighteen years after the signature, the five-year interim period has not come to an end, and the international community is still channelling aid to the PA, which has technically and in turn expired thirteen years ago. Since more than six decades the dominant Palestinian political discourse and main collective cause has been a nationalistic one, that of the State. The OAs in turn were formulated and brought into action as a process of State-Making.

Meanwhile, the social composition of Ramallah has dramatically changed, and with it the spatial configuration of this locality. This paper concentrates on the socio-spatial shifts in Ramallah since the commencement of the political process in 1994, as considered to be a direct result of the political discourse. It examines the change in the perception of the city and its community through primary testimonies; narrating the social and spatial transformations that took place since 1994 as perceived by various typologies of residents within this space. These perceptions are exampled hand-in-hand with the urbanization pattern in the specific colonial context.

A total of twenty-two interviews with specialized professionals, researchers, politicians and decision-makers, investors, artists and journalists were conducted, in addition to eight focus groups with five distinctive age categories between autumn 2011 and that of 2012. A selection of those were chosen for the purpose of this paper[2] (detailed in references).

Ramallah: Entrapment?

The case of Ramallah is not unique, but uniquely complex. Ramallah is a city that entered the twentieth century as a village and by its end had become a *de facto* capital. Ramallah was always the 'rest stop' north of Jerusalem. This perception of the city remained until the second half of the twentieth century when the Palestinian national liberation movement and many of its factions arrived. Yet, it remained the 'backyard' of Jerusalem.

Fate took a detrimental turn upon the signature of the OAs in 1993. Israel imposed a complete closure banning access of Palestinians to annexed Jerusalem or its own territory.

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[2] The code 'Name - INT.–X' is used to refer to an interview, and 'F.G. – Y' is used to refer to a focus group session; where 'X' refers to the number of the interview, and 'Y' refers to the age group of the focus group.

The result was a shift of offices and headquarters of institutions to Ramallah, in order to maintain accessibility for the Palestinian public. As for the Palestinian Authority's (PA) headquarters, Arafat[3] preferred Gaza as the 'temporary' stop before the Palestinian state is declared in five-years-time; when he would move to Jerusalem, or so he thought. Meanwhile, a base was needed in the West Bank (WB). Ramallah as the locus of concentration of political factions, centrally located within the WB and the backyard of Jerusalem was chosen.

Besides geography, Taraki notes that Ramallah and due to its early internationalization had set an advantage over its larger twin-town El-Bireh in terms of a compatible social atmosphere that is attractive for new-comers, as well as its 'historic designation as a liberal, open, and tolerant town' (2008a : 65).

"In my opinion, the reason for [choosing Ramallah] is due to the social composition… Ask yourselves: why is everything concentrated in Ramallah and almost nothing in El-Bireh which is now non-differentiable spatially from Ramallah?" (F.G. – Fifty+)

A major complication for Ramallah is its geographic confinement. It is not allowed to grow to the south as that territory has been long confiscated by the Israeli government and incorporated into its 'Greater Jerusalem' plan. Towards the East it has fully expanded along its border with the municipality of El-Bireh. Towards the West it is approaching saturation along the border with the neighbouring municipality of Beitunya. In addition, these three municipalities – Ramallah, El-Bireh and Beitunya – are surrounded by a ring of Israeli settlements and their accompanying no-man's land. The only remaining corridor is that towards the north. However, it is only a short distance before Area A[4] (in which expansion can take place) comes to end, and Areas B and C commence.

A] Israeli settlements   B] Oslo Accords: A] + B]

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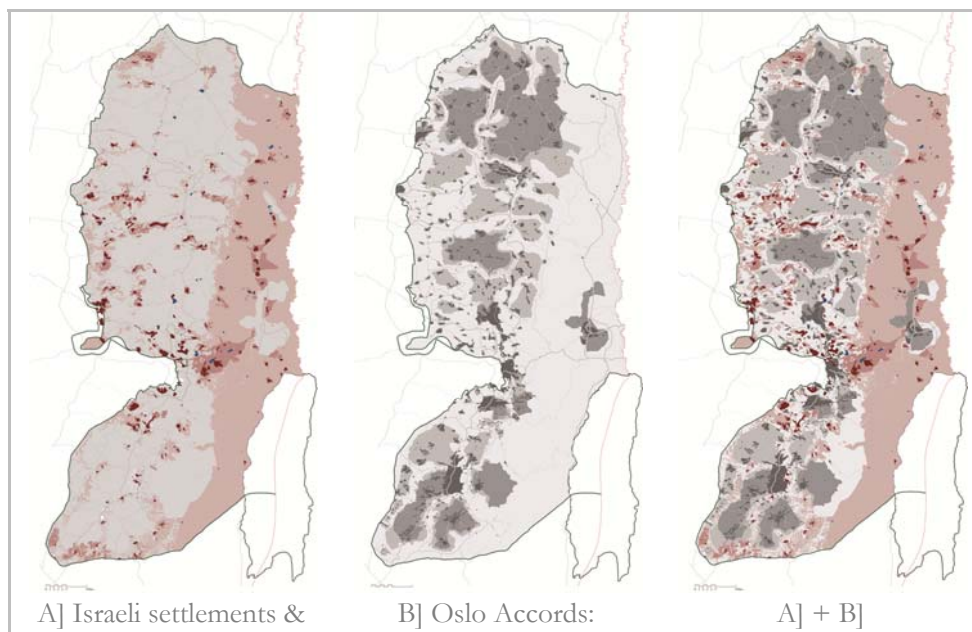
[3] Yasser Arafat – co-founder of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964, and Fatah Party in 1959. Upon the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 1996 he was elected president by the Palestinian people, and ruled in this position until he passed away in 2004.

[4] According to the OAs the West Bank has been sliced into Areas A, B & C, which outline the variation of authority between the PA and the Israeli Government. This is detailed in Fig.1 above.
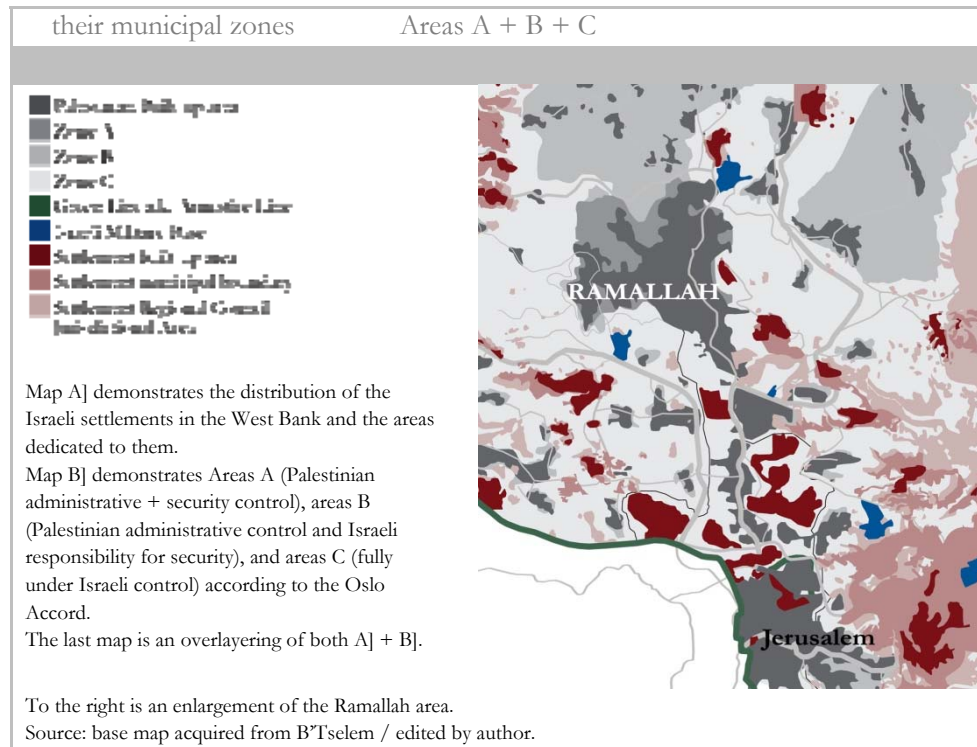
their municipal zones	Areas A + B + C

Map A] demonstrates the distribution of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the areas dedicated to them.
Map B] demonstrates Areas A (Palestinian administrative + security control), areas B (Palestinian administrative control and Israeli responsibility for security), and areas C (fully under Israeli control) according to the Oslo Accord.
The last map is an overlayering of both A] + B].

To the right is an enlargement of the Ramallah area.
Source: base map acquired from B'Tselem / edited by author.

Figure 1. The Layers of the West Bank & around Ramallah (including El-Bireh & Beitunya)

First Intifada: *Sumud*

In the Palestinian context *Intifada* stands for "uprising", and is associated with mass civil disobedience. In the contemporary history of Palestine the term has been used twice; for the period between 1987 and 1993 which is known as the *First Intifada*, and the second sparked in the year 2000 and was named as the *Second Intifada*. The end of the latter has not been named, and in comparison with the former it is not considered to be of comparative importance neither in terms of impact, nor to have succeeded in gathering significant popular support.

The *first Intifada* has been widely associated with the term *Sumud*, which means "resilience" and "steadfastness". This stems from the dominant characteristics of the period of 1987-1993 in terms of the presence of a highly sophisticated network of grassroots committees that catered for the daily needs of Palestinians on one hand, and on the other was acting as the executive arm of the political leadership. The activities varied from social services for local communities to activities of resistance and civil disobedience against the Israeli Army and its Civil Administration. This was enabled through the elaborate network of unions and organizations which were established in the 1970s-1980s (Shikaki 1996, Arouri 2004, Taraki 2008). *Sumud* was equivalent to non-questionable social solidarity, commitment, voluntarism, and the collective will to sacrifice for the collective good.

"In the period [of the *first intifada*] in which the political parties were strong, there were social factors acting against any droop. Our houses were the cafés and loci of congregation. Did either of you ever hold a meeting in a café? when a journalist called for an interview with a politician? or the members of a party met? There were no headquarters for parties and the houses were the hotels and the cafés and all of the spaces that now have moved out of the house and into the city itself." (F.G. – Fifty+)

"… if you say we are going to take youth and give them money to do things, at that time, we called this grand treason."(F.G. – Fifty+)

The First Intifada remains to be an important reference when discussing the national Palestinian struggle, as the few coming pages will demonstrate.

Figure 2. Palestinian Youth on a day of civil disobedience in 1987, WB (source: hansimann.wordpress.com)

Framework: the city, the unit, the space, the social formation

Social impacts of development processes are varied, diverse, and immense in scope and literature. This section focuses on the increasingly present 'otherness' expressed physically in the creation of spaces of difference, and the emergence and intensity of social stratification and 'elite formation'. In the case of Ramallah these two concepts are always crossed-compared with the notion of State-building, as this has been the main preoccupation of the political discourse.

Otherness and Spaces of Difference
Nations, States, and Cities are generally perceived as homogeneous units, and stereotypes are casually constructed. Nevertheless, Lefebvre argues that a city is not a single unit, rather a compilation of spaces of conflict (1991). According to Brewer (2006) nations associate with 'collective memory', where common history and experience play a major factor in maintenance of social solidarity.

"We cannot remain nostalgic to the political work, dedication of the masses, the secret underground activism and the romance of the process. This was an exceptional process, but not the norm. The norm is what we are gradually heading to, particularly here in Ramallah, with freedom of expression and choice amongst other aspects. This is not as rosy or romantic as the times of the 80s, but it is nevertheless the human norm; one wants to relax and enjoy his/her time as an individual, and if that means they will have to overlook the occupation, they will." (F.G.: 50+ yrs.)

Yuval-Davis (2000) argues that there is no such thing as 'pure' nation-state. Building on Anderson's (1991) theory of 'imagined communities', she states that 'collectivism' has turned into 'us' and 'them'. These clusters have their individual sets of requirements for membership, be it language, ideology, or social class among others.

In the case of Ramallah these could be easily linked to the dichotomy between English-and Arabic-speakers, veiled Muslim and the non-veiled, the *Returnee* and the *Refugee*, etc.

"There were lots of new people arriving into the city, leading to its growth physically. There were also numerous investments. This was accompanied by the arrival of a political elite [Palestinian returnees[5]], and a growth in awareness; not particularly in positive terms. There was an image of a different living style that arrived, politically, economically, living style, construction/built environment, cafés and entertainment, which all led to a change in the track of the resistance. Ramallah was consumption based before Oslo, yet the agreement caused a dramatic shift and increase." (F.G.: 30-45 yrs.)

Harvey asserts the inexistence of homogeneity by writing: "Social space is complex, non-homogeneous, perhaps discontinuous, and almost certainly different from the physical space in which the engineer and the planner typically work" (2009:35).
The absence of homogeneity is explained in relation to the observed variety of individuals, groups, and time in relation to ethnicity, ideology, and religion on one hand, and on the other age, gender and class. The width of the spectrum translates to the 'multiplicity of identities', which often and with time generates feelings and ideologies of 'otherness'.

"The *Ramallites* including those who came and have been living in the city since 20 years, are now subtly fighting against the intruders. It has become about maintaining a form of existence. Loci in which the so-called *intruders* inhabit, are deserted by those who consider themselves natives to the space. Some openly say that they do not want the culture of Jenin or Hebron or other moving to Ramallah." (F.G.: 30-45 yrs.)

"When they come from Nablus and other areas it is because they are being suppressed by the Israelis. So we 'host them' to help them make their lives easier..." (F.G.: 17 yrs. #2)

"Yes, when the people of Jenin all end up here then it will be over." (F.G.: 17 yrs. #1)

"I am the daughter of Ramallah, I like walking in it, I have my memories here.[…] But today, it is impossible to walk in these streets, we became strangers in our own city.[…] I live in this paradox, in this conflict with myself. On one side this is my city, on the other I do not relate to the people walking in its streets." (F.G.: 50+ yrs.)

In turn this multiplicity is the code for the creation of exclusive spaces such as gated communities and social clubs. Children grow to teens and later adults, subsequently the playground is replaced with entertainment spaces such as cinemas, cultural centres, exhibitions, restaurants and bars, or maybe the house, the family, and the worship place (Low 2000, Yuval-Davis 2000, Harvey 2009, Moreau 2009). Combined with the economic factor, this is generally what some refer to as the social production of space, which is a social, economic, ideological, and technological process of creation of a physical space (Low 2000).

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[5] Returnees: term used to describe the Palestinians that returned to Palestine / or entered Palestine for the first time with the signature of the OAs.

The otherness and differentiation of space further facilitates the human practice of classification and labelling, and creation of mental boundaries which in turn minimizes the contact and exchange between the different sides (Lefebvre 1991, Low 2000).

"[M]any of the new comers to the city even those of the lower-middle class, feel discriminated against, inequality of opportunities, and accentuated elitism portrayed in how they are treated by organization, or the people who feel that Ramallah is theirs, and so on. They do name some zones in the city where they choose not to go to, because of these attitudes against them. These zones are not gated with physical barriers, but are so in other aspects, mainly financial. So the point I am trying to make here is that Ramallah is spatially polarizing, it is becoming more socially differentiating." (Taraki, int-1)

As exemplary:

"This leads me to speak about a growing scary aspect of Ramallah. In world cities they call them Shanty-towns, the *Ru'a'* (mobs) within a city space.[…] Like in *Im-el-Sharayet, Beitunya*, and others... These are not exactly shanty towns with tin roofs, but the living environment reminds me of such.[…] This is a side-effect of the concentration of capital, where people come from other cities to work here leaving their families in their cities of origin. And it is from here that the naming *tailandieh* (Thai) originated in referring to them, i.e. like migrant workers.[…] So it might not be exactly a shanty town, but it is similar in terms of characteristics. I think if we had a Shanty neighbourhood, those people would all inhabit it." (F.G.: 30-45 yrs.)

Given the capitalist structure of communities, Smith revisits Marx's ideas remarks that "social relations of capitalism are more clearly and sharply observable at the periphery of the systems than at the centre" (Smith 1995:236).
This argument is further endorsed by Harvey (2009), who asserts that groups adopt distinctive forms of behaviour and activity styles which encapsulate the individuals, and hence they do not penetrate beyond marked 'edges'.

"[F]or leisure, I used to be focused on *Pronto* until there was a 'foreign invasion' of it, and since then I've been frequently going to *Beit Aneeseh*, not to isolate myself, but because simply I feel comfortable there. Indeed, the places we frequent are influenced by the people that we hang around with and their taste as well." (F.G.: 25-30 yrs.)

"[NGO employees] enjoy an income that is significantly higher than the average, and that in addition to their closeness to the 'foreign'. They visit a different set of cafés and restaurants, and enjoy activities that are catered for by their level of income and the accompanied privileges." (F.G.: 30-45 yrs.)

According to Low (2000), boundaries whether mental of physical are an expression of territories of influence, and exist in places of 'difference' and 'contrast'; hence, where there are conflicts. These boundaries create the idea of 'the stranger' among the citizens of the area.

"It is true that you almost know no one within the city. And no one knows you. And particularly this estrangement is the goal of these strategies. Since the [Palestinian] Authority was established no one knows anyone else. This process in its turn has created a new environment, new organizations, new mode of thinking of the people and the connection and continuity with the past is missing. The sons of the past are still living with it, while neighboured by the generations of 1991 and after who have absolutely no relation to the former phase of history." (F.G.: 50+ yrs.)

The multiplicity in the idea of 'the stranger' is in turn a reflection of the multiplicity of identities within a space, which are not only multi-layered but also crosscutting, which deforms the repetitive expressions of 'cultural preservation' and 'collective will' (Yuval-Davis 2000). In Ramallah 'the stranger' is many persons, the 'collective culture' inquiry results in extreme responses ranging between pure Christianity, conservative Islam, and progressive secularism. 'Collective will' beyond the issue of an end to the Israeli occupation is simply unidentifiable.

Stratification and Elite Formation
According to Taraki (2010) social relations and practices are dictated by people's attitudes towards events in history among other aspects, where the collective memory and culture is created. In this respect, Palestinian refugee camps were symbols for resistance and some formed localities for the emergence of what she refers to as 'alternative awareness'. Under the contemporary social shifts in Ramallah, the neighbouring refugee camp of Al-Amary is nowadays widely perceived as a locus of chaos, disorder and insecurity. This comes at a time were the city is experiencing increased consciousness towards social status and class, higher awareness to its national positioning, and greater fragmentation based on social class.

"On the one hand, they are firmly built into the national struggle against the Israeli Occupation and are valued as human reminders of the historical injustice and the abuse of human rights. The camps played a crucial role during the two Intifadas and regularly serve as visible symbols of the Palestinian struggle. On the other, [...] [today they are] looked on as outsiders, sometimes even intruders and are automatically positioned at the margins" (Alkhalili 2009:27)

"The national movement project for which there were decades of sacrifice, suddenly, when you see the camp which used to be the symbol of that struggle transformed and 'cleaned', you ask yourself whether that dream is still alive, or has been swallowed by the growing liberal economy and interests." (Anani, int-2)

These changes in perception of space and the set of dominant concepts about what is acceptable are highly influenced by the restructuring of the economic and – more importantly the – national value systems, and by such the priorities of the individuals:

"[The strategy in place is] about that of supporting the individual. At our times there were almost no Banks and getting a loan was a very hard process. One depended on the network for support, and only in the minimum. Today taking a loan to buy a car or house or make a wedding or whatever is as easy as going for a drink in a café, and that is the main source of distraction from the collective national struggle." (F.G.: 30-45 yrs.)

The growth of the Banking sector, the private sector via incentives for investors, and the proliferation of foreign-aid dependant organizations that are of 'high employment levels, low productivity, and expenditures on non-sustainable areas' (Kassis, int-3); together and gradually they led to the disengagement from the public sphere and its concerns towards the individual.
Foreign Aid Programs fostered the emergence of what Taraki (2008a) refers to as the 'new middle class'. Those are educated professionals holding positions such as high-ranking public servants and NGO workers. The PA has normalized a certain culture of 'privileges' and 'officialdom' through its institutions and through the western NGOs, which paved the way for the rise of formal looks, ambiences, and entourage. Short after, those were dubbed as the 'Oslo-elite" (Taraki 2008a, As'ad int-4). The concentration of this social category in Ramallah is due to:

1. The centralization of the public sector in the city,
2. Being the locus of the headquarters for a large portion of the private sector,
3. Presence of all foreign institutions and representative offices as well as the NGOs, and
4. Last but not least, the Israeli policy of closures and checkpoints which made daily commuting impossible (Abdallah, int-5).

In addition to job-oriented migration to Ramallah lies what many perceive as socially-motivated. Yuval-Davis (2000) argues that cities tend to become a haven for individuals wanting to escape commitment to the traditional form of 'culture', since in cities the boundaries between the public and private provide a cover for a differentiation in respect to what is generally regarded as normative practice in the confrontation between the individual and the collective through the exposed and hidden space.
"For youth, they are looking for a space of expression, of opportunities, diversity, amongst many other attractions that Ramallah offers particularly for the young generations."(F.G.: 50+ yrs.)

"I am picky, I only like the atmosphere of Ramallah!.. Even when I am in Jenin with my family, I constantly have the feeling that I need to get back to Ramallah. I have been in Ramallah for 12 years now." (F.G.: 30-45 yrs.)

Anani describes this phenomenon by saying:

"In terms of civil liberty, the growth of this trend in Ramallah faces as a down side the increased conservatism and radicalism in religion. The liberty of Ramallah is weird if you ask me. Youngs are leaving their villages and cities and coming here so a wider social freedom particularly in terms of the relations between the two sexes. But seeing girls, going out to bars and drinking alcohol is the fast version of liberalization without understanding the real essence of the concept. Those people still hold the same conservative beliefs they grew up with, but have taken a new outfit for social behavior. And one must note that there is no absolute freedom in Ramallah. In comparison to other Palestinian urban centers, yes, we have lots of freedom, however, in comparison to other cities like New York and London, we barely have any, we are still a village." (Anani, int-2)

Under public pressures for community alignment within the boundaries of what is perceived as the common culture, the play on the dichotomy of public-private coupled with pursuit of change in life mode leads to the creation of urban subcultures (Yuval-Davis 2000). With this background, Ramallah is starting to take the form of a cosmopolis that is isolated from the rest of Palestine, where new local forms and practices are emerging, and where the social sphere of Palestine as a whole is shrinking (Taraki 2010). This is physically exhibited in the economic functioning mechanisms (such as companies and NGOs), cultural activities (exhibitions and concerts), and the evermore-increasing number of leisure space and opportunities.
According to Lefebvre counter-culture and counter-space as forms of resistance to dominant order are in fact an expression of domination of bourgeoisie in a neocapital form over space. He argues that spaces of leisure are a form of division between social and mental spaces and realities, between the censorship and intellectuality, and between everyday modes of life and those considered out of the ordinary. Lefebvre considers these spaces as revealing of the breaking points between tradition and contemporary mode of life, calling them the "epitome of contradictory space" (Lefebvre 1991:385). Following Lefebvre's thesis, increasing leisure and economic spaces in Ramallah that resemble an expression of a growing bourgeoisie and stratification are a reflection of the Palestinian elite class (Brynen 2000, Taraki 2008, Aruri 2010).

Growth: the euphoria, the change, the missing perspective

Figure 3. Old Centre of Ramallah - a panorama image differentiating old structures from new. (source: author)

In preparation for the promised state the donor community pledged billions of dollars for the upgrading and development of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) simultaneously with institutional capacity building of the PA. On its end, the PA provided all possible incentives for investments of their varying scales. The development processes that took place in Ramallah over the past eighteen years were neither continuous nor flowing. Several disruptions occurred, shifts in balance of power, and a great discrepancy between the declared goals and the results on the ground.

However, over less than two decades Ramallah was host to tangible and persistent processes of transformation, changing its face and personality. The population of the city has doubled between the mid 1990s and today: from an estimate of about 15,000 inhabitants in 1993 to 31,356 in 2012 (PCBS 2011). As for social relations, they shifted from focus on *Sumud* (resilience and steadfastness) in face of the Israeli occupation as the city assumed the role of the 'operations room' for the national liberation movement, to a globalized cosmopolis ruled by neoliberal consumption-oriented structures and behaviour.

A relative stability within the city that was custom-provided by the PA has provided a selective illusion of security and freedom that citizens choose to act on in order to maintain their mental sanity as As'ad describes it:

"We do know that we are not free, but in order to be able to go on living, and so that our children could see us as proud people, we have to convince ourselves that we do control something, that we do have an opinion. However we all know and silently agree that we are not free, and that we have a real crisis. I personally believe that people are stressed, phobic, less tolerant, and metaphorically speaking we are walking time bombs." (As'ad, int-4)

Summing much of the aforementioned aspects: behaviour, living standards and style and relating that to the urban development of the city, Aburahme describes the new middle class by saying:

"The current evolution of the built environment is, to a large extent, part of a clear and ostentatious mobilization of a middle class determined to become more socially visible, a class that has little interest in 'old' politics of national projects - a class largely preoccupied with social distinction. With its ascension, new subjectivities premised on consumption as a social value have emerged and, as corollaries, discourses of non-violence and post-national/civil-society politics have been disseminated to reach an almost hegemonic level". (Aburahme 2009:505)

Taraki also notes:

"[The new middle class have] truly grasped what this stage in the history of Palestine requires. The national movement died, Oslo is over, and it is the same in every other country in the region, people are starting to think individually and about guaranteeing their own future instead of the past collective." (Taraki, int-11)

The rise of individual thinking and the subsequent prioritization of interests according to personal aspirations rather than the former national collective gave way to the re-identification of the space within the city. Neighbourhoods become a reflection of behaviour patterns and financial status. There is a general agreement among Palestinian scholars, professionals and academics (Samara 2010, Taraki 2008a, Aburahme 2009, Kassis [int-3], Anani [int-2] and Arouri [int-6]) that this shift in social behaviour is associated with the consolidation of the neoliberal project in Palestine, which was promoted by the donor community through the World Band and IMF policies. The neoliberal project has transformed the economic structure of Ramallah to a consumption-based behaviour embodied in the growing services sector. Aburahme warns of the 'trade-off':

"The right to normalcy, to the reproduction of daily life, to difference - all of which the occupation targets - are rights worth fighting for. As is the right to trappings, potentialities and contradictions of urban modernity, no matter how intellectually problematic these can be. But beware the trade off. Here, today, urbanization cannot be divorced from colonialism. Ramallah is spared the nightly incursions of places like Nablus and Jenin for a reason; if it is given room to breathe then to be sure there is a price to pay. Local and contained micro-freedoms are ultimately paid for with the disintegration of national strategy." (Aburahme 2009:507)

In this regard Yazan Khalili stated:

"The *status quo* should not persist. But what is missing is the alternative. It is not that we have no alternatives because we do, the issue is that there is fear of them. In my opinion it implies returning to an era that is harder than the current one. We are all part of this meaningless system and we are benefiting from it, I am benefiting from it. Nonetheless that does not imply that I would not prefer the dismantlement of the PA, because I do, as well as a return to a more organic economy that suits our political agendas.[…] In the end, we need to ask what is the goal of all of this? What is happening today here in Ramallah is absurd, in the sense of: 'what's next?'. We have neither achieved statehood and solved our existential problematic, nor not a state. The society has to take a move, has to get out of the current absurdity of the vicious cycle. This is what I meant by the general collective destruction. The personal success is based on a collective destruction." (Khalili, int-7).

Ramallah is expanding within shifting borders, reorienting socially in accordance with an ephemeral donor-dependent economy - from *Sumud* to consumption, and seems to be trapped in a permanent status of temporality.

"In the disaster of 1948 the refugees found shelter in neighboring countries as a 'temporary' measure. they left their food cooking on stoves, thinking to return in a few hours. they scattered in tents and camps of zinc and tin 'temporarily.' The commandos took arms and fought from Amman 'temporarily,' then from Beirut 'temporarily,' then they moved to Tunis and Damascus 'temporarily.' We drew up interim programs for liberation 'temporarily' and they told us they had accepted Oslo Agreements 'temporarily,' and so on, and so on. Each one said to himself and to others 'until things become clearer.' " (Barghouthi 2005:26)

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Selected Interviews and Focus Groups

Taraki, int-1   Dr. Lisa Taraki (Dep. of Sociology, Birzeit University)

Anani, int-2   Dr.Yazid Anani (Dep. of Architecture, Birzeit University)

Kassis, int-3   Dr. Mudar Kassis (Dep. of Philosophy, Birzeit University

As'ad int-4   Shurouq As'ad (free lance journalist)

Abdallah, int-5 Ing. Mahmoud Abdallah (Member of Municipal Council)

Arouri int-6   Mr. Tayseer Arouri (former politician)

Khalili, int-7   Yazan Khalili (free lance artist)

F.G. – Fifty+   Fifty years old minimum

F.G.: 30-45 yrs   Age between 30-45

F.G.: 25-30 yrs. Age between 25 and 30 years old

F.G.: 17 yrs. #1 17 year old Group 1

F.G.: 17 yrs. #2 17 year old Group 2

The Gap Between Visions and Policies.
Housing The Poor And Urban Planning In Ghana

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Rapid population increase has led to severe housing shortage in Ghana. In urban areas, this has resulted in overcrowding and growing slums. The continuous slum growth especially in the cities is a worrying trend. To date, the country does not have any tentative urban development policy. Our paper discusses the various draft policy documents and reports and on housing vision by the country over the years; it compares the contents of the documents to what have been achieved regarding affordable housing in the country through critical discourse analysis (CDA). These policy documents perspire the visions of its creators on the "urban question" and CDA is used to dissect them. The prevailing visions on the slum problem regarding housing is discussed as to why these strategies remain dreams to be realised in the country. The paper concludes that usually, the way the governments see the reasons behind the problem of slums in the cities determines the remedy it's prescribed by it.

Keywords: Ghana, Urban poor, Policy, Housing

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Introduction

Housing is a vital tool for economic development. Good housing and a decent neighbourhood improve human health, enhance labour productivity, contribute to social harmony, safety and security (Arku 2009). The housing sector is a major component of development in any country. A country's inability to provide adequate housing for all its citizenry is a major sign of poverty in the country. As Antwi-Barfi (2001:1) put it; 'lack of adequate housing to shelter the population of Ghana and the inability of governments to prevent homelessness is essence of poverty'. Housing deficit is in excess of 1,500,000 units in Ghana whilst supply figures are around 40,000 units per annum as against annual requirement of 120,000 units (UN-Habitat 2011). Although the country has national planning schemes for major sectors of the country, housing has never been a large component of such planning. usually, housing is seen as part of the welfare sector and this attitude has affected the kind of interventions given to the housing sector in the country. The inability of the state to deliver enough houses in the country to meet effective demand over the years has put pressure on the existing housing stock and infrastructure, especially, in urban areas leading to the creation of sub-standard structures and unsanitary environments in slum communities. In 2001, the slum population of Ghana was estimated at 4,993,000 people, growing at a rate of 1.83% per annum, the figure increased to 5.8 million by 2010 (Ghana Government, Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing 2012).

Detailed information found in the various policy documents on housing for the country indicate that the state is not ignorant on the need to provide affordable homes for the poor in the country. There were efforts made by the country before and just after attaining independence to provide housing for the masses, however, the initiatives were halted by subsequent governments after 1966 (Ghana Government, Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing 2012). This is due to the economic meltdown that the country started experiencing just after the overthrow of the government in 1966. Nothing much has been put in place by various governments to tackle the housing problem in the country, though it is clear from what is stated in the various policy documents that the state knows the problems associated with the housing sector. Clearly stated in the policy documents are the key factors militating against effective housing delivery in Ghana and they include: land cost and its accessibility; difficulty in accessing finance; high cost of mortgage; infrastructure underdevelopment; availability and cost of building materials (UN-Habitat 2010).

The paper discusses some of the reasons why the housing sector is in shambles in Ghana by focussing on the vacuum between visions stipulated in policy documents and the implementations of the purported ideas on the ground. Although none of these policy documents is officially adopted as a substantive housing policy, their contents contained all the perceived structures and strategies that can be put in place to help solve the housing problem in the country. However, those who need to see to the implementations of these policies have shown little commitment. In an attempt to digest the topic, the paper is structured like this; history and development of housing in Ghana, a review of the state's commitments on supplying houses for the masses, the county's commitment to slum eradication and then concludes on the reasons why it seems impossible for the state to turn visions stated in these documents to reality.

Housing in Ghana: History and Development

The government's stance in the housing market during most part of the colonial period was non-involvement, concerning itself only with providing accommodation for expatriate public servants and the representatives of European companies that operated in the country.

However, in the aftermath of the deadly earthquake that struck Accra in 1939, the government initiated the Earthquake Victim's Housing Scheme that aimed to build subsidized housing for the victims. This was the beginning of estate housing that became the hallmark of government-built or assisted housing in Ghana (Konadu-Agyemang 2001b). A significant budget was allocated for housing projects; in the early 1940s. Housing accounted for 2.5% of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act (CDWA) funds, channelled primarily through various regional bodies. This increased to about 5.6% by the early 1950s. Governor Allan Burns'1943 Development Plan amongst other things, proposed to construct estate houses for people with small incomes who lived in the large towns (Arku 2006). The 1951–58 Development Plan which was one of the most comprehensive plans ever devised for the country, focused on economic and productive services. This plan incorporated housing into the overall development framework. Housing then ranked fourth in this plan's budgetary allocation (Arku 2006). The large financial resources allocated to the housing sector made it possible to experiment a variety of housing schemes, ranging from subsidized housing to housing loan schemes. Example was the £2.5 million budgeted for estate housing projects in the three major urban areas: Accra, Kumasi and Sekondi-Takoradi, this included loans up to £1600 to those who wanted to construct their own homes and £500 000 for slum clearance projects (Ibid). During this period, no housing scheme ever existed outside the three urban centres, and the majority of low-income families did not benefit from these programmes (Ghana Government, Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing 2012).

Just before Ghana's independence in 1957, the first Ghana Building Society (FGBS) was established in 1956 to mobilised savings and lend to members for housing. However, this and many other initiatives by the then government immediately after independence could not be sustained through the economic decline of the 1970s (Arku 2006). In an attempt to save the situation, the National Redemption Council (RMC) government established the Bank for Housing and Construction in 1972 to be solely responsible for financing housing and the construction industry. However, it diverted its attention from this core issues to commercial banking after the government was overthrown in 1979 (discontinuity of projects by subsequent governments is common in the political and socio-economic development of Ghana's history). In the 1970s, the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) was given an additional responsibility of providing rental accommodation to public sector workers at affordable rates (History of Housing financing in Ghana). Other attempts by the state in the 1970s were, the creation of Building Societies, Roof and Wall Protection Loan schemes, Rural Cooperative Housing Schemes, among others (Ghana Government, Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing 2012).

Private financial institutions only became involved in the housing finance industry after the 1970s economic decline when the Ghana Commercial Bank, the Standard Chartered Bank and Barclays Bank all offered limited mortgage finance to a few borrowers who were well-off, influential or in high-level government or bank employments. The institutions suffered from the universal problem of 'borrowing short but lending long' which, in a period of hyper-inflation, bleeds out all their equity. Thus, by 1990, there was almost a complete absence of long-term mortgage finance in Ghana (Ghana Government, Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing 2012). These problems led to the establishment of the Home Finance Company Limited (HFC) in 1990 with a core objective of providing housing finance, as a secondary finance institution, through drawing on long-term funds from its initial capital (UN-Habitat 2011). All these attempts were geared towards providing houses for the few salaried workers employed in the formal sector and that the activities of most of the state agencies that embarked on housing programmes were directed primarily to housing workers in the urban areas (Ghana Government, Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing 2012).

Commencing in the early 1990s, the government also undertook a thorough reform of the housing sector based on the neo-liberal ideas used to transform other sectors of the economy. In particular, housing production has since been left to the private sector, with government acting as a "facilitator" (Asiedu and Arku 2009).

Current statistics according to the 2010 population census shows that 47.2% of the national housing stock is owner-occupied; whilst rental units represent 31.1% of the country's housing stock; rent-free is 20.8% and perching 1.0%. The rent free houses are usually compound houses and they are the family roots homes for the extended family long after the original owners have died. Different ethnic groups in the country calls it differently; 'abusuafie' by the Akans', 'femefeme' by the Ewes and the Gas call it 'wekushia'. A large number of extended family members and even some "strangers" live rent-free in these homes. Although compound houses (51.5%) still dominate the existing housing in urban and rural Ghana, their numbers keep declining. For instance, that of Accra's housing stock declined from 62 % in 1990 to 42.5% in 2000. Newer forms, such as bungalows, flats and informal types (wooden shacks, kiosks, etc.) are growing very rapidly in proportion. These makeshift houses constitute 2% of the national housing stock and 6.2% of the housing stock in Greater Accra Region. Only 3% of the national housing stock is owned by employers (public and private). There is a high concentration of households in the country occupying single rooms (44.5), the figure is quite higher in urban Ghana; 64.5% in Ashanti, 64% in Central and 61% in Greater Accra (Ghana statistical Service, 2012).

In the attempt by the government to formalise and strategise the country's housing development after independence, in 1986 the first National Housing Policy Document was prepared; this was followed in 1991-92 by a National Shelter Strategy Document, prepared in collaboration with UN-Habitat; then in 1993, the National Shelter Strategy Volumes One and Two were also developed; in June, 1996, the country became a signatory to the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda; again the National Shelter Strategy volumes One and Two were revised in December 1999 and June 2000 respectively. However, it should be noted that none of these documents has been formally accepted and officially adopted to use in the country as a substantive policy. And till date the country has no tentative housing nor urban policy.

Draft Policy Documents	Objectives
The national shelter strategy (Ghana, 1993)	1. Improving the quality of shelter; 2. Improving the environment of human settlements; 3. Making shelter programmes more accessible to the poor; 4. Promoting private sector involvement through an enabling policy environment; 5. Encouraging rental housing; and 6. Promoting orderly growth with infrastructure in place.
Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements-1996	Habitat Agenda: part of Paragraph 1 We recognize the imperative need to improve the quality of human settlements, which profoundly affects the daily lives and well-being of our peoples.
National Shelter Strategy -Part II - Strategy Report-2000	1.To accelerate home improvement and the upgrading and transformation of the housing stock 2.To make shelter programmes more accessible to the

	poor; 3.To promote greater private sector participation in housing delivery by creating an enabling environment 4.To create an environment conducive to investment in housing for rental purpose
Drafts National Housing Policy, 2012	1.To accelerate home improvement through the upgrading and transformation of the existing housing stock; 2.To make housing programmes more accessible to the poor by supporting the construction of housing units within their income or rental range; 3.To promote greater private sector participation in housing delivery by creating an enabling environment 4.To create an environment conducive to investment in housing for rental purpose; 5. To promote housing schemes that maximizes land utilization by increasing the allowable gross floor area (GFA).
National Urban Policy Draft Documents-2010	1.To improve environmental quality of urban life 2. To improve access to adequate and affordable low-income housing

Table 1: Objectives of Some Housing Policy Documents in Ghana. Source: Authors, own table compilation of documents from Government of Ghana, Ministry of Water, Works and Housing, 1993-2012.

The Country's Commitment to Slum Eradication in Urban Ghana

Slum creation in Ghana has been the result of an upsurge in rural-urban migration, limited supply of land, and regulatory frameworks that are not addressing the housing needs of the urban poor. Whereas the city of Accra for instance has a population density of 250.73 persons per hectare, population density in slums within the city is 607.8 persons per hectare, of which most of them live in poor and dangerous conditions along railway lines, on banks of waterways and along the sea (Accra Metropolitan Assembly 2011).

In Greater Accra alone it is estimated that nearly one third of the population live in slums (Accra Metropolitan Assembly 2011). There are seventy-eight fully developed slum communities in Accra alone according to the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (Ghana Centre for Democratic Development 2012). One of the objectives in the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), housing sections in 2009 and 2010 is to upgrade existing slums and prevent the occurrence of new ones. For this objective, the authors believe, the government is not doing enough to achieve it. Rural-urban migration, which is probably the main cause of slum creation in the cities, has been occurring in the country for a long period intensifying, during and after the structural adjustment period when many people lost their sources of livelihoods in the public institutions like the state farms.

Most of the people made their way to the cities especially, to the capital in search of alternative sources of income and this has continued till date. The country has however, not put enough measures in place to stop the rural-urban migration.

Nonetheless there is little effort made by the state to accommodate the numerous people that are trouping into the cities. The only effort the state had made to solve the problem of slums in the cities is to be part of a pilot project in four countries in Africa initiated by the UN-Habitat. The project has seen to the completion in 2010 of a mixed use residential facility at Amui-Djor near Tema Ashaiman, to accommodate 31 families with 15 stores and some toilet and bathing facilities to generate extra income (Government of Ghana 2010).

Though this was successfully done, the Ghana Housing Report, 2011 stated that the processes involved were complicated and therefore, replicating it in other areas will be difficult (UN-Habitat 2011). What this means is that, the government has no clear way forward as to the next step of providing affordable houses for slum dwellers. The state of the world cities reports (UN-Habitat 2006/7) stated that Ghana is listed among some countries in the world that are off track in terms of finding ways to solve the problem of slums in the cities.

Some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are however, becoming involved in housing supply in the country. Such NGOs as slum dwellers international (SDI) affiliates are becoming important minor players in supply at the bottom of the market (2011- housing profile). The Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor (GHAFUP) and People's Dialogue (PD) have attracted initial funding from the Department for International Development, (DFID), UK, to initiate the GHAFUP Fund (G-Fund) in 2005. The goal of G-Fund is to increase access to housing finance for the urban poor (UN-Habitat 2011). Though the efforts of the NGOs are recommendable, especially when they are building for those in the informal sector, it should be noted that there is nowhere in the world that NGOs have totally transform the housing sector. Housing is a major component of any country's development, it is necessary therefore, that the state puts in major intervention, through private-public sector partnership in affordable housing provision.

There is adequate evidence that low-income dwellers can make significant investments in shelter under certain circumstances. The state's overall policy initiative in this area will be to learn from what the NGOs are doing on smaller basis and replicate it at a large scale. For this course a round table discussion organised by Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) and included stakeholders in the housing sector advocated strongly that the country should have a national policy solely on slums (Ghana Centre for Democratic Development 2012:14). This should be the first step to help address the problem of slum facing the country.

Turning Visions to Reality: the Problem

The strategies documented in the various drafts housing policy documents in the country reveal that the state is not ignorant on finding solution to the housing deficit problem facing the country's poor. Even in event that majority of the poor are employed in the informal sector, it has been proven that it is possible to include the informal economy workers in housing programmes. The NGOs have spearheaded it, though on a smaller scale, likewise in African cities like Ouagadougou and Cairo Gulyani and Connors (2002) Abouelmagd Doaa (2012), the state spearheaded the upgrading of slum communities. There have been alternative strategies employed in Namibia- land for everyone from 1992 and in Zimbabwe- loan for low income group shortly after independence (Acquaah-Harrison 2004).

The question still remains as to why the views of all the expertise involved in documenting the information in the various policy documents are not being used? Is it the fault of the governments, the systems, or the people?

The authors believe reasons such as the political determination of the various governments, the burdens of Structural Adjustment Programmes which entangled the country, the perceived numerous problems associated with the informal sector workers and building for individuals instead of the traditionally accustomed one of building for groups; are what make it difficult for the state to turn its vision of developing the housing sector into reality.

Politically Determined Will

Governments since independence and especially after 1970s have given their attention to the housing sector on ad hoc basis. Though there are claimed schemes on the ground, a negligible number of people with very low income levels have benefitted from them. The experts working on the policy documents and other reports; policy advisers, architects, development planners, land economists, private developers and housing financing professionals have argued and continue to argue that the low level income earners cannot afford the houses on the market because they cannot afford the current land prices, they have no collateral to secure loans and cannot afford the monthly mortgage payments. But various governments continuously do nothing for the poor to help remedy the situation.

This is partly because the only way to assess the output of the various governments is to either confirm their reign or vote them out in elections. However, the political system in Ghana like in many African states are strongly based on ethnic lines which cut across economic statuses of people. What it implies is that both the poor and the rich in most cases do not vote on issues of development but on ethnic relations. Politicians are sadly not obliged to fulfil developmental agenda which interest the nation in exchange of votes. They say many things and implement a few or none to still get the votes. For instance, one of the goals of the draft National Shelter Strategy Volumes I&2 was to produce more locally-made building materials by strengthening institutions such as the Building and Road Research Institute, but little progress has been made. Inadequate government support among other reasons are responsible for this lack of progress. Recently, a locally produced cement (pozzolana) company nearly collapsed because the government refused to fulfil its pledge of making sure contractors awarded building contracts by the government do patronise the pozzolana. As stated earlier, the informal sector has typically produced approximately 80% of all new housing units. The national shelter strategy recognized the significance of this sector and stipulated the government should help the sector, but the government has instituted no practical policy initiative to enhance builders in the informal sector (Graham Tipple and Korboe 1998, Arku 2009). The government paid little practical attention to the repeated rhetorical support for self-help projects. Instead, successive governments' policies focused almost exclusively on slum clearance to solve the inhumane housing found in the cities.

Evidence on the ground proves that the private housing developers are more interested in providing for the small upper class in the country; gated communities are becoming common. As of June 2004, twenty three gated communities (15 to 600 units) were at varying stages of development. According to Grant, when all of the twenty-three projects offering houses and apartments for sale in the gated communities are completed in 2007, they would provide 3,644 units (3,572 houses and 72 apartments). In terms of the overall housing stock, this represents less than a 3% contribution to given present numbers (Grant 2005). However, this amounts to US$434.8 million (at 2005 values); such a sum would cover the costs for building more than 17,300 middleclass houses in Greater Accra and a considerably greater number of lower-income houses (Grant 2005:670). The number of gated communities had reached fifty in the country as at 2009 according to Asiedu and Arku (2009).

As the private estate developers are busily building gated communities for the upper and middle class, not a single structure have been built by them for the low income population in the country. This example should let the state realise that the private housing sector is not willing to provide for the poor unless they are redirected to do so and somehow enforced by a policy framework with the willingness of the state to see to its implementation. Any effort made by the state to provide affordable housing should start from the state reconsidering its complete withdrawal from the housing sector and instead consider establishing affordable mortgage institutions for individual borrowers in partnership with the private sector (Arku 2009). This to us is the way forward for any government who has the political will and determinant to solve the housing problem facing Ghanaian cities.

We also argue that one factor that questions the willingness of the state to provide housing for the poor is that almost all the policy documents and other documents available to address the housing issues in the country are compiled by the initiatives of institutions outside the country or organizations which are different from the state's own. The institutions or organisations usually fund the research conducted by various experts whose inputs are in the documents. Although the government invariably might be aware of the contents of the documents, the budget and commitment to implement them might not be available as it is evident on the ground. This is how UN-Habitat, 2011 put it 'in effect, such interventions to have housing policy in the country have tended to be piecemeal and mostly part of internationally funded programmes' (UN-Habitat 2011: xxii).

Structural Adjustment Programmes (Saps)

Due to the persistent socioeconomic problems that beset African countries in the late 1970s, many of them were forced to accept IMF and World Bank sponsored SAPs. Ghana came under the program in 1983 (Konadu-Agyemang 2001a). Among other measures and restrictions put on developing countries that accepted the SAPs is the withdrawal of national governments from financing public housing. The SAPs imposed upon debtor nations in the late 1970s and 1980s required shrinkage of government programmes and often the privatisation of housing (Abdullahi and Aziz 2010, Davis 2005). The housing sector in Ghana in response has undergone fundamental changes since the 1990s. Policy focus has shifted away from direct state provision and has moved strongly towards active private sector participation in housing production, financing and production of building materials which has largely been a failure at least for providing for the poor. In as much as the state argues that this is due to the failure of public housing programmes, dwindling state resources, unimpressive performance of state-owned enterprises, and recognition that the government alone is unable to solve the housing problem; on a broader scale, the changes are rooted in liberalization ideologies that have swept through most economies in the 1980s and 1990s including Ghana.

The state outright shift from housing financing in response to the demand of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank brings untold hardships on the poor in the country which has contributed largely to slums upsurge in the cities. The private organisations are profit-making organisations and if the state leaves housing financing in their care and it claims to be a "facilitator", that in itself cannot dissuade them from providing only for the rich where they are sure of making profit as it is happening in the country. The private estate developers do not have the poor in mind when building their estates and sometimes not even the ordinary people working in the formal sector. In most cases, the houses are affordable to individuals living outside the country and workers of big corporations and international institutions located in the country.

Informality

Although many African countries are described as countries of informality due to the fact that more than half of the population in those countries do earn their living from the informal sector, most decisions in African countries are taken for the minority group who work in the formal sector. In Ghana usually, reasons such as inconsistence in the amount of money earn, unstable jobs, lack of education and lack of collateral are used to disqualify the many people who are concentrated in the informal sector from getting access to loans to undertake any venture including to buy, build or rent a home. Access to finance in the house building industry is almost impossible for the informal sector operator (Asiama 1985). Sometimes one can say the people who are said to be poor in Africa are not poor because they earn low income but rather they are poor because they do not have access to the same opportunities as other people in the formal sector have because of mainly their low level of education and low exposure to many more opportunities (Asiama 1985:360). Facilities which exist have been fashioned to suit the ways of the elite, the educated few and the policy makers, with little thought for the non-salaried and the non or less educated people in the country. The argument used to defend their decisions is that they doubt the reliability of the income of the informal sector workers and ways of recouping the loans.

Informality should not be an excuse not to help the poor and majority of people in Ghanaian cities and towns to acquire decent homes. In essence, the informal housing supply system operating in the country has many advantages; in the light of the poor past performance of the commercial formal sector, and with its products completely missing the low income group, the informal sector should be utilised as the basis for housing supply policies. Emphasis should be on increasing its efficiency, especially through suitable finance like the small scale savings called 'susu' in the local Akan language which have gained ground in the country and can therefore, be developed further to get those who are employed in the informal sector to save and be involved in credit acquisition. The report on Ghana housing profile stated susu as an integral part of Ghanaian urban society and may hold potential to increase informal financing and micro-loan options in the country (UN-Habitat 2011).

Individual Flats Instead of Compound Housing

Compound houses are traditionally accepted structures in Ghana where different families dwell on the same compound and share certain facilities like bathrooms and kitchens. It is common in the rural areas as well as the indigenous communities in the cities. If government strategizes in these mode of structures, the cost will be far less and many people will have decent places of abode with less cost. A research conducted by Tipple et al (1999) on housing in Ghana called for a re-examination of the compound form of housing as it possesses much of worth in a society like Ghana where most households cannot afford a whole house, and where all houses are liable to be inherited by a group of people holding them in common but having rights of use of parts of them. Compound houses are much cheaper than the more fashionable detached flats ('self contained' as it is called in Ghana), allowing less-well-of householders to become owners (Tipple and Korboe 1998:248). The Ghana Housing profile (UN-Habitat 2011) also called on the state to adhere to what have been recommended in the various policy documents that the state should not concentrate on providing only completed units, which majority of the poor cannot afford and rather deploys its resources in strategic areas like compound houses. Compound houses do mimic the traditional way of living with strong social bondage among the household members. It as well helps in accommodating many family members on the same compound decently. The state should therefore, make efforts in encouraging more compound houses built to accommodate the urban poor.

Conclusions

The reasons discussed above in our views form the basis why the housing sector in Ghana is in shambles. Some other reasons are also noted and discussed in the policy documents and other important documents on housing in the country. If urban housing supply follows the proposed planning standards by the Bank of Ghana for occupancy of a maximum of two persons per room, there is a need for about 5.7 million rooms, together with all the accompanying land and infrastructure for adequate housing, between 2010 and 2020 (UN-Habitat 2011). Undoubtedly, this makes the concentration of resources and political effort on the tiny formal sector at the top of the market both inappropriate and unfair to majority of Ghanaians who are concentrated in the informal sector. The way forward involves major changes in the way housing is provided; a paradigm shift from ensuring that a few very well-constructed and serviced dwellings are provided to ensuring that enough housing is built for everyone at a price they can afford. This should be done by various governments creating the politically determined will to provide housing for the poor, the state creating an atmosphere for private-public partnership in providing public housing and develop ways and means of bringing informal sector workers on board to access loans for housing. The focus of housing should be widened from just single-household flats ownership to encourage multi-occupancy types for renting and compound houses 'the solution to this problem is within the bailiwick of Ghana's seat of Government' (Antwi-Barfi 2001). The country as a matter of urgency should have an authentic housing policy which contents should be aimed at being implemented to the latter.

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Checkered Urbanism. A Case Study on the Dualities of Culture and Economy in the Muddled Urbanization of Amman (Jordan): As-Sahel

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This paper analyzes the dynamics between the local cultural processes and economic transformations that form these sprawl patterns in the peripheries of the city of Amman, the capital of Jordan. The rapid shock-wave urban growth of Amman never allowed for the smooth transition of the city's peripheries from rural to urban spatially and demographically. This culminated in a morphology were pre-existing agriculture is juxtaposed to urban residential apartment buildings. The city was never able to perform formal territorial restructuring. It rather appropriated the existing rural structures as a base for development. Thus, urbanization was influenced by imbedded cultural values of land ownership that stretch beyond its economic value. Through a detailed analysis of one peripheral neighbourhood in Amman, the paper emphasizes the importance of understanding these complex dynamics not only to support planning decisions, but also to help identify their goals in the first place.

Keywords: Amman, Land Ownership, Sprawl, Urbanization

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Introduction

No matter how different the postmodern city looks today, they all share the same characteristics governed mostly by global forces of the economy: blurred distinction between the urban and the rural, ever-expanding infrastructure for cars, the appearance of the box building typologies hosting multiplicities of functions, suburban monotony, etc. However, looking at the local perspectives, one can identify specificities to the urban form, that spring from the interaction between local cultural history and identity and generic global development forces. Amman is no exception to this rule. The city's sprawl has spread to interlock with other cities, the infrastructure for the car has consumed large percentages of the city's area, and the private car has become almost the sole means of transportation. At the same time, when observing the patterns of the city's growth, one can realize that the city's enormous spread across the landscape has substantially surpassed the population's needs. The result is a fragmented urbanized landscape that is labelled checkered in this paper. The label checkered, describes the situation where 40 percent of the land available for the development in Amman remains open - according to a recent study of the city's density (GAM, 2008, Annex 12). However this percentage of open land cannot be categorized as edge locations, or even in-between spaces, or derelict areas, they are rather distributed throughout the city and its neighbourhoods.

At the first glance it is difficult to understand the rationale behind this diffused morphology. Moreover, given their fragmented nature, it is not obvious to perceive these spaces collectively either. However, systematic mapping and analysis allows the revealing of the interplay of forces that in the end shape this specific morphology of Amman. These forces stretch from political and economical circumstances in the region, to legal and procedural aspects that steer the city's development, to local social and cultural values that interconnect people with space.

This paper attempts to unravel the complex and dynamic interplay between these forces and demonstrate how they coproduce this morphology. The paper focuses on one representative neighbourhood in Amman.
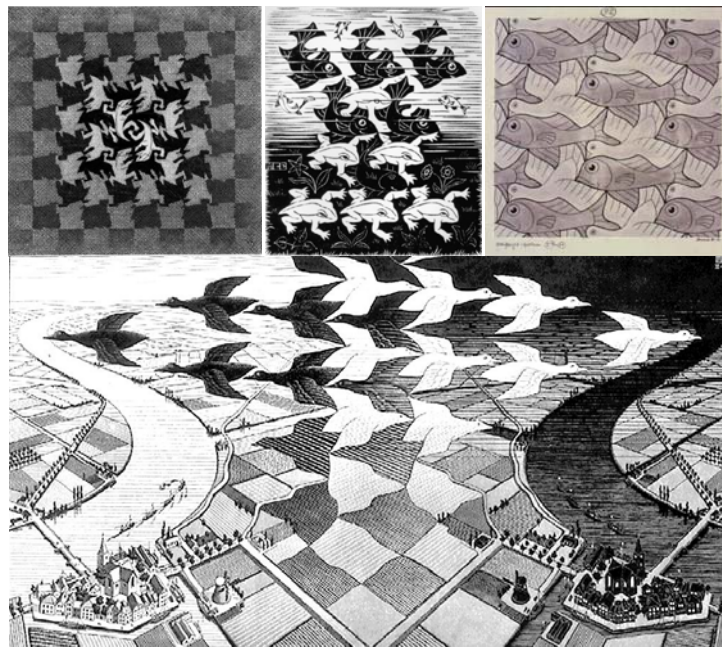

Figure 1. Examples of Escher drawings inspired by the checkered field. (Source: www.mcescher.com/, visited Sep. 25, 2012).

Checkered Urbanism – Coexisting Multiple Realities: Urban and Anti-Urban

In its simplest form, a checkered field is a representation of the distribution of two opposite but equally strong entities. It is a mishmash of the world, the dynamic between opposites; night and day, black and white, good and evil, etc. Many of these oppositions were depicted in the designs of the graphic artist M.C. Escher, who was inspired by the checkered field (Figure 1).

This paper talks about two opposites in the city of Amman that have a comparable importance: one the one hand there is the developed, urbanized, and built, and on the other there is the open, rural, and undeveloped. They coexist together side by side. The influence of each one on the other varies from positive to negative depending on the specific situation.

Although being equal in their strength, Escher shows the ability of each opposite to dominate by putting the other opposite to the background of the perspective. In this sense, the checkerboard is in a certain way also functioning as a hologram. Depending on the perspective, one can only see the figure created by one side. Changing the perspective, one sees the other.

In the case of Amman, the mentioned equal strength of the opposites is perhaps less obvious. Local governments tend to push urbanization by means of zoning plans, laying infrastructural networks, neglecting the provision of open spaces, and catering solely for the car. As urbanization is conventionally seen as development, it is seldom prevented. On the contrary, the mindset of authorities is usually rather focusing on 'attracting' investment. However, this paper will show how the interplay of local cultural values of the place with the speculative process of urbanization itself generates a (temporal) balance. It slows the urbanization process in an area by replacing it elsewhere.
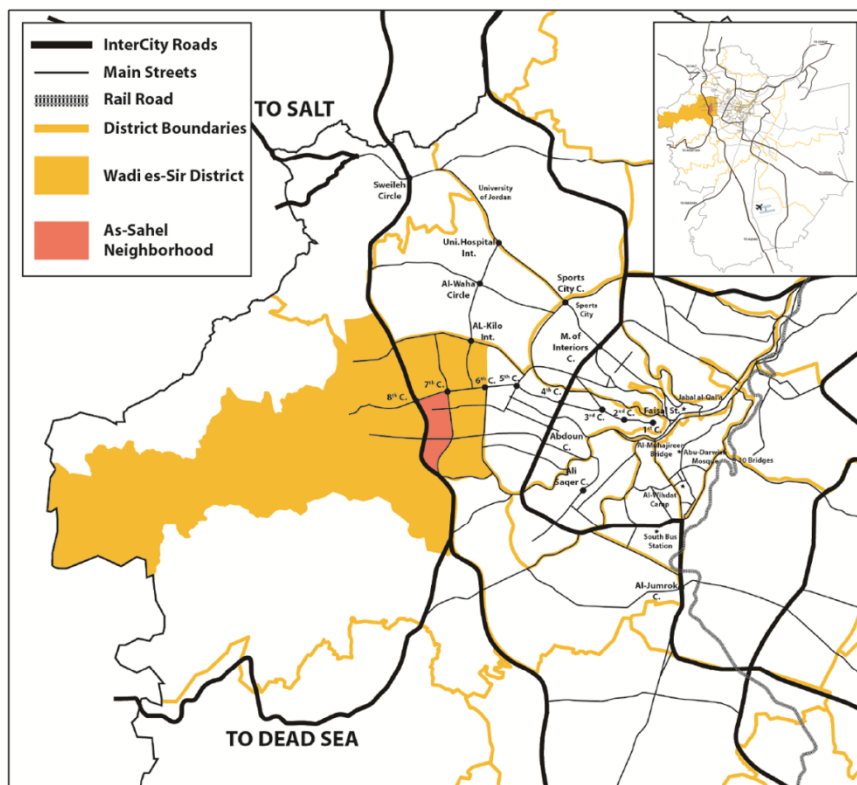

Figure 2. Map of Amman – showing Wādī es-Sīr District and as-Sahel neighbourhood within it. (Source: Author, based on maps of GAM, 2008)

The Case of As-Sahel Neighbourhood

As-Sahel is one of the neighbourhoods of Western Amman in the district of Wādī es-Sīr, (one of the 27 districts of Greater Amman) (figure 2). It is wedged by the convergence of the Queen Alia Airport Road and the King Abdullah II Road. A main road (Queen Zain al-Sharaf St.) crosses as-Sahel dividing it in daily practice into two neighbourhoods - although officially it remains one neighbourhood. Discussion of as-Sahel in this paper is only concerned with the northern neighbourhood.

The district of Wādī es-Sīr consisted originally of the agricultural fields that surrounded the town/village (figure 3) of Wādī es-Sīr. Just like Amman, this town was one of several towns inhabited by Circassian immigrants (from the Caucasus Mountains) who settled in Jordan around the end of the 19th century. The Circassians were settled by the Ottoman state and were given land near water resources that had agricultural potential. The flat fields of Wādī es-Sīr were suitable for grain crops[3].

Figure 3. Aerial photo of Wādī es-Sīr – showing the town and the grain fields in 1953. (Source: Royal Geographical Centre, Jordan)

As-Sahel was part of these fields through which a perennial water stream passed. At times the stream cut through the land deep enough and created a characteristic steep topography. Land distribution that is very recognizable through the plot lines (see figure 4) illustrates the strong relationship of dependency between plots and stream. The plots were organized perpendicularly to ensure the largest number of plots have a direct access to the water.

This agricultural origin of the neighbourhood persists explicitly within the sprawling urbanization of Amman. Agricultural activities exist side by side with the built up, making As-Sahel emblematic for Amman's checkered urbanism. The total built area is 41% of the land available for development. Although not all of the open land is still used as agricultural, a large percentage is (see figure 5).

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[3] Today the area of the city that is located on top of these fields is called Bayāder Wādī es-Sīr (literally meaning the grain fields of Wādī es-Sīr)

Figure 4. Agricultural plot lines – based on an aerial photo of 1978. (Source: author, based on aerial photo)
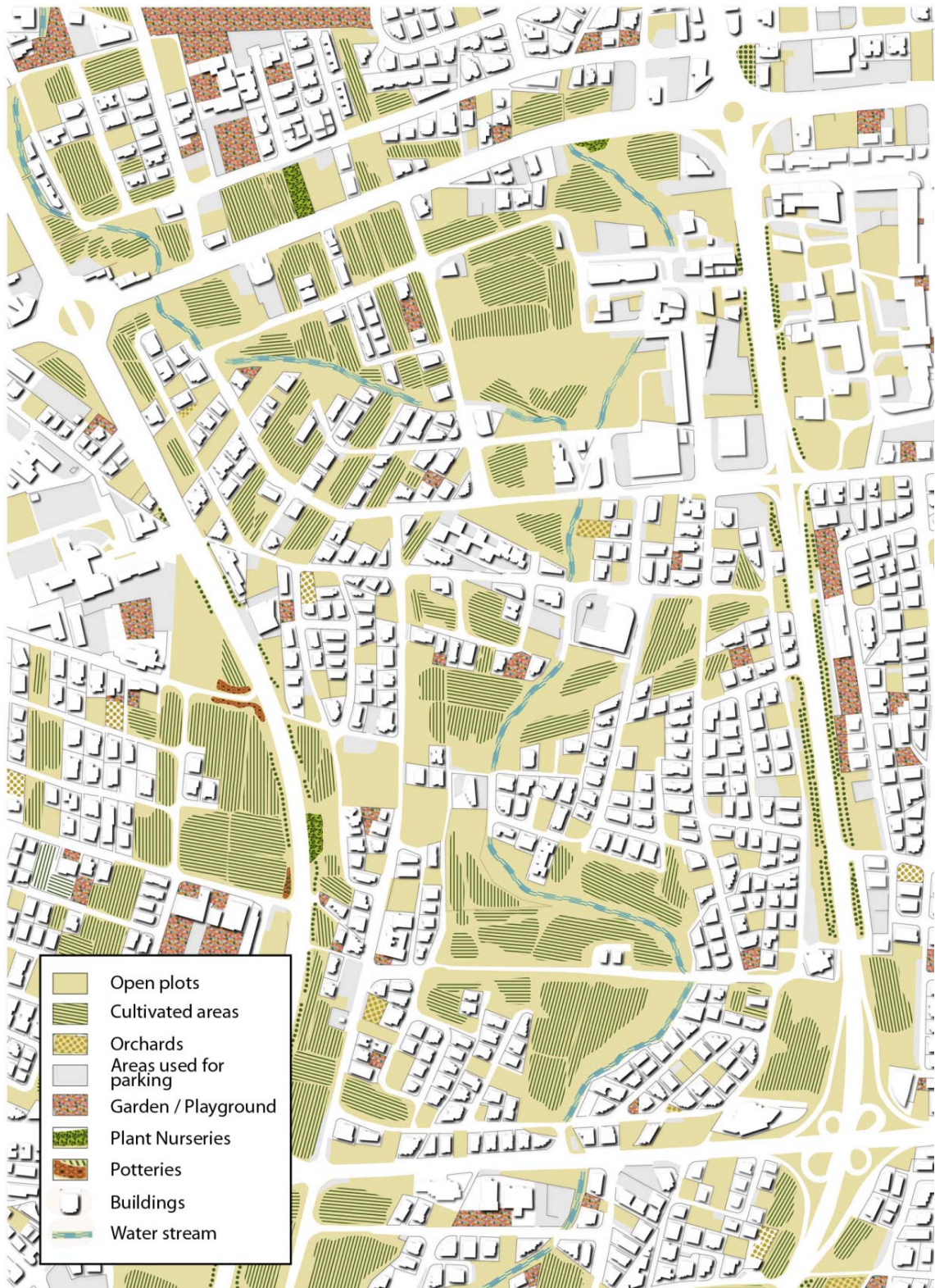
Figure 5. As-Sahel map – showing different uses of open plots. (Source: author, based on fieldwork)

Although the water stream still exists, it is no longer the datum line for the new urbanization. The new datum is the street. Driving along the street one experiences urban development and sprawl with intermittent open plots that often are still in use for agricultural purposes. However, behind these streets, on which developments turn its back lays an almost forgotten opposite landscape. Here, the path of the stream is considered the main path that runs across this landscape.

This double reality that coexist within as-Sahel can in many ways be considered complementary if we look at it from an urbanizing perspective; open land is considered a breathing space, an opportunity for seasonal markets, holding funerals and weddings, parking space, etc. (see figures 6-11). However interaction between the two is sometimes merely circumstantial and rarely even encouraged.

Figure 6-11. Examples of appropriations of open plots by the communities: election campaign post (top-left), watermelon seasonal market (top-right), funeral tent (middle row-left), pottery market (middle row-right), wedding (bottom-left), and children playground (bottom-right). (Source: author)

At hindsight it might be more interesting and challenging to exchange the unilateral urban perspective on this double reality for a dual look. The systematic presence (of fragments) of open land still constitutes a cultivated - and yes, damaged - landscape. Perhaps it is more correct to look to Amman as a hologram, looking urban from the one side, being landscape from the other perspective, modern and traditional, artificial and natural. Both forces are present, intermixed, side by side, in complement here and in contradiction there, the one dominating the other and vice versa or here and there, in balance.

Could checkered urbanism then be, in a certain way, a specific articulation of the city-landscape/city nature relationship - Nothing more, nothing less? City-nature relationship is evidently a classic team in urbanism. Ever since the 17th century, in cities like Versailles, Karlsruhe (both forest-park/city), Washington, and St. Petersburg (river system/city plane), the city is realized, in a certain way, while constructing (artificially or while domesticating) the nature in which it embeds itself (De Meulder, 2010). Le Corbusier did it still with a warp and woof manoeuvre in the notorious plan for Chandigarh. C. Doxiadis did it for Islamabad with the integration of a national park in his megalomaniac plan and consecutively in all the oversized master plans he unrolled all over the world. Is the Amman version of this city-nature relation a new kind of patchwork that is stitching at random the basically two main components of the city? A city that is predominantly composed out low rise (mostly 4 floors, mostly white/cream) relatively high density built fabric on the one hand and open spaces, natural space, fallow spaces on the other side. Their interplay defines the figure ground and counter figure of the city. It looks like both, co-present realities represent two very different modalities, two very different perspectives on land and space. One could argue that it is the modern versus the traditional perspective. Or is it more correct to characterize it as the urban look versus the countryside perspective: for example land to consume, land as market commodity versus land(-scape) as a collective heritage to cultivate, domesticate; consumption versus production, commodity versus patrimony. Land to be either private or public (also in the legal sense of property) as in the city versus land(-scape) as a collective, accessible space where the right of way is the evidence itself. It is only the base right on which can be layered the right to stay, to hold activities, to deploy installations. The opposition between both co-present modalities is quit fundamental in Amman: the built versus the open, mineral versus natural, fixed versus fluid, the stable versus the temporal. These oppositions might sometimes look contradictory; they nevertheless seem to compose the true character of contemporary Amman. And, in the end, isn't it nice to find cattle grazing behind the corner of a forceful fragment of urbanity, to complement the sterile malls with temporary, moving markets on vacant spaces, witness weddings in the smoky lobbies of hotels versus weddings in the open air. Isn't this multiplication of opposing options, characters, qualities, in the end, not enriching the city? It is for the moment still hard to imagine how the (development) policy of Amman could take into account, exploit, and take benefit from this duality (instead of denying it as it does until today).

Forces for Urbanization

The next two sections discuss the forces that shape this checkered reality of as-Sahel; the first section discusses forces for urbanization, and the second section will talk about the counter forces that maintain the openness in the neighbourhood. Many of the forces that will be discussed can be generalized to many of Amman's peripheral neighbourhoods. Non-the-less, as-Sahel has also local and contextual specificities, that maximize the effect of its checkered situation.

The district of Wādī es-Sīr including as-Sahel was incorporated into Amman municipality in 1986. Following this amalgamation, a zoning plan was produced, loosely based on a preliminary structural plan prepared in 1963 by Vernon Z. Newcombe - a U.N. advisor who was asked at the time to prepare an expansion plan for Amman. Newcombe suggested a linear expansion of Amman towards the town of Wādī es-Sīr (figure 12). He allocated a central economic zone, an administrative centre, and an industrial area. He also devised locations for different residential neighbourhoods that suit various economical backgrounds with green recreational strips running through them dotted with public and service facilities. To achieve this plan, Newcombe suggested a land pooling and redistribution system for the residential area, and public acquisition of land for the central commercial and administrative areas.

This was to replace the ongoing practice of using existing agricultural allotments as a base for urban subdivisions. In his opinion, shared in general by most of the professional planners worldwide, this causes irregular plots, inefficient infrastructure, and insufficient and uneven distribution of services and recreation areas. (Newcombe, 1963, p. 36)

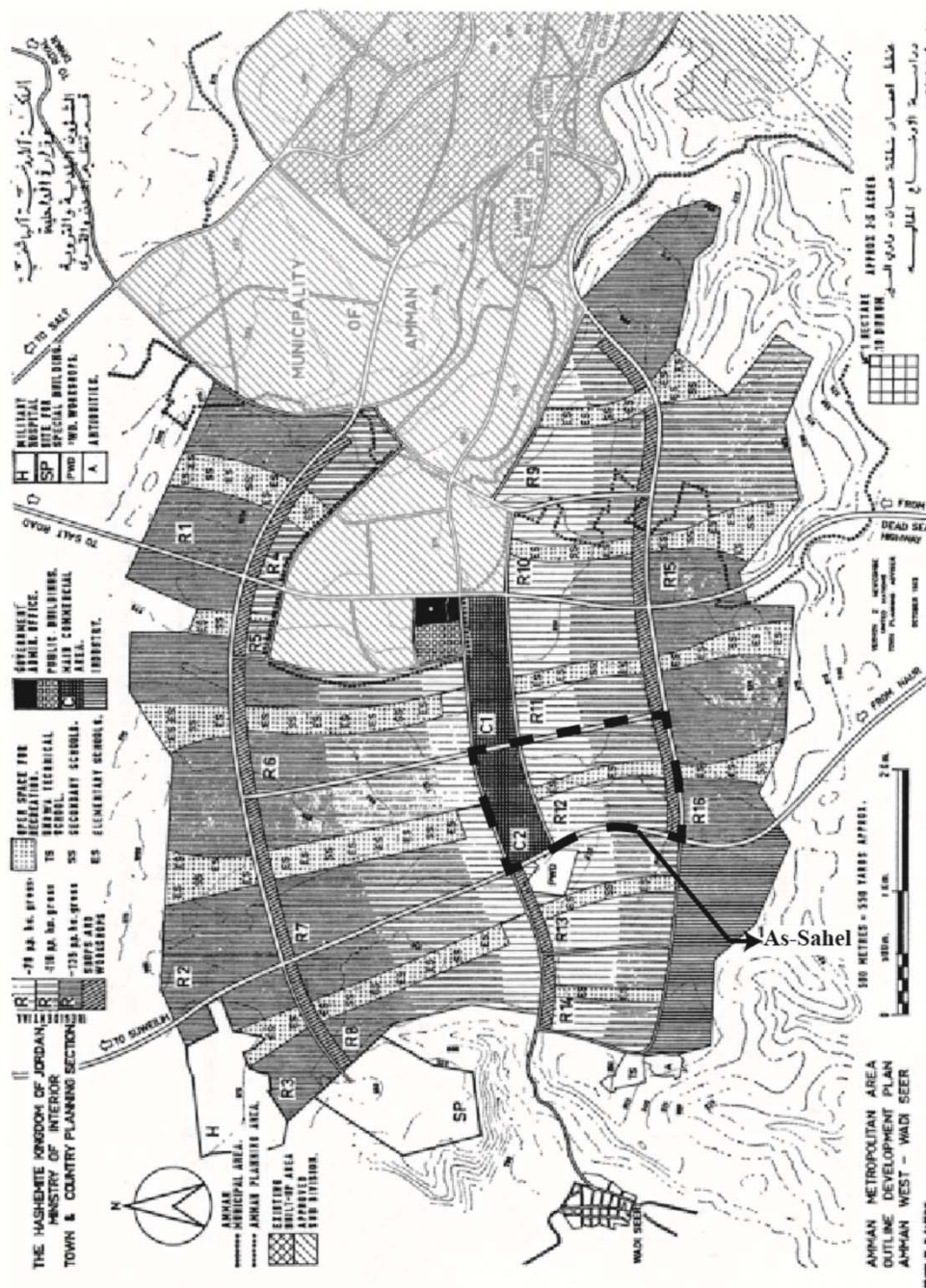*Figure 13*. Newcombe's 1963 scheme for Amman - Wādī es-Sīr: the scheme defines residential areas with different densities (R), central commercial areas (C), an industrial area to the southwest, a public and governmental buildings area, and several recreational strips that host schools and services running through a north south axis. (Source: Newcombe, 1964, edited to show as-Sahel area)

However, by the time the zoning plan was being devised, these recommendations could not be applied since urban sprawl has already gone a long way and land pooling became very complicated. Land prices had also risen much higher than the government's ability for land acquisition. This meant that the conventional practice (of converting agricultural allotments for these urban uses while maintaining their ownership status) persisted.

Once an area becomes officially zoned into the city (as in the case of as-Sahel in 1986), the subdivision of agricultural plots (to smaller areas) become allowed, and that the city authorities are obliged to gradually deliver infrastructure to the zoned areas. This by default raises land prices exponentially. Additionally, having a central commercial zone allocated in as-Sweifiyeh (adjacent to as-Sahel) and partly in as-Sahel, made the neighbourhood a lucrative urban space for speculation both residentially and commercially.

The execution of three major roads surrounding as-Sahel speeded up a lot of the sprawl in the neighbourhood. However, since the agglomeration of Greater Amman included many new neighbourhoods, the priority for providing internal infrastructure was given for the amalgamated areas closest to the city centre. Since as-Sahel is near the periphery of Amman today, its internal development was therefore comparatively slower and more gradual. Often a street would be constructed incrementally in sections (where a new building was being constructed) rather than as a whole. This of course required that the speculators had the ability and connections to convince the municipality to provide it with the necessary infrastructure.

Less than five years after the zoning plans were completed, around 300,000 Jordanian expatriates returned to Amman in the aftermath of the Gulf War. Many of those have lived all their lives in the Gulf and were accustomed to a consumerist lifestyle never equalled before in Jordan. Many of these returnees had sufficient means to reproduce that consumerist lifestyle (Beal, 2001). Consequently building and sprawl reached a peak in Amman. This is when the commercial area (Sweifiyeh) grew to become a vital commercial zone for the entire city, and started to spill over towards as-Sahel itself.

The massive and instant housing demand and the higher land prices caused a shift towards an almost generalized use of the apartment building typology in Western Amman. This was maximized later towards the end of 1990's, with the rise of new professional class with largely improved purchase ability. This class appeared with the newly established international and private sector companies that found an opportunity in the open economy as Jordan signed the world trade agreement, and privatized most of its services and other industries. Private companies responsible for the mass construction of the apartment building type allowed for faster urbanization in Amman. This economic boom in the early 2000s was reinforced in 2006 and 2007 as Amman became the headquarters for the many international companies racing for business in the new Iraq, and regional capital raced to invest in Jordan instead of Lebanon (after the Israeli invasion of 2007). At the same time, Amman received over half a million affluent Iraqis running away from the insecure situation in Iraq after the US invasion. (Marfleet & Chatty, 2009)

All these dramatic events with drastic impacts that surrounded the growth of Amman in the last quarter of a century added strong pressures for urbanization, causing many of the agglomerated areas (in 1986 and 2008 as well) to develop fast and at once. All these events can be traced in as-Sahel too following the sprawl patterns of the neighbourhood (Figure 14).

The (repetitive) urbanization processes that were adopted over and over to cope with the massive, unpredicted and sudden influx of people by the local authorities and the housing real estate sector and by people themselves were rather elementary. It is hard to qualify them as important contributions to the qualitative place making in Amman. The dominant role of the private real estate sector and the sequence of fast and instant real estate development waves, culminated in an industrial, mass produced urbanity.

It lacks the identity that is necessary for shaping the new urbanizing landscape of the rapidly developing city. As-Sahel, therefore, has (or lacks) as same urban qualities that the rest of Amman's neighbourhoods, regardless of the socio-economic statuses of these neighbourhoods (Figures 15-20). In fact, the only identity as-Sahel may represent lies not in its urbanity but rather in its pre-urban agricultural landscape that can still be seen in the scattered patches of open spaces large and small between buildings and building blocks.

As-Sahel in 2010

As-Sahel in 1998

As-Sahel in 1992

As-Sahel in 1978

Figure 14. Urbanization process in as-Sahel at five different stages - showing the effect of population influxes post 1992, and post 2006. (Source: Source: Author, based on field work, aerial photos of 1992, 1978 from the Royal Geographic Centre, and Amman 2005 GIS)

However, it is not enough to consider the dramatic political and other shocks and waves that continue to shake the region as catalysts, of this fast and massive, be it fragmented, development. This urbanization induces in a certain way a chain reaction. Hence, urbanization catalyses other urbanizations; it always has been a driving force for the urbanizing of yet other new areas. When an existing area becomes denser, the wealthier leave for new, still spacious, neighbourhoods that instantly become more fashionable for living. This double mechanism -of sudden influxes and the chain reaction of urbanization- causes the city to ever and ever expand without the real necessity to. Urbanization becomes a consumer of pre-urban identity without the need to establish a new one. This is a force that functions as a drive for urbanization and for maintaining openness at the same time.

Figure 15 - 20. Images of residential neighbourhoods across Amman: Umm al-Summāq (top-left), Khaldā (top-right), Kamāliyyah (middle row-left), as-Sahel (middle row-right), Deir al-Ghbār (bottom-left), Dāhyet al-Yāsmīne (bottom-right). (Source: Author)

Forces Maintaining Openness

When discussing an issue of slow urbanization, the first reason that comes to mind is slow economy. Because Amman's development has always been linked to turbulent regional events, the periods in between these events can be described with slower economy resulting in slower urbanization period. Since there is abundance in plots available for development throughout the city, higher land prices drives development away to further peripheral locations during these slower periods. This means that although as-Sahel's position and zoning plans make it a lucrative neighbourhood for investments and development, this very characteristic can slow urbanization there.

The forces that confine urbanization are not only economical they are also physical and social or cultural. However these forces are extremely intermingled and tied in complex economical relationships. Most of these forces are directly linked to cultural meanings imbedded within land ownership. We already hinted to a duality in the concepts of land and landscape in tradition versus modernity, countryside versus city, etc.

The concept of land ownership in its modern sense was only introduced in Jordan during the second half of the nineteenth century with the Tanzīmāt law[4]. Prior to this law land ownership was a much more relaxed concept. Ownership issues were governed by Islamic regulations and local traditions, and the state did little to interfere with these systems unless disputes arose. In these traditions, land was not owned by default; it was an open resource just like water in a river; a small portion can be claimed if the '*need*' and the '*ability*' to serve (cultivate or build) were available. (Akbar, 1998, pg. 53) Traditions in Jordan can be divided into two based on very different lifestyles, the settled and the nomadic.

The settled lifestyle mainly stationed in rural villages on the north western parts of Jordan. Land here was based on residential clusters of the village surrounded by agricultural fields. Residential quarters in each village were appropriated based on the Islamic concept of ihyā'[5]. The village thus was able to grow densely and organically as need for expansion arose. As for the agricultural land, in many Jordanian villages, it was considered as a communal resource for the village people (a land ownership system known as mushā). Land was thus distributed among villagers' households based on their ability of cultivation. Larger household were assigned larger plots, while small households were given smaller plots to cultivate (Fischbach, 1992, pg. 67-74). This meant that land was not owned but rather distributed/made available. Therefore, the value of agricultural land was related to its agricultural productivity and not on size or area, while private ownership only related to private residences and in some cases shops.

The economy of the nomadic tradition, mostly based in the Badia[6] (the steppe), is based mainly on animal farming. Here, land is abundant and with little value, and since the people are nomadic they had little need to own land; even not for private residences.

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[4] Before the second half of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman state treated the whole South-Syrian with peripheral neglect, until it started to lose some of its territories in the western parts of the empire to Russia. At that point, the state started to take more interest in its peripheral areas. This interest took form in the redistribution of its provincial administrative system (referred to as the 'Tanzīmāt' (regulation) era) in an effort to gain more control over the land. One of the main purposes of this action was the need to employ the fertile lands to make produce, and impose a taxation system on agricultural land. (Rogan, 1994, p. 33)

[5] Ihyā' is a principle that allows any person to own *dead* (un-appropriated) land by "enlivening" it (cultivating or building). Since land originally is not owned, Ihyā' is one source of ownership and is brought about when there is a new NEED to own a property (mostly a land plot). (Akbar, 1998, pg. 55)

[6] The Badia is a classical Arabic word used to describe arid to semi-arid regions of the Middle East where rainfall averages less than 200 mm but not as dry as a desert. Today the Badia makes up about 80% of Jordan's total area. (http://www.badia.gov.jo/land.html, accessed January 2, 2012).

The value of land here is largely influenced by areas for grazing and the availability of water, which are both not individual needs but rather needs for the tribal community. This is a condition where owning a property is not very relevant and consequently not very important. What is fundamental though is the control over (resources of) the tribal territory (water, graze land, etc.). As in many contexts, the control over the territory was the cause of continuous feuds between neighbouring tribes.

Since Amman is located on the edge of the Badia, the Bedouin lifestyle dominated the area prior to the Tanzimāt period. In those times, the number of villages in Jordan was rather limited because of the unsafe hostile Bedouin tribes who were always securing new territories for themselves. (Rogan, 1994, pg. 33)

The Tanzīmāt had little interest in the regulation of Bedouin lifestyles. The focus of the state at that time was indeed to increase agricultural produce (what gave a basis for taxation). The state consequently focused on regulating villages and towns that had agricultural potential, and settled immigrant groups from the Caucasus (Circassians and Chechnyans) in unexploited fertile areas with potential. This turned out to be mostly along the western edge of the Bādia. The displaced Circassians were very loyal to the Ottoman state, and were able to defend their villages against Bedouin raids. The north-south cluster of Circassian villages thus formed a safe route later on for the construction of the Hijaz railway that was intended to secure Hajj routes from Istanbul to Mecca, and spreading Ottoman control over its peripheries.

The Tanzīmat included a redistribution of the administrative system, and the installation of a land registry, and a taxation system upon agricultural land (Fischbach, 1992, pg. 87). Of course, the local population tried hard to resist these changes that accompanied the Tanzīmāt; especially taxes were contested. However the (potentially expanding) Circassian settlements forced many of the Bedouin tribes surrounding them to register their land in order to secure their title to it. (Rogan, 1994, pg. 46) However, further Bedouin tribes were never forced to do that. When the British mandate created the emirate of Transjordan headed by the Amir (later King) Abdullah I, one of the main political focuses of the government was to unify the tribes under the Amir. To accomplish this mission, the emirate had to solve the territorial struggles between the different tribes, and set the boundaries of each tribe's domain. This however conflicted with the new state land policy that was imposed by the British mandate. The land settlement program changed some of the land categories put by the Ottoman Tanzimat laws such as communal lands and 'dead' lands (that were available for ihyā') to publicly owned land within the national treasury. This obviously was a means to deliver the nation some capital (Fischbach, 1992, pg. 330). This legitimation is the classic colonial viewpoint that property of land is actually a right of use and that this can only be claimed in so far that the land is exploited. When not occupied or domesticated, the land is not in use, hence is not owned. This meant that all previously unregistered land (including tribal territories) was transferred to the Jordanian government. Nonetheless, the governments over the years maintained their recognition of tribal territories orally, while on paper they had the legal authority over them. This issue has always been the hardest hanging issue between the governments and the tribes in Jordan. In 1954 some tribes were able to secure some documents guaranteeing their rights to the land; however, these rights were never defined (Al-Zou'bī, 2012). The issue is constantly under debate in Jordan, especially when urbanization knocks on the doors of these contested territories. On the one hand, the large areas of lands were only necessary for Bedouin lifestyles when they were nomadic and needed large areas for grazing. Now however, they are settled and are either employed or work in agriculture or other private initiatives. On the other hand, the relationship between the Bedouins and these lands are not merely speculative, it is deeply embedded within their culture with deep connections of patrimony and belonging.

Instances of such contested lands are recurrent in the north and south of the Greater Amman Municipality Boundaries, and there are several instances of what is officially called 'illegal encroachments' on state land by the tribes who consider themselves as the rightful owners of the land (Razzaz, 1996 & Ammon News, 2011). Inner tribal lands, do not pose the same challenges, since the tribes were able to feel the threat of losing their title to land as early as the settlement of the Circassian immigrants, they felt the need to change their lifestyle into an agricultural one, and register their territories privately in their names.

Amman's continuous absorption of refugees and returnees who run away from any political disruption in the region never made it easier for the tribes in Amman to maintain their identity in the city. The only means that was available for those tribes to assert their identity and belonging was by preserving the ownership of the land they already have. This manifested itself in the largely undeveloped areas. Interviews with real-estate brokers revealed that in as-Sahel around 50% of the total land plots are owned by tribesmen and Circassian owners who refuse to sell for this reason. However, only in times of need for cash, these land owners tend to sell the smallest possible plot for the highest possible price. In as-Sahel, this means higher ground plots as well as 'commercial' and 'residential A[7]' zoned plots. Since the tribesmen and Circassians own plot that run in strips perpendicular to the water stream (as previously mentioned) and thus across topography, each land owner therefore own a spectrum of plot physical and zoning conditions, which in turn allow for this selectivity in selling options. The patterns of urbanization in as-Sahel clearly supports this argument (see figure 21) as higher grounds are more urbanized than lower ones leaving lower more agriculturally fertile lands open for agriculture.

Figure 21. East-west section across as-Sahel – showing how urbanization follows higher elevations keeping lower grounds available for agriculture (heights are doubled). (Source: Author)

With Jordan's reputation as regional refuge and hence continuous reception of massive population influxes, land has gained, not without reason, the reputation of always being on demand. The fact that land owners generally refuse to sell creates on one hand a shortage of offer for land for development regardless of its physical abundance. On the other hand it makes that the developers go and look further and further from the existing urbanized areas for land. Amman, in the meantime, competes with Beijing for the amount of highways and ring roads, regardless of the relatively low urban density. This complex and paradoxical ongoing situation causes land to be abundant and simultaneously land prices to rise continuously and not vary proportionally with the economy fluctuations. This has therefore labelled lands with high speculative value that insures safe investment.

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[7] 'Residential A' zoning represents the least dense zoning for housing in an urban context. The zoning corresponds to a set of regulations for building inside the plot such as 5m front and side setbacks, 7m rear setbacks and 39% building footprint to plot area ratio (FAR), this can be compared to 3m front setbacks, 2.5 rear and side setbacks and 55% FAR for the 'D' zoning which is the densest type.

Especially in an economically and politically unstable region not only for Jordanians but also for the many Arabs in the region as well, land has a guaranteed speculative value.

According to the real-estate brokers, the remaining 50% of the undeveloped plots belong to individuals who no longer reside in the country. Over and over again, many of the refugees who landed in Jordan after an upset in their own country used Amman as a stepping stone for building a better future for themselves and their families. Between the years of 2005 and 2006 for example, Jordan received over 500,000 Iraqis fleeing the seemingly unsettling situations in Iraq regardless of the US promise after removing Saddam. Land prices in Amman at this point doubled and tripled in an instant. However the numbers of Iraqis in the year after was reduced to 300,000 and has been fluctuating ever since, and became impossible to assess. Many of those Iraqis indeed applied for immigration, once they were in Jordan, mostly to the US and other European countries. Yet, as these families proceeded into an unknown future, they still tried to secure a place for them in Amman, should things not work out.

Finally, the checkered urbanism of Amman, this multi-scalar and omnipresent co-presence of built and un-built, of city and nature, of closed and open, has to be understood within the neoliberal economic regime that is characterizing Jordan. As a country with limited resources and adhering to the free market, urbanization is anyways not the result of strong planning processes and strictly enforced regulations. Urbanization is rather the result of a bottom up process, whereby individual landowners bring plots of land to the building market. This is by definition an incremental and bottom up process. Public authorities in the neoliberal era limit themselves mainly to facilitation of this process by making very broad zoning plans (allowing building), approving individual applications for allotments, delivering building permits and, finally, also by providing the infrastructure. No wonder that the patterns of urbanization are scattered.

The housing policy is in other words one of providing of building land (broad zoning, easy approval of allotments, etc.). This politics of providing -typical for quite some neoliberal regimes- do lead in the case of Jordan to an overprovision. This overprovision doesn't intend to oversupply the market. As explained earlier, prices remain rather high. The overprovision is rather guaranteeing that the offer on the real estate market is always sufficient, and this taking into account that the land market is private and depending on the individual decisions of land owners to bring land to the market, taking into account –given the residues of tradition- that a substantial part of the land owners will not bring their land to the market and taking into account that there has to be an offer on the market at any moment, also when a new crisis in the volatile region generates a new flow of (rich) refugees, hence a new wave of land transactions, a new boom in the construction industry. Because also that is part of the policy of provision in countries with a relative open economy: always being ready to secure for the country a part of the 'unexpected' refugee economy. The country does not want to miss these opportunities that come with shocks and waves, shocks and waves that ultimately resonate in the amplifying spatial patterns of open and closed that are so characteristic for Amman.

Conclusion: Concurrent Production of Checkered Urbanism of Amman

The paper revealed the many forces at play that simultaneously produce the double checkered reality of Amman. Although the paper separated the forces for urbanization from those that limit them, it is clear that these forces are not easily separable. They are largely interconnected and cause each other.

One of the main examples of this interconnection is the fluidity of Amman's residents. The temporary state of refugees and seekers of immigration outside the country is continuously confronted with their ambitions for a secure future. This in turn renders urbanization absent from its people and in no need for place making.

While external financial resources make a high speculative commodity of Amman's land, which consequently makes it un-amenable to most of its long-term inhabitants who in turn find themselves moving outwards.

A directly relative issue here is identity. The slow production of meaningful place in Amman causes urbanization to search for the pre-urban identity. Yet, this is exactly the reason why pre-urban owners refuse to give up these places for urbanization, and insist on maintaining their relationship to the place.

All these forces regularly contribute to the shaping of the city both in morphological and in social terms as have been seen in the case of as-Sahel. These forces are imbedded in the value of land and lay beyond the simple speculative value assumed by the zoning plans. Every day the checkered reality of the city tells its story of accepting and defense.

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Policy Perspective and Practices in the Urban South: Stereotypical Notions versus Realities in Nairobi, Kenya

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Rapid Ongoing deepening globalisation and rapid urbanisation coupled with political and socio-economic insufficiencies are resulting in severe societal problems globally. The situation is exacerbated in the Global South where most of this rapid urbanisation is concentrated and is resulting in the so called 'Urban South's crisis', exemplified by the prominence and persistence of informal settlements. The past six decades have seen the failure of several prescribed solutions attempting to deal with the urban South's crisis, leading to not only paradigm shifts but also to competing approaches. Using the case of Nairobi, this paper examines the linkages between global and local responses to urban problems facing the Global South. As such, the proliferation of actors with competing interests, different perspectives and possibly paradigmatic incompatibilities; could be preventing effective cooperation, thus contributing to the failure of initiatives, and in this way propagating the Urban South's crisis.

Keywords: Urban governance, Informal settlements, Political-policy contexts

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Urban South's crisis and stereotypical notions

Ongoing globalisation and rapid urbanisation trends, coupled with political and socio-economic insufficiencies, are causing severe urban problems globally, calling for more appropriate measures. This is exacerbated in the Global South which bears most of this global rapid urbanisation and suffers more from those insufficiencies, leading to the   'urban South crisis'. The 'urban South' i.e. urban environments in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America; share to various degrees tension concerning the 'path to development', socio-political and economic conflicts on urban space use, but more so the prominence and persistence of informal settlements. Many prescribed solution to the crisis have failed leading to not only paradigm shifts but also competing approaches, with each decade since 1950s seeing a paradigm shift in approaches. Moreover, the situation has been complicated by the proliferation of interested actors, not only with varying resources, scales, power, roles and approaches, but also with different interests, perspectives and paradigmatic positions; contributing to the failure of initiatives and thereby propagating the crisis. Seemingly the prescribed policies and initiatives usually   driven by both exogenous and endogenous powerful interest groups are not benefiting the targeted majority urban party poor, but partly due to existing political milieus they only end up benefiting the minority elites (Omenya and Huchzermeyer 2006). This also illustrates the persistent fundament lack of political will to deal with these urban problems in a systematic way. Hence the urban South exhibit stark dualities, juxtaposing informal settlements and gated communities, industrial zones and luxurious resorts, refugee camps and golf courses. Additionally, the urban South is subjected to multiple modes of transformation including firstly the exogenously conceived supranational visions and programmes based on stereotypical notions of development, secondly endogenous politico-historical forces determining implementation, and thirdly the spontaneous actions by the ordinary inhabitants. As such, there is wide variance between the normatively desired and the actual lived realities in many urban South arenas. Accordingly, using the case of Nairobi, Kenya and with reference to Structuration (Giddens 1984) and Bounded Rationality (Simon et al. 2008) theoretical perspectives, this paper reflects upon the foregoing issues. It presents briefly presents the paradigm shifts in responses towards informal settlements since the 1950s, followed by a glimpse into the Kenya's politico-historical context those responses were implemented. Subsequently the actors' frames of reference or paradigmatic positions are reviewed using the said theoretical framework, concluding with a discussion on the role of competing paradigms in the complex political historical context of the urban South crisis.

Paradigm shifts in response to urban South's Crisis

After of World War II there was unprecedented rapid urbanisation leading to proliferation of informal settlements in the Global South, which currently house over a billion people which is a third of the global urban population (UN-Habitat 2010). Since the 1950s, several solutions have been prescribed an attempt to tackle the informal settlements, with each subsequent decade witnessing a paradigm shift in dominant narratives and approaches, see Table 1 and (Kedogo and Hamhaber 2012). In the 1950s, in countries still under colonial rule, informal settlements were controlled through containment involving repressive segregation laws prohibiting the natives entry into urban areas, and also through brutal evictions and demolitions. The aim was to maintain racial and spatial purity and beauty of the urban areas, and also control disease, crime and political dissent (Myers 2003).

Paradigm in discourse & policy	Containment	Modernisation	Basic needs	Neoliberalism	Sustainability	Good Governance
Decade it was dominant	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Geo-political and economic context	Post war era Late colonial Cold war begins Liberation struggle	Decolonization Independence Keynesianism	Oil shocks Stagflation Debt crisis Fordism crisis Global urban crises	Thatcher-Reagan Conservatism Post Fordism & bloody Taylorism	End of Cold war End of Cold war Rio Earth Summit	New Millennium Millennium-summit Globalisation deepens
Global themes: policies, doctrines & declarations	Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Dec. 1948	UN Development Decades	Basic Needs approach Redistribution with growth (WEC 1976) 1976 Vancouver Decl. (Habitat I)	Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) Free markets. Retreat of the state	Brundtland Report 1996 Istanbul Declaration (Habitat II)	MDGs- 2000 Millennium Declaration
Development orthodoxy	Containment (by law & force)	Modernisation (accelerated growth & trickle down)	Basic needs (dependency theory-redistribution)	Economic-liberalism Enabling approaches, state roll back	Sustainable development	Good governance and MDGs
Prescribed responses to Urban South crises	Containment (by law & force) segregation, restriction & repression Slum clearance eviction and demolitions	Slum demolitions replaced with modern public housing	Global responses Aided self-help Sites-and-services schemes	Enabling approaches Urban management by market forces Slum upgrading	Sustainable urban development Urban management Tenure security regularisation	Cities without slums City-Nationwide policies City alliances
Envisioned role of the government	Controller for maintaining order, class and purity in the cities	Planner for economic take off and development	Provider of basic needs	Enabler of the private sector and civil society	Regulator of the private sector, market and global forces for sustainable development	Partner with all relevant stakeholders to alleviate poverty and other urban challenges -in MDGs
Envisioned mode of governance	Authoritarian & Clientelist	Representative democratic	Managerialist	Corporatist	Pluralist	Inclusive democratic
Kenya national socio-political context	Colonial State of emergency Liberation war	Kenyatta Era Independence Expectation Growth	Kenyatta Era Disappointment Despotism Politico-ethnicity	Nyayo era I Populism Restoration Austerity begins	Nyayo era II Dictatorship Economic downturn Corruption 2nd liberation struggle	Kibaki era Enthusiasm Economic growth Democracy Disappointment Inequality deepens

Table 1. Paradigm shifts in responses towards informal settlements
Source: (Kedogo and Hamhaber 2012)

In the 1960s, many African countries gained independence. The removal of restrictive laws led to massive rural-urban migration and rapid growth of informal settlements. '*Modernisation*' became the global development paradigm aiming to transform these countries from 'traditional' into 'modern' societies. Informal settlements were dealt by blueprint planning, demolitions and replacement by 'modern public housing'.

However, these proved highly inadequate to contain the explosive growth of informal settlements. The 1970s ushered in the 'redistribution with growth' and *'Basic needs'* development strategy, in which housing needs were addressed through 'aided self-help' and 'site and services schemes' which again failed to improve the housing situation of the urban poor (R. Obudho and Aduwo 1989; Weru and Bodewes 2001). The 1980s brought *Neoliberalism* and Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) prescribing the withdrawal of the state from service provision, and instead create an 'enabling environment' for the private sector and other non-state actors, to deal with housing problems.

However these actors did not take up the role despite many incentives, leading to severe proliferation of informal settlements with increasing poverty, inequalities and marginalisation in that decade (UN-Habitat 2006). The 1990s brought *'Sustainability'*, hence 'sustainable and integrated urban practices', aiming to produce liveable and inclusive cities with social harmony, economic and environmental sustainability; leading to participatory slum upgrading projects. However this projects only reached a tiny fraction of the existing informal settlements (Sietchiping 2008). The 2000s bought *'Good Governance'* to prominence calling for partnership between the governments, private sector, civil society and supra national entities among others. This led to city-wide and nation-wide city strategies and as espoused for example by the 'Cities Without Slums' initiatives, based on the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets. These actions are however still highly insignificant, compared to the existing urban challenges (UN-Habitat 2010). Consequently, this study identifies these six dominant paradigms that prevailed over the different decades depending on prevailing geo-political and economic forces. Nonetheless, these paradigms did not revolutionarily replacing each other but evolved to the next ones, and as shall be discussed later, they all continue to co-exist and are actually competing in the Global South's urban arena. These approaches were driven by exogenous actors in their formulation, but powerful endogenous actors greatly influenced their implantation. Thus while policy and programme documents reflect closely those paradigm shifts, there were variances between what was written and what was actually practiced with the politico-historical context playing a significant role.

Politico-historical context of informal settlements arena in Nairobi

Since 1950, in terms of national governance Nairobi has seen four distinct eras: the late colonial period ending at independence in 1963, Jomo Kenyatta's presidency from 1963 to1978, Daniel arap Moi's from 1978 to 2002 and finally Mwai Kibaki's from 2002 to date. Each era had a profound impact upon the informal settlements arena. The colonial era starting from 1888, set the stage for the current unevenness in Nairobi and also played a significant role in the formation informal settlements and their subsequent persistence to date (R. A. Obudho 1997; Syagga et al. 2001; UN-Habitat 2003). The deliberate destitution of indigenous people and appropriation of their lands to facilitate the colonial settler plantation system's high demand for labourers, generated a vast destitute and landless population that fuelled rural-urban migration and the growth of informal settlements in the subsequent decades (Bennett 1996; Okoth 2006). During colonial times, this population was confined in the 'native reserves' and prevented entry into the urban areas by segregation laws, thus through containment laws and practices Nairobi's population was kept low. The Vagrancy Act of 1922 authorised the demolition of any undesirable native housing, and Nairobi planned based on racial segregationist laws as elaborated by the master plans of 1905, 1927 and 1948. These unequal spatial divisions still persist today albeit based on economic classes, with the poorer populations, comprising more than half of Nairobi's population, confined in less than five percent of Nairobi's total land area, in informal settlements (Amis 1984; Hake 1977; Hope 2012; K'Akumu and Olima 2007).

The 'divide and rule' policy also instituted , ethnic segregation amongst native communities in settlement patterns, socio-economic and political space and in other material and discursive practices that persist to date; negatively impacting many housing initiatives(Hake 1977; Makachia 2011; Godwin Rapando Murunga 2012; Syagga et al. 2001). Furthermore, to facilitate the administration of the colony, a local elite was created and accorded many privileges, wealth and power, and in return to help subjugate their fellow indigenous people. At 'independence' the colonial government handed over the governance of the country to this elite, who maintained colonial practises and a status quo that befitted themselves; but they showed no political will to deal significantly with issues affecting the majority poor citizens people (Furedi 1973; B. A. Ogot 1995; Wrong 2010).

Independence in 1963 ushered in Kenyatta's presidency, with great expectations for prosperity and emancipation for majority of the citizens. However, the oppressive colonial state structures were inherited intact and without any radical transformation to accommodate the needs of the majority, leading to disappointment and dissent (B.A. Ogot and Ochieng 1996). To counter this dissent, the regime concentrated dictatorial powers person of the president and furthered politicisation of ethnicity and ethnicisation of government, establish patron-clientelistic relationships, heavily rewarding loyalty with the illegal allocation of state land and other benefits (Godwin R Murunga 2004). Moreover appointments to the civil service and provincial administration favoured more the members of the president's ethnicity. This patronage and clientelistic relations coupled with the politicisation of ethnicity also seemed to play a role when it came to allocating state contracts, public housing, site and service schemes and also in the selective demolition of informal settlements during the modernisation and basic needs periods (Amis 1984; Shihembetsa 1989). Moreover, when the government realised public housing and site -service schemes could not meet the growing housing need nor replace informal settlements, the provincial administration began issuing quasi-legal land permits for building informal settlements, following political patronage and ethnic consideration, to consolidated clients, pay back favours and reward fellow tribesmen; thereby creating the current ethnic based ownership structure. Hence landlord-tenant conflicts quickly become politico-ethnic clashes. This also affects slum upgrading polices and initiatives, for example as witnessed in the Mathare 4A programme and the current Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) in Kibera (Bodewes 2005; Gatabaki-Kamau and Karirah-Gitau 2004; Government of Kenya 2002, 2004; Omenya and Huchzermeyer 2006; Otiso 2003).

Moi's presidency also called the Nyayo era began in 1978. Inheriting a very powerful presidential position, but ascending to power from a weak position with intense opposition from Kenyatta's politico-ethnic elites, he pursued a populist approach. This ostentatiously was to end the excesses of Kenyatta's regime and to reach out to the other communities that felt marginalised. Nevertheless this regime became extremely dictatorial and corrupt, relying on ethnic calculations and other Machiavellian tactics. There was gross mismanagement of the economy, public malfeasance and widespread plunder of state resources and public land for clientelistic and patronage purposes. These land grabbing and illegal land allocations led to widespread evictions and demolitions of informal settlements (COHRE 2006). Slum upgrading projects such as the 'Kibera Nyayo Highrise Estate' were transformed into middle class houses allocated based on political patronage to wealthy individuals (M. Huchzermeyer 2008). Additionally, the Nyayo era coincided with the 1980s global economic crises, leading to neoliberal policies including the World Bank driven Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). These SAPs emphasised market-driven economic policies, privatisation, austerity measures, down-sizing of the public sector's employment and withdrawal of the state from the provision of public services such as health, education, housing, water and sanitation.

These greatly impoverished the ordinary citizens by reducing access to essential services, economic regression and massive unemployment; thereby greatly contributing to the explosive growth of informal settlements in the 1980s and 1990s (Lando and Bujra 2009; Godwin R Murunga 2004; Syagga et al. 2001). Conversely, for the politically connected the withdrawal of the state presented immense opportunities for enrichment and corruption, exacerbating inequalities (Mkandawire and Soludo 1999). In addition, citing corruption and Moi's reluctance to reform, donors withdrew their funding for government projects and instead channelled it through Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), leading to proliferation of NGOs in Nairobi's informal housing arena in the 1990s. This increased duplication, lack of coordination and wasteful competition in the arena (Syagga et al. 2001). Thus while the activities of the non-state actors increased in the informal settlements arena, the government's greatly diminished during the Nyayo era.

While there were many commissions, reports and reconditions by the government in conjunction with bilateral or multilateral partners based on the 1980s neoliberal's enablement paradigm and 1990s sustainability's integrated urban development paradigm, many Nyayo era of the interventions towards informal settlements resulted from 'roadside policies'(Omenya and Huchzermeyer 2006). These were populist, spontaneous and political presidential declarations without reference to legal frameworks such as, the 2001 declaration for the rents in informal settlements to be reduced by half, which led to violent clashes between tenants and slumlords (Shilaho 2008). As such, apart from the populist approaches and policy failures, there was also the great lack of political will to address the issue of informal settlements in an effective manner. Consequently, due to both internal and external causes during the Nyayo era, while the politically connected individuals became enormously wealthy building luxurious homes, the welfare of the ordinary citizens deteriorated tremendously and informal settlements grew exponentially (Médard 2010; Shultz 2010).

After a protracted struggle for democracy, the year 2002 ushered Kibaki's presidency with the promise, great expectations and hope to drastically improve the socio-economic situation of ordinary citizens, and to end corruption, authoritarianism, politicisation of ethnicity, public malfeasance and impunity, but to also drastically improve the socio-economic situation of ordinary citizens. This promise led to the resumption of aid and foreign investments.

The national economic performance and democratic space improved. However, this enthusiasm was quickly replaced by disappointment and despair when it became apparent that corruption, impunity and politicisation of ethnicity had not ended but had only become more polished and sophisticated. Furthermore, despite economic gains the socio-economic situation of many citizens was not improving, as the gains seemed to benefit only some regions and politically connected individuals (Godwin R. Murunga and Nasong'o 2006; Okombo et al. 2012; Syagga et al. 2001; Wrong 2010).

Following the disputed elections in 2007, the perceived deliberate unfairness and inequality in the distribution of national resources culminated in violent politico-ethnic clashes, that nearly plunged the country into civil war, with the informal settlements bearing the brunt of the violence (Mueller 2008; Njogu et al. 2010). Those clashes have had a profound effect on the ongoing 'slum upgrading' activities by both the government and non-state actors. Moreover, these clashes only ended after a power sharing agreement and the formation of a coalition government with rival factions sharing out government ministries and departments, contributing to the government having within itself divergent programmes, approaches and responses to informal settlements due to conflicting interests, visions, philosophies and paradigmatic stands. (Ajulu 2003; Mueller 2008; State and Non-state actors Nairobi, Personal Communication 2011).

During Kibaki's regime there has been a more apparent government action towards informal settlements including the creation of a ministry dedicated to housing, the continuation of the UN-Habitat supported Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) and the World Bank funded Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP) initiated following the 'good governance' paradigmatic approach but constituent actors having divergent paradigmatic approaches. However, these slum upgrading actions by both state and non-state actors have remained highly insignificant and fragmented in the face of the magnitude of informal settlements in Nairobi; with many residents seeing these actions as merely political gestures. The Kibaki's regime has also seen a tremendous widening of the gap between the rich and the poor; a dramatic increase in luxuries gated communities, while the growth of informal settlements continues unabated.

In conclusion, these politico-historical contexts have played a significant role in rendering housing initiatives ineffective in transforming the living situations of the urban poor, but instead turned the initiatives to serve the interests of the ruling elites, such as political control and wealth. Many actors purported to act according to the prevailing paradigm but actually acted according to paradigmatic positions that best served their interests.

Additionally, Nairobi exhibits vastly unevenness with global processes and local struggles dissolving into a variety of conflicts in the expressions, use and organisation of spaces. Apparently, unevenness and divisions in Kenya were deliberately produced and continue to be reproduced by powerful actors. These divisions condition the actions and interactions of actors in Nairobi's informal settlements arena. As discussed above, certain actors have routinely constructed and maintained power relations by use of facility, that is allocative and authoritative resources, to gain control and establish their preferred mode of domination, exercising power and realising their own intentions, and finally reproducing relations of autonomy and dependence in Nairobi (Giddens 1979, 1984). Apparently, policies and initiatives in Nairobi exhibit an elite bias, aimed at serving the interest of the elite, while the needs of the poor are only met with mere rhetoric or populist gestures (Hendriks 2010; Kedogo et al. 2010; UN-Habitat 2009a). Could this also explain why in Nairobi and other Global South cities, policies and incentives aimed at the needs of the poor ordinary citizens are not effective? There is a need to appreciate and deal with the unevenness and divisions in an appropriate manner, in such a way that would lead to the improvement of the welfare of majority of citizens in Nairobi and Kenya and many Global South countries.

Theoretical perspectives: Structuration Theory and Bounded Rationality

According to 'Structuration Theory' (Giddens 1984) there is 'duality of structures' i.e. social structures make social action possible and at the same time social action creates those very structures. By defining *structures* as being 'recursively organized rules and resources' that both constrain and facilitate or enable social actions and structures existing as 'memory traces' (Giddens 1984 pp. 377); this theory provides a way of situating actors in Nairobi's informal housing arena according to their paradigmatic positions (Kedogo and Hamhaber 2012). Hence through having control over *signification* and *normative* exogenous actors label new paradigms and what it 'ought to be' and prescribe it since they also control *allocative resources* such as donor funding. Conversely powerful endogenous actors by their *authoritative resource* to control people and *allocative resource* such as land, eventually determine how the initiatives are eventually implemented on the ground, reproducing *"relations of autonomy and dependence"* (Giddens 1979 pp. 93); following their vested interests, routine social relations, practices and institutional designs, all structured by deeper values and conceptions such as paradigmatic positions (Healey 1997).

Moreover, 'Bounded Rationality' (Simon 1957; Simon et al. 2008) illustrates how when making decisions, actors have rationalities limited by circumstances and time and other contextual constrains, thus explaining issues like politico-ethnic considerations the Nairobi's settlement arena housing or the transferability of concepts developed in the Global North to the urban South contexts.
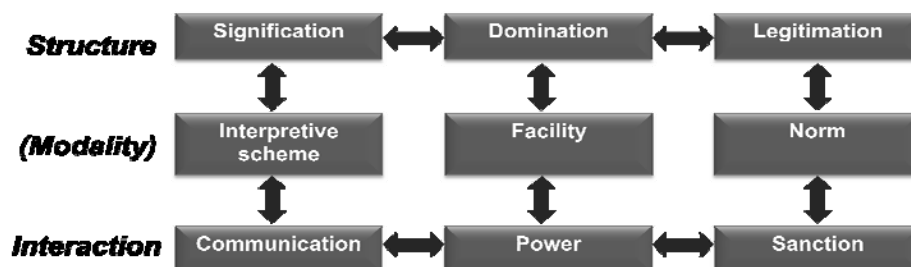

Figure 1. Dimensions of the duality of structure (Giddens 1984: 29)

Paradigmatic positions in Nairobi's informal settlements arena

Nairobi's informal settlements arena involves exogenous actors, powerful endogenous actors and finally the urban poor themselves. While in theory, policy and programme documents have closely followed the paradigm shifts shown in table 1, in practice the actors according to different paradigms; exhibit a wide variance between the desired and actual action (GoK, 2005; M. Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006; Pugh 2001a; UN-Habitat 2003, 2009b, 2009a). Indeed, this was observed during the field-study in Nairobi; firstly, based on what the actors said about themselves, their modus operandi, policy and programme documents; secondly, through analysing what other actors said about the particular actor; thirdly based on scholarly evidence; and finally all these analysed through a 'structuration-housing' analytical framework (Kedogo and Hamhaber 2012). The analysis revealed the co-existence of multiple paradigmatic stands. Multilateral organisations played a major role, and actually introduced and defined the dominant paradigms although with divergent meanings and approaches. For example, while the UN-Habitat and UNDP emphasised human development aspects and community participation themes in line with the sustainability paradigm, World Bank focused more on enabling the market and private sector, an approach deemed neoliberal (Omenya and Huchzermeyer 2006; Pugh 2001b; UN-Habitat 2010; World Bank 2008). Bilateral agencies mainly reflected values and priorities of their mother countries, but mainly followed a basic needs paradigmatic approach. Many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), seemed to follow the stances of their funders, with the pragmatic NGOs following a basic needs need approach, and rights-based ones following a good governance approach (Omenya and Huchzermeyer 2006). Endogenous actors including the government actors had highly varying paradigmatic approaches depending on the party affiliations, visions, vested interests, and motives - both positive and negative. Some insisting on evictions and demolitions following the containment paradigm, whereas others favouring welfare based subsidised public housing akin to the modernisation paradigm (GoK 2011). Moreover some politicians engaged in clientistic activities with the 'slumlords' supported neoliberal laissez faire approaches that did not interfere with the status quo in the informal settlements (M. Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006; Mitullah 2008).

This laissez faire approach was also preferred by several private sector actors, ranging from giant multinational corporations to small informal enterprises, who were benefiting from the persistence of informal settlements which enable payment of low wages and maintenance of a pool of casual labourers.

In sum, the good governance paradigm aims at ensuring the views of the weakest in society are taken into account in decision-making, to produce more responsive actions towards the needs of the urban poor. However, the voice of the majority of the urban poor in Nairobi's informal settlements is rarely heard. Several NGOs set out to represent the voice of the urban poor, but only ended up representing the views of their funders. Attempts to increase urban poor's participation in government-led projects have often been hijacked by powerful interest groups and gate keepers. Hence several residents feared any slum-upgrading activity, which from their experiences only led to further displacement and worsening of their welfare (M. Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006; Syagga et al. 2001). Accordingly, many residents wished for a more supportive government that listened and protected them, engaging them not with political gestures, but in a more genuine manner, leading to actions that could genuinely improve their living conditions.

Conclusions

This paper, while focusing on Nairobi informal settlements arena, has discussed the urban South crisis with its constituent material and discursive practices in complex policy and politico-historical contexts, with a myriad of heterogeneous actors with differing interests, resources, approaches and frames of references. The actor/stakeholder analysis reveals highly unequal power relations. Powerful actors by virtue of their allocative and authoritative resources produce and determine which paradigm will be dominant, how they will be defined normatively and eventually how they will be implemented. These resources could be financial, coercive force, knowledge, framing ability, proximity, relations or links among others. Conversely, the urban poor, lacking those resources have little say in determining what is prescribed for them. While the current 'good governance' paradigm designates them 'the primary stakeholders' their participation remains nominal or manipulation (Charton-Bigot and Rodriguez-Torres 2010; W. Huchzermeyer 2009; Mitullah 2008). Moreover, whereas most actors referred to 'good governance', empirical findings suggest that different actors defined it differently according to their interests and paradigmatic stands; indeed programme documents were similar, but their practices widely divergent (COHRE 2006; M. Huchzermeyer and Karam 2006). As such, seemingly changes in dominant paradigms in the lager arena resulted only in changing of names and labels at ground, and the preferred underlying paradigmatic approaches of many actors remained unchanged. In fact those different paradigmatic stands could be preventing effective cooperation, mutual understanding and attainment of a common ground, necessary for the working of good governance approaches such as multi-level/actor systems, public-private-partnerships and participatory slum upgrading. Apart from conflicting interests, conflict paradigmatic stands could also be blamed for the persisted failure of many initiatives aimed at informal settlements. In sum, could all this explain why many actions aimed at or purporting to improve the lives of the urban poor have in fact end up worsening the situation further, deepening more the multiple layers of the exploitation of the urban poor? There is need to need to interact appropriately with the opportunities afforded by increased awareness and the demand for democratised decision-making processes and socio-economic rights by ordinary people; in a way that ensures the needs, voices, interests and views of the majority urban poor are adequately accommodated policies and initiatives that affect their lives.

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Orienting the Knowledge of International Urban Conservation in the Light of the Arab Revolutions

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This paper engages the specialists' network of urban conservation to reflect on the apparent mismatch between the knowledge and values system of experts and those of wider society in the light of the 'Arab revolutions'. A postcolonial perspective is adopted to problematise the 'thinking and doing' of a transnational community concerned with a sensitive treatment of spatial transformations in 'historic' cities of Arab-Islamic legacy in the Mediterranean. A progressive research agenda is put forward to engage critical heritage studies and the anthropology of development at the intersection where a post-western perspective is needed to disentangle the production of international cultural heritage knowledge from a scientist / positivist paradigm. Multi-sited ethnography is suggested as a methodological strategy, and the Old City of Tunis as a site to test dis-continuities with colonial and Western epistemologies, as related to the knowledge practice of urban conservation professionals.

Keywords: International networks of Urban Conservation, Knowledge practices, Postcolonial theory, Arab revolutions, Tunis

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Introduction

In the last decade processes of urban conservation and development in the Southern Mediterranean were debated in international policy arenas, and studied along disciplinary debates, until the Arab revolutions from 2011 onwards have shaken long-standing regimes. These tumultuous events referred to in Arabic as الثورات العربية (al-Thûrât al-'Arabiyy) translate into English as Arab rebellions or Arab revolutions, and are generally labelled in western media as Arab spring or Arab awakening. This paper will argue that the sense of crisis and rapid change that followed the popular uprisings is an opportunity for the international urban conservation community to reflect on its practices and re-orient debates over 'historic cities' in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean towards new directions.

The paper will explore the potential of a research agenda that would depict - and overlap - a number of specialised perspectives of urban conservation which currently converge on the body of Southern Mediterranean cities. Cities that are placed into the 'development' side of the urban scholarship divide [Robinson, 2006]. The objective is twofold. First, to critically trace respective epistemologies and knowledge practices; and second to follow how they relate to each other. The proposal is to test claims about the parochial nature of transnational (wannabe global) policies and practices by tracing steps that link an essentialised language, often filled with blurred notions, back to specific concepts and intellectual traditions underpinning theories of urban 'conservation' and 'development'. A postcolonial perspective [King, 2005; Mitchell, 2001, 2002; Said, 1979; Robinson, 2006] is strategically adopted to dis-embed specialist knowledge practices from dominant Modern and Western epistemologies, thus making space for other forms of knowledge, arguably embodied in the urban form and social practices longly associated with cultural-religious norms of Islam, as practiced in the Maghreb and Mashreq [Abu-lughod, 1978, 1987; Bianca, 2010; Hakim, 2008; Radoine, 2011]. The suggested method (multi-sited ethnography) enables researchers to investigate circulation/translation of meanings, thereby bringing under analytical lenses the tensions and contradictions (relationships and disjunctures) within narratives of international urban conservation for development, which are being framed, concurrently, in different locales and at different scales. The focus would then be on how transnational knowledge practices join different rationales of 'continuity' (conservation) and 'change' (development) in the built environment with spatial transformation taking place in - or envisioned for - a number of layered, long lived, cities of the Southern Mediterranean attracting the attention of international organisations.

Finally the paper introduces the conservation agenda for the old city of Tunis as a potential site to test dis-continuities with colonial and Western epistemologies as related to the knowledge practices of urban 'heritage experts'.

Background to conservation and development for old cities of the Southern Mediterranean

'The history of the Mediterranean is above all the history of Mediterranean cities'
(Benheim, Hidouci and Messiah, 2012: 16)

From a geopolitical perspective independent states in the southern and eastern Mediterranean established between the end of the Second World War and the early 1960s (chronologically following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and a period of European colonial mandates) transformed in several instances into repressive regimes: in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria, under the projected image of republican democratic institutions or, as in the case of Morocco, of a constitutional monarchy.

Other countries witnessed civil war due to sectarian politics, as the case of Lebanon (1975 to 1990) and Algeria (1991-2002). Crucially, the ongoing struggle between the Palestinian[2] and Israeli states to control the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River reverberates on the wider geopolitical region.

Plausibly old cities situated in the occident, Maghreb [المغرب], and orient, Mashreq [المشرق], of the southern Mediterranean share commonalities with those on the northern shores (Europe, Balkan Peninsula) in terms of climatic conditions, material culture, and traces of ancient civilisations. Still, these 'other' cities are typically categorised in international policy documents by virtue of additional concomitant factors: a significant legacy of Islamic civilisations; a majority of their population being ethnically Arab and/or using a dialect of the Classic Arabic language; sharing the ruling power of the Ottoman Empire for about three centuries (1550s to 1880s); being subject to European colonisation projects[3] (1830s to 1960s); and recently witnessing popular revolts against authoritarian regimes installed in the middle of the twentieth century.

After suffering a long period of neglect, decay, and marginalisation started during colonial administrations and continued in the post-independence period [Balbo, 2010:12], what are labeled nowadays as old / traditional / historic parts of these cities[4] have increasingly become, since the 1990s, sites of attention across the national/international spectrum as locales in the global tourism market capable to attract foreign investments.

In the following paragraphs I will try to disaggregate how these perspectives interrelate, starting with the identification of 'local' institutional actors and special interest groups, then tracing ways in which they interact with 'international' (aid/development) organisations, and between each other, when addressing visions of spatial transformation for the older core of the city that arguably still dispenses (cultural) identity for a wider urban agglomeration. To this point I found the following quote a useful synthesis of dynamic and emergent qualities of the 'city' that become objects of debate.

'Perfectly apt and fantastically adaptable, "city" indicates, together, a physical environment, its forms of inhabitation, the human beings that make, inhabit, and mythicize it, and the complex networks of their relationships, both permanent and volatile. "City" has evolved throughout history to continue to adhere to its complex, never complete, and changing "whole", now open and yet still always identifiable.' [Stoppani, 2010: 3]

International organisations typically frame the problem as 'physical and economic rehabilitation' of Mediterranean cities falling under the metaphorical line of a global North-South divide (ie cities outside EUropean shifting boundaries) which are then classified as 'aid recipients'. Supporting measures are usually delivered in the form of development projects implemented through technical advisory and financial contributions, whose objectives typically include: i) halting and possibly reversing physical deterioration of the urban fabric classified as 'heritage'; ii) improving living conditions of low-income residents; iii) amend national legislative and institutional frameworks; and iv) training of professionals and administrators.

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[2] The state of Palestine is recognised internationally by about 130 states, including the members of the Arab League, while its status at the United Nations is still currently debated.

[3] With variations in form, style and duration between French (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Syria and Lebanon), British (Egypt and Palestine) or Italian (Libya) control.

[4] Each of these terms framing the time-layered urban fabric in specific dialectic relation to the new / modern / contemporary urban development that has engulfed 'the old city' in the last century.

National and municipal governments increasingly link visions of economic growth, through the development of 'sustainable' tourism (as an industry), to projections of spatial transformation seen as requirements to be(come) a 'heritage destination' of global appeal. The political and administrative apparatus of each state thus intersecting (with particular specificities) with wider agendas of cultural heritage conservation and urban development put forward by international and transnational organisations. These interrelationship are typically marked by an oscillatory movement between iconoclastic, future oriented, visions of development associated with modernist planning, and a desire for conserving traces of the past thus reaffirming the value of a particular (national) cultural identity. As Mitchell remarked '[o]ne of the odd things about the arrival of the era of the modern nation-state was that for a state to prove it was modern, it helped if it could also prove it was ancient, since [...] deciding on a common past was critical to the process of making a particular mixture of people into a coherent nation' [2001: 212].

Performing the interface of institutional agendas between aid organisations and nation states, specialist interest groups (intellectual elites, professionals, academics) advocate for the conservation the historically and culturally layered urban fabric to extend beyond the preservation of monumental elements. These groups contrast two types of governmental attitudes perceived by specialists as equally problematic, sweeping modernist planning visions on the one hand and policies of laissez-faire resulting in physical decay on the other.

From the 1970s, a parallel process of international recognition of cultural values embedded in buildings and urban fabric, gained momentum following the World Heritage Convention[5] adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1972. Within a decade a number of the old cities in question was registered, by signing up to this international legal tool, into a list designed to specifically include sites representative of 'universal outstanding value'[6]. It is also useful to point out that the creation of sites of 'national heritage'[7] since independence from colonial powers, and surely after creation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, has been often used as a tool for regimes' propaganda and, as such, official heritage sites have become associated for residents with the contested legacy of oppressive governments.

A progressive research agenda for Urban Conservation and Development: Revisiting categorisations of (old) cities in the Mediterranean

The term 'old city' is adopted in this paper to define human settlements that started their life long before our time, and have reached us, across many transformations and generations, in some traceable form.

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[5] The 'Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage' is a legal instrument ratified by State Parties. As we write it has been ratified by 190 countries which' thereby agree to identify and nominate properties on their national territory to be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List' [http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/]

[6] For a critical perspective of this practice refer to Turtinen, 2000; Labadi, 2007; De Cesari, 2010.

[7] The literature addressing these topics is quite extensive and I'm listing just a few authors here to give a feeling of the spectrum covered. Some highlighting the disjunction between the past and the present and the use of traditions /material culture in the definition, manipulation, invention of national identity (Lowenthal, 1985, Hobsbawm, 1992, Levinson, 1998, Choay, 2001, Serageldin M., 2000); Others the use of the transnational construction of 'world heritage' by nation-states to mask the multi-vocality of sites and 'project carefully constructed images of the past, the nation and cultural diversity' (Labadi, 2007), often at the expenses of minorities and the grassroots (De Cesari, 2010).

'We can conceive a city as a "whole" that exists only if it is in a perpetual state of change […] As it changes … and continues to redefine itself through accretions, micro-trauma, new growth and considerable mutations - expansion becomes relative, and almost secondary [Stoppani, 2010: 2].

This section of the paper will highlight ways in which processes of labelling, and categorisation, of old cities in the southern and eastern rims of the Mediterranean contributes to frame specific developmental narratives and thereby reduce the spectrum of possible imaginaries of urban transformations. The questioning of unsettled / hybrid terms is therefore suggested as a strategy for enquiry in order to make explicit associations as well as fractures in a transnational urban conservation knowledge constructed across the metaphorical shores of the Mediterranean: from the international to the national (and vice versa); from colonial to postcolonial (and neocolonial?); from Islam to the West (and vice versa); back and forth between religion, secularism (or *laïcité* ?); as a dialogue linking Europe, the European Union, and its neighbours; as a place in-between the Universal and the Particular, Modernity and Tradition, modernism and the search for identity.

The labelling of the policy initiative 'Medinas 2030: Rehabilitation of Historic City Centres' (defined by the European Investment Bank as a 'knowledge management program' of the Marseille Center for Mediterranean Integration) offers one example of the type of bureaucratic wording critiqued by this paper. This generic formula can be then found, reassembled in a number of variations, across a varied spectrum of aid organisations. In their language, rehabilitation can be exchanged for regeneration, conservation, revitalisation; historic is synonymous with ancient, old, heritage; and southern and eastern Mediterranean is placed alongside with North African, Middle Eastern, Oriental, Arab, Islamic. Each of the labels cited above carrying then a double effect of reduction of urban complexity, as well as insertion within a particular discourse (each label slicing the field of enquiry in a particular way), that limits the imagination of possible urban futures to the section of urban life captured by the categorisation. But as Robinson arguments in Ordinary Cities '[s]imilarities and differences […] are promiscuously distributed across cities and do not neatly follow the lines of cultural, regional or structural categorisation of the world of cities' [2006: 63].

A close reading of definitions adopted in international policies of conservation and development could then disclose sets of conceptual relation implicit in any choice of wording, which cannot be considered neutral in value.

The first issue coming to mind is a latitudinal divide between policy, theory and practice for cities located on different shores of the Mediterranean basin: on the Northern rim cities are in Europe, 'Western' and modern, while those in the remaining shores [8]are Southern or Eastern, 'others' and developing. In second instance, categorisations following a linear conceptualisation of historical time proper of the philosophical project of modernity constructed, in its association with discourses of colonialism, 'the idea of the non-contemporaneousness of geographically diverse but chronologically simultaneous [sic] times' [Osborne, 1992, in Robinson, 2006:16]. A discontinuity in the continuum past, present and future, which has been used - and arguably still is - to forge dichotomies such as history/present time, conservation/development, and traditional/modern; all of which carry important consequences for how urban transformation in old cities are conceptualised and carried into practice.

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[8] Cities in the Balkan Peninsula being hybrid, geographically in Europe but politically outside of the European Union, while Turkey remains somehow isolated as a geopolitical conundrum on the edge between Europe and Asia.

The core of a more holistic urban conservation and development agenda should then be positioned at the intersection of two problématiques: on the one hand, the tension between how different conceptualisation of the Past are negotiated between specialists, interested groups within society, and politicians [Lowenthal, 1985; Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000; Sedky, 2009]; and on the other the critique of an hegemonic paradigm of progressive Time, as a product of nineteenth-century Europe, by which '[p]eople came to believe that the pattern of human affairs manifested neither the working of a divine will nor the self-regulating balance of a natural system, but the unfolding of an inner secular force' [Mitchell, 2002:1]. These complex philosophical problems becoming essentialised by mainstream agendas (due multiple political, ideological, and economic reasons) in rationales of urban transformation which distract the public from what are essential coordinates to navigate issues of continuity and change. Due the scope and length of this paper, I will just introduce those I see as crucial: the individual, together with the beliefs of their community; a complex understanding of time, valuing both life and death in a perspective of dynamic transformation; and, last but not least, the physical and existential spaces we inhabit /dwell as human beings [Heidegger, 1978 (orig. 1927)].

Exploring fruitful contradictions: the case of the Tunisian Revolution

This paper proposes then a trajectory for a progressive agenda of urban conservation based on a postcolonial reading of insights from the Arab Revolutions of 2010-12, particularly with reference to the case of Tunisia and the old city of Tunis. Further, it argues that current times of crisis and revolutionary movements on a regional scale, present researchers and reflective practitioners with the opportunity to reconsider longstanding assumptions validating international urban conservation knowledge and its practices. As a matter of fact, narratives constructed in the last two decades (eg culture and development, sustainable tourism, sites management, etc.) are likely to become reconfigured to adapt to rapidly changing contexts in cities and states of the Arab Mediterranean region, and attempt to remain viable. To ask how transnationally conceived knowledge practices have so far articulated agendas of 'rehabilitation of historic cities in the southern and eastern Mediterranean' is thus a timely question to open up possibilities for a more postcolonial, post-western [Winter, 2012], practice of urban conservation in development. Particularly for old cities which are still, too often, assimilated to French colonial constructs of the *médina* as epitome of the non-European city: outmoded, random, labyrinthine and chaotic.

The case of the Tunisian revolution offers an example of what I would consider 'fruitful contradictions', tensions to be explored as a starting point to re-orient the expertise of international urban conservation. Dramatic changes brought about by the 'Revolution of Dignity', from the Arabic ثورة الكرامة [Thawrat al-Karāmah], make Tunis a very interesting site to explore the research agenda outlined so far when coupled with long-standing concerns for the conservation of its old city, in Arabic المدينة العتيقة [Madina al-Atiqah]. Since 4 January 2011, Tunis has become a centre of global attention, as Tunisian people - protesting against unemployment, corruption, and a repressive police-type regime - forced president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to remit the power he seized in 1987. Tunisia, a state strongly modernised in the 1960s by president Bourgouiba after independence from the French Protectorate, in the last couple of years has witnessed a significant change in the political sphere with the emergence and electoral affirmation of Ennhada: a party previously banned and explicitly inspired by Islamic values. In current times of transition and uncertainty, national debates are centred around tensions between reformism (sided with Modernity) and the quest for a Tunisian identity (cultural, religious as well as political) as significantly represented by the very name of the party Ennhada (النهضة) that can be translated as 'renaissance' [Ghorbal, 2012].

What could be learned then by exploring tensions in the dialectic pair change/continuity as they reverberate on urban transformation narratives that will emerge and attempt to define the future of old cities, particularly in Tunis? Looking at post-revolution changes from the 'heritage' perspective of protected areas in old cities, such as the capital Tunis, concerned specialists report a mushrooming building activity, with unauthorised demolitions and new constructions starting as soon as control measures were halted due to a transitional phase in government that resulted in a in a power vacuum [Fig. 1].
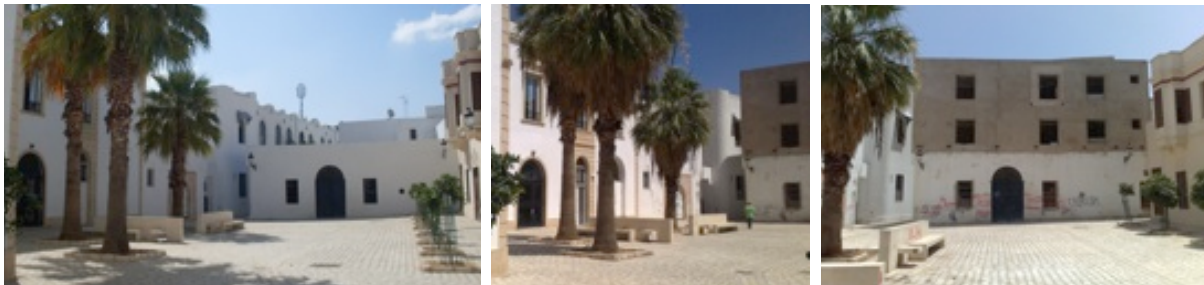

Figure 1. Medina of Tunis, Place Khereiddine Pacha: left to right the square in August 2010 at completion of the urban conservation project by ASM [source: Wikimedia], and in June 2012 after illegal construction of two floors facing the Museum of the City [source: author].

Once considered together, these two phenomena present 'post-regime heritage' [Silverman, 2012: 3] with an apparent contradiction between a reaffirmation of religious-cultural identity in the political sphere and, at the same time, a negation of value for the 'historic' built fabric representative of past architectural achievements and thus frequently associated with nostalgic feelings for 'traditional' values and ways of life. Such apparent contradictions are suggested here as the starting points for reorientation of urban conservation. The desired contribution of this paper is then to bring forward debates on urban conservation coming from the Islamic world, as well as reflecting on the implicitly hybrid nature of conservation practices for Arab-Islamic cities of the Mediterranean often constructed on the basis of Western epistemologies.

The Old City of Tunis as a crossroad of urban conservation and development
Moving from theoretical propositions, this section outlines the potentiality of the old city of Tunis as a selected site of investigation. The city, capital of Tunisia, is layered with a rich Arab-Islamic cultural legacy from the seventh century onwards as well as traces of ancient mediterranean civilisations (notably Carthage) and, in 1979, was Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site as 'Medina of Tunis'.
The research assumption is that analysing (dis)continuities between Tunis and transnational policies / institutions one could observe how definitions translate, and unfold, into the specific context; how practices take control over abstractions; how the politics of urban conservation becomes embodied in the process and actors.
The case is particularly pertinent to the question of how knowledge practices of urban conservation professionals articulate cultural heritage conservation and diverse development agendas, as the medina of Tunis has been described 'as the best, scientifically researched Arab old town' [Escher and Schepers, 2008: 129].

In addition, Tunis features a remarkable continuity in urban conservation practice and a respectable international reputation within experts networks, specially in the Mediterranean, due to the longstanding experience and innovative approaches of the *Association de Sauvegarde de la Médina de Tunis* (ASM) operating since 1967.

The term médina, since the French Protectorate (1881-1956) has been used to denote the non-European city in opposition to the *ville nouvelle*, the modern colonial city. Derived from the Arabic word for 'city' مـديـنة [madīnah] used especially in the Maghreb, it is still widely adopted to refer to the historic centre of the city, and precisely because of its hybrid nature deserves a more accurate 'translation' [Marcus, 1995] to question its local/colonial/postcolonial aura and thus open multiple directions for research. For example, specialist knowledge of the 'medina' - represented by architects planners as an artistic jewel and/or urban object - is arguably related to both colonial and scientific paradigms [McGuinness, 1997; Bacha 2006b]. As an ideal construct, the 'medina' has been symbolically charged in many ways: firstly, as emblem of resistance against colonial domination [Abdelkafi, 1989: 251] and then of national identity; more recently being branded as 'cultural asset' to be revitalised via tourism [Escher and Schepers, 2008; Saidi, 2012]; and last but not least, retaining value as a place of tradition and religious significance. In the last century, the process of 'heritage' construction [Bacha, 2008], and knowledge practices of urban conservation [McGuinness, 1997], have evolved in close relation to France - both as colonising power and provider of modern epistemologies - making the case of Tunis specially apt for problematisation via postcolonial theory.

Postcolonial critique: where critical heritage studies meet anthropology of development

To develop this agenda in an innovative way, the suggestion is to seek a more engaged exchange between two bodies of critical work: heritage studies and the anthropology of development (expertise). Along which lines then could one open up a conversation between these two fields, thus developing a stronger sense of knowledge articulation beyond disciplinary compartmentalisation? As a start, the critique of an 'authorised heritage discourse' [Smith, 2006] focuses on the modalities by which experts place values on the built fabric, and aims to redefine values as socially constructed systems of meaning [Zancheti and Jokilehto, 1997; Gibson and Pendlebury, 2009].

To this point, the debate following 'Decennial reflections of a "geography of heritage" (2000)'[Tunbridge, Ashworth and Graham, 2012; Harvey, 2012; Silverman, 2012; Shackel, 2012; Winter, 2012a] illustrates how ideas of 'heritage' as process rather than product, as dissonance instead of consensus, as a tool for claims of power and identity - with scalar implications (international, glocal) and an ambiguous relationship with economics - have resinated and further developed. The field of critical heritage studies in the last decade has grown exponentially and is currently very much alive, debating its diversity and future directions. While 'one of the most important recent intellectual developments of heritage studies is an understanding of heritage as a present-centred and future-orientated process' [Harvey, 2012], what is at stake 'here is the dilemma of how to best arrange knowledge production for the study of heritage' [Winter, 2012a: 1] when the language of critical heritage theory derives from the social science and humanities, while professional disciplines of conservation train experts 'in material-centric disciplines that privilege scientific and/or positivist methodologies' [ibid: 2]. Winter goes on to question the 'possibility and limitations of creating boundary crossing conversations' [ibid: 3] between science and humanities, across separate knowledge practices of academic theory and conservation practice, and ultimately around the multidimensional issues of human development.

In particular pushing critical heritage studies 'to account for its relationship to today's regional and global transformations, in ways that validate its conceptual development and respond to the new ideologies of globalisation' [Winter, 2012b: 11], in 'an arena of knowledge production that responds to and engages with pressing challenges by moving beyond the limited repertoire of epistemologies currently privileged' [ibid].

At the intersection where a post-western perspective is called to problematise how the production of international cultural heritage knowledge became entangled with a scientistic, positivist paradigm there is space for opening a dialogue with an anthropology of development that imports complex, processual thinking to critically address the construction of policy, of spending categories, and ethnographically explores the community of professionals/experts in international development [Green, 2009; Lewis and Mosse, 2006; Mosse et al., 1998; Mosse, 2005, 2011]. Winter [2012b] argues in the International Journal of Heritage Studies that

'[a]s ways of knowing culture and the past, these scientistically oriented knowledge practices [archaeology, architectural conservation and museums] would provide the epistemological and intellectual foundations for the transnational cultural agencies that would emerge in the aftermath of the Second World War. As various commentators such as Wallerstein (2006) and Escobar (1995) have observed, in the post-colonial decades of the 1940–1960s, the scientific paradigm continued its ascendency in the international arena, even in the domain of culture, as its supposed universality enabled European knowledge to sidestep the post-colonial critique, including accusations of its role in unjust imperial rule' [ibid: 6-7]

the conversation ideally continues where Mosse in An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice [2005] states that

'[n]o longer moored to the assumptions of the old colonial and Cold War world order and its "science of development", notions of growth progress, modernization aid or development demand constant conceptual work to remain politically and morally viable' (ibid:1).

This articulation of theory and practice, across heritage and development, is then crucial to problematise the transnational constructs of urban conservation in the Southern Mediterranean depicted in the first part of the argument. As demonstrated by the aforementioned literature 'in anthropological hands, policy discourse is desembedded from the expert communities that generate, organize (and are organized by) its ideas' [Mosse, 2011: 2]. This lesson could then be applied to explore the community of experts in international urban conservation (professionals, policymakers, scholars) which so far have remained prisoners of an insulated debate despite some attempts to reach out.

The research agenda sketched so far would then problematise urban conservation policy (linking theorisations of heritage to current urban transformations) from the perspective of development practice, thus valuing different types of knowledge and reflecting on participatory learning processes where different voices are recognised, within and beyond communities of expertise [De Cesari, 2010] and, at the same time, question development policy (as a link between theory and practice) from the perspective of urban conservation, dealing with 'the latent conflict that exists between continuity and change in the urban structures and their elements' [Zancheti an Jokilehto, 1997] beyond essentialised notions of 'cultural heritage'. New investigations would then be trans-disciplinary and reaching across the theory / practice divide in urban conservation and development, as the problem could be fruitfully addressed from the perspective of complexity thinking (systemic, emergent, dynamic, adaptive, etc) [Morin, 1974].

Methodological reflections

On a personal level, the interest in understanding reciprocal connections between built form and cultural practices [King, 1980] specially in Arab-Islamic cities of the Mediterranean has connected my academic and professional experience as architect planner for about fifteen years. Initially drawn to international 'development' practice by an aspiration to see / explore / test how conservation of material culture could be integral to a human development agenda (beyond critiques of elitist practice not contributing to the cause of 'the poor'), I became frustrated from testing the recurrent dissonance between development policy wording and the actual challenges of professional practice framed as consultancy. In the end, ethical questions about spending large funds (often borrowed by the state) in 'projectised activities' of a limited shelf-life, lead me to step outside of professional practice to look at the problem from an academic research perspective.

This double identity on the one hand allows a vantage point spanning across two sets of knowledge practices (built environment technical disciplines as well as social sciences), while on the other it can be challenging to differentiate which 'hat' the researcher is wearing in relation to the diverse knowledge toolkits adopted when reflecting on the object of study. The matter being further complicated in the hybrid realm of internationally constructed scientific and technical epistemologies. In practical terms, a practitioner turned researcher could face the dilemma of how to map and interpret multiple perspectives embodied in expertise networks of urban conservation professionals and policymakers - of which s/he partakes knowledge practices - without loosing the focus proper of academic analysis. On the other hand, an academic could be challenged to understand the epistemological and political implications faced by those who enact professional practice across 'interfaces and fractures' linking local specificities to transnational policies, in a way that pays due respect the complexity of the problem seen from a practical/ operational perspective. In thinking about how one might approach this challenge, two potential paths lie ahead, each with its knowledge practices so far separated along a theory / professional practice divide. I believe that both trajectories contribute to knowledge (as learning process), but the respective planes of 'thinking and doing' do not intersect enough to provide a multidimensional image. While the articulation of 'thinking and doing' through reflexive practice could open up new lines of enquiry on the study of urban conservation processes, interrelations between practitioners and theoreticians are arguably under researched [9]. For example, how does the practitioners thinking influence their doing, and how this doing is institutionally organised?; or can the doing contribute to a process of public learning or not[10]?

To overcome this methodological conundrum this article proposes to frame investigations through 'multi-sited ethnography'. Developed in anthropology to investigate a 'cultural formation, produced in several different locales, rather than the conditions of a particular set of subjects [as] the object of study' [Marcus, 1995: 99], this method allows the researcher/ethnographer to compose locations at different scale, and of varied nature, within a single terrain [Marcus, 1995, 1999]. Specially relevant for the proposed research agenda is the possibility to: first, track the 'circulation' of meanings, eg through associations, connections, disjunctures and fractures; and second, to explore 'translation' from one cultural idiom to the other through multiple languages, specialist lexicon and spatial constructs (morphologies) in the urban fabric.

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[9] I owe much insights on this aspect to conversations with Michael Safier at the Development Planning Unit, London.

[10] On a preliminary basis, the author has explored these questions with regards to the role of foreign professional expertise in supporting the priorities and autonomy of local actors in cultural heritage conservation and valorisation in the case of Aksum, Ethiopia [Nardella and Mallinson, forthcoming].

Fieldwork in multiple sites could then be designed to probe associations between agendas of urban transformation (conservation and development) for one, or more, old cities and global normative frameworks.

At the broader scale this would entail mapping the terrain of how knowledge practices articulate transnational policies (as sites of enquiry) of urban 'conservation and development' about the 'Southern Mediterranean': eg through the design of technical and legal tools for interpretation, conservation, and management of 'heritage' sites; and/or policies for 'sustainable' economic development.

'International' actors preliminarily identified in generating both policies and practices include: intergovernmental agencies and their non-governmental advisory bodies; multilateral financial institutions; supranational and state-funded cooperation/development agencies; philanthropic and specialist institutions.

At a detailed scale, the validity of universalist claims of expert knowledge (and related taxonomies) could be confronted with the specific qualities of spatial transformations occurring in selected old cities of the southern and eastern Mediterranean (as relational site of investigation).

Where meanings associated with 'international' categories morph in a significant manner when placed into a particular urban context, one could argue an implicit parochial (Western) nature of 'universalist' epistemologies found in the larger scale.

The investigation would then purposefully track knowledge practices, as ways of articulation and transmission of knowledge by specialists, acting across the international-local spectrum of policymaking and practice. Emerging policy concepts and categories, still unsettled in their definition, would become topical items of investigation in order to question the apparent consensus surrounding 'international' urban conservation and development agendas by following which tensions emerge in the expert community during the 'solidification' process that typically transforms a policy idea into an official dogma [Ellerman, 2001] sanctioned by one or more organisation (eg cultural heritage as a contributor to economic development).

Conclusions

This paper aimed to engage experts networks of urban conservation to reflect on the apparent mismatch between the knowledge and heritage values system of specialists[11] and those of wider society as revealed in the light of the Arab revolutions, particularly the case of Tunisia and Tunis old city.

Reflecting on embodied in tensions emerged in the aftermath of the popular uprisings - namely those related to continuity and change - the aim has been to highlight the necessity and scope for a reorientation in current mainstream international urban conservation practices directed to old cities in the Southern Mediterranean.

A postcolonial perspective has been suggested to problematise the 'thinking and doing' of a transnational community of expertise concerned with spatial transformations in old cities that are valued specially for their Arab-Islamic urban legacy and ancient roots in Mediterranean civilisations. The suggested research agenda, strategically adopting a multi-sited ethnographic methodology, could open up new directions by exploring dis-continuities across scale (from transnational to the neighbourhood) and knowledge frames that guide policies and spatial transformations currently discussed in urban conservation expertise networks.

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[11] For an outline of the literature see Avrami, Mason and de la Torre, 2000; de la Torre, 2002; Gibson and Pendlebury, 2009; and publications of the research project on the Values of Heritage carried out by the Getty Conservation Institute (1998-2005).

Further, I would argue that reflecting on apparent contradictions that emerge in the current 'transition' phase of Arab Revolutions should inspire researchers and reflective practitioners to confront long standing parochialisms hiding at times behind a 'mere' technical understanding of the problem (joined to supposedly shared values and terminology); otherwise concealed under an international ideal of universally valid, co-produced, knowledge that could be applied to many contexts; and often implicit in the (af)filiation with the cognitive tradition of Architecture as a specific way of seeing and representing the city and the urban. At the same time, it would be important to further ground the argument in macro-scale dynamics of the last two decades and to intersect this analysis with an outline of how debates on the conservation of historic (parts of) cities [12] have shifted in relation to the powerful paradigm of culture and development [UNESCO, 1996; Schech and Haggis, 2000].

The broader scope of the paper is then to continue on the path of distancing specialist knowledge from Orientalist [Said, 1979] representations of people inhabiting old cities of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean as lacking awareness of their cultural heritage[13] and thus needing to be guided on the right path, where such constructs often echo colonial and imperial knowledge practices of the last century that aimed at constructing an image of 'others' as inferior to European, Christian, Modern epistemologies.

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[12] See for reference Bandarin and van Oers [2012], chapters one and two.

[13] See Bacha, 2006, 2008 in the case of Tunisia; and AlSayyad, Bierman and Rabbat, 2005; and Sanders, 2006 for a useful comparison with Cairo.

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Coping with Urban Sprawl:
A Critical Discussion of the Urban Containment Strategy in a Developing Country City, Accra

George Owusu[1]

Accra, Ghana's largest metropolis, exhibits unique features in terms of low densities in central locations due to large number of under-used plots, except inner-city informal residential areas. Over the last three decades, the metropolis has grown to encompass it surround district, now referred to as the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area. The massive sprawl has largely occurred in the west and east of the city, where growth rates of over 30% per annum have been recorded. This paper examines factors underlying the massive expansion of Accra, and the urban containment strategy to curtail the sprawl. It concludes that though many factors account for the sprawl, the key is the weak public control over land and the resultant poor spatial planning. As such, any urban containment strategy is unlikely to succeed within the context of the existing land management system where land is held privately under customary institutions while planning remains a public functions for local governments.

Keywords: Urban sprawl, Urban containment, Accra, Ghana

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Introduction

Urban sprawl also referred to as urban decentralization has been a subject of intense debate among academics, urban planners, and the general public (Wasserman, 2008; Jaret et al., 2009; Angel et al., 2011). It refers to the physical outward expansion of cities characterized by low densities, separated land uses and car-dependent communities. The debate on urban sprawl features two contesting thoughts – for and against. Opponents of urban sprawl supported by environmentalist have argued that the phenomenon results in increased automobile travel and congestion, high levels of pollution, loss of farmland, duplicative infrastructure at high costs to society, limited employment accessibility, concentrated poverty, and many other undesirable outcomes in metropolitan areas (Wasserman, 2000, 2008; Angel et al., 2011). Arguing from this point and concluding on an analyzes of state management programmes on urban sprawl in the USA, Ming Yin and Jian Sun (2007) noted that governments should more fully exercise their responsibilities to control urban sprawl rather than just leave this issue to local devices.

On the other hand, proponents of urban sprawl have argued that urban decentralization can yield positive outcomes. These positive outcomes include improved satisfaction of housing preferences, good quality and serene environment (especially air quality and noise pollution), lower crime rates and better public schools (Glaeser and Kahn 2003).

While the debate on urban sprawl is divided, policy has largely been on the side of curtailing sprawl. Consequently, a number of strategies referred to as urban containment have been developed with the view to reshape urban development patterns. As the name implies, urban containment aims to reign in the outward expansion of urban areas into the surrounding rural areas beyond defined boundary. According to Nelson et al. (2004), it does so in part by choreographing public infrastructure investment, land use and development regulation, and incentives and disincentives to influence the rate, timing, intensity, mix, and location of urban physical expansion. They add that in broad terms urban containment programmes are distinguished from traditional approaches to land use regulation by the presence of policies that are explicitly designed to limit the development of land outside a defined urban area, while encouraging infill development and redevelopment inside the urban area.

The debate on urban containment measures has engaged much of the developed world particularly, North America and Western Europe, or broadly speaking matured urban societies. However, there has been relatively little academic research on the subject in Sub-Saharan Africa, where recent studies indicate ever-growing cities of sizes and population unprecedented in the continent's history. In much of the developing world (including Sub-Saharan Africa), the discussions about urban sprawl have largely centered on city expansion and the consumption of agricultural lands with limited discussions on strategies to contain sprawl.

This paper examines containment strategies to cope with urban sprawl in Ghana's largest metropolitan area, Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA). It proceeds by looking at the causes of urban sprawl, followed by a discussion of the growth and physical expansion of Accra. The paper then looks at the containment strategies employed to deal with the sprawl of GAMA, and ends with a conclusion.

Forms and Causes of Urban Sprawl

According to the UNFPA (2007, p.45), the space taken up by urban localities is increasing faster than the population itself. It adds that between 2000 and 2030, the world's urban population is expected to increase by about 72%, while the built-up areas of cities with populations of 100,000 or more could increase by 175%.

Much of the city expansion and the emergence of large cities will occur in the developing world, especially Sub-Saharan Africa where currently the urbanization level is relatively low compared to other regions of the world.

It has been noted that the growth of cities in the developing world is dynamic, diverse and disordered – and increasingly land and space-intensive (UNFPA, 2007). This rapid urbanization process will require a large amount of land, mostly prime agricultural land to be converted to urban land use (e.g. residential construction), especially in the urban periphery – a process referred to as peri-urbanization.

A key feature of urban sprawl in both developing and developed countries is the declining levels of densities – a key driver of urban growth and sprawl. According to Angel et al. (2011), if urban densities decline by 2% per annum in developing countries, urban land cover will grow by nearly factor 3 between 2000 and 2030 and factor 6 between 2000 and 2050. They projected that urban land cover in developing countries will increase from 300,000 km² in 2000 to 770,000 km² in 2030 and then 1.2 million km² in 2050. Urban sprawl takes several forms as illustrated in Fig. 1. These include *low density development* (low-rise buildings largely due to cheap land prices in the periphery)*; strip or ribbon development* (transport arteries or corridors driven development)*; uncontrolled outward development* (unregulated outward expansion due to weak planning and zoning regimes) and*; leapfrog development* (urban development 'jumping' over greenbelts and other growth boundaries).
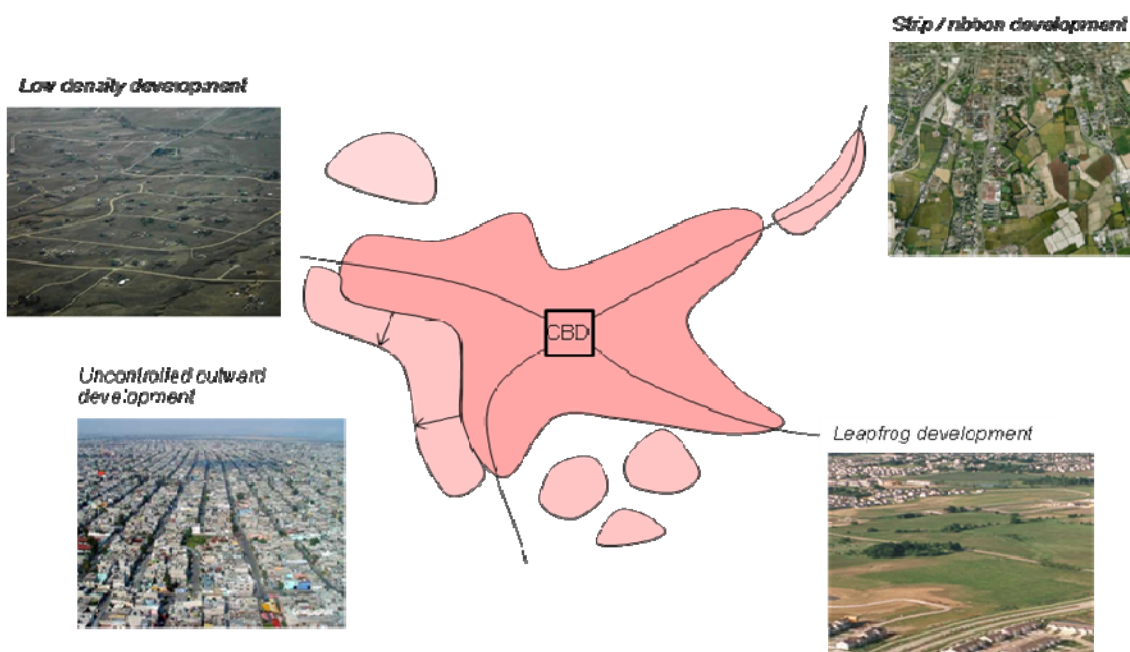

Figure 1: Forms of Urban Sprawl (Source: Siedentop 2011)

A review of the literature on urban sprawl identifies three main broad causal and sometimes interrelated factors as accounting for sprawl, namely: *natural evolution*, *flight from blight*, and *effects of land speculation*. Some have posited that urban sprawl represents a natural growth phenomenon (Jaret et al., 2009). In other words, since cities represent the hub of economic activities and populations there is a natural tendency for the outward expansion of cities. The conclusion here is that urban sprawl (or urban decentralization) is not the result of a market system out of control, but that it generally follows an orderly natural growth process.

Flight from blight has also been put forward as another important theory for the increased sprawl of cities. This theory proposes that greater decentralization of urban areas is in part driven by the repellant factors of higher tax rates, higher crime rates, crumbling infrastructures, low-performing public schools, and a greater presence of the poor and lower class in central or inner-city neighbourhoods (Wasserman, 2008). Wasserman (2008) adds that the flight from blight explanation looks beyond the natural forces (as accounting for the increased footprint of an urban area and decreased population density), and seeks a further explanation for urban decentralization based upon the desire to avoid the real and perceived blight of more centralized locations of cities.

A third explanatory factor of urban sprawl not well-highlighted in studies of the subject in developed and matured urbanized societies of Europe and North America is *the effects of land speculation on urban sprawl*. In cities of the developing world with weak land markets and urban governance systems, land speculation is rife. This leads to a situation where developers who need land for housing and other productive activities must find land far away from the city centre and the urban built-up area – a process sometimes referred to as peri-urbanization. According to the UNFPA (2007), peri-urbanization is fuelled in part by land speculators who nurtured by the prospect of rapid urban growth hold on to land in and around city, expecting land values to increase. This allows cities to expand their footprints and reduce their densities, and sprawl while empty plots of land remain in inner-city areas.

To what extent do the broad factors underlying urban sprawl discussed here drive urban growth and expansion in Accra? In the next section, we discussed the sprawl of Accra over the last three decades and analyzed the factors underlying it.

Growth and Expansion of Accra: What are the Driving Factors?

The decision by the colonial British government in 1877 to relocate the administrative capital of Ghana (then Gold Coast) from Cape Coast to Accra is one of the most important factors in the development of GAMA (MLG/DTCP 1993a). Consequently, Accra has attracted significant public and private investments towards its infrastructural and services development over the years, making it the 'most developed' region in Ghana. Today, GAMA comprising the Accra Metropolis, Tema Metropolis and six other municipalities (Ga South, Ga East, Ga West, Adenta, Ashaiman and Ledzokuku Krowor) is the largest and the densest urban population concentrated area in Ghana. Though administratively defined as independent, the municipalities which were a few decades ago purely rural, are now geographically and functionally part and parcel of the built-up area of the Accra Metropolis – constituting the GAMA (see Fig. 2). The built-up of the surrounding municipalities is largely attributed to the spillover of the population of the Accra Metropolis (GSS, 2002).

Even though Accra's growth dates back several decades, the growth of the city seems to have picked up steam in the last three decades of economic liberalization and increased in the intensity of engagement with global capital (Grant and Nijman, 2002; Grant and Yankson, 2003; Owusu, 2008). Within the last three decades, the population of GAMA grew from almost 828,000 in 1970 to over 2.5 million in 2000 and over 3.6 million in 2010 (see Table 1). Increasingly, much of the population of the region is settling outside the Accra Metropolis, hence the sprawl of the metropolitan area. While the population of the Accra Metropolis was about 77% of the total population of GAMA in 1970, it declined to 72% in 1984 and about 50% in 2010. The growth of the metropolis was just 1.1% for the period 2000-2010, compared to 3.3% for 1984-2000.

While the proportion of the total population in the Accra Metropolis within GAMA has declined dramatically, the share of the population in the surrounding municipalities have grown steadily.

Of particular interest are the Ga Municipalities (Ga East, Ga West and Ga South) which less than two decades ago constituted one district called the rural Ga District. The population of the Ga municipalities rose from just over 66,300 in 1970 to over 908,000 in 2010. Unlike the other municipalities which are fairly built-up, the Ga municipalities still contain large expanse of empty land ready to be converted to urban residential use. Hence, much of the future population of GAMA is likely to occur in this part of the region as evident in Table 2.
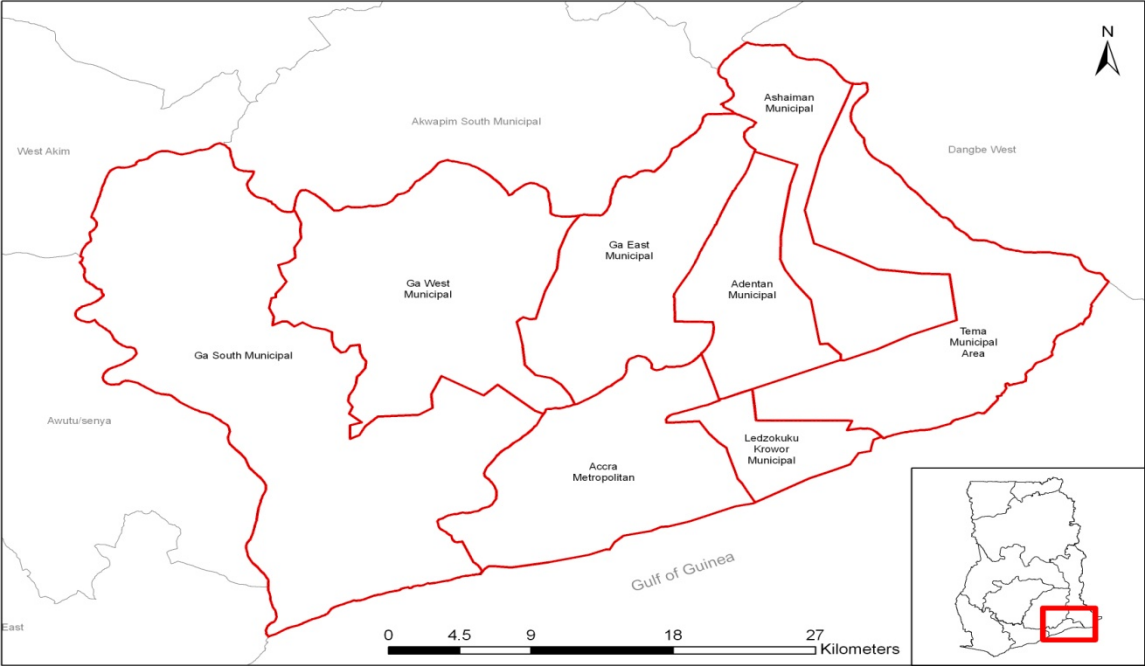

Figure 2: Map of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA)

District	1970 Pop.	1984 Growth Rate	Pop.	2000 Growth Rate	Pop.	2010 Growth Rate	Pop.
Accra Metropolis	636,667	3.0	969,195	3.3	1,658,937	1.1	1,848,614
Ledzokuku-Krowor Municipality	-	-	-	-	-	-	227,932
Ga District*	66,336	4.9	132,786	8.9	550,468	5.0	908,053
Tema Metropolis	102,431	4.4	190,917	2.8	298,432	3.0	402,637
Ashaiman Municipality	22,549	5.8	50,918	6.8	150,312	2.4	190,972
Adenta Municipality	-	-	-	-	-	-	78,215
Total	827,983	3.5	1,343,816	3.9	2,501,196	3.8	3,656,423

*Includes Ga East, Ga West and Ga South Municipalities

Table 1: Population of GAMA, 1970-2010.
Source: Derived from Population Census reports (1970, 1984, 2000 and 2010).

Community	Growth Rate (%)
Anyaa	37.5
Awoshie	32.7
Tantra	25.9
Lashibi	25.5
Amanfrom	23.6
Gbawe	22.2
Ogbojo	22.1
Ashaley-Botwe	21.1
Taifa	20.3
Adenta West	19.1
Dome	16.9
Sakumono	16.7
Ofankor	14.3
New Achimota	14.0
Pokuase	19.1
Ashaiman	6.8
Madina	6.2
City (Accra)	3.3

Table 2: Growth Rates of Selected Fringe Communities of Accra Metropolis, 1984-2000
Source: GoG/MLG&RD (2010)

Table 2 illustrates the contrast with respect to annual growth between the Accra Metropolis and urban settlements within the Municipalities or fringes of the city. While the annual growth rate of the Accra Metropolis and the average for the Ga municipalities for the period 1984 and 2000 was about 3.3% and 8.9% respectively, it was extremely high for fringe communities, especially those in the east and west of the metropolis. In these parts of GAMA, annual growth rates in excess of 20% are very common with Anyaa and Awoshie (all in Ga South Municipality) recording growth rates of well over 37% and 32% respectively. It is these high population growth rates and the unresponsiveness of city authorities which account for the massive sprawl and the under-serviced urban communities. Estimates indicate that the built-up area of GAMA increased from about 133 km² in the mid-1980s to over 344 km² in 2000. Within the same period, the average density (persons/km²) declined dramatically from about 14,120 per km² to about 8,103 persons per km² (Yeboah, 2009; GoG/MLG&RD, 2010).

According to Owusu (2008), a number of interrelated factors or conditions at various spatial scales (global, national and cities local levels) accounts for the sprawl of Accra. Fig. 3 illustrates that, at the global level, economic globalization facilitated by the implementation of economic reforms in the mid-1980s, led to Ghana adopting an open-door policy towards global capital and its actors. This policy was reinforced in the early 1990s with the return to democratic constitutional rule – political liberalization. As a result, GAMA has attracted global capital and its actors, namely multi-national corporations, international NGOs, expatriates and international returned migrants – all seeking a foothold in GAMA (Owusu, 2008).

In addition, the country's open door policy within the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) protocol on free movement of people, civil strives in some West African countries and relatively stable economy have attracted a number of West African migrants (especially from Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire) into Accra.

It needs to be stressed that the tendency for globalization to favour the concentration of economic activities, capital and people in large cities such as Accra, inevitably leads to pressure on land resources within and at the peripheries of these cities, and consequently city sprawl.
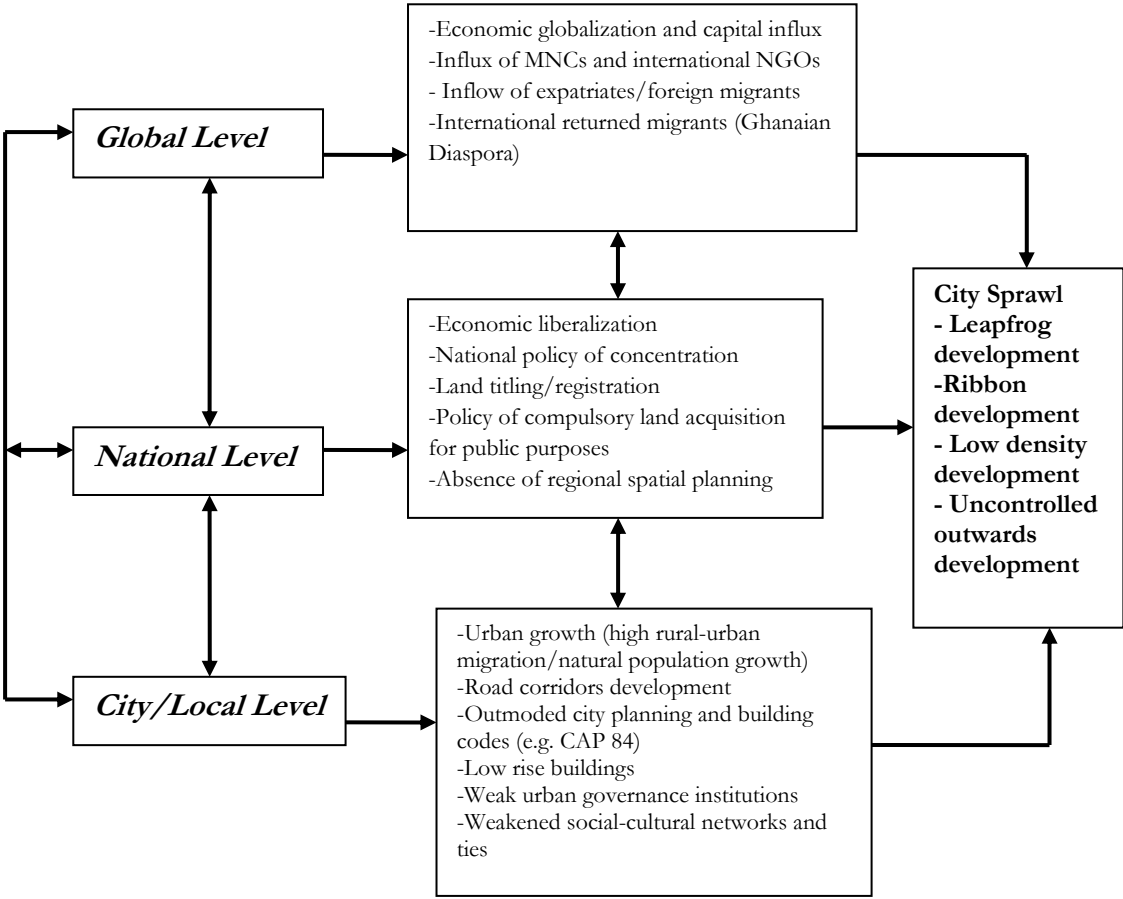

Figure 3: Analytical Framework of Spatial Levels and Factors Accounting for GAMA's Sprawl
(Source: Adapted from Owusu 2008, p. 181)

To the global factors are national and city/local factors which condition land use and planning and consequently city sprawl. In particular, either implicit or explicit Ghana has pursued a policy of concentration resulting in Accra becoming the hub and epicenter of socio-economic and political activities in the country. This has served to make Accra and GAMA as the most sought after destinations in Ghana. The influx of population to GAMA has been exacerbated by the national policy of compulsory land acquisition for public purposes[2], and the absence of national and regional urban policy and spatial planning frameworks. Consequently, land is inefficiently and ineffective use resulting in low density development and open spaces in built areas, while there is constant search for land in fringe areas.

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[2] Although in terms of land mass, the Greater Accra Region is the smallest in Ghana, however, as result of the presence of the national capital, Accra Metropolis, the state has compulsorily acquired land for public uses in this region than any other region in the country (Owusu, 2008).

At the city level, a number of factors related to the national level have exacerbated the sprawl of the city. The manifestation of interacting factors at the global and national levels leads in particular to land scarcity at the local level due to the influx and concentration of population as well as absence of strong land use and planning institutions. In particular, the management of urban areas in Ghana (including Accra) based on the Town and Country Planning Ordinance (Cap 84) passed in 1945 is quite striking. This ordinance transplanted from the British's Town and Country Planning Act Ordinance of 1932 centring around planning schemes, layouts and more importantly minimum plot sizes of 70ft by 100ft, do not promote intensify development but low-rise buildings with large open spaces. In other words, the current urban management framework based on CAP 84 which may have been realistic in the 1950s of low urban growth and abundance of land is unrealistic under the current conditions of rapid urbanization and urban growth (Owusu, 2008), especially in large metropolitan areas such as GAMA.

Another key factor at the city which has facilitated sprawl is the development of dualized road corridors in and out of the city of Accra. Many of these city road projects have been built with donor assistance, funds which were obtained as a result of the Ghana's liberalized economy. Intensify peri-urban development tends to follow these road corridors by linking the city to other urban areas and rural surroundings.

Three key road corridors are worth being mentioned, namely the Kwame Nkrumah Circle-Nsawam corridor (linking east of Accra); CBD-Mallam-Kasoa corridor (linking the west of the city) and; CBD-Madina-Aburi Corridor (linking the north-east of Accra) (see Fig. 4). These road corridors have been critical to the massive expansion of GAMA, especially to the east and west in recent years. According to Doan and Oduro (2011), improved roads make peri-urban development attractive to middle-class residents while at the same time allowing peri-urban residents to commute to the central city and other locations within the metropolitan area where their livelihoods are located.
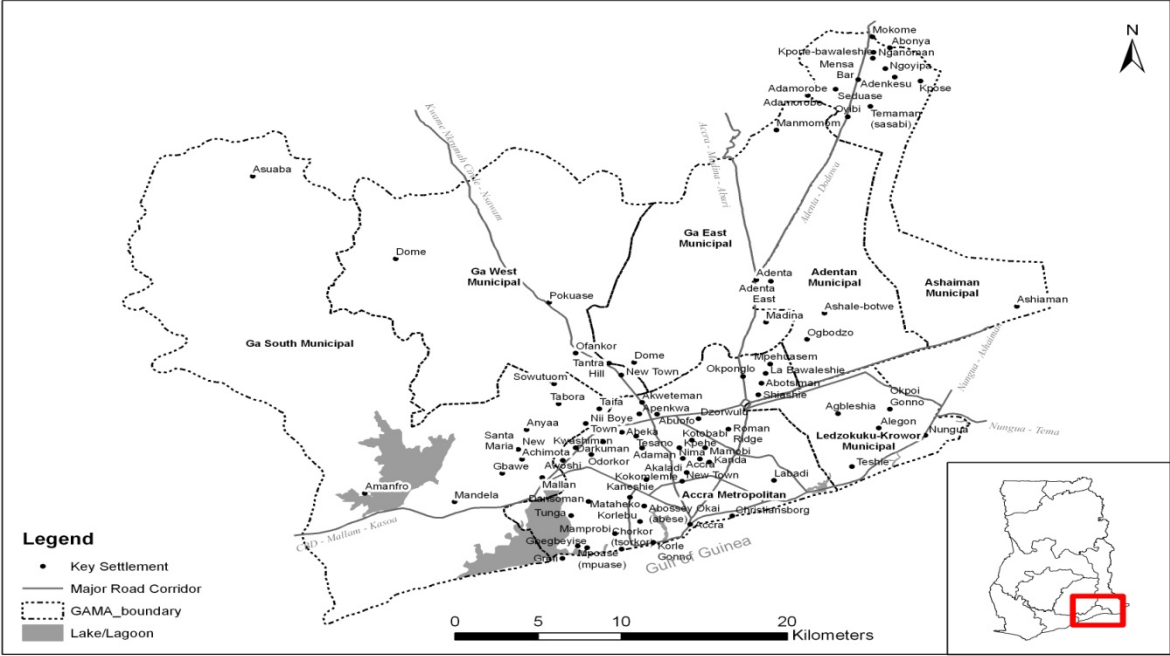

Figure 4: GAMA's Main Road Corridors

Overall, the conditions driving sprawl are exacerbated by weak urban governance structures and institutional coordination. Even though the existing legal framework establishes the Metropolitan and Municipal Assemblies (local governments) as the main agents of urban development in Ghana, these institutions are very weak (GoG/MLG&RD, 2010). This is because the current system of decentralized planning still operates in a top-down fashion, and local governments lack both the capacity and the political will to plan, design, implement and monitor programmes and policies at the local level. As Doan and Oduro (2011) notes, planning functions in GAMA and elsewhere in urban Ghana, are severely hampered by the inability of local governments to direct physical development in an orderly manner, hence the unregulated and out of control sprawl of the region.

As a result of the multiplicity of factors and conditions driving the sprawl of GAMA, the region exhibits the many different forms of sprawl as indicated in Fig. one. These include leapfrog, ribbon, low-density and uncontrolled outwards developments. Evidence exists to indicate that at all places within GAMA, developments have breached greenbelts and natural boundaries resulting in leapfrog sprawl. Also, there are strong developments along the main road corridors in and out of Accra reflecting ribbon development. However, leapfrog and ribbon sprawl are accompanied by a general pattern of low-density and uncontrolled outwards developments.

Containing the Sprawl: Urban Containment Strategies of GAMA

Urban containment strategies for contemporary GAMA can be found in the *Strategic Plan for the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area Volumes 1&2* and *Summary Report* (MLG/DTCP, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c). This plan prepared by the Accra Planning and Development Programme (APDP) in association with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat) covered a 10-year period, 1995-2005. The GAMA Strategic Plan projected that the population of GAMA will be about four million in 2010, which will in turn place severe strain on the demand for land for housing, industry, recreation, open-space, etc.

The GAMA Strategic Plan examined five alternative concepts to contain and meet the needs of an expanding GAMA up to 2010 and beyond. These concepts were *urban consolidation*, *multi-city structure*, *twin-city*, *satellite towns* and *laissez faire*. Urban consolidation involves basically the freezing of urban development in peripheral areas of Accra by intensively utilizing land within the existing city boundaries. Key measures considered include the utilization of vacant lands or plots, redevelopment of selected old low-density inner city areas, infilling and upgrading of blight areas of Accra. A second concept to contain the sprawl of GAMA in the GAMA Strategic Plan was the concept of multi-city structure which meant the establishment of several cities within the metropolitan area, each with its own central business district (CBD) and servicing population of 250,000-300,000. The idea here was to decentralize economic activities from the existing well-established centres, namely Accra and Tema, and create four more centres at strategic locations with GAMA.

The third urban containment strategy considered was the concept of satellite towns. This strategy was thought of to restrict the growth of Accra by directing future urban development consciously to potential growth centres such as Dodowa, Nsawam, Amasaman, Kasoa, etc – all within easy commuting distance from Accra. In other words, these towns will join Tema as towns prepared to absorb additional population from Accra, while Accra remained as the principal business centre but its physical growth curtailed (MLG/DTCP, 1993a).

A fourth concept considered was the twin-city structure in which the development of Accra and Tema was to be coordinated and harmonized. The strategy envisaged eventual merging of Accra and Tema through the process of the two cities growing towards each other rather than peripheral growth.

The last concept in the GAMA Strategic Plan is the concept of laissez faire, which means a continuation of the status quo of the unrestricted growth of the metropolitan area until natural or economic constraints prevent further expansion. This approach requires the expansion of the existing infrastructure and services to the increasing unrestricted growth of GAMA.

After consideration of the pros and cons of each concept as well as taking into account factors such as social and environmental impacts, transport inefficiencies, administrative difficulties, cost effectiveness, land economics and flexibility to meet future needs, the plan concluded that a single concept will not be able to contain the sprawl of GAMA. As such, a mixed-concept plan involving three concepts (urban consolidation, twin-city and multi-city structure) was proposed for GAMA. According to MLG/DTCP (1993a), the preferred mixed concept plan sets out the long-term physical land use structure of GAMA with the following key elements of consolidating development within the existing built-up area and promoting orderly expansion.

A key prominent feature of the individual urban containment strategies examined and the preferred mixed concept adopted in the GAMA Strategic Plan was the extensive used of greenbelts and natural urban boundaries such as hills and water bodies to define and limit the spatial expansion of the metropolitan area.
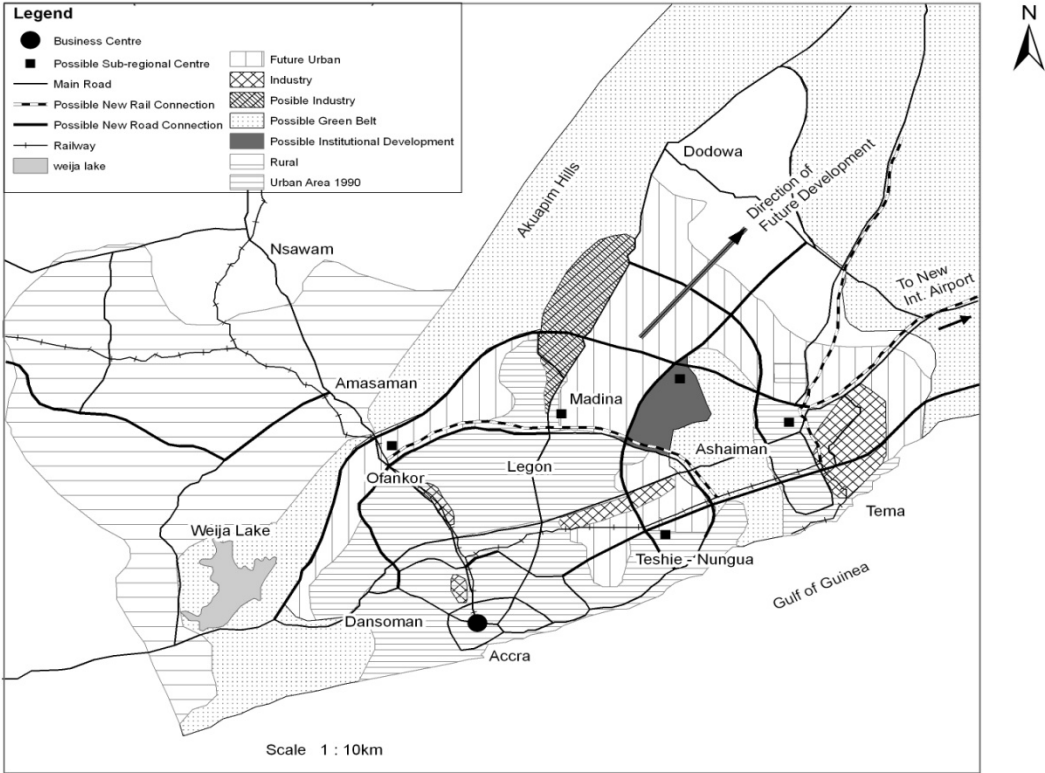

Figure 5: Proposed Mixed Concept to Contain Sprawl of Accra

Fig. 5 is drawn based on the preferred mixed-concept of urban consolidation, twin-city and multi-city structure. It envisaged that the Weija Dam adjoined by hills and greenbelts would serve as the limit of the metropolitan area in the western direction. In the north and north-east, greenbelts and the foot of the Akwapim Hills would served as the limits of GAMA, while future urban development was envisaged to occur only in the east leading to the eventual merging of Accra and Tema.

The Plan as captured in Fig. 5 proposed that future urban development to the east was expected to be complemented by infilling, redevelopment and upgrading of poor inner city areas within the existing built-up areas of the metropolitan area – urban consolidation.

In addition, Accra and Tema would be developed separately (twin-city concept) while at the same time encouraging decentralization of economic activities from these centres to new potential growth points or CBDs such as Madina, Dansoman, Ashaiman, etc (multi-city structure). These developments were be facilitated by improved transportation networks (roads and rail), especially the construction of ring and orbital roads to link the east-west and north-south sections of GAMA.

Land Use	Year (Area in hectares)		
	1990	2000	2010
Commercial	1,650	2,050	2,250
Civil/Cultural	130	150	180
Institutional/Special uses	4,280	5,550	6,980
Residential	26,350	33,380	41,940
Industrial	2,690	5,190	7,690
Defence	1,640	1,640	1,640
Major roads	1,460	1,950	7,200
Transportation (terminal)	920	920	1,200
Open space	2,000	11,250	12,550
Urban Total	*41,120*	*62,080*	*81,630*
Rural Total (%)	*68*	*52*	*37*

Table 3: Summary of Land Use Requirements
Source: MLG/DTCP (1993a, p. 49)

In terms of land size for various land uses, the GAMA Strategic Plan envisaged a required total land area of 129,250 ha (about 1292.5 km²) (see Table three). It was projected that by 2000, total urban land use will be 48% with 52% being rural; 63% and 37% by 2010. Based on an estimated average gross residential density for new development of 80 persons per hectare, a substantial proportion of the total urban land use was allocated to residential use which was projected to increase from 26,350 ha (263.5 km²) in 1990 to 33,380 ha (333.8 km²) in 2000 and almost 42,000 ha (420 km²) in 2010.

Given the fact that the GAMA Strategic Plan sought among others to promote urban consolidation, it was interesting that a large amount of land was earmarked for residential development, open spaces, roads and transportation terminals, etc. In fact, as Table 3 indicates, total land use was expected to grow from 41,120 ha (411.20 km²) in 1990 to 62,080 ha (620.8 km²) in 2000 and 81,630 ha (816.3 km²) in 2010. It would suggest that large amount of land given to open spaces and roads runs counter to the plan's intention to promote urban consolidation and compact development. Again, it is difficult to see how these proposed large land use allocations were going to be contained in the set boundary limits as illustrated in Fig. 5.

Failure Planned Containment Strategy

Two decades after the formulation and implementation of the GAMA Strategic Plan, the shape and size of GAMA revealed a metropolitan area growing and expanding in all directions except to the south which is occupied by the ocean, Gulf of Guinea. Today, the urban footprint of GAMA goes far beyond the limits set in the Strategic Plan. As indicated in Fig. five, from the west, GAMA stretches from Kasoa/Awutu-Senya District in the Central Region to Nsawam and the Aburi/Akwapim Hills (in the northeast) in the Eastern Region to Dodowa in the Dangme West District of the Greater Accra Region. In other words, the size of the metropolitan area to a large extent is better defined only by the regional administrative boundaries rather than greenbelts and natural urban boundaries (see Fig. 5). Why has the urban containment strategy failed to limit the spatial limits of the metropolitan area? In the following we analyzed a number of interrelated factors which account for this situation:

Challenge posed by existing land management system

The GAMA Strategic Plan acknowledged the challenges in land delivery and the difficulties in projecting the demand for land due to inadequate records as well as informal land acquisition processes in GAMA. However, a critical issue not properly highlighted in the Plan is the disconnection between land delivery for development purposes and planning. Key to this disconnection is the existing land management system (mode of land alienation and tenure) where land is held privately under customary institutions, while planning remains a public function for local governments with limited or no control over the ownership and the acquisition of land. According to Owusu et al. (2012), ineffective coordination, communication and harmonization between customary landholders and public planning agencies lead to a situation where chiefs and others dispose of land for purposes other than what it has been zoned for by planners. Like many regions in Ghana, land in GAMA is largely held or owned by chiefs and family heads. The normal process of land acquisition starts by prospective developers identifying vacant lands and then proceeding to negotiate for payment for leasehold titles, often 99 years for residential development and 50 years for other uses (Farvacque-Vitkovic et al., 2008). Due to delays in obtaining building permits and rent-seeking behaviours of public officials, developers hardly seek approval for permits from local government and the Department of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) as mandated by law before starting the development of their land (Gough & Yankson, 2000; Grant, 2009; Antwi & Adams, 2003; Owusu, 2008; Yeboah & Obeng-Odoom, 2010). Again, customary land owners are in many instances either ignorant of planning regulations and building bye-laws or show little appreciation for even the need for physical planning (GoG/MLG&RD, 2010) and therefore allocate land for development without reference, in most cases, to institutions like the DTCP and the local governments charged with planning, zoning, regulation and development control. The disconnection between land delivery for development and planning leads to physical development that is not in conformity with planning schemes (that is, where they exist) or to zoning and sub-division regulations that are supposed to guide the overall development of GAMA. Again, the weaknesses in the land delivery system result in a situation where vacant lands exist in inner city areas while there is intense competition for land beyond the built-up area contributing extensively to the sprawl of GAMA.

Weak planning and development control institutions

While the existing land management system contributes significantly to the sprawl of GAMA, the situation is exacerbated by weak planning and development control institutions.

The Metropolitan and Municipal Assemblies are responsible for the overall planning and development of Ghanaian towns and cities. They are supported technically by the DTCP and other public land-sector agencies. However, many studies have described these institutions as weak and therefore unable to direct physical development in an orderly manner (Farvacque-Vitkovic et al., 2008; Doan & Oduro, 2011). An examination of planning schemes in GAMA reveals that many Municipalities do not even have schemes for many areas and where they exist are manually-developed and outdated. Thus, the existing planning schemes tend to bear little semblance to actual development on the ground. This situation is blamed on limited and outdated mapping equipment and inadequate trained and qualified staff. Again, weaknesses in development planning and control as a result of limited logistics and human resources are further exacerbated by cumbersome and non-transparent official building permit approval process.

Therefore, frustrated land developers proceed with development without going through the existing cumbersome development permit application procedures (Yeboah & Obeng-Odoom, 2010). Since the Assemblies lack the personnel and other resources to enforce development controls, it is difficult to reverse unauthorized development once it starts. This situation contributes to the sprawl of GAMA.

Metropolitan fragmentation
Even though the GAMA region exists geographically and functionally as one contiguous entity, politico-administratively, it is fragmented into independent and separate autonomous local government areas. At the time of the preparation of the GAMA Strategic Plan, the region was made up of the AMA, Tema Municipal Assembly (including Ashaiman) and the Ga District. However, over the years these local government areas have been further sub-divided into eight independent and separate autonomous local government areas. As noted earlier, the Ga District is now made up of the Ga South, Ga West and Ga East. In addition, the Ashaiman and Adenta Municipal Assemblies have been carved out of the Tema Municipal Assembly while the Ledzokuku Krowor Municipal Assembly has been split from the AMA. The process of fragmentation of GAMA has hindered inter-local government cooperation (Owusu et al., 2012). Using solid waste disposal as an example, Owusu et al. (2012) demonstrate the difficulties encountered by the AMA to deal with waste in the Accra Metropolis partly as a result of the non-cooperation among local governments in GAMA.

The politico-administrative fragmentation of GAMA as a result of the creation of several independent local governments is further compounded by the absence of enabling legislative instruments within Ghana's Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462) which allows local governments to work together. Thus, although Act 462 provides a framework to facilitate adjoining local government areas to coordinate and harmonize their development planning, subsidiary legislative instruments to activate some provisions of the law are not in place (GoG/MLG&RD, 2010). In addition, the Greater Accra Region lacks a regional spatial planning framework which allows districts within the region to align and harmonize their planning effort towards achieving a common development planning goal. At the moment, broad national development goals are implemented by the Assemblies through the preparation of development plans which include specific programmes, projects and activities which are relevant to the specific Assembly in question.

Weak enforcement of plan
While the GAMA Strategic Plan for the period mid-1990s to 2010 provides a comprehensive picture regarding the growth of the region, it is very difficult to assess the extent to which the provisions in the plan was aligned to programmatic expenditure patterns.

This is reflected in the limited coordination between central government's investments, especially development of road corridors, and the plan objectives in terms of curtailing sprawl. Accra and for that matter GAMA has attracted significant investments in the road sector, leading to the development of road major corridors. However, these road corridors have been constructed without due regard to their spatial implications for the sprawl of GAMA.

Again, evidence over the plan period suggests there has not been significant attempt to decentralize investment and economic activities away from Accra as envisaged in the GAMA strategic plan. Like many countries in the developing world, central government is the key investor in infrastructure and services. The tendency to concentrate public investments development in Accra has led to a situation where private sector has also responded in similar fashion by concentrating private investments in the metropolitan area. This situation has persisted despite attempts through Ghana's investments laws to promote decentralization of investments.

Impact of Globalization

Although the GAMA Strategic Plan was formulated at a time when Ghana and more specifically Accra has intensified its incorporation into the global economy, the plan failed to acknowledged this process and more importantly the implications of the process for the spatial development of GAMA. In other words, the plan seems to have taken cognisance of city/local and national factors to the neglect of the global conditions. Nevertheless, it has been widely accepted that recent urbanization trends in large cities in developing world are strongly characterized by an unprecedented scale of urban change which is strongly influenced by globalization than ever before (Cohen, 2004).

In Ghana, GAMA is the favourite destination of global capital and its actors. For instance, between 2001 and 2008, the Greater Accra received about 84% of total direct foreign investment (including agriculture) in Ghana (ISSER, 2009). This has led to an increase in the number of multinational companies, UN and other international agencies and international NGOs using the metropolitan area as the national and/or West Africa headquarters. In addition, foreign and Ghanaian-owned real estate companies have been active in the region's housing market for the last two decades. This has led to the development of gated communities and other housing estates mainly targeting foreign expatriates, the Ghanaian middle and upper classes as well as Diaspora Ghanaian community.

The overall impact of global capital and its actors in GAMA is increasing pressure on land and housing due to scarcity and high prices. Within the context of weak land market and development, land speculation in peri-urban areas tends to be widespread, and consequently leading to ever expanding GAMA without proper services and infrastructure.

Conclusion

Unlike other developing country cities where urban sprawl is triggered by a combination of peri-urbanized economic and residential activities, in the case of GAMA, peri-urbanization is mainly for residential development characterized by low-density development. This study assessed urban growth in GAMA, Ghana's largest metropolitan area and the adoption of mixed-urban containment measure (urban consolidation, twin-city concept and multi-city structure approach) to curtail the sprawl. However, the present size and scale of GAMA suggests the failure of the containment strategy to limit the sprawl of GAMA. At the heart of the failed urban containment strategy of GAMA is the existing land management system. The policy issue here is that the existing land management system needs to be reformed to allow public control over the use of customary/privately-held lands.

Until this situation changes, urban containment strategies seeking to explicitly limit the development of land outside the defined urban area are unlikely to succeed within the context of the existing land management system where land is held privately under customary institutions, while planning remains a public functions for local governments with limited control over the acquisition of land.

In this direction, existing urban land reforms under the Land Administration Project (LAP) and the Draft Land Use and Spatial Planning Bill, 2011 – which seek to strength the capacity and enforcement roles of the DTCP and other public land sector agencies as well as local governments – need to be given serious attention.

Large metropolitan areas of Ghana, such as GAMA, need particular attention in terms of land management, and planning and environmental management systems which involve the active participation of and collaboration with customary landholding institutions, as strongly proposed in recent national policy documents such as the new Decentralization Policy Framework and Action Plan and the draft National Urban Policy (NUP) and Action Plan.

Within the context of strengthening urban governance, a much greater commitment to collaborative and deliberative approach to metropolitan regional planning is warranted to chart a growth management strategy for GAMA. In this new collaborative and deliberative approach to metropolitan regional planning, the active engagement of customary land owners must be of priority concern for public planning bodies.

Acknowledgements

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Envisioning the Future of Mumbai/Bombay.
Strategic Planning as a Tool for Inclusion or for further Centralisation?

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Alokeparna Sengupta[2]

The paper aims at exploring recent changes in the urban planning domain in the Indian megalopolis of Mumbai/Bombay, with a focus on an emerging form of document, the 'Vision'. The paper highlights the active role of private investors in promoting visions and in selecting the projects to be financed, especially through 'ad hoc' created bodies. Such governance structure has been defined by some scholars as 'governance-beyond-the-state', usually led by economic, political and socio-cultural coalitions. While acknowledging its capacity of restructuring a clearly fragmented and often ineffective institutional context, the paper questions if such form of governance is actually aiming at a larger inclusiveness or rather at strengthening the government in such a complex context. Concluding remarks also question the role of international agencies in the definition of the governance structure and in the promotion of (standardised) visions and strategies as innovative forms of planning.

Keywords: Mumbai, Vision, Strategic planning, Private Think Tanks, 'Governance-beyond-the-state'

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Mumbai/Bombay: a contested Mega-City Region

Mumbai/Bombay is the capital of the State of Maharashtra, the second largest city of India after Delhi and one of the largest metropolitan areas in the world. The double naming of the city could confuse a non-Indian reader, but it actually contributes to show the complexity of the city. While 'Bombay'[3] refers to the nature of the city as a port and as a melting pot of different cultures, languages and religions, 'Mumbai'[4] is used mainly by some right wing parties to reject the colonial past, the current globalisation process and the immigration (Hoskote, 2007). Even though both terms can still be heard, since 1996 the city was officially renamed as Mumbai after an initiative promoted by the ruling right wing coalition (Shiv-Sena and BJP). In the following paper the city will be called with its current official name, without forgetting that even the denomination is a matter of conflict in such complex context. Not only the name is contested, but also the area it is referred to is an object of debate.
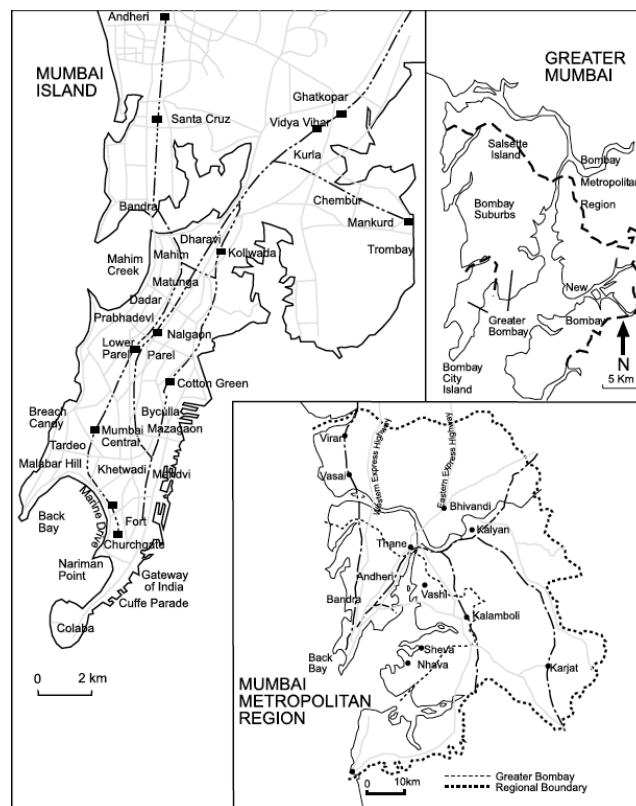

Figure 1. Mumbai island, Greater Mumbai and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (Pacione, 2006).

The same name is actually used to define at least three different territorial units (Patel, 2007; Zérah, 2008):
- the original colonial city - also called the 'island city' - that covers an area of sixty-eight sq km with a population of around three million inhabitants (Census 2001);

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[3] Bombay stems from the name given by the Portuguese colonisers in XVI century (*Bom Bahia*); it was afterwards adapted by the British and is commonly used by large part of the Indian population.

[4] Mumbai is rooted in the name of the mother goddess in the Hindi religion (*Mumba-Aai*).

- the area created through the extension of the boundaries of the *island city* in 1950 and again in 1957, officially called 'Greater Mumbai'. It covers an area of 437.71 sq km and is populated by almost fourteen million inhabitants (Census 2011);
- the 'Mumbai Metropolitan Region', an area of 4355 sq km populated by more than twenty-one million inhabitants (Census 2011).

In addition to this, since the end of the XX century the name of Mumbai refers also to a strong BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) hub[5] (Dossani, Kenney, 2007) and to a 'Global City-Region'[6] (Scott, 2001; Zérah, 2009), rather than a Global City. According to some scholars, such concept focuses too much on economic dimensions (Taylor et al., 2002) and on the changing role of the core city (Sassen, 1994), thus 'eclipsing the phenomenon of the de-concentration of activities and jobs towards the periphery and the cities of Thane and Raigad' and overlooks 'the strong metropolitan socio-spatial inequalities' (Zérah, 2009).

As a matter of fact, the crisis of the manufacturing in the core city in the Seventies caused both the decentralisation of industries to other parts of the Mumbai region and the rise of the informal economy, through which low-cost services and goods started to be produced both for internal consumption and for the formal national and global economy (Sassen, 2000). While the employment in formal manufacturing in Mumbai has decreased from 41% in 1961 to 12.5% in 1991 (Mahadevia, 2008), it is currently estimated that 'more than 60 per cent of the national income of India is generated in the unorganized segment and it is the unorganized sector that grows much faster than the organized sector' (Gruber et al., 2005). Slums, now covering 12% of the territory of the city but hosting more than half of its population (Nijman, 2008), were considered as a social problem targeted by specific policies from their first appearance. They also started to represent also a spatial problem after the liberalisation of India and the shift towards an economy mainly based on services at the beginning of the Nineties.

Basing on economic data on Mumbai[7], nowadays some scholars define it as 'the financial and commercial capital of India' (Pacione, 2008), while others stress the fact that Mumbai is the 'Mega-City of a poor country' and a 'city of the new economies and of large chunks of poverty' (Patel, 2007). According to Patel, 'Mumbai is becoming like most cities in the developing world, one based on services and the flow of information with dispersed manufacturing located in specialized areas' (ibidem). 'The inability to integrate its disparate interests groups', 'the marginalization of groups such as Dalits[8], Muslims and migrant labourer' and the 'competitive populism' promoted by the different parties also characterise Mumbai (Hoskote, 2007). These elements altogether make it harder for the city-region to become competitive at the global level, as well as equal for its inhabitants. While both the Central and State Government strongly hope for its climb up the ladder to become an International Financial Centre (IFC)[9], a simultaneous functioning of several governing bodies to cope with the disparate issues of the city-region seems to be still far (Dossani, Kenney, 2007).

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[5] A BPO refers to an offshore area offering cheaper labour forces to global technical and financial platforms.

[6] Further studies on the Mega-City Region define it as "a series of anything between twenty and fifty cities and towns, physically separated but functionally networked, clustered around one or more larger central cities and drawing economic strength from a new functional division of labour" (Hall, 2009).

[7] Mumbai generates 6.16% of the total GDP and serves as an economic hub of India, contributing 10% of factory employment, 25% of industrial output, 33% of income tax collections, 40% of India's foreign trade (MMRDA, 2008).

[8] Also known in Western countries as "untouchables" or "scheduled castes".

[9] The convenient location of Mumbai in terms of world timing (four hours of time overlap with UK and European business centers) and its competency in sophisticated financial and engineering services make the city-region a High Connectivity Gateway (Taylor et all, 2002).

The fragmented governance structure of Mumbai/Bombay

Looking at the governance structure that is present on the territory of Mumbai it is possible to recognise three main institutional actors involved in planning activities:

- the 'Central Government of India', which is directly involved in the planning of areas of national interests (rail yards, docklands, military areas etc.) and is currently promoting a national city modernisation scheme, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) through the investment of around $ 20 billion dollars for a period of seven years started in 2005;
- the 'Government of Maharashtra (GoM)', which is in charge of regional urban planning through a governmental agency, the 'Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority' (MMRDA). The MMRDA is not only in charge of the regional plan, but also of the development of the main infrastructures and of large scale projects;
- the 'Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation' (GMMC) is formally governed by the mayor that is elected by the councillors of the Corporation, but in reality it is lead by the Municipal Commissioner, directly appointed by the Government of Maharashtra (Zérah, 2009). The Corporation is mainly in charge of water supply, sewage and waste management, education, public street lighting etc. Given the fact that the GMMC is dependent on the decision of the State for the approval of its Development Plans for the area of Greater Mumbai it is usually not considered an autonomous planning authority, but mainly a provider and maintainer of public services.
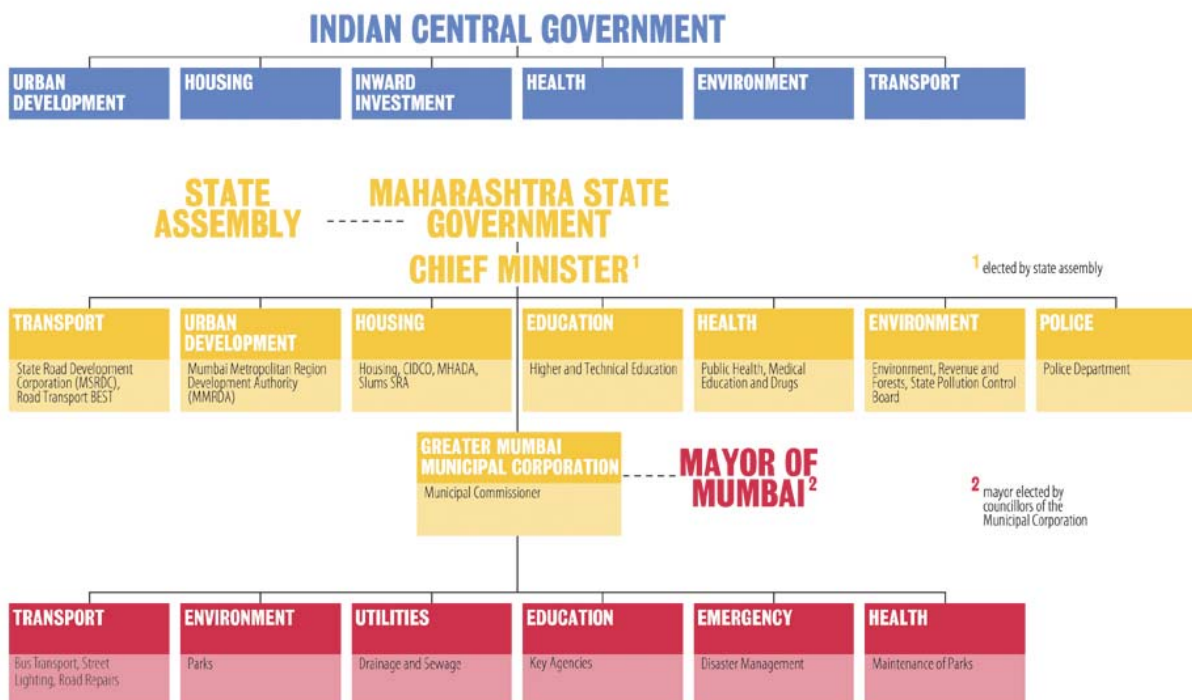

Figure 2. Governance structure in Mumbai (www.urbanage.com)

The governing local bodies, the GoM and the GMMC are traditionally led by two different (and often conflicting) political parties and further agencies contribute to the complexity of planning in Mumbai: the MSRDC (Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation), the MHADA (Maharashtra Housing and Development Authority) mainly responsible for the planning and construction of public housing and the SRA (Slum Redevelopment Authority) involved in the rehabilitation and relocation of slum settlements. Such 'proliferation of institutions' can be seen on one hand as an answer to various specific problems of the city, but on the other hand as a strong element of fragmentation of the real capacity to govern the city (Zérah, 2009).

Along with this, the economic liberalisation of 1991 has added a second parallel process of decentralisation and involvement of private actors – making the structure yet more complex. The decentralisation promoted in 1992 through an amendment of the Constitution should have brought to the creation of a Metropolitan Planning Committee, but actually has not been realised so far (Phatak, 2007; Zérah, 2009). On the other hand, after an amendment of the Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning Act (1996), also registered private companies could be considered Special Planning Authorities (SPA) and could promote plans for large areas of the territory. According to Patel, "this legislative step opened the way for private-sector and international finance to participate more actively in the governance of the region and the shaping of global market" (Patel, 2007).

Raiser and Volkmann underline that: 'the power to implement any political agenda is split among rivalling institutions and political parties [...]. Rather than resembling the City Inc. model of Shanghai, Mumbai/Bombay could be classified as a "patchwork city". If there is any integrating image, it is most likely the dream world created by the world's largest film industry, Bollywood' (Raiser, Volkmann, 2007).

Urban planning in Mumbai/Bombay: from land use planning to the visions

This complex governance structure has also portrayed a diverse array of planning efforts – the traditional land use planning through the Development Plans (also called Master Plans), the regional plans drafted by MMRDA, and the more recent plans of the Special Planning Authorities or the Vision plans drafted by private investor groups. The first two town planning acts of 1945 and 1915 stated the production of Development plans every twenty to twenty-five years. The replacing Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning Act of 1966 also included the need to coordinate Development Plans and Regional Plans.

The first Development Plan for Greater Mumbai (1964-1981) focused mainly on the provision of amenities and on the decongestion of the island city through the promotion of development in the suburbs and the shift of industries outside of the city core. Critics to such plan state that the planning was done 'at a slow pace' and without 'budget or strategy to acquire land for the development of amenities' (Nallathiga, 2009). In 1970 the first Regional Plan for 1970 – 1991 was published and was sharing similar concerns with the Development Plan (Pacione, 2006). It envisioned the creation of Navi Mumbai, a new city on a 344 km area opposite to the island city. Though the development had already started in 1971, the Development Plan was sanctioned in 1979. The city was planned to host 2 million inhabitants, but had only reached 200,000 units in the Nineties and ad scarce public service (Pacione, 2006).

A new Development Plan was promoted at the level of Greater Mumbai for the period 1981-2001. Initially approved in parts, complete approval was gained only in 1993 and hence extended until 2013. Such delay in the approval strongly affected the effectiveness of the plan: actual population overshot estimates of the plan, leaving a backlog of two million inhabitants in 2001 to be accommodated (Nallathiga, 2009). It also introduced restrictive development control regulations (ibidem).

The next Regional Plan (1996-2011), created after the liberalisation, reflects a different approach: it amended rent control act to promote urban renewal, land use zoning was relaxed to develop new offices at Nariman Point and business centre at Bandra Kurla (Pacione, 2006). The new orientation is clearly explained also in the document of the Regional Plan: 'for decades, Mumbai's spatial development followed a mono-centric, linear pattern of growth [...]. The [former] Regional Plan sought to alter this pattern by developing Navi Mumbai on the main land across the harbour, and by creating other growth centres, like Bandra-Kurla Complex and Kalyan Complex. These efforts, together with large population growth in Thane, Kalyan, Bhiwandi, Vasai - Virar area, and massive industrial investment taken place outside Greater Mumbai have set in motion an irreversible process of spatial decentralisation [...]. New growth centres and new transport linkages are likely to give rise to a new spatial structure, new pattern [...]. This structure, which may form an "Open Pentagon", will emerge as MMR's core of economic activity and population' (MMRDA, 1996).
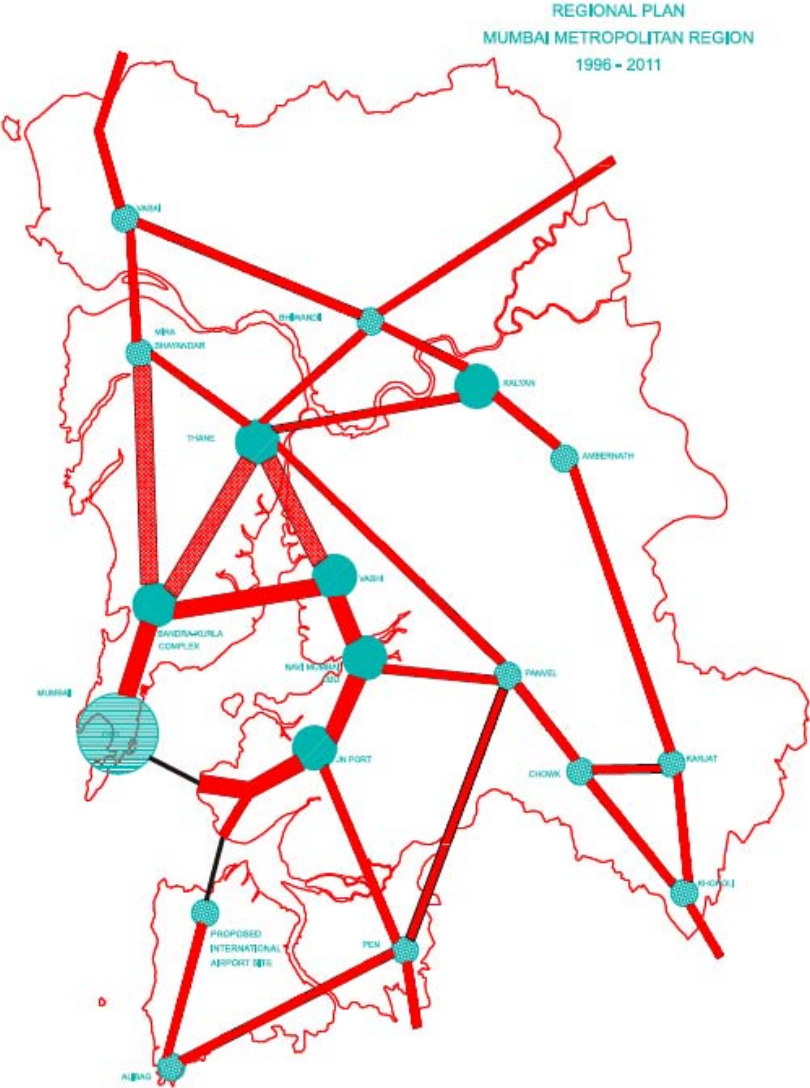

Figure 3. The Open Pentagon in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMRDA, 1996).

The traditional planning system in Mumbai has undergone severe critiques since the beginning of the XXI century. Both the development and regional plans are considered too detailed to be flexible, to have a too long perspective without considering also short and mid-term actions, to pay scarce attention to the socio-economic dimensions of the city, to be often approved too late to be useful, to leave little space to private investors and to care too little about the implementation: 'the root-cause of the urban maladies has been the divorcing of the plan preparation from plan implementation' (Nallathiga, 2009). Hence, the rise of new planning forms such as the 'visions' - mainly promoted by private actors and endorsed by few local and international bodies – after the liberalisation should therefore not surprise.

It is interesting to notice that the 'visions', defined as a form of strategic planning by their promoters, are substantially overlapping with the traditional forms of planning both in terms of scale and of duration. The first vision was presented in 2003 for the area of Greater Mumbai and was intended to last until 2013, that is to say exactly the same moment in which the Development Plan for Greater Mumbai would have expired. The most recent vision is targeting the whole region and has been presented in 2011, that is to say when the Regional Plan has expired. It is intended to be valid until 2052, more than any other traditional plan.

Vision Mumbai 2013 and its implementation

In contrary to its ruling economic strength, by 2003, the scale and complexity of Mumbai's numerous problems had grown to an alarming level. Overflow of immigrant workforce with respect to the jobs, infrastructure failures, conflicting interests of ruling parties of the State Government and Mumbai Corporation, floods, religious and ethnic divides, high cost of land and rental values - each a complex problem on its own and the simultaneous occurrence of all, pressed the Government of Maharashtra (GoM) to look for a new approach to deal with Mumbai's future. Henceforward, a set of Vision documents has been produced to tackle with the city's problem. This process of forging a 'vision' for Mumbai highlights a specific model of restructuring the city based on a coalition of industrial and government circles, in a configuration similar to an entrepreneurial urban regime (Kennedy, Zérah, 2008). In September 2003, the Government of Maharashtra appointed Bombay First[10] – a think tank initiative founded by a group of corporate - and the global consultancy firm Mc Kinsey to produce a study with the objective of transforming Mumbai into a world-class city, which formulated into the Vision Mumbai 2013 document. Though initiated by a group of private interests, the plan later on was endorsed by the GoM, Prime Minister of India and the World Bank. Following the strategic outline of the document, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra created a Task Force, which studied the initial proposals and made final recommendations through its own report. Based on these recommendations, the Mumbai Transformation Programme was established in 2005 by the Government of Maharashtra with the support of international organisations such as the Cities Alliance, USAID and the World Bank, which was also financing a regional business plan (Zérah, 2009). According to its promoters, such programme 'consist of over 40 projects to spur economic growth in Mumbai, reduce poverty and enhance the overall quality of life of its residents, especially slum dwellers' (Cities Alliance, 2006).

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[10] *Bombay (Mumbai) First* was founded with the objective to involve both private business houses and the public sector in the development of Mumbai. The idea of Bombay (Mumbai) First was derived from the London First in a conference held by Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1994. Funded by its founding members and corporate houses, the aim of the body was to act as an intermediary between various levels of governing bodies, private enterprises, individuals and NGOs. The motive behind founding of this organisation was to develop agendas for the city without the time consuming bureaucracy and meddling of political motives of public sector bodies.

In 2005 the Mumbai Transformation Support Unit (MTSU) was formed to act as an umbrella initiative within which all projects selected inside the shortlisted focus areas have been integrated.

In this framework the document 'Vision Mumbai 2013' is worthy to be critically analysed in its parts, being the initiator of the new trend of strategic planning in Mumbai that has been outlined above. The document in its form and objectives clearly portrays the corporate planning roots of an American consultancy firm, in this case Mc Kinsey being the co-author. The document is a public one and is in the form of a written report[11], which can be downloaded from the Internet (www.visionmumbai.org). Both in the selection and description of case studies and in the implementation strategies for the enlisted initiatives, there is utmost importance given to the involvement of stakeholders and private investments as key drivers to a city's development. The plan follows GoM's policy of polycentric growth. The study has been framed as an assessment of the strengths and opportunities of the city. The document exhibited that Mumbai was lagging behind in both aspects of economic growth and quality of life – the two main indicators for a world-class city.

The preface of the document states that: 'the report attempts to provide a comprehensive vision for Mumbai for 2013, with the clear aim of helping it achieve the status of a world class city. It also provides a blueprint for Mumbai's overall development over the next ten years: what needs to get done to ensure that Mumbai does indeed convert its vision into reality' (Bombay First/Mc Kinsey, 2003).

The document identifies eight priority initiatives, focusing both on areas of development (economic growth, transportation, housing, other infrastructures, financing) and on implementation strategies (governance, 'generate momentum through quick wins', 'enable implementation through public private resources'). Mumbai is governed by a multiple set of bodies and there is no governing body accountable for any of these actors. The integration of functions under one head though ideally favourable is not realistic goal for the present given the conflicting political parties at the city and state level governance structure.

Hence, for immediate implementation, a steering committee headed by the Chief Minister (CM) and consisting of other key ministers and the Mayor should be formed. For ensuring an efficient implementation mechanism an Empowered Committee consisting of key state and city govt. officials, selected private sector participants should meet fortnightly to review progress and coordinate with Steering Committee. Key agencies like MMRDA, MSRDC, SRA, MHADA etc. should be made accountable by signing of Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) and CM should review performance on a monthly basis. It is fostered an active participation of Mumbai's corporates and NGOs especially in advocacy, funding, infrastructure creation, management resources and independent projects.

Following the Vision Mumbai 2013 document by Mc Kinsey and Bombay First, a task force appointed by the Chief Minister in 2004 produced a report named 'Transforming Mumbai into a World-Class City'. In addition to what is already stated in the Vision Mumbai 2013, the document proposes the creation of a Citizen Action Group (CAG) described as a 'citizen body' in order to monitor the implementation of projects. McKinsey's recommendation for the creation of a ring-fenced Mumbai Infrastructure Fund (MIF) has been modified in the second document to be called Mumbai Development Fund (MDF). The MIF suggestion stops at describing the protective policy for the money. The MDF (also ring-fenced) goes on to indicate that it will mainly consist of central-government's contribution and taxes generated through reforms suggested in the conversion of leaseholds to freeholds.

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[11] In the document is contains several charts and schemes alongside with the text, but does not include any map.
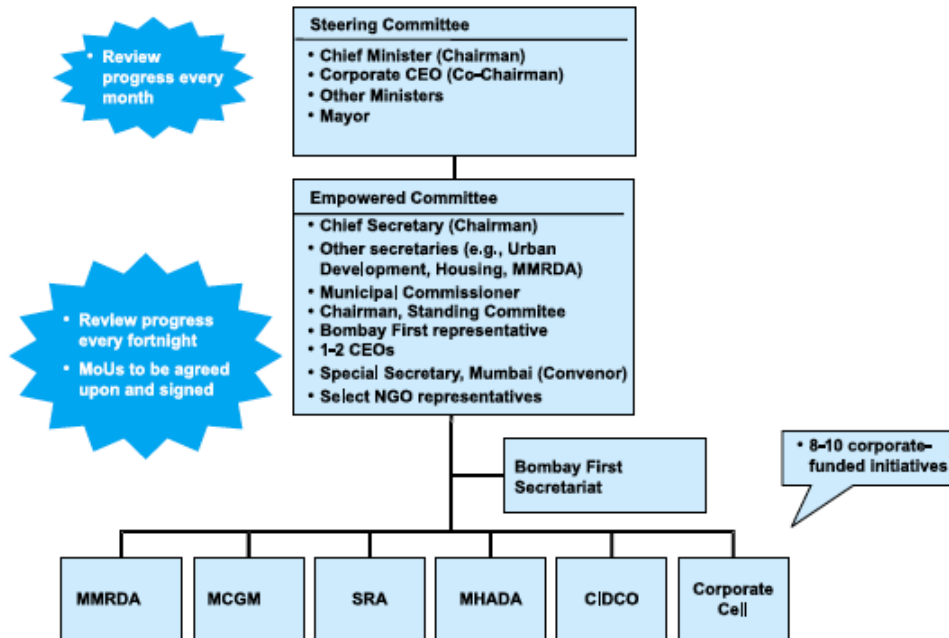
Exhibit 17

MUMBAI IS CURRENTLY RUN BY MULTIPLE AGENCIES

Source: TIFR website; interviews

Exhibit 18

STEERING COMMITTEE TO BE HEADED BY THE CHIEF MINISTER

Source: Team analysis; interviews

Figure 4. Multiple Agencies governing Mumbai vs. new governance structure (Vision Mumbai, 2003).

Controversial aspects of the Vision Mumbai 2013

Even though the McKinsey document is supposed to give a visionary and strategic outline for future developments its size and scope is quite unrealistic. The Vision Mumbai document clearly follows the corporate strategic planning applied to cities. In the global context of strategic planning and vision for cities, corporate planning is a practice of the past in the Western context especially the American cities of 1980s. The question then is what is the need of a Vision documents for a city's development in the Twenty-First Century following outdated practices framed by an American firm, while concurrent Western cities have moved onto other alternatives of strategic planning which are more spatial in character (Healey, 2004).

The vision met with heavy criticism from NGOs, activists and various urban planners, as they believe that it is just an initiative to free up more land for the builder community (Mehta, 2007; Mahadevia, Narayanan, 2008; Zérah, 2009). In general some scholars are questioning the choice of Shanghai as a reference model for politicians[12] and for the authors of the Vision Mumbai 2013 document: 'Both Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Maharashtra Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmuk have said, in public fora, that they hope to turn Mumbai into Shanghai - never mentioning that Shanghai's current new-economy successes have been built on decades of agricultural change and rapid industrialisation in the city's hinterland on one hand and high levels of human development, as in the case with the whole of China' (Mahadevia, Narayanan, 2008).

Moreover, some parts of the Vision Mumbai 2013 are particularly controversial such as what is stated at page fifteen, point three of the Economic Growth section: 'the Govt. should zone areas for supermarkets and hypermarkets in large land parcels such as the Mill Lands' (Bombay First/Mc Kinsey, 2003). In the past two decades following the closure of the Mumbai Mills, the Mills lands have been contested upon by private real estate developments for a long time. The Development Control Regulation (DCR) of 1991 reserved a third area each for parks, affordable housing and private development owners. In 2001, however the GoM amended the DCR to re-state that a three-way share applied only to the open lands and not all lands. The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, entitled to develop a third for public spaces, and MHADA, responsible for affordable housing, maintained silence on the act reversal. This led to a wide array of protests from citizen groups. The quoted sentence of the report is supportive of political parties and private interests to go forward with this scheme of maximising profit earning from a central city neighbourhood revitalisation scheme. Given Mumbai's housing problems, revitalisation of this area shouldn't be dominated only by pure capitalist gains, which benefit mostly the elite and have almost no consideration for social consequences. Proposals of simply creating super markets and malls in a central city location is lacking any sort of creative and comprehensive approach to the city's problems. As the architect Charles Correa noted, 'there's very little vision. They're more like hallucinations' (Mehta, 2007).

Vision Mumbai's intention about making Mumbai a liveable city is clear, but the questionable aspect is if this agenda of large-scale development is deemed successful over the debris of thousands of slums, which are the homes of the voiceless poor making up of major part of the city's population and work force.

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[12] The Chief Minister of Maharashtra in one of his speeches has declared: 'Today, Shanghai has become a symbol for Mumbai - that city started from zero and see where it is today. Citizens here will start having confidence in the government when they see Mumbai's transformation in the next five years. This is not mere talk. We want citizens' groups to support us. Their advice and suggestions for improving the city will be considered' (Mahadevia, Narayanan, 2008).

Though the document makes proposals of redesigning the Slum Redevelopment Authority's schemes for effective rehabilitation, the social welfare objectives in consideration are questionable. For example the fact that 'the creation of Special Housing Zones […], tax breaks for developers who construct low income housing [..], e.g. salt pan lands at Kanjpur and provide right package of incentives to developers for low-income housing' (Bombay First/Mc Kinsey, 2003). The salt pans of Mumbai, which have till now been earmarked as NDZs (No Development Zones) not only because they are eco-sensitive, but also because the 1991 Development Plan states that these areas are not suitable for construction. Given the fact that the construction suggested by the document is for low-cost housing and moreover an incentive attractor for private builders, there is no doubt that the quality of construction of these houses would be low and people who will suffer would be the poor rehabilitated slum dwellers. The policy of providing incentives in the form of tax breaks to private developers for building low cost housing is a direct import of planning policies from the USA (Healey, Upton 2010). However the crux of the matter being import of policies from a developed economy into a developing one leaves wide gaps in effective implementation. Though the import of this policy has been suggested, what the document forgets to mention is who is really going to be responsible or hold accountable for the quality of construction as the Government has clearly shifted its responsibility of providing housing for the poor on to the shoulders of the private sector. Another critical element regarding the slums, is the critique by the Vision to the existing Slum Redevelopment Authority and to its scheme (SRS): according to the Vision the existing SRS is 'commercially unviable' because it provides housing for free. Instead, the new policy foresees that the rehoused slum dwellers should pay for their new property, for maintenance and facilities. Some sceptical scholars on the other hand underline that 'unless vacant land is closely guarded, studies have suggested that a policy of making the poor pay for housing only induces them to sell the new homes and move back to somewhere that it is possible to live at a cheaper level' (Mahadevia, Narayanan, 2008).

Moreover, the Chief Minister's following report proposes the formation of the Citizen Action Group (CAG) in order to increase transparency and accountability of the whole Mumbai Transformation Programme initiative. The MTSU project website clearly describes the activities of the CAG as to 'generate energies, ideas, linkages, resources and citizen participation', as well as to 'promote effective, responsive and proactive Governance in Mumbai'.

In reality the almost twenty eminent members composing the CAG are actually either members of public bodies or owner of private business[13]. Therefore the Vision in considered by some scholars both as 'an instrument for the coalition [...] at power [in the Government of Maharashtra], in order to produce a strong discourse on Mumbai and eclipse the municipality' and 'as a tool for the Government of Maharashtra to mobilise the funds of the JNNURM for large infrastructural projects' (Zérah, 2009). Other scholars underline the value of such vision as a 'lobbying tool' in the hands or the corporate sector: 'the elites also want to lay claim to public finance, to the extent they can extract, from the state government and central government to build the infrastructure that would ease their living and give them a quality of life of global standards [...]. Our suspicion is that such Vision Plans are a ploy to force the state and municipal government to push out as many slum dwellers as possible into the nooks and corners of the city where they cannot be seen' (Mahadevia, Narayanan, 2008).

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[13] For example the vice – chairman of the Citizen's Action Group is also a member of the Empowered Committee which is monitoring the ongoing projects, President of Indo-Italian Chamber of Commerce and also the Managing director of Concast Ltd.- a private manufacturer of casting machines used in concrete construction. This is just one example of the conflicting realities of what has been written and what is being actually done.

Conclusion: 'travelling urban paradigms' in a context of 'governance beyond-the-state'

The case of the current planning innovations in Mumbai raises several reflections on strategic planning, especially in contexts that are different from the Western countries.

First of all, it shows that the shortcomings of the traditional planning and the critiques that are formulated against it are similar both in Western Countries and in such a different context such as the one of an Asian Mega-City Region. The form of the vision in the case of Mumbai seems also to achieve the goal of 'mobilizing attention [...], which builds from and contributes to shaping conceptions of identity' (Healey, 2004).

Moreover in the case of Vision Mumbai 2013 the active role of private investors is clear both in promoting plans and in selecting the projects to be financed, especially through the Empowered Committee and of the Citizen Action Group. Such ad hoc created bodies, nevertheless have on one hand proved to be hardly inclusive and on the other hand reflect an old perspective of strategic planning: 'it was traditionally assumed that the primary function of strategic spatial frames and plans was to direct the state's investment and regulatory power. This reflected an authoritarian conception of power, the ability of a government agency to command certain actions and control their implementation" (ibidem)'.

Such governance structure that widely includes private investors has been defined by some scholars as 'governance-beyond-the-state': 'while such absence of codification potentially permits [...] socially innovative forms of organisation and of governing, it also opens up a vast terrain of contestation and potential conflict that revolves around the exercise of (or the capacity to exercise) entitlements and institutional power [...]. While the democratic lacunae of pluralist liberal democracy are well known, the procedures of democratic governing are formally codified, transparent and easily legible. The "modus operandi" of networked associations is much less clear. Moreover, the internal power choreography of systems of governance-beyond-the-state is customarily led by coalitions of economic, socio-cultural or political élites' (Swyngedouw, 2005).

As a matter of fact, also in the case of Mumbai large contestations have risen from the side of NGOs, academics, several practitioners and groups of citizens. Nowadays, while the Government of Maharashtra has entrusted a Singapore-based consultancy (Surbana Ldt.) to develop a further vision (Vision Mumbai 2032 and 2052), a group of academics from the Rachna Sansad's Academy of Architecture, researchers from UDRI (Urban Design Research Institute) and NGOs are preparing a brief based on the perceptions and needs of a large number of citizens that should work as a base for the next Development Plan of the Greater Mumbai area (promoted by the Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation). Once again traditional and 'innovative' planning are running parallel, but in this case it is not clear where the real innovation lies.

Moreover, the Vision has the merit of promoting a restructuring of the institutional context that is clearly fragmented and often ineffective. It is questionable if the opening privates, on one hand, and the evident strengthening of only one governing body (the Government of Maharashtra), on the other, represents the best solution for such a complex Mega-City Region. Nevertheless, it should not surprise: 'in fact, it is the state that plays a pivotal and often autocratic role in transferring competencies (and consequently in instantiating the resulting changing power geometries) and in arranging these new networked forms of governance' (Swyngedouw, 2005).

In conclusion it is also relevant the role and the presence of international agencies such as Cities Alliance, USAID and the World Bank, both in promoting innovation in planning and in co-financing some of the programmes.

As it is noticed by Healey, even in Western countries 'funding bodies such as the EU, the international aid agencies, and many higher tier government funding programmes, have also encouraged the production of strategies and visions [...]. However, only some of these actually produce significant effects other than ensuring formal compliance in order to attract funds or meet regulatory requirements. Some strategy statements may serve political purposes though a rhetorical flourish which displays the promises of a mayor or local regime. Other so-called strategies may merely record already well-established directions' (Healey, 2009).

The latter seems to be the case of Mumbai.

The current changes both the city and the planning system are undergoing in Mumbai may be difficult to be described and understood by non-Indian readers, but it is mainly to them that this paper is addressing. As a matter of fact, 'new vocabularies of spatiality and place' (Healey, 2004) are developed in the new strategic planning approach, often referring to the relational geography; such apparently distant and extreme case of Mumbai seems actually to mirror the emerging conditions of complexity and fragmentation that are described in the new strategic planning theories. Therefore the case seems to be useful mainly as a learning and reflection opportunity.
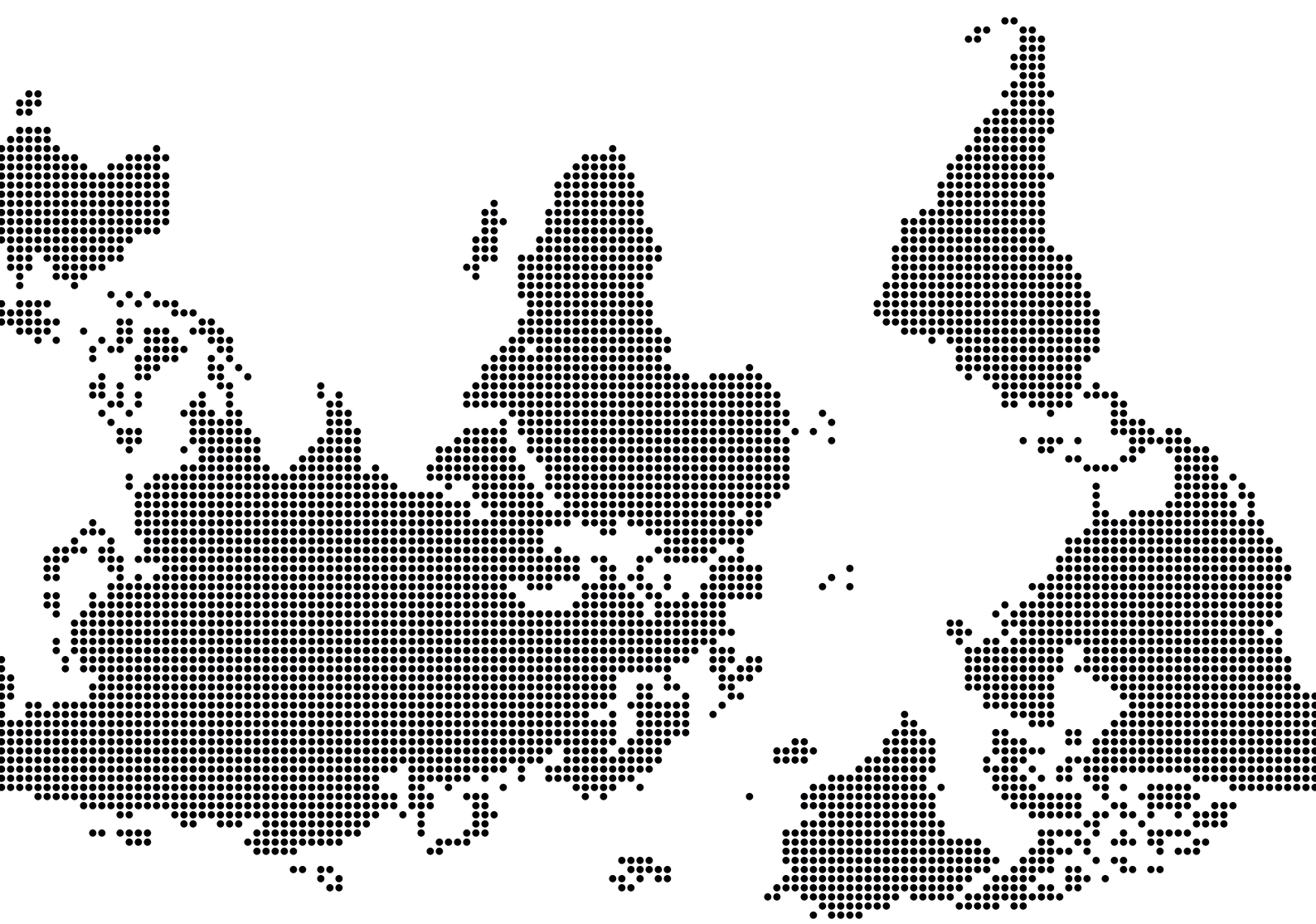
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