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***A Projection into the ideas and technologies of "non-place"  
and "space of flow" in urban context***

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Settore scientifico disciplinare di afferenza: ICAR 14

Esame finale anno 2013

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**Esame finale anno 2013**

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## Abstract

The meaning of a place has been commonly assigned to the quality of having root (rootedness) or sense of belonging to that setting. While on the contrary, people are nowadays more concerned with the possibilities of free moving and networks of communication. So, the meaning, as well as the materiality of architecture has been dramatically altered with these forces. It is therefore of significance to explore and redefine the sense and the trend of architecture at the age of flow.

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In this dissertation, initially, we review the gradually changing concept of "place-non-place" and its underlying technological basis. Then we portray the transformation of meaning of architecture as influenced by media and information technology and advanced methods of mobility, in the dawn of 21st century. Against such backdrop, there is a need to sort and analyze architectural practices in response to the triplet of place-non-place and space of flow, which we plan to achieve conclusively.

We also trace the concept of flow in the process of formation and transformation of old cities. As a brilliant case study, we look at Persian Bazaar from a socio-architectural point of view. In other word, based on *Robert Putnam's theory of social capital*, we link social context of the Bazaar with architectural configuration of cities. That is how we believe "cities as flow" are not necessarily a new paradigm.



## Introduction

This study is aimed to trace the practice of architecture in relation with recent theories of global flows. For that, we initially review the Marc Augé's non-place, Manuel Castell's space of flow and William Mitchell's city of Bits in contrast with classic literature of place. Along the discussions, however, we generalize and extend these concepts, to include socio-economic flows as well as morphological approaches to fluid surfaces. A wide range of case studies, from Persian traditional bazaars to informal marketplaces and contemporary malls, and from transport oriented developments to public spaces of civic engagement will be explored, accordingly.

Last but not least, we analyze the way these dynamics of flow, together with the flows of signs and information, feed the landscapes of everyday life from architectural and urban points of view.

I

Problem statement

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**How is the practice of architecture shaping and/or being shaped by the flows?**

"Fluidity" is the essence of urbanization and architecture. Indeed, the world is entirely in a state of "fluxion", "transition" and change; and everything flows<sup>1</sup>. The change occurs in varied paces. once in a while, bit by bit and as slowly as it can be hardly conceived in man's limited lifespan, and in some other occasions, it happens in real time for example with instant communication and media enhanced technology.

As specified by dictionary definitions<sup>2</sup>, the word "flux" in French is referred to a movement in a space, while in English it is understood as transformation in time. In this study, the concept of flow, not only implies the widespread mobility of objects and subjects - bodies, technologies, information, signs, symbols, sounds, images and goods- but also provokes a morphologic transformation of urban space<sup>3</sup>. The idea of flow is about keeping the material and/or immaterial capitals moving around rather than to merely transfer them from one location to another<sup>4</sup>.

Space is seen as material support of social interaction which provides for simultaneity. For centuries, this aim was achieved through physical contiguity. That is the nature of space of place. However, with the current interactive networks of performance functioning on a planetary scale in real time (globalization) and with the growing methods of traveling, societal practice is not anymore dependent on being territorially adjacent.

Within this perspective, the incentives of flow, chiefly, redefine the context of social interaction, and, contribute to a civic "exchange and encounter" among individuals. Needless to say that such daily practices are not detached from man's physical environments. While architectural approaches in

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1 Wheelwright,1964:29

2 M. Heydari-Malayeri, An Etymological Dictionary of Astronomy and Astrophysics English-French-Persian (<http://dictionary.obspm.fr>), Accessed May,7th, 2012

3 Furthermore, we survey the sense of fluxion in architecture by means of smooth-surface topographies and volumes that themselves flow.

4 This is, arguably, a clear distinction between spaces of flow and non-places.

contingency with flow may broadly differ, there is a need to define clear frameworks to understand the relation between the nature of built environment and the features of flow.

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The logics traditionally applied to read architectural places -either those largely deal with psychology of place<sup>5</sup> or those concentrate on objectivity<sup>6</sup>- appear to be problematic if not completely out-dated. Therefore, this research is intended to explore how the practice of architecture is shaping the flows, and, to what extent it is being shaped by the flows? What exactly do we mean by landscapes of flow besides non-places? What are the differences between fluidity and transition from architectural point of view? What are the different types and archetypes of flow and non-place? And what is flow urbanism?

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<sup>5</sup> Lynch,1960; Alexander,1977

<sup>6</sup> Cullen,1961



## **II**

**Literature review and Theoretical framework of the study**

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**In the quest of meaning**

**From space of place to non-place and space of flow**



## **i. Space**

All human action is involved with space: conceptual, temporal, social and physical. The idea of space is an integral part of architectural thinking over the history. Every cultural period has its own conception of space but it takes time for people to realize it consciously.

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### **i.i. The meaning of Space**

The concept of "space" is one of the key lessons to be taught in architecture schools. One might appeal to stress on materiality of what we build -including walls, floors, ceiling and so on. However, what really counts is a set of qualities that propel the experience of architecture. Here, we aim to introduce the space as a central dimension of built environment, while it is not a simple or unitary concept. In fact, different people at different times and in different contexts deal with different "conceptions" of space and their congruence is a subject of debate among scholars.

Apart from a whole set of spatial meanings which one might call ethological space (home range, core area, territory and so on<sup>7</sup>), it is possible to list many other meanings of the term. The most basic distinction is between human and non-human space. All space with which designers are concerned is basically human -although there is a difference between an Athenian Plateia<sup>8</sup> and a freeway at rush hour. We can then distinguish between designed and non-designed space (Designed meaning ordered according to some rules, and reflecting some ideal environment, however dimly).

"Space" is certainly no new term in architectural theory. But space can mean many

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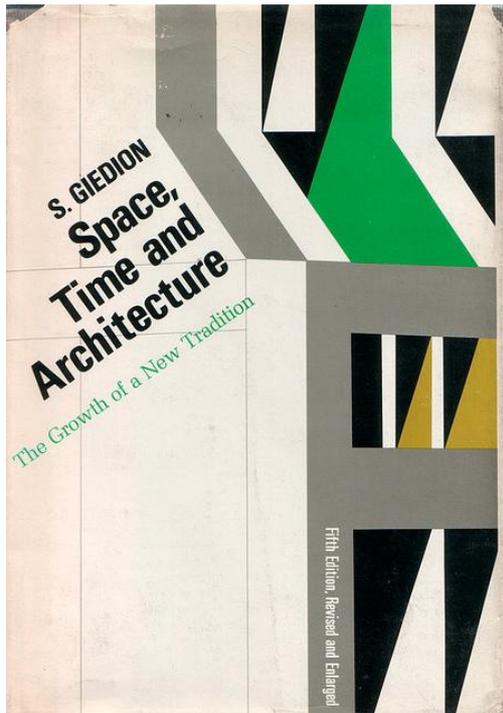
7 "countries", "regions", "landscapes", "settlements, and "buildings"

8 Plateia or platia (πλατεία) is the Greek word for the town square or the central places for feasts, celebrations, events and meetings.

things. In current literature we may distinguish between two uses: space as three-dimensional geometry, and space as perceptual field. None of these however are satisfactory, being abstractions from the intuitive three-dimensional totality of everyday experience, which we may call "concrete space". Concrete human actions in fact do not take place in a homogeneous isotropic space, but in a space distinguished by qualitative differences, such as "up" and "down". In architectural theory several attempts have been made to define space in concrete, qualitative terms. Giedion, thus uses the distinction between "outside" and "inside" as the basis for a grand view, of architectural history. Kevin Lynch penetrates deeper into the structure of concrete space, introducing the concepts of "node", "landmark", "path", "edge" and "district", to denote those elements which form the basis for men's orientation in space. Paolo Portoghesi finally defines space as a "system of places", implying that the concept of space has its roots in "concrete" situations, although spaces may be described by means of mathematics. The latter view corresponds to Heidegger's statement that "spaces receive their being from locations and not from "space". A concrete term for environment is place. It is common to say, that acts and occurrences take place. In fact it is meaningless to imagine any happening without reference to a localism. Place is evidently an integral part of existence. What then do we mean with the word "place"? Obviously we mean something more than abstract location. We mean a totality made up of concrete things having material substance; shape, texture and color. Together these things determine an "environmental character", which is the essence of place. In general a place is given as such a character or "atmosphere".<sup>9</sup>

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9 Rapoport, 1977:12–14



Picture II.1 . Sigfried Giedion, 1941, *Space, Time and Architecture [The growth of a new tradition]*, cover page

### **i.ii. Space and anti-space**

There are two principal conceptions of space which can be compared to modern physics' theory of matter and anti-matter. This theory assumes the existence of two opposite universes, each totally antithetical to the other. Any coincident meeting of the two worlds will cause their mutual obliteration. According to this analogy Modern space is, in effect, anti-space. Defined by its properties as an undifferentiated and formless continuum, it must destroy its opposite, space, which is conceived of as a formed and shaped figure. The traditional architecture of streets, squares and rooms created by differentiated figures of volumetric voids is by definition erased by the presence of anti-space.

Complete, uncritical subscription to the limited sensibility of Modern space, or anti-space, leads to the erosion and eventual loss of space, and the results of this can be seen all around us. It is no longer possible to make a stable public space, to

design a street or square, or simply form a good room. The sensibility as well as the skill to accomplish this has been lost. While we are aware of both types of space, there is a predisposition to use only one; modern life is conceived only in terms of anti-space.

Each of these two space types is defined more precisely through a description of both the conceptual form ascribed to them, and their assumed properties. Space is conceived as differentiated volume, identifiable in its configuration as form, discontinuous in principle, closed and static. It is serial in composition. Anti-space is the opposite. It is undifferentiated and ideally formless, continuous in principle, open, and flowing. It is controlled, directed, or temporarily captured, but never composed<sup>10</sup>.

While, perceptually, the actual visual occurrence of either space or anti-space is realized

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10 Concerning the issue of controlled environment, in 1967 an important text appeared: the text by the French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault. In "Des espaces autres: une conférence inédite" Foucault introduces the heterotopias as opposed to utopias:

"There are utopias. [...]. Also there are, and possibly in every culture and every civilization, real, physical places, places designed as part of the institutions of society itself, that are a sort of contra-places. They are a sort of realized utopias in which the real places, all the other real places that one can find in culture represented at the same time, are being fought and turned around, a sort of places that are outside all places, even though they are traceable in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from the places they mirror and speak of, I call them, to emphasize their opposition to utopias, heterotopias."

He was exploring a new field, a new organization of space. Even though this text was quite refreshing, Foucault didn't ask the main question that you expect from reading the text. The hypothesis could be quite easy: In the network-space, the heterotopia is no longer the different space, instead it has become the standard. Today's proliferation of heterotopias could be explained by the rising level of chaos in spatial layout; the network-space that makes an end to the place. It is when the city becomes illegible, that one tries to find a solution in the heterotopia as a paradigm.

only in the presence of physical things, the illusion of what is seen between these things is in each case different. Anti-space appears indefinite; it is perceived as the tension and direction in between things. Space is specific; it is perceived as the form of the "in-between" itself. This condition is unique to space and is the essence of its definition. The successful appearance of this illusion of form 'in-between' is almost tangible: something is there.

Space does not appear empty; anti-space does, despite its animation. Space as opposed to anti-space has value-it is charged with a presence. It seems to exist and have properties which are tangible: scale, proportion, and size. Its shape can be measured and its limits defined. The perception of anti-space is always less explicit. When space was the dominant concept, its underlying assumptions were a finite universe of Cartesian geometric order, a harmony of simple mathematical ratios interpretable through geometry. The universe of space was imagined as an assembly of pure and crystalline forms<sup>11</sup>.

Here and now, we are encountering with a pair of concepts contradicting theoretically, among which, however, no precise distinction could be practically realized<sup>12</sup>: "a fuzzy empire of blur" as noted by Koolhaas<sup>13</sup>. For instance the realities of "transit" contrary to "residing" or "dwelling"; the conception of "meaningless events" in contrast with "meaningful moments"; the quality of "interchanges" comparing with "crossroads", where people may confront each other; the confusion between "passengers" and "travelers"; and eventually central

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11 Peterson, 1978:89-113

12 Such binary oppositions are omnipresent in architectural readings: Space - Anti-space; Perceived - Conceived; (almost visible) - (invisible); Ordered - Random; Formed - Unformed; Discontinuous - Continuous; Static to flexing - Flowing in motion; Specific - General; Manmade - Natural; Particular - Universal; Variable - Uniform; Multiple - Singular; ...

13 Koolhaas, 2002

to this research, the space of “place” in contrast with “non-place” and “space of flow”<sup>14</sup>.

## ii. The products of space

### ii.i. Place

The idea of “place” itself is a disconcerting term as it does not restrict itself within a definite and clear cut elucidation. In other words, various modules of “place” are to be addressed by different disciplines involving philosophy, anthropology, urban or human geography and here, more affiliated to our study, architecture.

To begin with, browsing through dictionary<sup>15</sup> definitions, the term “place” is basically defined as a portion of geographic space. It is a particular part of space, i.e. “... the place where they first met”. Generally, the sense we get of a place is heavily dependent on practice and particularly on the reiteration of practice on a regular basis. The concept of place receives remarkable contributions from authors of different disciplines, each of which address certain components of place<sup>16</sup>.

Tim Cresswell<sup>17</sup>, asserts that while it is the case that place was only formally conceptualized as a meaningful segment of geographical space by humanistic geographers in the 1970s, it is not true to say that the concept of place was invented by geographers. The origins of a philosophy of place can be seen in classical Greek philosophy and particularly in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. Plato (428–348 BC) developed the loosely defined notions of “chora” and “topos” in the context of an account of the origins of existence and the process of ‘becoming’.

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14 McLeod, 2000; Augé, 1995; Derrida, 1988; Koolhaas, 2002; Castells, 1999

15 Cayne, Bernard S., ed. The New Lexicon Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language. New York: Lexicon Publications, 1990

16 Arefi, 1999

17 Human geographer at the Department of geography of the University of London

Becoming, in Plato's terms, is a process that involves three elements – that which becomes, that which is the model for becoming, and the place or setting for becoming. This final element is "chora", a term which implies both extent in space and the thing in that space that is in the process of 'becoming'. It is often translated as a receptacle and differs from the void of "kenon" (abstract space) in that it always refers to a thing within it -it is not empty. Topos is often used interchangeably with chora in Plato but is usually more specific. While chora most often referred to a place in the process of becoming, topos would refer to an achieved place. Later Aristotle would use chora to describe a country while topos would describe a particular region or place within it. Both chora and topos would become part of geographical language through the notion of chorology (study of regions) and topography (the shape of the land surface). Both chora and topos are different from the notion of kenon (the void) in that they refer to something more particular -more like place than space. While kenon is limitless space, chora and topos are finite and contain things.

To Aristotle, place was a necessary starting point from which it is possible to understand both space -the infinite, the void- and movement and change. Place takes precedence over all other things<sup>18</sup>. To understand change and motion, for instance, it was first necessary to acknowledge that the most general and basic kind of change is change in respect of place, which we call "locomotion"<sup>19</sup>.

The geographical question of "where" is absolutely fundamental to Aristotle for everything that exists must be somewhere because what is not is nowhere<sup>20</sup>. To Aristotle, place comes first because everything that exists has to have a place and has to be located. Thus without place nothing else can exist,

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18 Casey, 1997:71

19 Casey, 1997:51

20 Aristotle in Casey,1997:51

while it can exist without the others<sup>21</sup>. As for Aristotle, there is a very powerful philosophy of place as the starting point for all other forms of existence.

Philosophically, Aristotle marked a high point for thinking about place as philosophers turned to the seemingly more profound notion of space. Indeed, it was not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that place reemerged as a central philosophical concept – particularly in the work of Martin Heidegger and his advocator Christian Norberg Schulz<sup>22</sup>.

The basic principle of architecture is to understand the "destiny" of the place<sup>23</sup>. That is to say the meaning in architecture is mainly assigned to people's ties and attachment to their environments. When God said to Adam<sup>24</sup> "A fugitive and a wanderer" you will be on the earth, he confronted the man with his most fundamental puzzle of life: to step over the point of entering and beginning in order to regain his lost place<sup>25</sup>. This notion represents the third component within the idea of a meaningful "place". That is the "sense of place". The first and second elements, namely "location" and "locale", address to the "where of place" and the "what of place", respectively. While the former refers to an absolute point in space with a specific set of coordinates and with measurable distance from other locations, the latter points to the material setting and the visible and touchable appearances of a place<sup>26</sup>.

As for Norberg Shulz, the phenomena of place led to the conclusion that the structure of place ought to be described in terms of "landscape" and "settlement" and analyzed by means of the categories "space" and "character". Whereas "space" denotes the three-dimensional organization of the

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21 Casey, 1997:52

22 Cresswell,2009:2

23 Norberg Schulz, 1988

24 Genesis, Chapter 4,verse 12

25 Norberg-Schulz, 1976

26 Cresswell,2009

elements which make up a place, "character" denotes the general "atmosphere" which is the most comprehensive property of any place. Instead of making a distinction between space and character, it is of course possible to employ one comprehensive concept, such as "lived space". Similar spatial organizations may possess very different characters according to the concrete treatment of the space-defining elements (the boundary). In history the basic spatial forms have been given ever new characterizing interpretations. On the other hand it has to be pointed out that the spatial organization puts certain limits to characterization, and that the two concepts are interdependent. The structure of a place is not a fixed eternal state: As a rule places change, sometimes rapidly. This does not mean, however, that the *genius loci* necessarily changes or gets lost, but the places conserve their identity during a certain stretch of time<sup>27</sup>.

Studies focusing on the psychological relationships between people and places lead us to discover new conception of built environments. Environmental psychology takes on the transactional perspective which views people and their physical environment as an inseparable unit, constantly influencing, defining and altering one another. The theory of place experience suggests that the users of a place have certain expectations as to the objectives possibly realizable in a place. This would require some understanding of the places' functions in order to use them accordingly. Consequently, this understanding of the places' functions can be considered part of cognitive ecology<sup>28</sup>.

Marc Auge puts forward the term "anthropological places" and believes that the so-called places have at least three characteristics in common. People want them to be places of identity, of relations and of history. He considers conventional conception of place as bounded, rooted, organic and

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27 Norberg- Schulz,1980:11,15-18

28 Kraemer,1995:.3-20

associated with modes of dwelling that are embedded in history<sup>29</sup>.

Probably the most influential approach, owing to Kevin Lynch, explores the interaction between human and environment through inhabitants' understanding of the elements of urban form. In order to propose a cognitive map, Lynch identified five elements of urban landscape as Paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks<sup>30</sup>. Following by that, scholars integrated such physical attribution with the nature of activities and perceptual parameters to construct the character of "Place"<sup>31</sup>.



*Picture II.2.* Open-hand monument, Chandigarh, Le Corbusier

One may claim the above mentioned manuals were created when communication technology and travelling patterns were not such widely capturing the world<sup>32</sup>. William Mitchell, for example, criticizes Le Corbusier's famous open-hand landmark in

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29 Auge, 1995

30 Lynch, 1981

31 Montgomery, 1998

32 Fattahi, 2009

Chandigarh's plaza as being "too late!"<sup>33</sup>. Ironically, he glorifies a gigantic, unpleasant satellite dish in a near-by, messy, industrial and unplanned area as a landmark of electronic agora:

"A place within which digital information can flow rapidly and freely, and can instantly be connected to the system of global digital information flows. Within the electronic agora there are new economic opportunities, new possibilities for the delivery of services, and new potentials for social and cultural life"<sup>34</sup>.

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### **ii.i.i. Place , meaning , Identity**

Places are the subject-matter of a phenomenology of architecture. The idea of meaning has been central to notion of place in human geography from the second half of twentieth century. In other words, location became place when it became meaningful. The primary relationship between the two kinds of elements denotes the term location. How will be the place formed as meaningful for man to "invite" him to locate his settlement? The question has to be answered both in terms of space and character.

From the spatial point of view man needs an enclosure, and accordingly tends to settle where nature offers a defined space. From the point of view of character, a natural place, which comprises several meaningful things, such as rocks; trees and water, would represent an "invitation". Where the actual conditions are favorable; visualization becomes the most important means of place concretization, whereas a location where nature offers less has to be "improved" by complementation and symbolization.

The identity of a place is determined by location, general spatial configuration and characterizing articulation. As a totality we experience for instance a place as "a dense cluster of enclosed stone houses in a hill side", or as "a continuous row of brightly colored veranda houses around a small bay", or as "an ordered group of half-timbered gable houses in a valley". Location "configuration and articulation do not ' always contribute in the same measure to the final result: some places get their identity from a particularly interesting location, whereas the man-made components are rather insignificant. Others, instead, may be situated in a dull landscape, but possess a well-defined configuration and a distinct character. When all the components seem to' embody basic existential

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33 Horan, 2000

34 Horan, 2000:x-xi

meanings, we may talk about a "strong" places. The elements; however, are there; and the "strength" of the place could easily be improved if the *genius loci* is understood and respected.

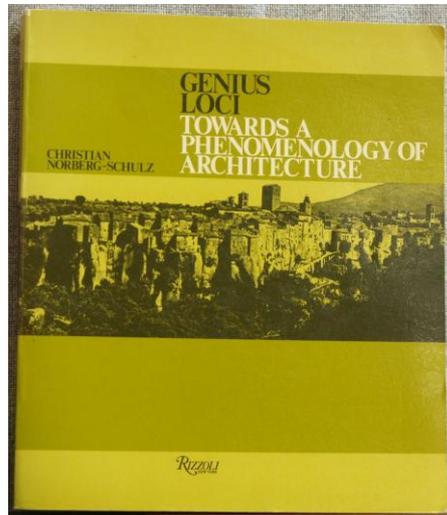
The two psychological functions involved, may be called "orientation" and "identification". To gain an existential foothold man has to be able to orientate himself; he has to know where he is. But he also has to identify himself with the environment; that is, he, has to know how he is a certain place. In Intentions in Architecture art and architecture were analyzed "scientifically", that is, by means of methods taken over from natural science. I do not think that this approach is wrong, but today I find other methods more illuminating. When we treat architecture analytically, we miss the concrete environmental character, that is, the very quality which is the object of man's identification, and which may give him a sense of existential foothold. To overcome this lack, I introduced in *Existence, Space and Architecture* the concept of "existential space". "Existential space" is not a logico-mathematical term, but comprises the basic relationships between man and his environment. The concept of existential space is here divided in the complementary terms "space" and "character", in accordance with the basic psychic functions "orientation" and "identification". Space and character are not treated in a purely, philosophical way (as has been done by O. F. Bollnow), but are directly related to architecture, following the definition of architecture as a "concretization of existential space". "Concretization" is furthermore explained by means of the concepts of "gathering" and "thing". The word "thing" originally meant a gathering, and the meaning of anything consists in what it gathers. Thus Heidegger said: "A thing gathers world".

The character is determined by the material and formal construction of the place. We must therefore ask: how is the ground, on which we walk? How is the sky above our heads? Or in general, what are the boundaries which define the place? How a boundary depends upon its formal articulation, which is again related to the way it is built. Looking at the building from this point of view, we have to consider how it rests on the ground and how it rises towards the sky.

Except for the intuitions of Venturi, the problem of character has hardly been considered in current architectural theory. As a result, theory has to a high extent lost contact with the concrete life-world. This is particularly the case with technology, which is today considered a mere means to satisfy practical demands. Character however, depends upon how things are made, and is therefore determined by the technical realization ("building"). Heidegger points out that the Greek word *techne* meant a creative "revealing" of truth, and

belonged to poesis, that is, making. A phenomenology of place therefore has to comprise the basic models of construction and their relationship to formal articulation.

31



Picture II.3. Norberg-Schulz, Christian, 1980, *Genius loci*

Without reducing the importance of orientation, we have to stress that dwelling above all presupposes identification with the environment. Although orientation and identification are aspects of one total relationship, they have certain independence within the totality. It is evidently possible to orientate oneself without true identification; one gets along without feeling "at home". And it is possible to feel at home without being well acquainted with the spatial structure of the place that is the place is only experienced as a gratifying general character. True belonging however presupposes that both psychological functions are fully developed. In primitive societies we find that even the smallest environmental details are known and meaningful and that they make up complex spatial<sup>35</sup>.

### ii.ii. Non-Place

Initially, we come across a familiar contrast: the known place - broadly meaning and difficult to clarify precisely- as opposed to "non-place (even if it has not been regarded from such perspective). For, the experience of non-place is a significant aspect of contemporary life. The arenas we feel we know even if we have never been before. As for Ian Buchanan<sup>5</sup>,

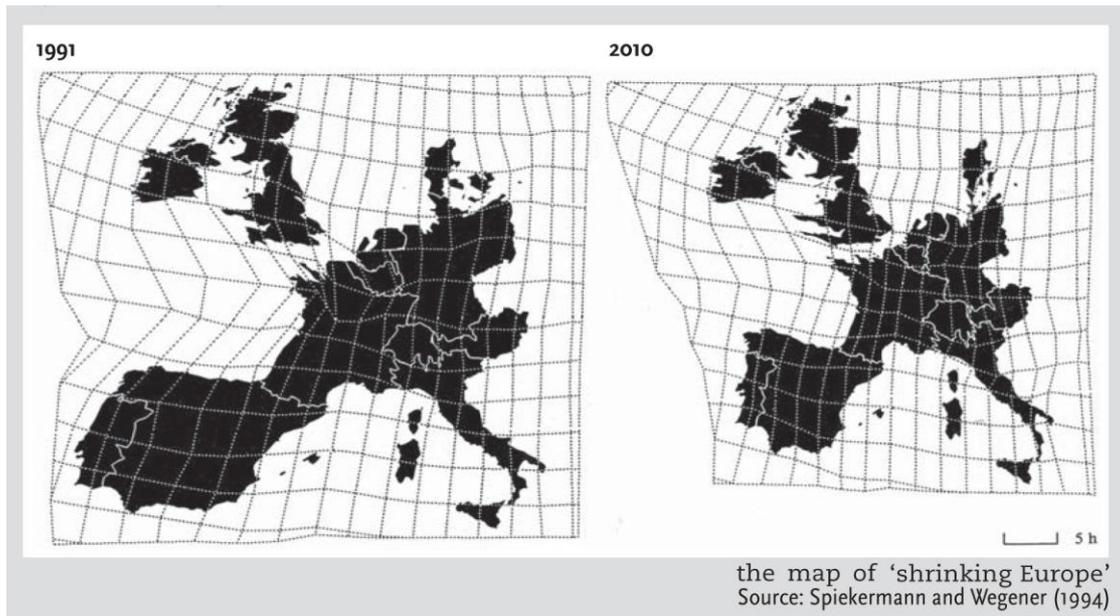
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<sup>35</sup> Norberg-Schulz, 1980:5, 14, 15, 19-21, 170, 179

the notion of non-place is not a comprehensive framework to describe all there is to the contemporary state of social spaces, but it covers unprecedented opportunities to perceive unavoidable sites in the course of daily life, exquisite yet delusive. no matter how often we travel or how much we like fast-food or hamburger, confronting the sites as hotels, malls, freeways, fast-food outlets, airports and places of transit are inevitable parts of our quotidian life; some people with luck spend less time on the average of such altars, and for many metropolitan citizens is their common junk food because the cities today are structured around and on the basis of these fields.

In contrast with the idea of place, Marc Augé, delineates the advent of a new stage of world in which the intelligence of time and space, as fundamental components of architecture, has been totally revolutionized.

In the first place, people's understanding of time as well as the use they make of it has been contributed to difficulties in distinction between various events as meaningful moments or meaningless occurrences. This was the term of "excess in time" and is the direct consequence of speeding up of instant telecommunications and information flows and results in bombardment of images of spaces and times other than the one a person may be immediately located in.



Picture II.4. The map of "Shrinking Europe (Spiekermann and Wegener, 1994)

Secondly, Augé spelled out the peculiarity of current era not due to the world's lack of or scantiness of meanings, but to our explicit and extreme daily need to fill the world with meaning. This spatial overabundance was expressed in changes of scale and in the increase of imaged and imaginary references and in the acceleration of means of transport<sup>36</sup>. Advanced and super-advanced developments in the field of telecommunication and transportation could instantly and sometimes simultaneously, provide us with an insight of an event on the other side of world (In example, I haven't been to China or London for Olympic games, but I have seen what so ever happened, sitting on a couch in my living room thanks to the new media that allows for a distant participation) or we can reach to another location in few hours. This means the shrinking (*Picture II.4*) of the planet by means of time-space compression and demonstrates how distances are deformed in relation to travel time between regions through accelerating networks of flow<sup>37</sup>.

36 Augé, 1995

37 Maeiyat & Apollonio, 2012:2

Augé labels this era as the age of supermodernity<sup>38</sup>. He also named the sites in relation to transitory ends (including shopping, transportation and leisure) as non-places. The term non-place was coined by Melvin Webber (1964) who was one of the first scholars to seriously address the relationship between electronic media, growing mobility and the nature and experience of late-twentieth-century cities. Today's world economy is reorganized on the grounds of such technologies. However, social critics disapprove the way people interact within these realms. For example, Augé's academy of thought proposes a cynical interpretation for these circumstances and questions the impact of such rapid changes. He alarms that places are melting into meaningless locations merely as specific sets of coordination and measurable distances. Furthermore, he indicates an unwelcome paradox in people's existence in non-places which contributes to peculiar sense. That is while people generate and organize place by gathering together, meaningful social interaction can be hardly seen in non-places. Obviously such spaces deal with people, but individual's coexistence- as passenger, customer or user- is regarded as equivalent and uncorrelated, and their behavior is conventional and pre-designated. In fact, they interact more often in silent<sup>39</sup> with texts,

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38 Surmodernité

39 The practice known as "silent trade" reminds several accounts in the West Africa during the last thousands years. These exchanges are said to have been made according to very particularized rules; two and only two trading parties would transact business with another. They would do this not only without the help of a middleman, but also without speaking to one another or coming face to face or even with sight of each other. Elaborate precautions would in fact be taken to prevent any kind of direct visual contact. Despite this mutual avoidance and the resulting impossibility of negotiating rate of exchange, agreement presented with no serious difficulties. Bargaining was carried out through gradual adjustment of quantities, arrived at by alternate moves by the two parties. Though, each of the two in turn would have to leave his good unguarded in a

instructions, screens and signs. So, one is not integrated with others but simply perceived as the same, detached and alone.

Ultimately, the third category of excess in relation to which the situation of supermodernity might be defined is the figure of the “ego”. The view now held is that any text about another tells us more the conditions of its production, the author’s background and personal prejudices, and so on, than it ever does about its purported topics. A heightened concern in ethnological circles is for the integrity of “Other”. To put it in another word, neither speaking for the other nor in the place of the other has had the paradoxical effect among ethnologists of a Hamlet-like-soliloquizing about the self at the expense of the other. Auge’ pointed out that Anthropology is now placed in the invidious position of promulgating the individual as source and guarantor of all meaning production, even as it disputes the sovereignty of such an idea as the individual. What this urgently demands is a re-conceptualization of the individual in such a way as to be able to articulate the encounter with the “Other” in an equitable way<sup>40</sup>.

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place accessible to the other, neither would take advantage of this for dishonest purposes. (Moraes Farias, 1974: 9)

Similarly, Renoma department store, in Wroclaw, Poland, functioned under the name of “Wertheim” from the date of its opening on September 1930 until 1945 as one of the most new-fashioned market places and attracted universal admiration of people as well as journalists since it was the largest steel structured retail center in Europe at the time of its opening. Surviving its structure and ceramic coating of the façade even after a few days of burning during the world war in 1945, it was decided to be reconstructed soon after the war. Its primitive concept, pointed by architect Zbyszek Mackow, responsible for the transformation of the historic building, was to work as a completely self-service department store at the time of opening to confront the sense of embarrassment or shyness among the people of middle-class; since they didn’t feel free to choose, examine and buy the goods in such luxury markets.

40 Buchanan, 1999

These excesses result in considerable physical modifications such as urban concentration, movements of population and the multiplication of what we call 'Non-places' in opposition to the notion of 'place'.

The word non-place designate two complementary but distinct realities; spaces formed in relation to certain ends (transport, transit, commerce, leisure) and the relations that individuals have with these spaces. However, Place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed. The possibility of non-place is never absent from any place. Place becomes a refuge to the habitué of non-place. Places and non-places are opposed or attracted like the words and notions that enable us to describe them; but the fashionable words -those that did not exist thirty years ago- are associated with non-places<sup>41</sup>. Thus we can contrast the realities of transit camps (where peoples do not feel at home<sup>42</sup>), or passengers in transit with those of

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41 Auge, 1995

42 Toward a transition into Descombes' definition of the notion of "rhetorical country" and the major question concerning where the character is at home, Marc Auge outlines that one is at home when he is at ease in the rhetoric of the people with whom he shares life. The sign of being at home is the ability to make oneself understood without too much difficulty and to follow the reasoning of others without any need for long explanations. According to Descombes' definition, Auge concludes that in the world of supermodernity people are always, and never, at home; the frontier zones or marchlands mentioned by Descombes, no longer open on to totally foreign worlds. Supermodernity naturally finds its full expression in non-places. Words and images in transit through non-places can take root in the -still diverse- places where people still try to construct part of their daily life. Conversely, it may happen that the non-place borrows its words from the soil, something seen on auto routes where the 'rest areas' are sometimes named after some particular and mysterious attribute of the surrounding land: aire du Hibou, aire du Gite-Aux-Loups, ... so we live in a world where the experience that ethnologists traditionally called "cultural contact" has become a general phenomenon. The first problem with an ethnology of the 'here' is that it still deals with an 'elsewhere', but an

residence or dwelling; the interchange (where nobody crosses anyone else's path) with the crossroads<sup>43</sup> (where people meet); the passenger with the traveler<sup>44</sup>.

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The real non-places of supermodernity have the peculiarity that they are defined partly by the words and texts they offer us: their instructions for use which may be prescriptive, prohibitive or informative. Sometimes these are couched in more or less explicit and codified ideograms (on road signs, maps and tourist guides) and sometimes in ordinary language. This establishes the traffic conditions of spaces in which individuals are supposed to interact only with texts, whose proponents are not individuals but `moral entities` or institutions (airports, airlines, Ministry of transport, commercial companies, traffic police, municipal councils); sometimes their presence is explicitly stated, sometimes it is only vaguely discernible behind the Injunctions , advice, commentaries and messages transmitted by the innumerable supports (signboards, screens, posters) that form an integral part of the contemporary landscape. So the link between individuals and their surroundings in the space of non-place is established through the mediation of words or even texts. Vocabulary has a central role here because it is what weaves the tissue of habits, educates the gaze, and informs the landscape.

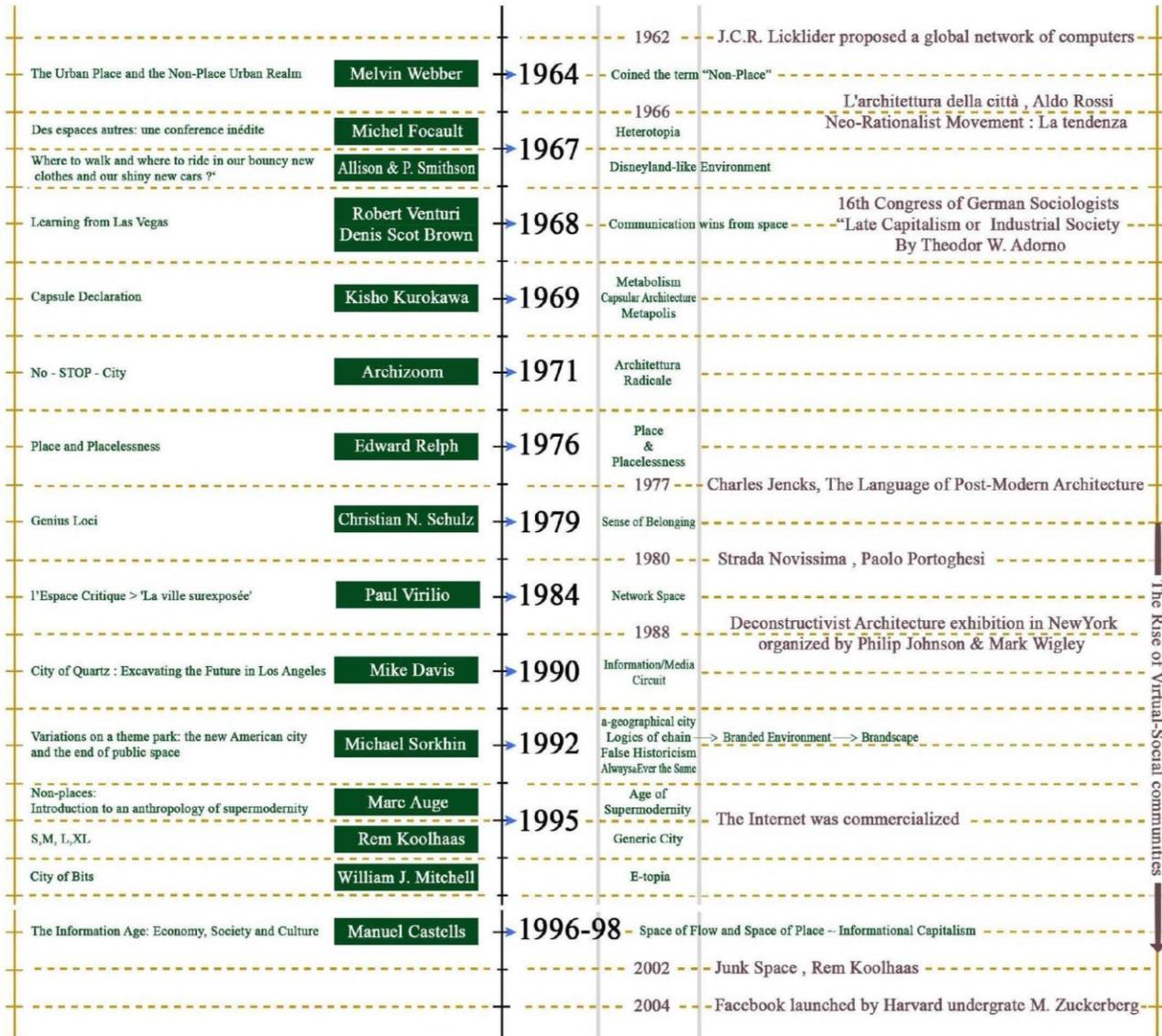
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elsewhere that can not be perceived as a singular and distinct object (Auge, 1995)

43 "The master says: "A crossroad is a holy place. There, the pilgrim has to make a decision. That is why the gods usually sleep and eat at crossroads. Where roads cross, two great forces are concentrated –the path that will be chosen, and the path to be ignored. Both are transformed into a single path, but only for a short period of time. The pilgrim may rest, sleep a bit, and even consult with the gods that inhabit the crossroad. But no one can remain there forever: once his choice is made, he has to move on, without thinking about the path he has rejected. Otherwise, the crossroad becomes a curse." " - Coelho, Paulo, 1992, Maktub,

44 Buchanan, 1999

CHRONOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OF THE TERM "NON-PLACE" IN THE SECOND HALF OF 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY IN BRIEF



Picture II.5. The evolution of the concepts of "non-place" and "flow" in the second half of 20th century

### ii.iii. Space of flow

As we previously discussed, Space is the substantial support of time-sharing social practice that allows for simultaneity. By space of flow<sup>45</sup>, Manuell Castells intends to signify the material arrangements provided for real-time civic interactions without territorial contiguity.. These spaces are structured around the interactions of social actors and their actions. They are shaped by the constant circulation of information, technology, organizational interaction, goods, traffic, people and so on<sup>46</sup>.

The meaning, or literally sense of space, has been traditionally assigned with the cultural ties, historical continuity, emotional belonging and intimate relationship between man and environment. Throughout history, this has been achieved through physical contiguity. While on the contrary, people are now more concerned with possibilities of free moving and networks of communication. For, nowadays, in-transit condition has become universal and we all live in an increasingly continuous transience in and in-between destinations like home, work, shops and etc.

The movement towards capsular architecture by Japanese metabolists crystalize such narration in architecture. A capsule is the abode of homo-movens in metapolis. Metapolis is the name given to those urban phenomena which, going beyond the metropolitan scale; free itself from any territorial medium. Metapolis is founded on interconnected networks of visible means of transportation and invisible means of communication. Lacking a physical substrate, and as a consequence of the absolute leading role of flow and movement, the form of the metapolis differs radically from that we knew of the metropolis<sup>47</sup>.

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45 Castells, 1996; Castells, 2000 :18-30

46 Ballantyne & Smith, 2012

47 Kurokawa, 1969

As for Castells, the current process of technological revolution, and conclusively, the global socio-economic restructuring have transformed the sense of space and time as basic dimensions of our experiences within which we feel like a micro-particle in a vast flow of people and signs...<sup>48</sup>

Given these context, architecture attempts to find its role as to establish meaning through the creation of shared symbolic forms, and, in some occasions, reveals contradictory reactions in response to the friction between "place" and "flow". Postmodernism, false historicism, new-monumentalism and standardization or Americanization are among the major implications of the so-called dialectic.

Today, the resulting transformation in actual material of our lives, and the following dialectics among the space of place, space of non-place and space of flow<sup>49</sup> have influenced the meaning and the practice of architecture. Some architects, conservatively, struggle against these uncommon situations; some others reveal and glorify them as objects of esthetic contemplation; some reveal contradictory reactions; and some more talented attempt to take these potentialities as fertile grounds to create new identities both in subjective and objective terms. These latter practitioners mainly propose a transformative fusion between the physical and informational fluidity-based aesthetics.

### **ii.iii.i. Landscapes of flow**

No society can survive without the movement of people, goods and information. Mobility is an essential requirement for evolution; "be it through the facilitation of trade or, most importantly, for human interaction."<sup>50</sup> The question here is if transport and transit are an ends themselves or, contrarily, if the landscapes of flow contribute to

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48 Delalex, 2006:98

49 be it bodies in fluxion or information or any kind of capital .

50 Knoflacher et al. 2010 :340-347

new lifestyles and new conception of built environments? And, to what extent architecture of the city is being influenced by such new modes of thought? How do we classify landscapes of flow?

#### **ii.iii.i.i. Road-scapes of flow**

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The birth of advanced and super-advanced possibilities of travelling, primarily, impressed different disciplines and subsequently raised many debates among thinkers. Pioneers of the early 20th century, mainly viewed the landscapes of transport infrastructures as an utopian image of the future. Fillippo Tommaso Marinetti, Italian futurist poet, for instance, declared that "the splendor of the world has been enriched by a new beauty, the beauty of speed.

"A roaring motorcar, which seems to run on machine-gunfire, is more beautiful than the winged victory of Samothrace." In his manifesto of futurism, he announced that the new era would be characterized by energy, speed and technological vision."<sup>51</sup>

Another example is a set of drawings by Harvey Wiley Corbett<sup>52</sup>, one of which was published in scientific American in 1913 (Picture II.6). The drawing demonstrates a section through a tall urban skyscraper contained overhead bridges, multilevel sidewalks, and fascinating skyline design as explained by Donna Goodman in a history of the future<sup>53</sup>. His drawing shows an inter-modal integration of subways, multi level streets and pedestrian's elevated sidewalks- to bridge high-rise towers. This followed later by Hugh Ferriss<sup>54</sup>, in 1916<sup>55</sup>, which developed a number of drawings of conceptual future city, published in "the metropolis of

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51 The manifesto of futurism first appeared in "Le Figaro" on February 20, 1909: 55

52 American influential architect (1873 - 1954).

53 Goodman, 2008:39

54 American architect and delineator (1889 – 1962).

55 Goodman, 2008:108

tomorrow"<sup>56</sup>. The principle idea of drawings was about zoning, yet highways were of significance in the arrangement of suggested building zones. The approach inspired further generations of artists, architects and film makers. As for film makers, visions of the future have sometimes been a place of speculation for mobility<sup>57</sup> with playful and even sometimes naive proposals of flying cars or multi level streets. "Just imagine"<sup>58</sup> by Stephen Goosson<sup>59</sup>, "Metropolis" in 1927 by Fritz Lang, "Things to come"<sup>60</sup> in 1936, and "The fifth element" in 1997 directed by Luc Besson are cases in point. Some of which, optimistically portray a positive images of future, advocating the belief that technology would ultimately improve the life.

Notwithstanding the advantages of rapidly widespread infrastructures of transportation, some writers, social thinkers and architects resort such overabundance to negative. In 1969, Superstudio group, appropriately, created a dystopic collage, namely "motorway" to criticize the destructing of urban landscapes as a result of modern planning systems and the imposition of automobiles on the environments<sup>61</sup>.

In the same way, Peter Blakes in god's own junkyard attacked the dominance of highways over American landscapes and town scrapes:

"Most of highways are hideous scars on the face of American nation- scars that cut across mountains and plains, across cities and suburbs, poisoning the landscape and townscape with festering sores along

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56 Ferriss, 1998

57 Goodman, 2008

58 "Just imagine" was a fictional film in which the configuration of buildings and a few overhead bridges like those of Ferriss's drawings, were arranged along highways running directly through the urban center. The scene is somehow comparable to Le Corbusier's radiant city (Goodman, 2008:113-114) .

59 American film set designer and art director (1889 - 1973)

60 Produced by Alexander Korda and directed by William Cameron Menzies (1936)

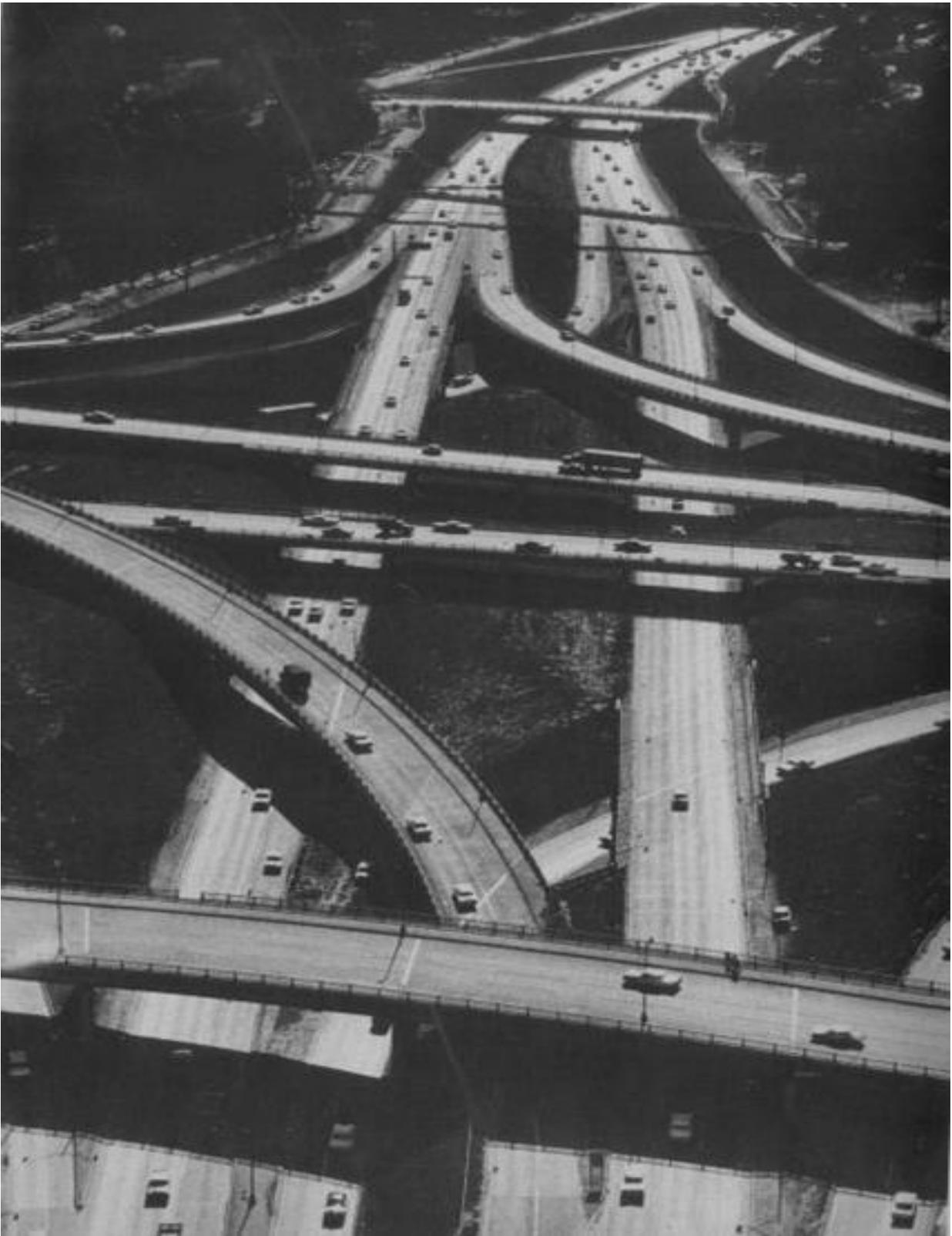
61 Goodman, 2008:188

their edges. And as these highways cut across our cities, they form massive walls that mutilate our communities by chopping them up into disconnected bits and pieces.

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*Picture II.6. City of the Future by Harvey Wiley Corbett, 1913*



*Picture II.7. Peter Blakes, God's own junkyards, Boston expressway*

th the exuberance of "accessibility" instead of proper nature of connections<sup>62</sup>, traditional places- where sense of belonging arises from sedentary attachments and localized dwelling- diminished to locations- without meaningful combination of locale, location and sense of place- understood by transitory and mobile subjects<sup>63</sup>. Place as location is a false desire towards the death of distance. The consequent landscape has nothing in common with the characteristics of "place". It is simply conceived as the "road-scape of flow" and is characterized by "autobahns" and roads.



*Picture II.8. Motorway, Superstudio*

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62 Arefi, 1999:180-183

63 Cresswell, 2009

Within the road-scapes of flow, the sense of "non-place" supersedes that of place; orientation is frequently based on prohibitive, informative and prescriptive "instructions" or signs. Individuals interact with "conventional" manuals in codified ideograms, signboards, screens, posters or in routine language- sometimes nothing more than "thank you!"- Whose proponents are not individuals but moral entities or institutions such as Airport, Airline, Traffic Police, and similarly Bank and Automated Teller Machines<sup>64</sup>. All there is to do is to follow the instructions and to wait to see what is going on. In transitory networks, one may go, somehow, anonymously; yet his/her ID-card has been already controlled upon contractual agreements. so the existence is traced through one's ID-entity<sup>65</sup>. The controlled or gated community is an implication of this phenomenon, and has been the source of concern for many social critics including Michael Foucault<sup>66</sup>, Giorgio Agamben<sup>67</sup>, Manuel Castells<sup>68</sup>, Antonio Negri<sup>69</sup> and others. This fact, however notable, we leave beyond the scope of our study.

The discussed qualities mostly deal with subjective rather than architectonic features. Yet it is naive to separate the interdependent twins "subjectivity-objectivity". In other words, it is impossible to suppose that the objects- the built environment- have remained the same in this trend and only the nonphysical dimensions- subjects- have been transformed or vice versa.

To be more precise, one is not integrated with others in the road-scapes of flow, but simply perceived as the same and prototype. In an appropriate manner, every geography of transport

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64 Auge, 1995; Buchanan, 1999:393-398

65 The term "ID-entity" is borrowed from a paper presented in World Congress on Computer Science and Information Engineering, 2009 in Los Angeles (Fattahi, 2009)

66 Foucault, 1986

67 Agamben, 1998

68 Castells, 1996

69 Hardt & Negri, 2000

and transit has become a set of always-and-ever-the-same, standardized qualities without too subtle differences. On this account, monotonous, homogenous, ubiquitous, and standardized are typical words to flee at their features.

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However, such features of contemporary era should not be seen only as threats. They are, at the same time, windows of opportunities for the birth of new ideas. This proposal, evidently, would not call for yielding to immobility. After all, we aim at new vision and principles, according to which, urban environments come to be judged and assessed.

#### **ii.iii.i.ii. Info-scapes of flow**

In spite of those who consider the rise of cyber technology as dystopic scenario for cities, Information would be the most valuable asset in the 21st century. Information revolution would be the backbone of a major structural transformation in the world's shared culture. Yet, the growing use of electronic interactions, regardless of radical previsions, neither reduced the tendencies toward physical movements<sup>70</sup>, nor contributed to the end of global cities:

*"... [With the new electronic speed of information movement], the large cities of the world are so obsolete and and irrelevant that they will all suffer the fate of London bridge, which has not fallen down but is to be taken down to a private property of a Texan. ... New York will have been dismantled and the ordinary citizen returned to life on the land. There will be no roads and no wheels, but only anti gravitational transport"<sup>71</sup>.*

The advent of fluid, responsive, kinetic and data-driven landscapes of information -namely "info-scapes"<sup>72</sup> or "Infocean" - and their integration with the realms of architecture and urban design

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70 Plaut, 2004:162-166

71 McLuhan,1968:91

72 Fattahi, 2009

dramatically alters principles of perception and orientation.

New forms and tools of perception arise from digital and informational technologies. Provisional "Linkmarks" supplant landmarks. For, information is present everywhere and the life can be regarded as a way of grasping the knowledge through the networks of information. It is not information in itself which carries value, but the ability to interpret and evaluate it. Jurgen Mayer, in his winning proposal for Audi Urban Future Awards 2010, correspondingly points to processing and surveillance technologies that transform the city and its inhabitants into a flow of data and dissolve the boundaries between bodies, cars and buildings<sup>73</sup>.

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#### **ii.iii.i.ii.i Case study:"A.WAY" (a proposal by Jurgen Mayer)**

The transformation of the city is a central theme for the future. Whereas the automobile has thus far shaped the appearance of cities, in the future it could be a city's structure that determines which types of mobility are developed. The future is shaped on the one hand by architects, and by mobility providers on the other.

In 2010, a competition<sup>74</sup> about the future of cities questioned visionary urban planning concepts focusing on mobility in urban spaces. Visions of the future have always been a place of speculation for mobility. Individual mobility of the future will strongly be linked to the developments of digitally augmented urban spaces, automated driving and personalized data exchange between the human body and its environment. Traffic will be a constant flow, with no more need for parked vehicles. Pedestrian areas will regain their lost space from cars. Repercussions will be seen on a social, economic and ecological level. Surveillance

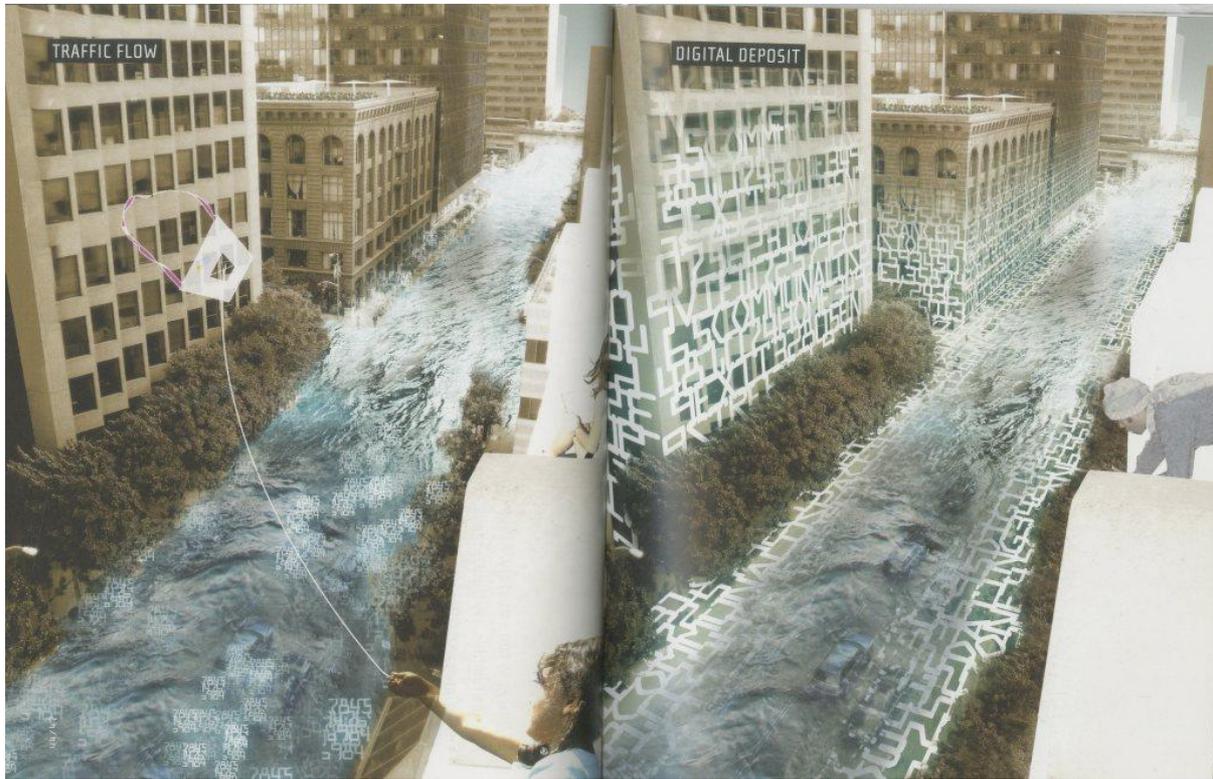
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73 Mayer & Angelier, 2010

74 Audi Urban Future Award

technologies will transform the city and its inhabitants into a flow of data, blurring the boundaries between body, car and architecture. The winner was Jurgen Hermann Mayers' vision, in which he argued the digital age floods the city.

49



*Picture 11.9. Traffic flow*

"What is the first thing that comes to your mind with regard to the topic "urban future"? "What is our impact as an architect or landscape architect on this topic"? "Do you think mobility concepts will change the future of the city, or do urban conditions change our concept of mobility"?

To answer the above-mentioned guiding questions, Mayer narrates a story: "A.WAY". A.WAY is a fairytale exploring the potential of digital technologies in the context of the future of mobility. It takes the reader on a journey to discover the creation of Pokeville, a model of future cities in which cars turn from viewing machines for maneuvering through traffic to sensorial experience

machines. In Pokeville, the car becomes a catalyst for social interaction and a personalized perception of the city. Jurgen Mayers begins his fantasy as the following:

"Once upon a time, around 1985, the world discovered the ozone hole and it changed the way we think about our future. From now on, consumption, production and mobility are at stake. With the introduction of digital technologies in the early 21st century based on electricity as the main source for energy supply, our cities will grow free of pollution and congestion; green, clean, quiet and efficient."

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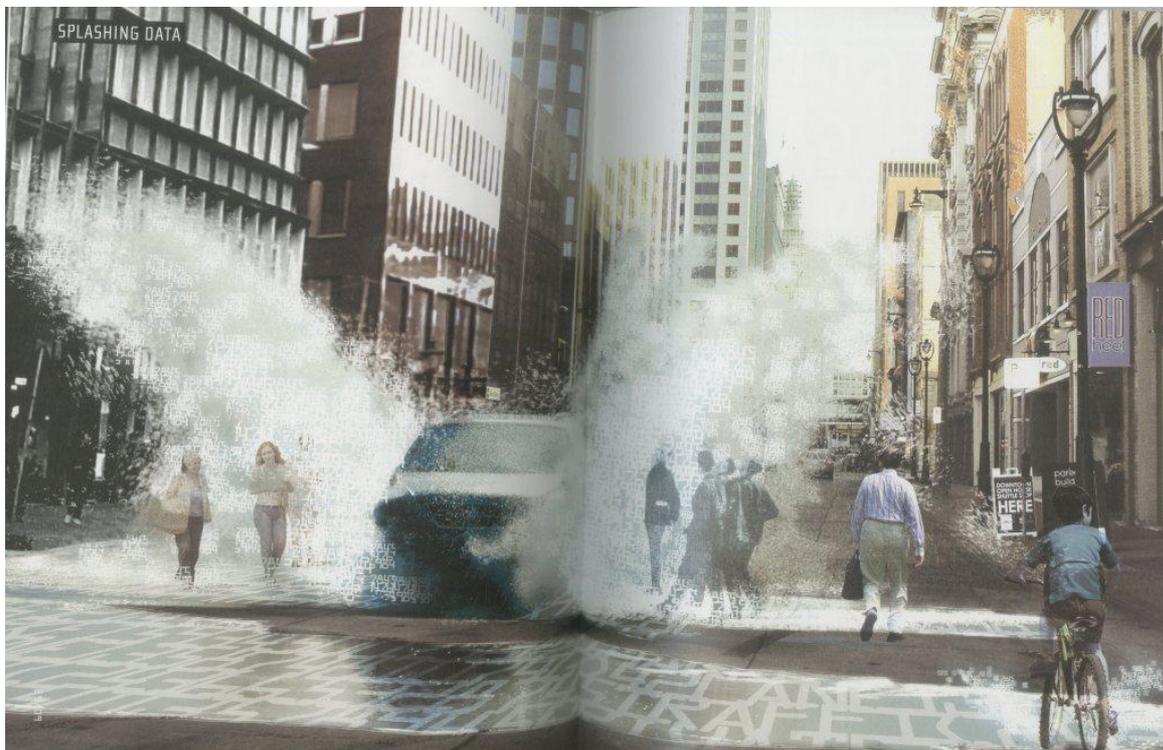
*Picture II.10. Automated traffic flowed like a river at different peak periods. Cars left traces of their interaction with the elastic urban zone.*

The 20th century proposed playful and even sometimes naive visions of flying cars and underwater urban settings. Novel ways of flying around galaxies, journeying to the centre of the earth, diving into submarine worlds, traveling through time, jumping through universes, tele-transporting, injecting into and voyaging through the blood stream of a human body populated our visions of the future. Maybe, in the long term, we will experience these magical modes of transportation. Yet the short-term future might be invisible first.

New forms of perception will arise from digital technologies. They will allow for each one of us to

selectively allow or reject individual aspects of the city. The car will transform from being a viewing machine for maneuvering in traffic towards a sensorial experience machine. Driving through the city will put our senses and sensibilities into the foreground and allow us to interact with the urban context in completely new ways. And there is always the option of a collapse of all systems that might come as a surprise, keep us going, force us to improvise, invent and move ahead. If at that point cities have proved once more to be flexible, adjustable, able to transform and survive, then we will live under a protecting ozone layer again, happily ever after.

As for Mayer, to flow is to run smoothly. he asserts that everything needs to flow. As for the pokeville, the constant flow of traffic creates new aesthetics and growth potential. The proposal explores a wide range of novel expressions in accordance with the concept of flow: multitasking, Wandering, digital interaction, digital pollution and digital wash, space of negotiation,...



Picture II.11. *Splashing Data*

The underpinnings of this proposal could be traced in his "body guards" project in 2004 (Picture II.12 and II.13), in which he suggests a kind of outfit that applies "smart dust" as a sensory equipment - so far only used in military technology. Smart dust is almost invisible airborne particles build up a dynamic, intelligent cocoon for testing, warning, spying, scouting, communicating, guarding and protection. So, body guards continuously inspect the environment and citizen, and signal the environmental, physical, and other risks<sup>75</sup>.

In Mayer's visionary city, digital information is constantly exchanged among urban space, buildings, people and their cars. This would develop imaginary clouds of data and individualized information around bodies. Mayer predicts that as people move around this digitally-augmented urban environment their personal data and preferences would "splash" onto fields of information from the world around them:

"Driving through the city will put our senses and sensibilities into the foreground and allow us to interact with the urban context in completely new ways . . . A driving machine becomes a viewing machine. That means that the occupant can experience the urban environment in a completely different way, independently of whether the car is moving or has to stop or brake. What we are advocating is cleaning the city of all of the tools that are important today in order to make individual mobility within the city possible."<sup>76</sup>

Nevertheless, the issue of information flow is not always about the fictional images of futurology. The growth of media and cyber technology influenced the design of real cities, "where the concept of the street has been redefined as a continuous flow of consumer information"<sup>77</sup>. Consider Times Square, Tokyo's Shibuya or Ginza districts, and Las Vegas strip where excessive

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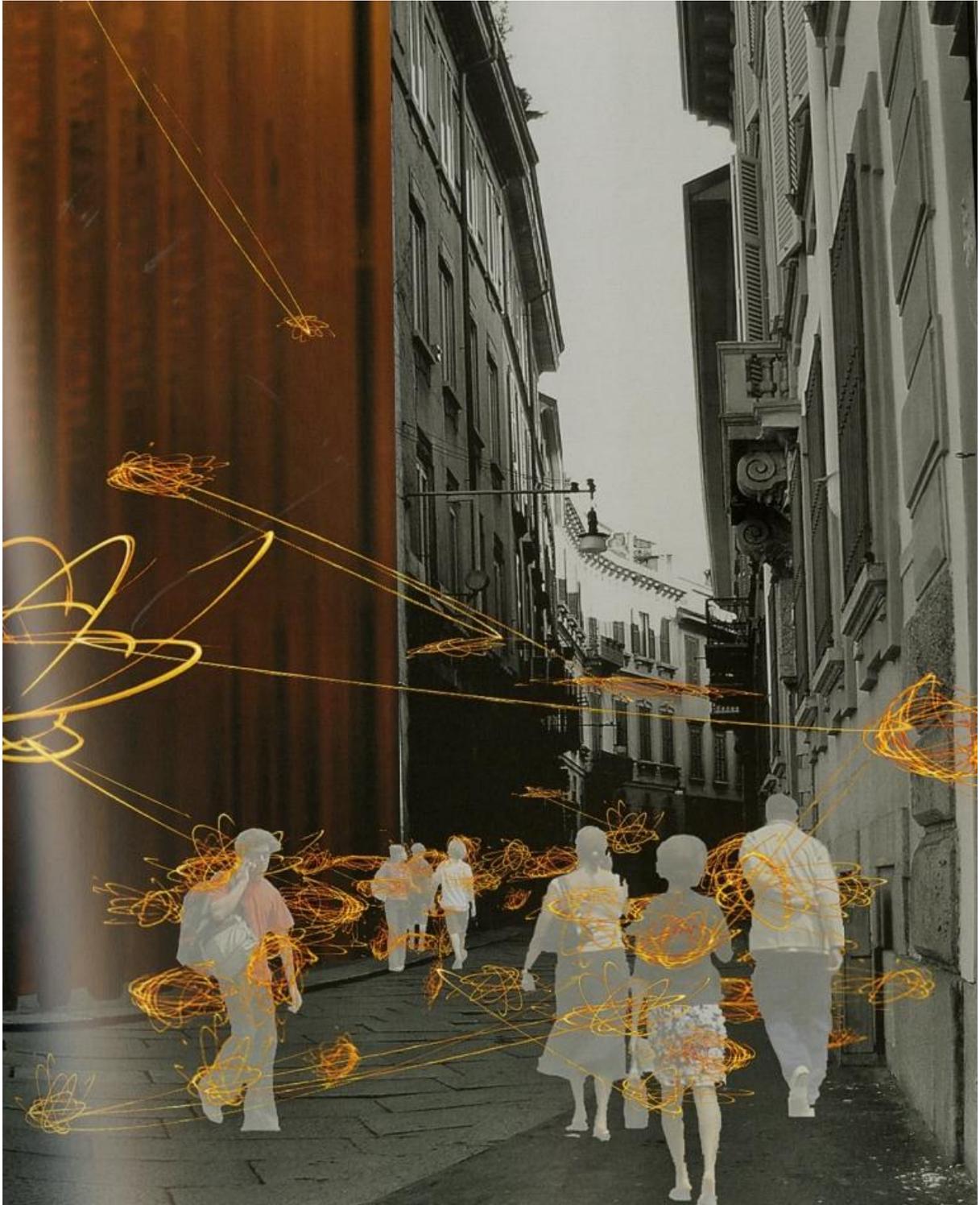
75 Urbach et al, 2009:136

76 Mayer & Angelier, 2010

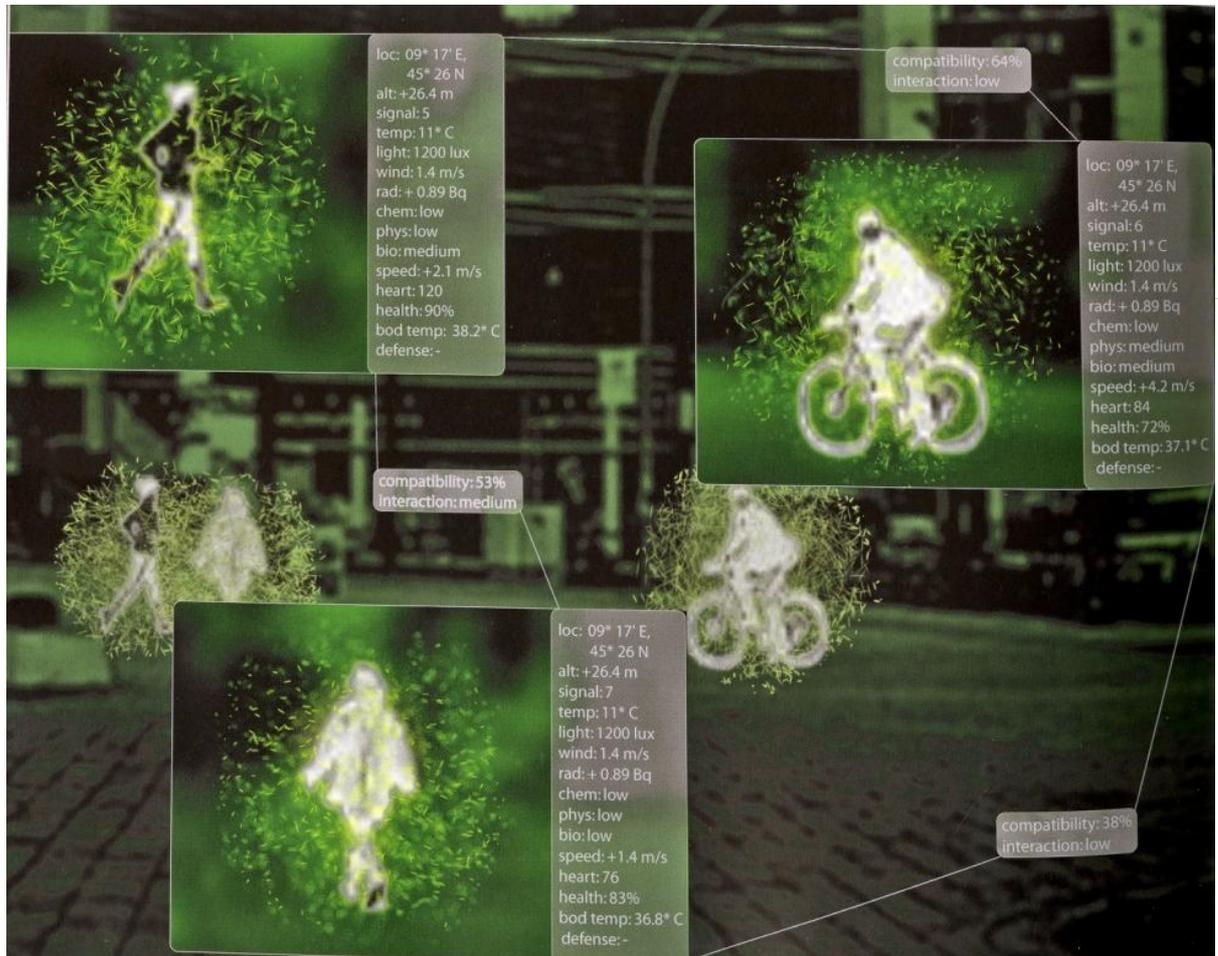
77 Goodman, 2008:208

programmable LEDs (Light-emitting Diodes)", computerized images and screens have revolutionized the character of area. The area is conceived by the invasion of images, lights and graphics rather than architectonic features.

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Picture II.12. J Mayer H, *Body guards*



Picture II.13.. J. Mayer H. body guards proposal and smart dust

So the meaning of info-scape is associated with IT-entity in contrast with identity. Imageability wins legibility. The real-time flows of signs, logos and advertisements of films, fashion and goods are undoubtedly ephemeral. New logics of space structure the sense of time<sup>78</sup>. In such environments, the state of Connectedness is supported by visible and invisible infrastructures of telecommunication.

Needless to re-emphasize, the upcoming theories followed by global flows of information such as "the death of distance"<sup>79</sup>, "home as information factory"<sup>80</sup>, "E-topia"<sup>81</sup> and "city of bits"<sup>82</sup> would not eliminate the need for actual cities and face-to-face

78 Castells, 2004:91

79 Cairncross, 2001

80 Gurstein, 1990:128

81 Mitchel, 1999

82 Mitchell, 1995

contacts<sup>83</sup>. As well as that, the rise of telecommunication would not make transportation useless<sup>84</sup>.

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83 Nigel Thrift, 2000:102

84 Plaut, 2004:162

### III

#### Synthesis

## Architecture in the context of "flow urbanism"

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## **i. Architecture in the context of "flow urbanism"**

With the rise of process of urbanization, form, meaning and practice are in constant state of flux. Such fluidity is the essence of cities. The logics of place and flows seem to exert much influence in this process of change and reform. However, many of the concepts and approaches offered by scholars to study the architecture of cities, do not fit the new contexts and challenges facing and in tune with the exigencies and dynamics of flows (of goods, people, information, and capital to name a few). Therefore, there is an essential need to define new modes of thinking about these changes and challenges.

The current nature of cities, in response to the emerging tension between its progressively fragmenting physical fabric and the proliferation of electronic and socioeconomic networks, has raised new approaches towards the urban landscapes of flow. Today's city is not an accident. Its form is usually unintentional, but it is not accidental. Any design decision, in the world's interconnected web of forces and influences, results in change to the vitality and resilience of the environment. Since the architecture and the city have a mutual relation, how architecture is influenced by the challenges and the logics of flow is of significance in any attempt to read the contemporary city. This study, correspondingly, aims at drawing the picture of today's practices of architecture in the context of what one could call "flow urbanism".

### **i.ii. Flow urbanism**

The fate and livelihood of cities in global economy, initially, depend on their habitant's constant interaction- deliberately or automatically - with real-time information systems<sup>85</sup>. To explain the

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<sup>85</sup> Mitchel, 1999

urban themes of the age of flow, Manuel Castells links the civic interaction with the social communication patterns. He believes that "the diversity of expressions of local life, and their relationship to media culture, must be practically integrated into the theory of communication". The way people manifest themselves and communicate with each other, outside their homes and off their electronic circuits- sociability of public places- is notable in this regard. That is to accentuate an essential need to redefine the public sphere as "sites of spontaneous social interaction" which are the "communicative devices" of the society<sup>86</sup>.

A globalized world of space-time compression including informational economy, virtual reality, technologies of speed and advanced methods of movement<sup>87</sup> releases the disciplines of architecture and urban design from the constraints of traditional public spaces. The city is seen as transformed by new forms of collective life and public life is defined by the circulation of information and news and the flows of people and capitals. In this sense, the urbanism of flow or flow urbanism represents the smooth spaces of urban mobility that generates new forms of public space<sup>88</sup>.

In pre-automobile cities, public funds were spent to build post offices, courthouses, libraries, and places of governance and to maintain streets, piazzas, markets, and parks. These were the places for spontaneous interaction - a distinct realm, maintained by the public. Milan's Galleria Victor Emanuel of 1865, for example, extended directly from one street to a public square through the city block, its interior floored with masonry, its glass roof flooding the space with light, and the shop facades defining the corridor as exterior in every respect: a

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86 Castells,2004:86-87

87 Auge, 1995; Koolhaas&Mau,1995

88 Stickells,2008

smaller-scale commercial street connecting two larger public spaces<sup>89</sup>.

Generally speaking, public realm is where the communal interest is debated and constructed. Thus, the urbanism of flows, in its approach to the production of the public realm, conjures a model of fluid, interconnected space that unsettles established ideals of public urban place-making. Seeking an architectural approach to reconcile the characteristics of today's splintering metropolis; it suggests an alternate spatial ordering for urban places based on qualities of fluidity, changing programmatic intensity, rhythms of use and their aesthetic possibilities. In this way it posits heterotopian spaces that become tools for imagining other modes of public occupation, exchange and encounter<sup>90</sup>.

### **i.ii.i. The loss of meaning in the space of flow**

In a city we do tend to notice the few important cultural buildings, while the rest of the fabric disappears into the background; but it is in this non-signifying background that most of us spend most of our lives<sup>91</sup>. As cities disperse and grow, infrastructures and technologies of flow become more and more important. In the realm of design and planning, this generates functional, experiential and perceptual shifts from forms of urban space to process of urbanization, because infrastructures of flow challenge the traditional sense of urbanism. The dominant landscapes at the age of flow are the sites of what Manuel Castells calls "cultural archives" and "functional communication" including museums, convention centers, shopping malls and transportation nodes. Given the key role of architecture as to rebuild symbolic meaning and as to stress the placial (place-like) qualities within or

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89 Safdie & Kohn, 1998:39

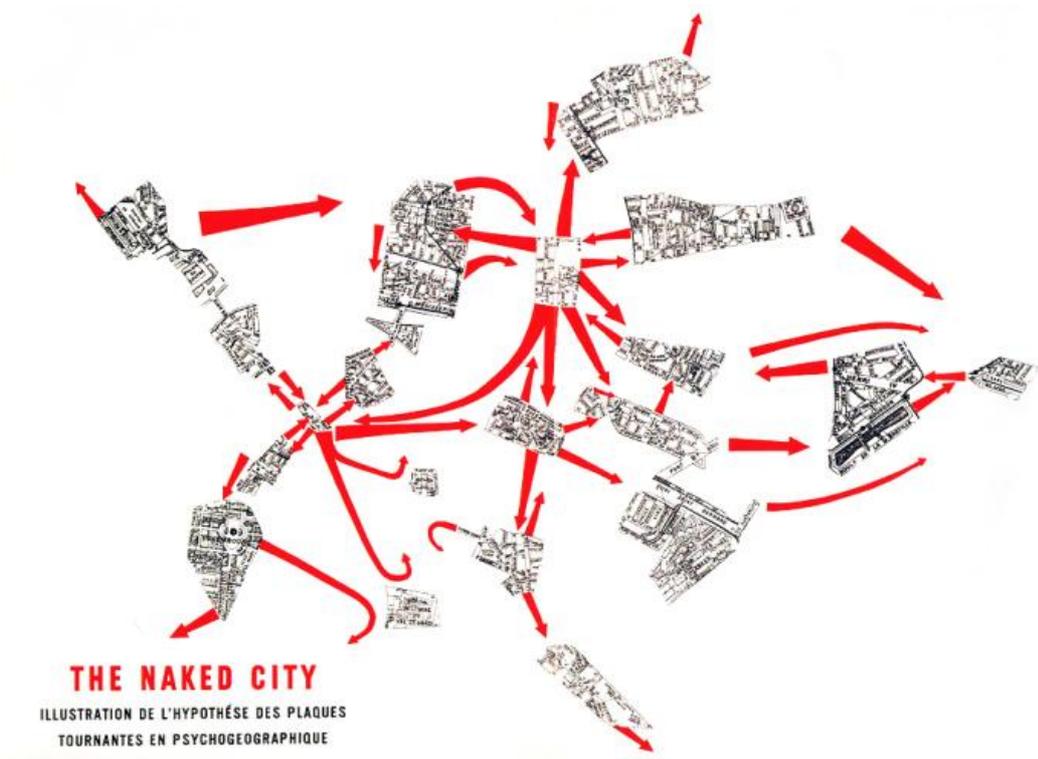
90 Stikells, 2008:247-258

91 Ballantyne & Smith, 2012:34

adjacent to spaces of flow, Castells's observation revolves around the loss of meaning in the context of flow urbanism.

A majority of urban planners often consider the relation between cities and infrastructures as necessarily conflicting, and believe that living and moving should constitute separated spheres of urban life to be both spatially and functionally held apart. Such tendency may question if the flows can be seen as an object of design<sup>92</sup> or if architects are or are not engineers or technicians of issues such as territory, communication and speed<sup>93</sup>. Anyhow, others may assert that flows are needed to be shaped and designed. Indeed, the latter underline a shift in architects' willing from designing spaces of place to intervention in spaces of flow<sup>94</sup>.

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Picture III.14. *The Naked City* of Guy Debord (1957)

92 Delalex,2006:13,11

93 Focaoult,1984:244

94 Castells,2004:91

As for Manuel Castells, the concept of the space of flow is constructed around a dialectic that opposes a global, dominant and abstract horizon of networks and an increasingly fragmented physical space. This entails an antagonistic relation between flows and places, which often warn against the classic meaning or "sense of place". For, the nodes of flow, however important in the revitalization of cities, broadly speaking, lack the integration with the entire fabric and the public realms of the city as a whole. Such literal "meaninglessness" appeals for connecting the practice of architecture with urban design and planning.

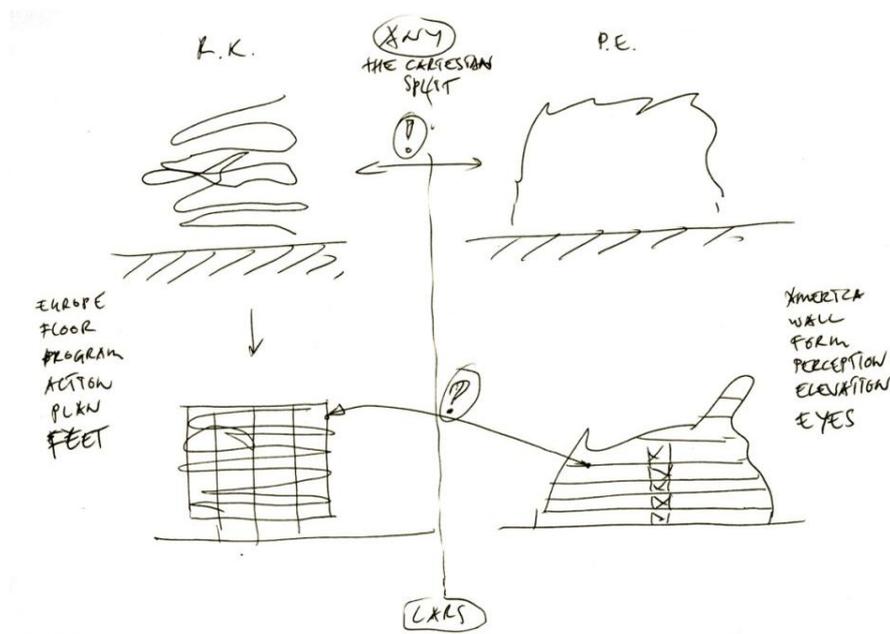
In some occasions, the underlying dialectics between the space of place and space of flow, result in paradoxical manifestations. Some approaches are aimed to reflect the meaninglessness of our historical period through meaningless forms. In other words, to make no sense the architecture must have an absolutely abstract form. A very example of such "architecture of nudity", in Castells' term of use, is the Barcelona airport designed by Ricardo Bofill. Another fundamentalist defense of the meaning and the culture of place in response to the logics of space of flow are to build fakes and exclusionary identities that become tribal in form. Architectural pastiche, false historicism, tribalism ... are some expressions to name such tendencies which can be plainly seen in Las Vegas, for instance.

Ultimately, some other tendencies -namely new-monumentalism- grasp at series of sculptural and iconoclastic forms marking a general sense of "culture", rather than a particular localization. Indeed, the goal is to create public spaces with architectural forms that try to convey some meaning, even if detached from entire urban process and structure of the city. Consider the showrooms for BEST Products Company in 1970's designed by James Wines and Alison Sky of SITE, and Robert Venturi and

Denis Scott Brown. Such projects seem like the traffic lights of spaces of flow - stop and go.<sup>95</sup>

By and large, against the backdrops of flow urbanism, some architects struggle against the logics of flow, conservatively; some others reveal and glorify them as objects of esthetic contemplation; some reveal contradictory reactions; and some more talented attempt to take these potentialities as fertile grounds to create new identities both in subjective and objective dimensions. These latter practitioners mainly propose a transformative fusion between the physical and informational fluidity-based aesthetics.

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Picture II. 15. *The Cartesian split*, Lars Spuybroek, 1999

In a sketch published in the magazine *Any*, Lars Spuybroek symbolizes, for instance, the opposition between an American school primarily concerned by questions of forms, perception and experience, and a European school concentrating on the infrastructural and programmatic aspect of flows. The sketch shows two drawings separated by an axis, labeled “the Cartesian split”. On the right side, the

<sup>95</sup> Castells, 1996

American school is represented by a slightly hairy blob-like envelope filled with flat and regular ceilings; on the left side, the European school is symbolised by a square box crossed by winding ramps leading from the ground floor up to the top.

Two initials, RK and PE, situated on each side of the axis, possibly designate Rem Koolhaas and Peter Eisenman as the leaders of each movement.

This diagram shows that, while the American school concentrates on the sculptural aspect of flows correlated with the introduction of new design tools allowing conceiving complex geometries, the European school prefers to manipulate interior spaces in relation to physical movements and programmes. The American school is certainly the most experimental and seductive, but the European school seems to relate more specifically to the societal impacts of flows. It yet remains more conventional in its means of conception and Cartesian in its expressions<sup>96</sup>. The space of flows entails today a conception of space that marks a shift from the modern Cartesian space, where objects were geometrically organised on a neutral and horizontal background, to a more virtual space defined by intricate relations between cities, companies or individuals<sup>97</sup>.

Here and now, we mean to extend the scope of this diagram raising a fundamental question: how is the contemporary architecture shaping and/or is being shaped by the dynamics of flow?

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96 Delalex,2006:30-31

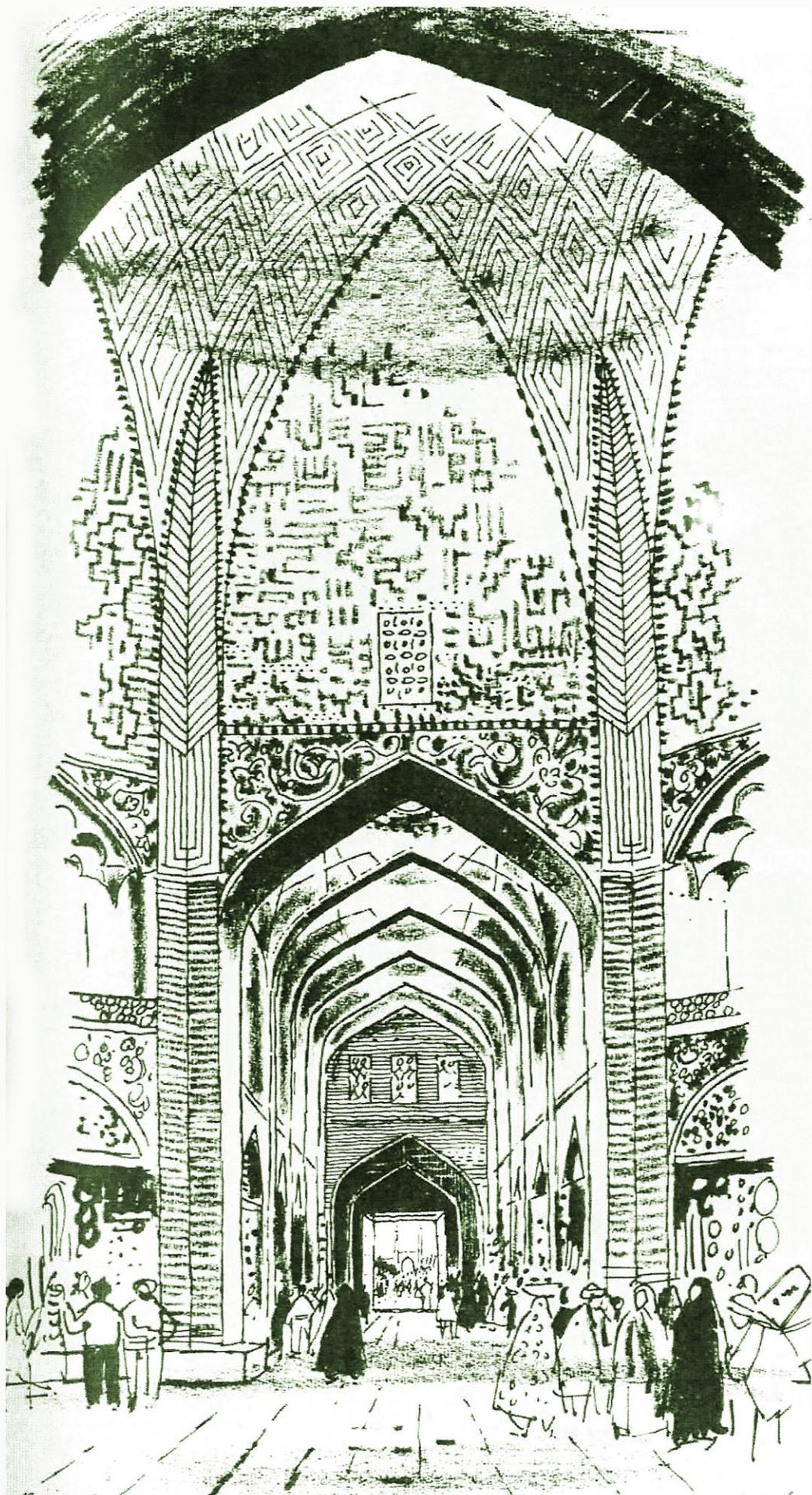
97 Delalex,2006:15

### **III.I**

**Synthesis**

## **Architecture to be tamed by the flows**

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Kamilla Bismal

Chahār Sū / street crossing emphasized  
by dome of exceptional  
height.

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**Bazaar, the city and the flows of social engagement**

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### **i.i. Persian Bazaar and social flows<sup>98</sup>**

The flow of "social capital" is a remarkable determinant in the process of urban change and reform. In this study, we reflect on socially-driven dynamics of (physical and informational) flow in Iranian bazaars; and, we distill specific directions towards the social architecture of city. Having reviewed the literature of "flow" and "social capital", we signal a need for fresh modes of thinking assignable to contemporary cities. So, rather than regarding the space of flow, like Manuel Castells, as a brand-new phenomenon which is set up by digital technology, we generalize the concept to include such flows as the hierarchical mechanism of civic interrelation among the people of bazaar and the crowd. That is, we argue, a clear-cut instance of social capital.

The world is in a state of "fluxion" and everything flows<sup>99</sup>. Fluxion and change are fundamental parameters of the human condition<sup>100</sup>. To avoid the creation of circumstances that serve to freeze the city and cancel out the possibility of further transformation are of importance. A richer, smarter and more effective version of urbanism is the kind that allows cities to be fluidly modified and changed with the passing of time, rather than the types that stabilized a rigid, inflexible and unchangeable piece of city.

Change happens quickly -in real time- and slowly<sup>101</sup>; either by intention or by serendipity<sup>102</sup>.

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98 This section was chiefly motivated by and was presented in the conference of urban change at the University college of London, in November 2012

99 'Ta panta rei : all is flux' Heraclitus of Ephesus (540-480 BC) argued that common sense is mistaken in thinking that the world consists of stable things; rather the world is in a state of flux. The appearances of 'things' depend upon this flux for their continuity and identity (Guthrie, 1974:204).

100 Wheelwright,1964:29

101 The pace of change in an urban area will range according to the element concerned:

Very slow changes that concern transport networks and land use. They are the most stable elements of the urban spatial structure since they only change in a slow and an usually incremental manner. Infrastructures, such as highways, roads transit systems, ports and airports take years to be constructed and once operational will remain as such. The same process applies to land use as residential, commercial and industrial functions change in a very slow manner.

Any design decision, in the world's interconnected web of forces and influences, results in change to the vitality and resilience of the environment. We, as architects and planners, are making and witnessing a purposeful change not only towards a spatial way of designing spaces and operating human dwelling, but also in a trend towards a social architecture.

The sense of "place" and the sense of "flow" seem to exert much influence in this process of change. The spaces of flow are structured by the constant circulation of fluid capitals<sup>103</sup> around the interactions of social actors and their actions. The dynamics of flow have been always the substantial motivator of urbanization. Persian old bazaars, for example, reveal such incentives in the process of formation, configuration and survival of the cities.

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Slow changes that concern workplaces and housing. Specific urban infrastructure such as buildings (e.g. apartment complexes, warehouses, offices) have a life span that can stretch to centuries depending on the construction techniques used. However, the activities occupying them dominantly last much less.

Fast changes that concern employment and population. Enterprises are part of business cycles where they are created, expand and often dissolve. With these changes, employment opportunities will vary. Households also have a life cycle where they are formed, expanded and are eventually dissolved with the related population changes.

Very fast (immediate) changes that concern freight transport and commuting. Although passengers and freight movements tend to be stable in time and space within a metropolitan area, they have the potential to change very quickly. For instance, congestion or fluctuations in the demand can be coped with rapidly by rerouting vehicles (Wegener,1995).

102 Knoll & Berkebile,2012:41

103 Ballantyne & Smith, 2012:1-39

Poster ID : SK112

# Bazaar and The Flows of Social Engagement

Urban Change in Iran  
University College London  
8- 9 November 2012

A phenomenological comparison between traditional civic-life-oriented Bazaars in Persian cities and modern shopping archetypes of non-place

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## Problem Statement

How the methods by which the flow of socio-economic forces of Bazaar which influenced, shaped and tamed the old cities differ from those of contemporary practices of urbanization?

## Summary

With the social architecture and the contextual flows of crowd, exchange and encounter, "Bazaar" has been regarded as dominant and rooted structure of the Iranian cities, over the years. The charismatic place of merchants in the society and the mutual compartment and trust among the people of bazaar [Ahl-i bazaar] and the entire citizens, have set this institution as an important feature of Iranian culture. Bazaar is supposed to support the allocation and organization of space in accordance with the trade activities and complementary urban functions. It simultaneously covers various domains of human needs, not only as a trade hub but also as a civic center. In other words, the social activities of a city flow to every other parts like blood through the veins of bazaar. Consequently, the architecture of bazaar was shaped by and, at the same time, was shaping the flow of inhabitants' civic interaction. Such repositories of civic interplay, we argue, are considered as "social assets" for the process of urban change.

In this paper, accordingly, we plan to reveal the secrets applied in durable, compatible, and reliable bazaars of Iran by which "informal networks" of "social capital" were generated, maintained and developed. Afterwards, we propose a framework within which, socio-architectural logics correlate with the possibilities brought up by the flows of capitals (including objects and goods, information, people and organizational interaction, and ...). This practice would organize and mobilize the experience, activity, event and meaning around the nodes of flux, in the cities.

## Highlights

- What kind of change?
- The "architecture of engagement" and the "Civic landscapes of flow"
- Bazaar and the city in contingency with the flow



The configuration of the city of Shiraz along the fluid dynamics of bazaar (10<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century)

- Social architecture of Bazaar and the flow of information
- Bazaar and the Glue and bridges of flow

Azadeh Ranjbar, A. 2009, The Persian Bazaar: an attempt to document traditional market in Iran, University Jhad of faculty of urban planning and architecture  
Faramaki M.M. 1992, The Formation of Architecture through the experiences in Iran and the West-world (Persian ed.), Faaz Scientific & Cultural Institute, Tehran

This study is part of an ongoing Ph.D research at the department of architecture and urban planning, University of Bologna, Italy  
Supervisor: Fabrizio Ivan Apollonio  
Co-Supervisor: Mahyar Arefi

Picture III.16. Bazaar and the flows of social engagement

Today, classic bazaars are not exactly the same as they used to be. But, if we consider the marketplace as a center of social life and as a piece

of city within the city, as it always has been<sup>104</sup>, then we would understand its meaningful role in urban reform.<sup>105</sup> The main challenge in this paper is to underline how the social assets of bazaar influence shape and tame the cities? In other words, we explore to what extent the flows of social capitals, which arrange the "architecture of social engagement" among the people of bazaar, determine the formation and transformation of cities? How do these factors interrelate with the spatial qualities of bazaar and the city?

### **i.ii The essence of change**

The current process of modernization (technological revolution) and the global trend of socio-economic restructuring have immensely transformed the sense of space and time, and the practice of urban planning and design. The "change" might be seen as an organic procession from traditional constraints to modern world's emancipation and smooth fluidity. Traditionalism, in this context, signifies values and cultural factors, including strong kinship ties, simple exchange, indirect forms of governance and nonconsensual authority relations, while modernity is a set of values and personality traits, such as mobility, individuality and entrepreneurial spirit, necessary for the modernization of the society.

Against this backdrop, Bazaar has been the constitution of a holistic way of life encompassing economic forms, political sensibilities, ideological persuasions, and central to our debate, social relations all of which fall under the rubric "traditional"<sup>106</sup>. Apart from its traditional roles - as a central marketplace and craft center, a primary site for extra-familial sociability, *and*, a socio-cultural milieu of a traditional urban life style- bazaar in the

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104 Rossi, 1988

105 This poster was submitted to the conference of urban change at the University college of London, in November 2012.

106 Keshavarzian, 2007: 47

contemporary Iran has performed as a socio-economic and power-base of the religious establishments, also a bastion of political protest movements<sup>107</sup>.

The fact that invokes the discussion here is to question if today's urban society can hope to regain the intimacy and social significance of the traditional bazaar and how important this retrieval is? In fact, the contemporary urbanities now follow a path of less, not more, civic engagement and our collective stock of "social capital" -the meaningful human contacts of all kinds that characterize true communities- is so dangerously eroded that it verges on the depletion<sup>108</sup>. Urban dwellers are not connected to one another through collective actions as they once were in bazaars<sup>109</sup>.

To answer such questions and the ones such as "Whatever happened to civic engagement", Robert Putnam puts forward the fall of sociability of bowling games as an exemplary metaphor of social disengagement. He argues that more American are bowling today than ever before, but rather isolated and not in organized leagues. The rise of solo-bowling threatens the livelihood of bowling lane properties. Because "the profit there is not in balls and shoes", but it lies in social interactions and occasional civic conversations over drinks and pizza that "solo bowlers forgo". So, bowling is, surprisingly, a vanishing form of social capital<sup>110</sup>. The bowlers share some of the same interests, but they are unaware of each other's existence. Their ties are to common symbols, common ideals, but not to one another.

Such interpretation is comparable to unwelcome paradox about the existence of people in Marc Augé's non-places<sup>111</sup> which contributes to

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107 Ashraf,1983:30

108 Putnam,1995:105-113

109 Wirth,1938

110 Putnam,1995:109

111 The term non-place was coined by Melvin Webber (1964) who was one of the first scholars to seriously address the relationship between electronic media, growing mobility and the nature and

peculiar sense. In simpler terms, while people generate and organize place by gathering<sup>112</sup> together, meaningful social interaction can be hardly seen in non-places. Obviously such spaces deal with people, but individual's coexistence is regarded as equivalent and uncorrelated, and their behavior is conventional and pre-designated. Individuals interact more often in silent<sup>113</sup> with texts, instructions, screens and signs. So, one is not integrated with others, but simply perceived as the same, detached and alone. This is about the blowing of social capitals.

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experience of late-twentieth-century cities. Following by Webber, Marc Augé, in contrast to the idea of place, delineates the advent of a new stage of world in which the intelligence of time and space, as fundamental components of architecture, has been totally revolutionized. Augé labels this era as the age of supermodernity. He also named the sites in relation to transitory ends (including shopping, transportation and leisure) as non-places (Augé,1995).

112 The generic term "place of public gathering" represents all locales in human communities outside their personal and private realms of dwelling. In traditional Islamic cities of Iran this term attributed with public gardens, pathways, streets, covered streets such as bazaars and suqs, other traditional places of commerce and the institutions of the society together with their urban contexts. Nowadays, we must consider airports, railroads terminals, mall centers and likes within the roster of "public-gathering-places" (Ardalan, 1980:5)

113 The practice known as "silent trade" reminds several accounts in the West Africa during the last thousands years. These exchanges are said to have been made according to very particularized rules; two and only two trading parties would transact business with another. They would do this not only without the help of a middleman, but also without speaking to one another or coming face to face or even with sight of each other. Elaborate precautions would in fact be taken to prevent any kind of direct visual contact. Despite this mutual avoidance and the resulting impossibility of negotiating rate of exchange, agreement presented with no serious difficulties. Bargaining was carried out through gradual adjustment of quantities, arrived at by alternate moves by the two parties. Though, each of the two in turn would have to leave his good unguarded in a place accessible to the other, neither would take advantage of this for dishonest purposes. (Moraes Farias, 1974: 9)

### **i.iii. The "architecture of engagement" and the theory of "Civic landscapes of flow"**

The concept of "social capital" has been recently on the agenda across the globe, since being introduced by Jane Jacobs in "the death and life of great American cities" in 1961, James Coleman in his examination of Chicago schools in 1970s, and Robert Putnam's article entitled "Bowling alone" in 1995. The idea of "social capital" defines the informal networks of trust and prosperity, which together with physical and human capitals, shape the foundation of healthy communities. "By analogy to physical capital and human capital, social capital refers to the norms and networks of civil society that lubricate cooperative action among both citizens and their institutions"<sup>114</sup>. In other words, the lack of civic engagement and norms of mutual reciprocity and trust contribute to the fade of social institutions, and, dissolve the cities.

Civic engagement and social connectedness are practical preconditions for better quality of urban realms and economic growth. However, with the growing transformation of "places" into "non-places" and "spaces of flow", the issue of "civic disengagement" has affected urban environments, and resulted in the sense of loss (of community, meaning, ...) , geographies of nowhere and the "crisis of identity"<sup>115</sup>.

From this perspective, social capital clearly constitutes an asset, and an abundance of social capital in a community implies denser social networks and a happier, healthier community with meaningful spaces. That is why urban practitioners have stressed on the possibilities of generating social interaction through investments in physical

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114 Putnam,1998:vi

115 Arefi,1999

improvements, or what they call the “architecture of engagement”<sup>116</sup>.

#### **i.iv. Civico-scape of flow**

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Cities were 'invented' to facilitate the exchange of information, friendship, material goods, culture, knowledge, insight, skills and also the exchange of emotional, psychological and spiritual supports<sup>117</sup>. So, the flows of civic interaction and the connectivity with the networks of "exchange and encounter"<sup>118</sup> are of significance in their potentialities to transfer human resources<sup>119</sup>. Needless to mention that not all kinds of exchange are commercial and not all patterns of encounter are conventional, however, trade-based flows are notable in this regard.

The fate and livelihood of cities in global economy, in the first place, depend on their habitant's constant interaction- deliberately or automatically- with real-time information systems<sup>120</sup>. Materially speaking, the space of flows is folded into the space of place. Their logics might be distinct, but that does not prevent us from thinking either about their interrelations, or about their shared identities. The way people manifest themselves and communicate with each other, outside their homes and off their electronic circuits- sociability of public places- is arguable in this regard<sup>121</sup>.

Vital cities tend to have more active and certainly recognizable public realms - space systems for the city in which meeting, movement, exchange and encounter would be feasible. The common public spaces at the age of flow are seen in the sites of "cultural archives" and "functional

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116 Bothwell et al,1998

117 Montgomery,1998

118 The catchphrase "exchange and encounter" is borrowed from "the third Asian Conference on Arts & Humanities (ACAH, 2012)" held in Osaka,Japan

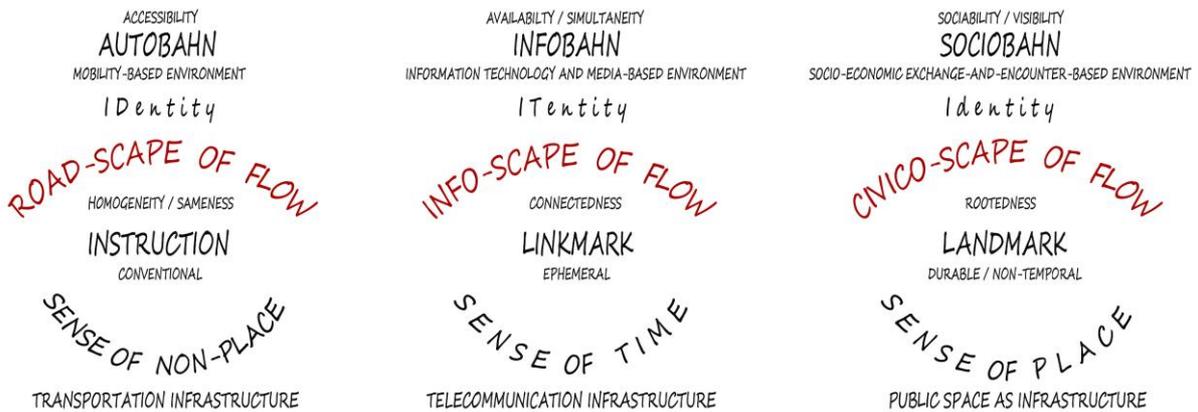
119 Castells, 2004:86

120 Mitchel, 1999

121 Castells, 2004:86

communication"<sup>122</sup>, as well as shopping environments<sup>123</sup>.

Within the physical or geographical environment there is an operational environment within which people work and which affects them. Within that is the perceptual environment of which people are conscious directly and to which they give symbolic meaning and within that is the behavioral environment of which people are not only aware but which also raises some behavioral response. This space, actually used by social groups and reflecting their behavior patterns and perceptions can also be called social space. While social space occurs in physical space, it is distinct from it and the congruence between the two is important<sup>124</sup>.



Picture III.17. Landscapes of flow

To define the key role of social cohesion and communal exchange, we suggest the idea of civico-scape of flow, and, we address to the permanence of "public space as infrastructure of civic life" in contrast to meaninglessness and ephemerality of non-places (Picture III.17). Such infrastructure we entitle "socio-bahn" as it grants fluidity in addition to sociability and sense of rootedness.

122 Castells,2004

123 Koolhaas et al,2002

124 Rapoport,1977:12-14

To illustrate, the way social assets were accumulated in the realms of Iranian traditional bazaar, in contrast to their corresponding landscapes of the west, is a source of impressive lessons to be learnt. The flows of people, information and social capital in bazaar bring about rare potentialities to create urban identities, both in subjective and objective terms. That is to propose a transformative fusion between the physical and informational fluidity-based aesthetics.

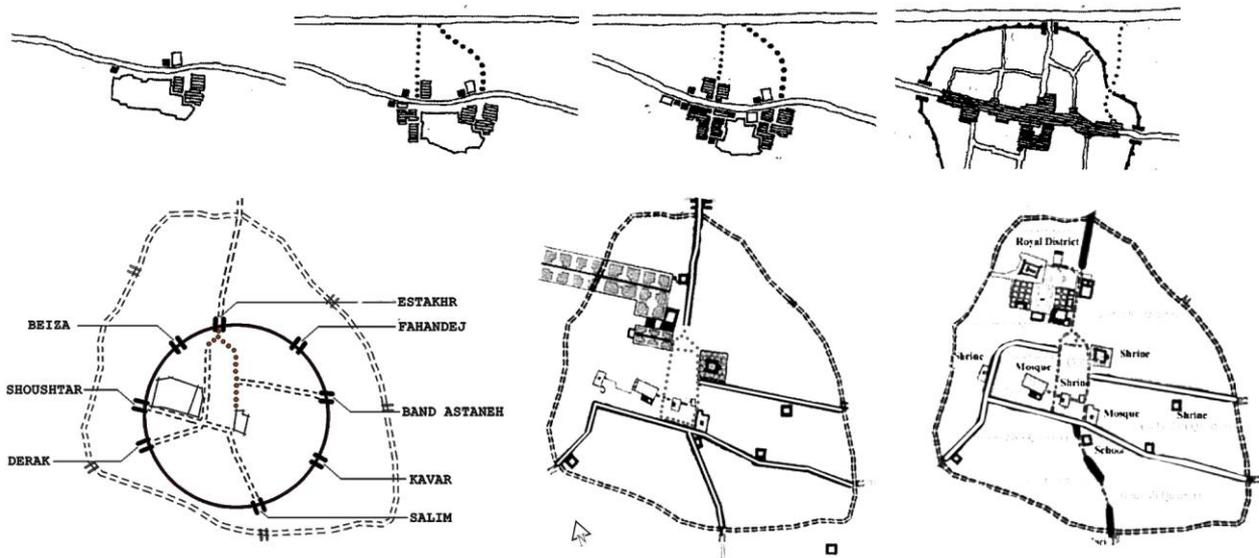
#### **i.v. Bazaar and the city in contingency with the flow**

The city and the flow mutually construct each other. The formation and growth of many cities recall the underlying forces of flow. A clear cut instance of this practice could be traced within the fabric of Persian old cities in the midway of pivotal trading routes -such as silk-road and spice-road. To accelerate the flows of trade-base exchange, in such contexts, was principally the *raison d'être* of the cities. In so far that the evolution of bazaar -as the main axis of commercial fluidity- is proved to be former to the advent of the city as a whole<sup>125</sup>. That is to say the main roads adjacent to human settlements were the primary and impermanent spaces of informal trade. With the rise of commuters' flow and through the integration with other contemplating components - such as warehouses, workshops, Caravanserais, Mosque, Seminaries [Madrasah] and etc.- the structure of old city was crystallized by social-cultural, political-economic and economic-religious flows<sup>126</sup>.

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125 Azadeh Ranjbar, 2009

126 Falamaki,1992



Picture III.18. The configuration of the city of Shiraz along the fluid dynamics of bazaar (10th,16th and 18th century)

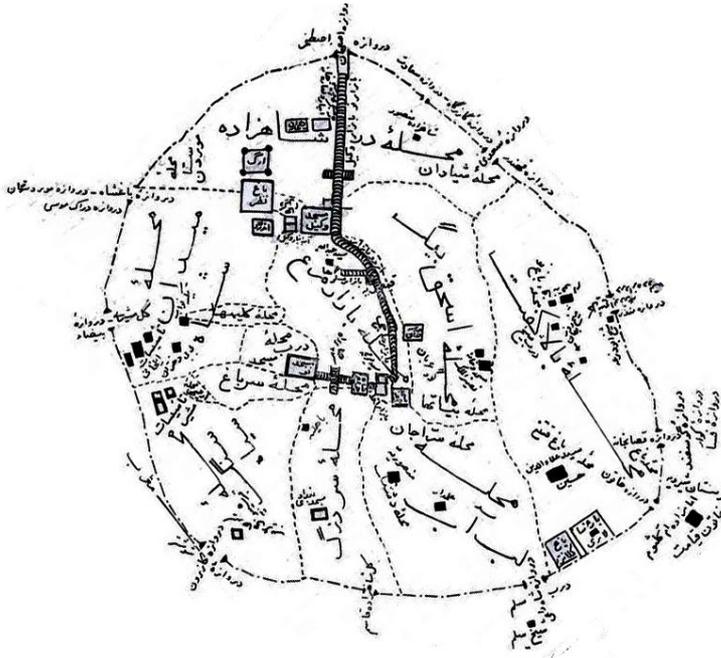
Bazaar, this very particular component of Persian cities, thus, has been progressed and fitted with the structure of cities over the Islamic era. Covered, coherent and glorious bazaar later appeared with the contribution of tradesmen, elite groups and authorities, and conclusively, became the heart and spine of what is now considered as the historic core of these cities<sup>127</sup>.

Bazaar's fundamental role was to accelerate the exchange among the inhabitants. It was being shaped by and, at the same time, was shaping the flow of inhabitants' exchange, encounter and civic interaction. This could be a reason for the progressive trend of Bazaar and its gradual organic growth in the cities like Shiraz (Picture III.19).

Architecturally speaking, the term "Bazaar" is often attributed to a covered street, or series of streets and alleyways, lined with small shops or stalls grouped by the typology of services or products. It has been defined as the major street of the urban fabric, connecting major entrances of the city. The street is a product of the spread of a settlement, once houses have been built on all available space, around its central square. It provides a framework for

127 Azimzadeh,2003

the distribution of land and gives access to individual plots. It has a more pronouncedly functional character than the square, which by virtue of its size is a more attractive place to pass the time than the street, in whose confines one is involuntarily caught up in the bustle of traffic. Its architectural backdrop is only perceived in passing<sup>128</sup>.

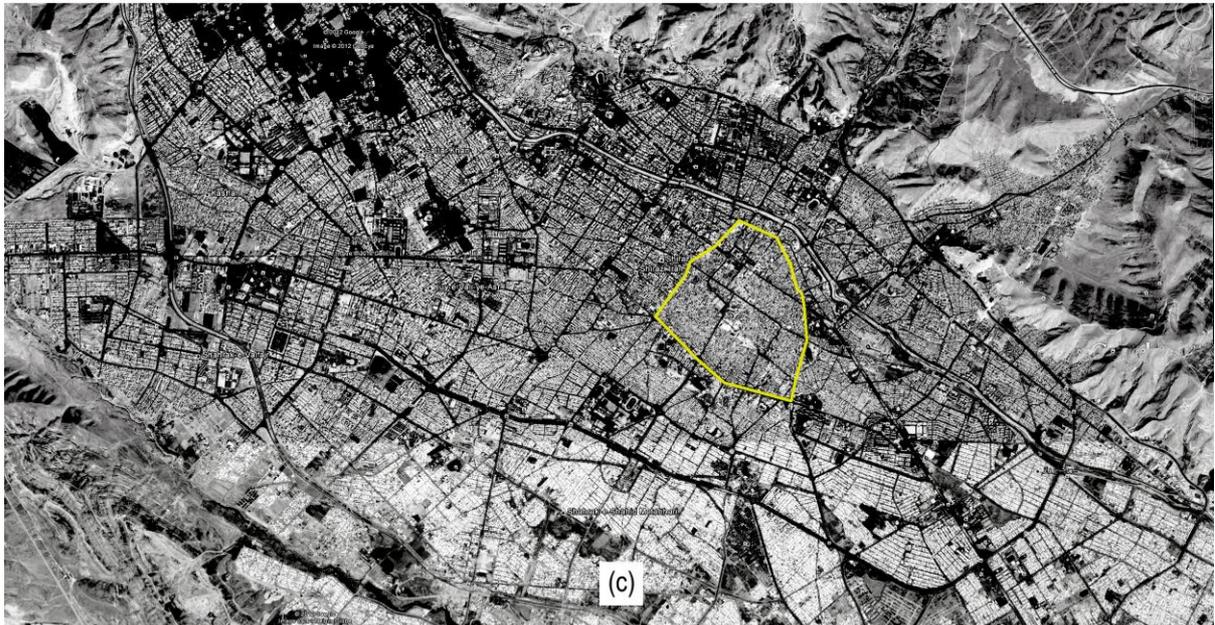
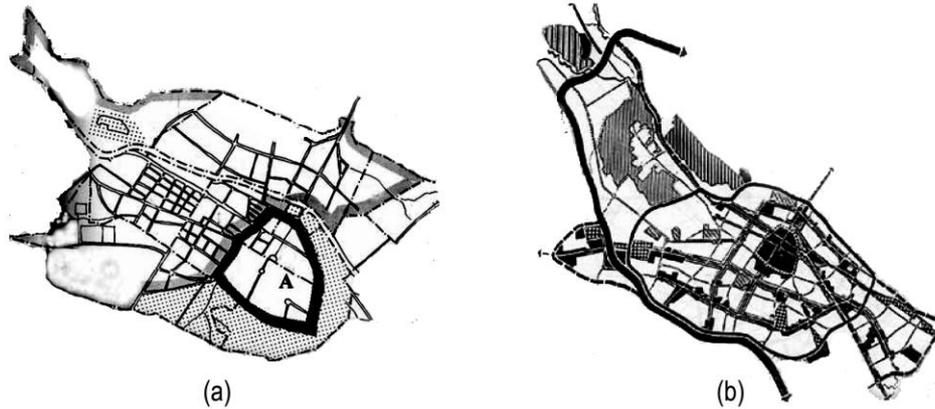


Picture III.19. The historic core of the city of Shiraz in contingency with bazaar

But, the meaning associated with the streets in the urban culture of traditional Islamic cities has been conceived in different way, and in this framework, is not exactly the same as that of occidental ones. The concept of bazaar as a street is about a channel for economic and political manifestation and more likely describes a space of wandering and loitering. It includes the space of commercial activities, yet "it is there less to ensure the efficiency and hegemony of statehood and more as a ribbon to insinuate a cultural fabric"<sup>129</sup>.

128 Krier,1979:15-17

129 Kazimee et al,2003:106



Picture III.20. The proposed Master plan of Shiraz (a) in 1966 (b) in 1988; (c) Shiraz city in the present time

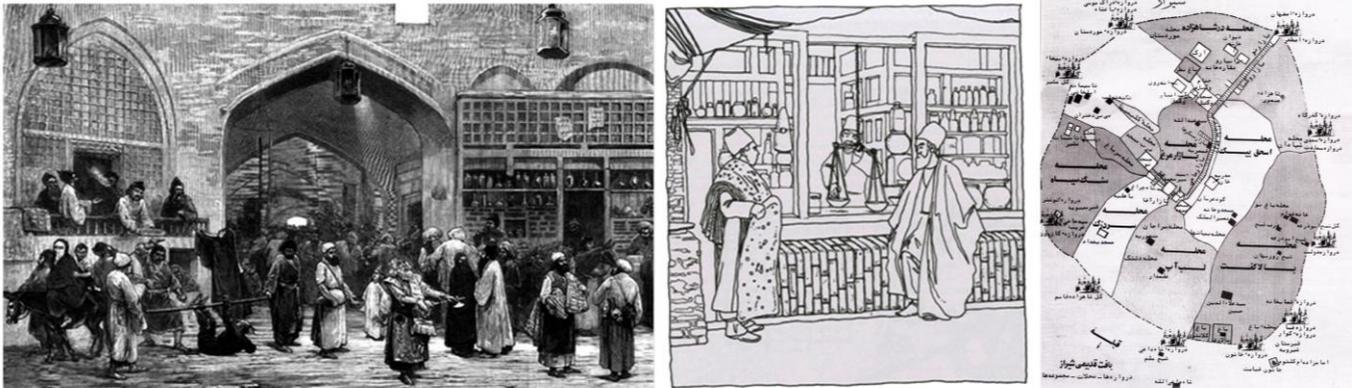
### **i.vi. Social architecture of Bazaar and the flow of information**

To understand the nature of bazaar, it is not naive to get a grasp of disciplines like humanities and social science, which prima facie appear to be far away from the realms of architecture and urbanism. One may explore urban space and the architectural context of the city to perceive the grounds of civic life in cities. In the same manner, in order to conceive the architectural dimensions of bazaar, we

may study the behavioral interrelation among the people of Bazaar.

As we discussed earlier, bazaars were shaped mainly along the main-street of the cities linking the city gate to the main square. So, it provided a shortcut way to go from one district to another within the city or to travel entirely the city. Consequently, passerbyers were not necessarily customers and vendors, but frequently commuters. Due to such intertwined network of people, bazaar was the most relevant place to announce the official and unofficial news and information. The spatial proportions and layouts of shops were provided for a close verbal transaction. Throughout the commercial intercourse, with the intimate physical distance between commuters and vendors, the dialogues were not only about the trade, but also covered the exchange of political, economic and social happenstances, viewpoints and so on.

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Picture III.21. Bazaar: an informal network for the flows of information

Another dimension of informational fluidity in bazaar is the way people of different groups, used to exchange data in the course of daily life. The process of trade was not based on spontaneous trends. Contrarily, those on the head of the pyramid were aware of the demand and supply and they could wisely manage the direction of market. In this tradition, probably the merchants were spending most of the time, sitting in their stores [Hujra], chatting and discussing a variety of issues. But, in the

meantime, they were collecting information about the local and international news, the natural disasters, the splendor or the decay of the market and so on<sup>130</sup>. Such informal networks mobilized the flow of information, and consequently, the efficiency of bazaar.

The nature of social interaction is mainly what differentiates the perception of bazaar from today's wordless and monotonous shopping environments. In the core of any transactional activity in bazaar, a meaningful socio-cultural interrelation was engendered. In accordance with the collected information, the products of human activities were offered in bazaar to support what people needed and to objectify what their potential skills were. Therefore, Bazaar was the center of economy in one hand and the heart and soul of community and culture on the other hand<sup>131</sup>.

#### **i.vii. Bazaar and the glue and bridges of flow**

Generally speaking, without a transactional base, cities and urban places would become progressively lifeless, dull and inert. Nowadays, from a peculiar but impressive point of view, the practice of shopping is seen as "the last remaining form of public activity" and it is predicted that, in the near future, the urban realm could no longer be understood without the idea of shopping<sup>132</sup>. As far as Koolhaas and his colleagues are concerned, shopping environments, more than any other sites of public interaction, define the atmosphere of a city. Sze Tsung Leong, one of the editors of the guide to shopping remarks that:

*"Not only is shopping melting into everything, but everything is melting into shopping"<sup>133</sup>. Through*

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<sup>130</sup> Beheshti,2009:11

<sup>131</sup> Behzadfar et al,2009

<sup>132</sup> Koolhaas et al,2002

<sup>133</sup> The New York Times' architecture critic Herbert Muschamp expressed his admiration in a review entitled "Forget the shoes, Prada's new store stocks ideas", stating that the store has

*successive waves of expansion – each more extensive and pervasive than the previous –shopping has methodically encroached on a widening spectrum of territories so that it is now, arguably, the defining activity of public life . . .*

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*Shopping is the medium by which the market has solidified its grip on our spaces, buildings, cities, activities, and lives. It is the material outcome of the degree to which the market economy has shaped our surroundings, and ultimately ourselves."<sup>134</sup>*

However, the point is the fact that people in today's complex world do not buy solely the merchandise any more, but the ideas, concepts and events. On one hand, the infrastructure of cities like airports, train stations, schools, museums, streets, parks and squares have begun to be designed and organized in accordance with the mechanisms of shopping<sup>135</sup>; on the other hand, today's shopping environments are subjects to integrate with the flows of various civic activities including cultural and recreational ones, to take the advantages of such social capitals.

Social capital commonly refers to the stocks of social trust, norms, and networks that people can draw upon in order to solve common problems. Social scientists emphasize two main dimensions of social capital: social glue and social bridges.

#### **i.vii.i. Social glue**

Social glue refers to the degree to which people take part in collective life. It also concerns the amount of trust or the comfort level that people feel when participating in these groups. Social trust and group participation form a recursive relationship. The

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become the meeting place that Prada and Koolhaas strove for, the epicenter surpassing the merely commercial to become a public space and a destination as well (Muschamp, 2001)

134 Koolhaas et al, 2002:129

135 Koolhaas et al., 2001

level of trust influences one's willingness to join a group. Likewise, group participation helps build trust.

The Persian Islamic cities, such as Safavid Isfahan and Zand dynasty's Shiraz, were chiefly built on the grounds of three central elements: religion (God), system of rule (Shah) and the nation. Bazaar, in this context, stands for nation; however, there was a rooted relation between bazaar and both the religious and governing authorities. Also, the people of Bazaar [Ahl-i Bazaar], and in particular the merchants<sup>136</sup>, were seen as the friends of God, according to spiritual narrations. They were among the most influential groups for the system of government, as they were shaping the economic flows of traditional urban societies.

Bazaar, virtually, encompassed a broad spectrum of definitions: from credit to power, from eligibility to splendor and embroidering<sup>137</sup>, and from cooperation to competition. The social and economic structures of bazaar have been set up on the grounds of very unique patterns of trust-relationship between individuals and the people of bazaar. For example, some of the most reputable, wealthy and respected merchants, were known as the "merchants' trustee [Amin-u-Tujjar] whose objective was to support those in bankruptcy or trouble. As they were reliable among the people of bazaar, they tried to encourage, assist and guaranty the bankrupts so that they could restart their professions and return into the economic cycle of bazaar. As can be seen, becoming a merchant was not only the issue of capital and trade, but on top of that, it symbolized a proper culture and behavior. The existence and subsistence of bazaar and the city were based on those merchants who managed the flow of economy

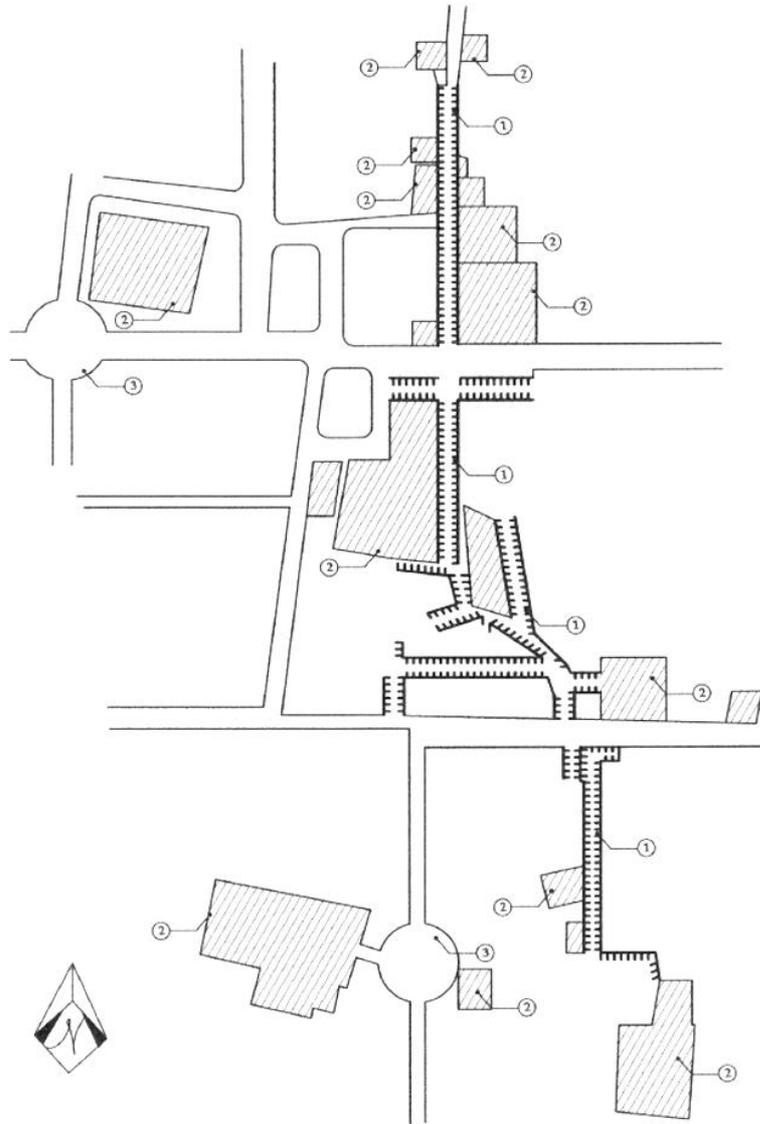
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136 The name merchant was a name of great respect that was not simply given to people who owned a shop or involved in trade base activity. One gave it only to those who had clerks or factors in faraway lands. These people occasionally were elevated to the highest responsibilities such as ambassadors (Kazimae,2003:102).

137 Falamaki,1992:71

through their reciprocal strategies and their trustful personalities.

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### Bazaar of Shiraz

- 1- Bazaar as a linear element in urban fabric
- 2- Major buildings of the city
- 3- Public squares of the city

*Picture III.22. The links between Shiraz bazaar and other city institutions (The bridges of Bazaar)*

### **i.vii.ii. Social bridges**

Social bridges are the links between groups. These links are vital because they not only connect groups to one another but also give those in any group access to the larger world outside their social circle through a chain of affiliations. In the public realm of bazaar, groups of people, consciously or unconsciously, affect each other, interpenetrating cultural elements in-between assorted cultural domains.

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People in traditional society of Iran, were classified through their professions and their social, economic and religious status. In a similar way, the people of bazaar were sorted in an hierarchical order in order to supplement the unity of discipline. Wholesale merchants [Tujjar], skilled engineers [muhandisan-i hunar-var], skilled artisan and artists [hunarvaran-i maharat] were among the middling groups, while the lowest group comprised artisans [muhtarifan], workmen and artisans [pisha kar]. In the late 18th and early 20th century, each guild (Sinf) was headed by two or three masters (ostad), who represented the group in the citywide organization of the guilds (Heyat-i asnaf). This group discussed and tried to solve problems mutual to the bazaar, although several representatives of the government such as the market superintendent (Darugheh), market inspector (Muhtasib), mayor (Kalantar) had some levels of control over the marketplace.<sup>138</sup>

The presence of important spaces and centers of the city along the Bazaar and the influence of the people of Bazaar over the political and religious sectors of society resulted in a place more than merely an economic entity<sup>139</sup>, but a space for variety of social and religious events<sup>140</sup> as well as political

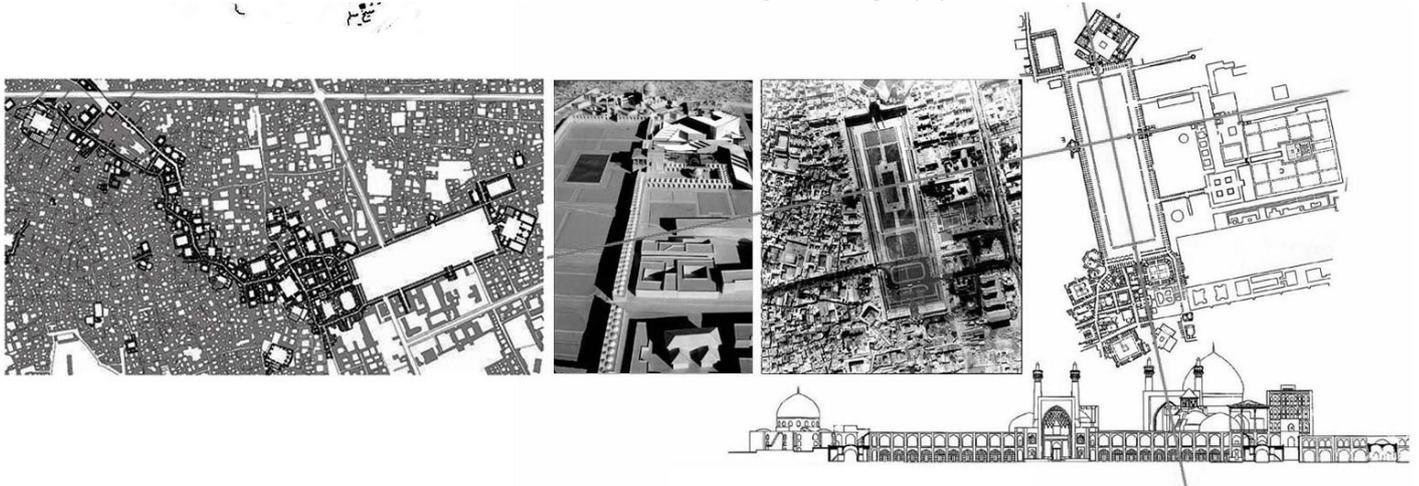
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138 Bonine & Keddie,1981:233

139 Behzadfar et al,2009

140 mourning ceremonies, national festivities and religious occasions.

movements<sup>141</sup>. There was the main manifestation of inhabitants' work and play; and it was the stage on which the key movements and ceremonies were enacted. During those "ritually charged activities", the city dwellers and the merchants were actors and spectators, participants and audience. The communal sense of place and time was built, expressed, coordinated and integrated in contingency with the Bazaar and her neighboring by-products.



Picture III.23. The city of Isfahan and organic growth of Bazaar

### i.viii. The life and death of Bazaar

The experience of fluidity in cities takes multiple forms depending on the kind of subjects that compose the flow. Material and immaterial subjects of flow in bazaar- as public spaces of flow-constitute important components of social capitals<sup>142</sup>. Over the recent time, the absence of a wise management of economic sectors, the rapid process of suburbanization and the unwelcome sprawl of settlements, the advent and impacts of modern highways and streets (*Picture III.24*), as well as the trends towards globalization has caused an

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141 Traditional merchants (Bazaris), were often clustered together in the major cities and organized through craft guilds and other merchant networks to shape a mobilizing structure of Iranian society. This structure played an influential role in many social movements including the Tobacco movement, constitutionalism movement (Mashruti) and likes.

142 Urry,2002:44

immense decline in functional characteristics of bazaar. Such alteration is not disconnected from the trajectory of cities.

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At the same time, new technologies of communication and information exchange have engendered a situation in which the urban site have become fragmented and discontinuous spatially, while they are connected in vast invisible networks where information, images and money flow freely from location to location. The impact of these new circumstances on our cities has been profound, contributing to a dismantling of the historic city and the reconstruction of urban life in entirely new, free-floating forms. Increasingly, our thinking about the city must confront the fact that we live not simply in places, but in cities constructed as simulations and complex webs. Public life has moved from Main Street and bazaar to the hyper-environments of the shopping mall and the surface of the video screen (i.e. Times Square). Rapid advances in technology will overthrow the regime of time and space that used to be familiar to us one day.

Many of the concepts offered by scholars to study the architecture of cities, do not fit the new contexts and challenges facing and in tune with the exigencies and dynamics of flows of goods, information and capital, to name only a few. Therefore, there is an essential need to define new modes of thinking about these changes and challenges. The conventional "sense of place" has become somewhat problematic if not entirely outdated<sup>143</sup>. One may claim the common manuals to evaluate the quality of place were created when communication technology and travelling patterns were not such widely capturing the world<sup>144</sup>. In this

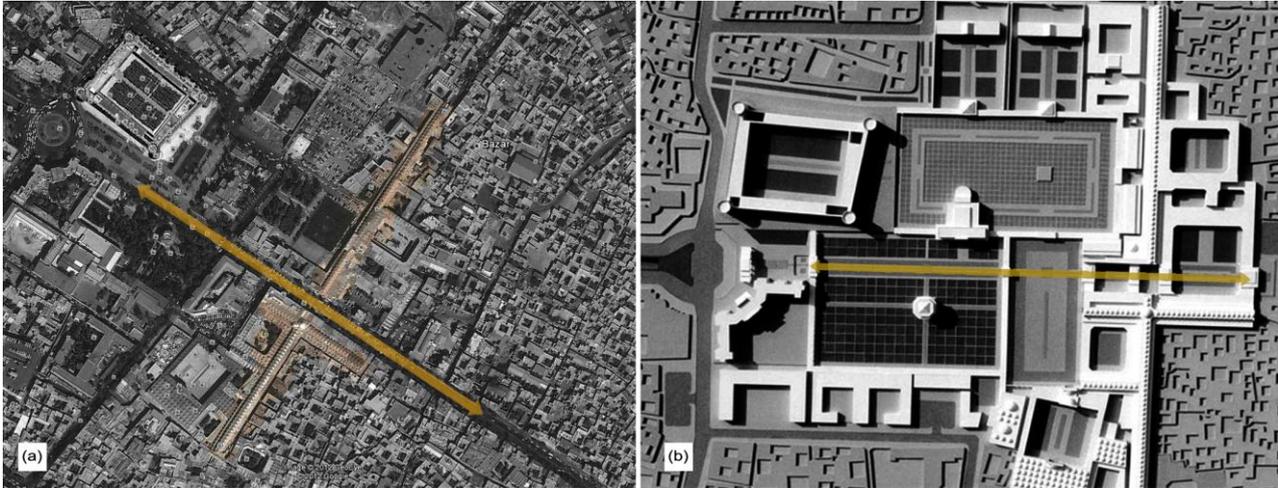
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143 Fattahi&Kobayashi,2009

144 William Mitchell, for example, criticizes Le Corbusier's famous open-hand landmark in Chandigarh's plaza as being "too late!" (Horan, 2000). Ironically, he glorifies a gigantic, unpleasant satellite dish in a near-by, messy, industrial and unplanned area as a landmark of electronic agora:

"a place within which digital information can flow rapidly and freely, and can instantly be connected to the system of global digital information flows. Within the electronic agora there

atmosphere, the traditional bazaars are "fighting a life and death struggle for survival"<sup>145</sup>, however, their transparent flows of people, information and trade underline the instances of "social capital" which are capable to revive the livelihood and fate of the cities.



*Picture III.24. (a) The impacts of modern streets on urban fabric of Shiraz; (b) Revitalization of Karimkhan historic complex, Naghsh-e Jahan-Pars Consulting Eng. 1994*

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are new economic opportunities, new possibilities for the delivery of services, and new potentials for social and cultural life" (Horan, 2000:x-xi).

145 Ardalan,1980:6

ii

Synthesis  
**Commerce and cultural flow**

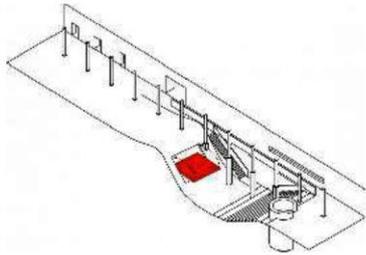
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The global economy does not only involve the transfer of money, people and information. It also involves the exchange of many cultural signs and objects, such as music, film, or design. Global flows thus assume a more and more cultural content. This cultural dimension of flows implies to redefine the role of infrastructures. Not only do they serve as functional devices supporting material and immaterial movements, they also become aesthetic devices that city governments, communities, and individuals actively use, adopt and transform in order to assert their position and identity.

Infrastructures thus acquire a more and more cultural and reflexive character. In social theory, the intensification of global exchanges is mainly discussed as an economic and financial phenomenon. Authors such as Manuel Castells and Saskia Sassen mainly focus on the social and economical consequences of flows. Meanwhile, they call attention to their increasing immateriality, as the exchange of services in the new economy appears to prevail over the physical movement of goods and people. But interpreting the actual interdependence of disjointed locales and their interconnection through complex networks also implies a particular analysis of the nature of flows.

Today, successful shopping environments are subjected to mixture of various civic activities including cultural and recreational ones. The advent of remarkable architectural icons with significant public spaces as well as mixing different functions and uses - including the crossing of the boundaries traditionally separating the fields of retail and culture - do in fact represent the new principles guiding the development of shopping malls in the 21st century. Shopping hubs increasingly rely on the integration of multiple, diverse functions from retail to leisure and to cultural facilities in order to acquire a clear strategic positioning and attract their visitors. Here, we mean to examine this trend on account of Koolhaas' approach to Commerce in Prada Epicenter in New York. Maison Hermes in Tokyo designed by

Renzo Piano and Migros Supermarket chain in Lucerne are further cases in point.



Picture III.25. Prada Epicenter, New York, Rem Koolhaas, a stage for intimate events

New York's Prada Epicenter – an exclusive boutique, a public space, a gallery, a performance space, a laboratory, whose opening coincided the publication of Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping, could be considered as part of OMA / AMO's ongoing research into shopping as the last remaining form of public activity. While the New York store would be Koolhaas's first retail space, he had long been considering the meaning of shopping in the contemporary urban environment, and the Prada experiment promised to be an ideal testing-ground for his theories.

As museums, libraries, airports, hospitals, and schools become increasingly indistinguishable from shopping centers, their adoption of retail for survival has released an enormous wave of commercial temptation that has transformed museum-goers, researchers, travelers, patients, and students into customers. The result is a deadening loss of variety. What were once distinct activities no longer retain the uniqueness that gave them richness. What if the equation were reversed, so that customers were no longer identified as consumers, but recognized as researchers, students, patients, museum-goers? What if the shopping experience were not one of impoverishment, but of enrichment?

The New York Prada Epicenter is a conversion of a 23,000 square-foot space in SoHo formerly belonging to the Guggenheim museum. The defining feature of the store is not about materials or

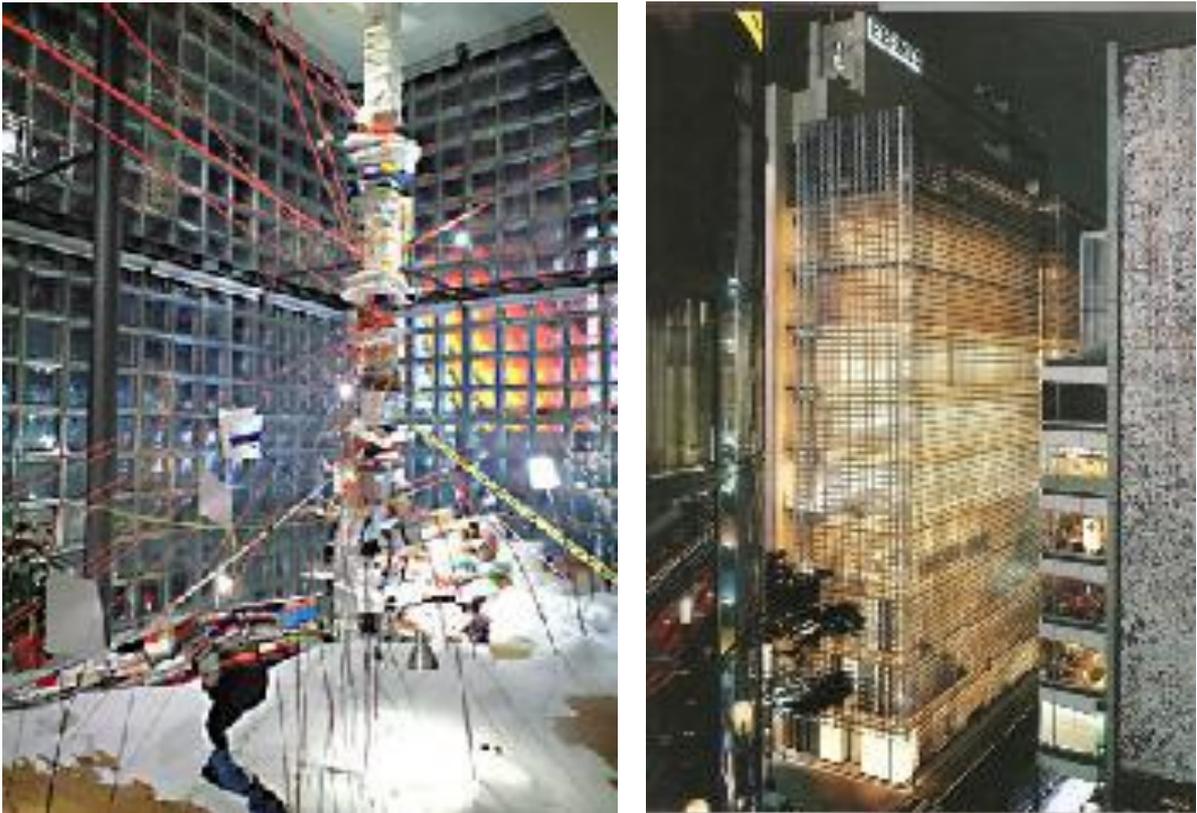
technology, but about Koolhaas's introduction of cultural programming into a commercial setting. The concept is visible as soon as you enter the store: The Wave – a curving space cut out of the ground floor and opening it up to the basement– is the main element facilitating experimentation in what a fashion store can be. On one side, the slope has steps - apparently for displaying shoes and accessories – that can be used as a seating area, facing a , wavelike wooden grandstand and a foldout stage where intimate concerts and lectures could be held. The store thus becomes a venue for film screenings, performances, and lectures, and, the merchandise became secondary to this huge void in the center of the store. Koolhaas's observations about joining commerce and culture have taken root in other projects, in example Renzo Piano's Maison Hermes in Tokyo<sup>xv</sup>, Diener & Diener's Migros Supermarket in Lucerne<sup>xvi</sup>, Switzerland, ...

Maison Hermes in Tokyo includes a two-level gallery on its top floors, where artists show their installations or art work. It includes a two level gallery on its top floors, where artists such as Hiroshi Sugimoto mount impeccable installations of their work. The design is exquisitely / excellently simple, a pair of slender conjoined towers, wrapped in a luminous of custom-fabricated textured glassblocks set into a steel grid. A narrow shaft between the building's two separate volumes contains separate entrances to the store, offices, art museum. The glass skin takes on different glowing lines by day and at night, setting the building apart from the garish visual chaos of Tokyo's Ginza district.

Inside the building, Piano placed the stairs connecting the first three retail levels against the glass-block exterior so that the movement of shoppers up and down the staircases would animate the facades with activity and differentiate between the shopping floors and the working floors above. Seen from inside the shop, Ginza's bright lights and busy sidewalks create a blur of color and motion behind the textured glass-block walls. The view

enlivens shopping experience without distracting too much from the merchandise. On the top two levels, the mini-museum blows open the cozy, intimate feeling of the shopping floors with a lofty, double height space with softly screened daylight, where Hermes puts on impeccably mounted art exhibitions by artists such as Hiroshi Sugimoto in a lively, elegant room evocative of the great Maison de Verre in Paris.

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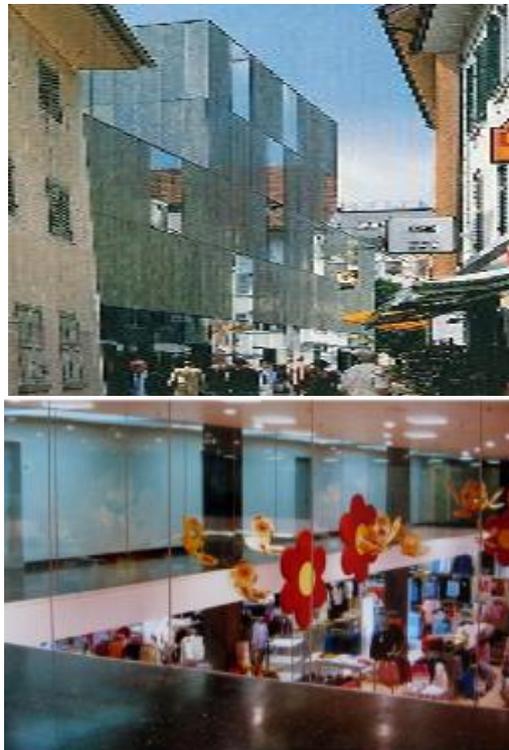


*Picture III.26. Maison Hermès, Tokyo*

Migros Supermarket chain in Lucerne mixes commerce with education, by combining a shopping center with an adult school run by Migros chain in the same building. In fact, students on their way to classrooms can look down at the product-packed aisles that support their education through corridors bound with walls of glass. Above the commercial area are the classrooms of the "Migros School": a school promoted by Migros where adult education courses are offered in languages, information technology, decorative arts, cooking and sports. The

classrooms on the second floor are arranged along a glassed-in gallery overlooking the shopping centre, creating visual relationships among the various functions of the building; the classrooms on the upper floor have large windows overlooking the rooftops of the side naves.... mixes commerce and education by combining a shopping center with an adult school run by the Migros chain in the same building. In fact, students in their way to class can gaze down / look at the product-packed aisles that help support their education through corridors bound with walls of glass.

In a provocative juxtaposition of education and commerce, corridors of the Migros School overlook the shopping levels through internal walls of floor-to-ceiling glass. As students Shuttle/ move smoothly, forward or backward between classes, there is no forgetting the corporate nature of the Migros School or the interplay between education and commerce, between the acquisition of knowledge and acquisition of merchandise.



*Picture III.27. Diener & Diener's Migros Supermarket in Lucerne, Switzerland, education versus shopping*

In addition to the undeniable intensification of transnational exchanges, we thus have to consider the various kinds of flows at work, as well as their respective content. Some authors raise today the increasingly cultural and aesthetic substance of flows. Scott Lash and John Urry (1994), in particular, argue that the proliferation of flows also involves signs and design-intensive objects, such as pop music, fashion images, and advertising. They explain that flows are now composed of “postindustrial commodities”, whether pure signs, or semantically loaded objects, whose relative immateriality is balanced with a stronger cultural component. As we start considering the cultural content of flows, the dialectical opposition between hardware and software tends to disappear. The question is not whether flows are material or immaterial, but what meaning they carry. Infrastructures in this context bear a new and enlarged role. They become a primary support of art, politics, entertainment, and aesthetics.



*Picture III.28. Federation Square, Melbourne, 2004*

Flows of signs, and more particularly of cultural signs, form the category of flows, which is certainly the least discernible of all. Their content is so wide, their patterns so diffused, their media so numerous that it is difficult to differentiate them from other flows. Hence, flows of culture are often

undistinguishable from flows of capital, or people. Yet, it seems worthwhile to consider them more in detail. In this chapter, I wish to show that the global logic of flows constructs a cultural space, a global mediascape marked by the aesthetic substance of flows, and the cultural purpose of infrastructures. Flows, as they are described by Castells, are programmed and repetitive sequences of exchange. They hold a very systemic character, undermined by a strong technological determinism and a rather dramatic vision of society. This character corresponds, in my sense, to a modern conception of the infrastructure, primarily conceived of as a functional, fixed, heavy and long-term investment.

By concentrating on the cultural content of flows, a more reflexive character of infrastructures may raise to mediate a more diverse and ephemeral content. The signs and objects exchanged in the global economy involve many services related to a certain quality of life: travels, leisure, psychotherapy... The specificity of flows of signs and culture, as opposed to flows of people or capital, lies in their narrative structure, which allows them to permeate our everyday lives and to construct collective imaginary worlds. The consequence of the more aesthetic substance of flows is the ever faster recycling of urban spaces. Cities are thus remade with increasing rapidity. Urban space becomes itself a commodity that people consume, embellish, or neglect when it is not up-to-date anymore.

Places and people acquire a new awareness of their role and position within global networks. They adapt more quickly to the changing content of flows. Soft infrastructures, such as networks of small cultural industries, become in this context the privileged means of the new reflexivity of cities.

**iii**

**Synthesis**

**When form follows the flows**

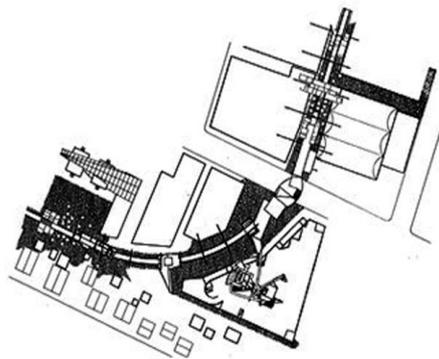
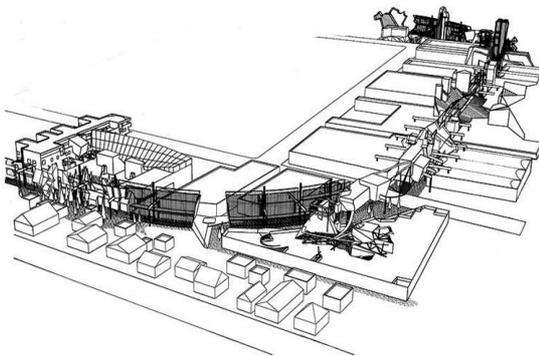
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A catchword by Bernard Tschumi printed on a poster in 2012 Architecture Biennale in Venice, states that “architecture is defined by the action it witnesses as much as by the enclosure of its walls”. So, the target of architecture is not merely to build the nature. But on top of that, man, society and culture will be tamed through the process of architecture and urbanization in order that any given environment might be understood in unique ways. The urbanism of flow entails today a conception of spaces that marks a shift from the modern Cartesian space, where objects were geometrically organised on a neutral and horizontal background, to a constantly transforming spaces shaped by sets of complicated (virtual and physical) relations in the networks of people, information and capitals.

For example, Maeklong market, located in the south of Bangkok, appears somehow difficult to be perceived as an architectural practice. Even so, it is an enlightening example of a different conception of architecture in contingency with the context of flow. Maeklong seafood and vegetable market, or Rom-Hoob's market<sup>146</sup>, is a permeable field of impermanent market stalls sheltered by shrinkable umbrellas and awnings. The setting is not in essence different from typical temporary market-places around the world. Yet, it is a unique fascinating piece of adaptive urbanism. Due to the high density of the neighboring area and overpopulation, there is no enough room for local trade activities. So, the market stretched out along the both sides of railway tracks on approximately half a kilometer length. The track is reserved as a passageway in-between the stalls.

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146 Literally means 'Shrinking umbrella'.



Picture III.29. Rom-Hoob's market, Thailand versus A.R. Culver city, USA

Whenever the train passes through, the stalls will be pulled back from the line, and then they will be replaced once the train has passed. It is a formal operation in the sense that the train timetable is pre-determined and everybody knows what will happen and when; but it is also informal urbanism in the sense that nobody is in charge of the operation.

### **iii.i. Rom-Hoob's market, Thailand**

The market is obviously permeable as there is no definite point of entry. One may reach it near Mae-Klong station, where the market begins, or from the narrow passage-corridors which link the field with the central market of Samut Songkhram. Rom-Hoob's market is an approach from an urban potential (Train station) which is not, at first view, powerful enough to generate any urban configuration. But it strives to exploit relationships to its advantage, by awaiting for an opportunity and taking the advantages of its flexibility. The form follows the flows of trains, goods and people (as customer, seller, passer-by and visitor). One may regard it as "an architecture of event" which "enshrines the everyday discourse" and not as architecture of space"<sup>147</sup>. The social practice is glorified as the quintessence of Rom-Hoob's market, and, the sense of space is conceived through the integration of program, function, activities and actors in their civic daily life.

The subject matter of Rom Hoob's Market - however spontaneous and informal- is to some extent comparable with Eric Owen Moss's proposal in SPAR<sup>148</sup> city project which is composed of the spaces over an unused southern pacific railroad right-of-way in Culver City - an island of Los Angeles archipelago. Both practices, either unplanned or spontaneous and by design, can be thought of as flexible and

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147 Sinuraiban, 2012:139

148 Southern Pacific Air Right City

sometimes temporary structures that feed off the existing infrastructure and build forms.

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Picture III.30. Rom Hoob's Market along Maeklong railway, Bangkok, Thailand

# Maeklong Market



1. MARKET ACTIVITY  
IN SPACES OF STALLS

2. ENVIRONMENTAL  
FACTORS

3. LEVEL OF VISIBILITY  
FROM STALLS

4. ILLUSTRATING  
TACTICAL USE

5. DEMONSTRATING  
IN SPACES OF THE  
STALLS

6. TRAIN CROSSING  
THE MARKET

7. TRAIN PASSING  
THE MARKET



## CONTEXT

THE MARKET IS LOCATED ALONG THE RAILWAY TRACKS, WHICH IS A STRONG POINT OF LOCAL COMMUNITY. THE MARKET IS A PLACE WHERE LOCAL PEOPLE CAN BUY AND SELL GOODS. THE MARKET IS A PLACE WHERE LOCAL PEOPLE CAN MEET AND INTERACT.



RESEARCHERS  
ANALYZED THE  
LOCAL MARKET  
AND THE  
TRAIN CROSSING  
IN THE  
MARKET

## RELATIONSHIP

THE MARKET IS A PLACE WHERE LOCAL PEOPLE CAN BUY AND SELL GOODS. THE MARKET IS A PLACE WHERE LOCAL PEOPLE CAN MEET AND INTERACT.



The narrow alleyway separates the stalls of the market. When the train crosses through the market, the stalls are closed. The stalls are closed for a short time. This is the advantage of a market in this situation.

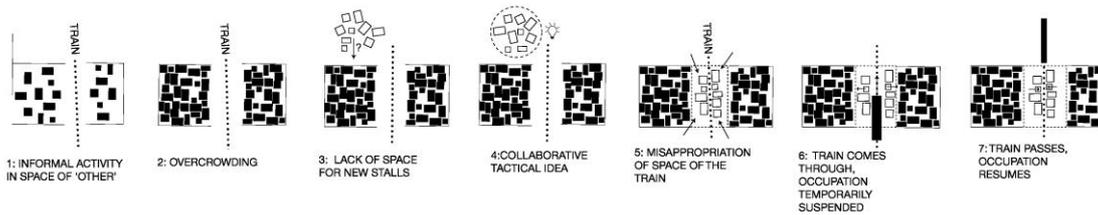
## TACTIC

### INTERFERENCE



Picture III.30 Analysis: The flows of crowd

# Maeklong Market



Picture III.31. Form follows the flows in Rom Hoob's market

The market snakes through the fabric of neighboring areas. The area has been home to light industry and manufacturing over the years. The spur was mainly built to pick up freight. The design idea is to use the right of way of the old southern pacific railway which formerly serviced the industrial district. Besides, it serves as a reminder that industry has dispersed at the moment and as a symbol of the economic disparities that divides the city. So, the objective of Moss's plan is to mend the tear in the urban fabric and to reverse the area's economic decline. The rail would be transformed into a linear landscaped urban corridor including pedestrian walkways and recreation spots. At ground level, the right of way would be converted into a green belt. Above the railway, a series of 60-foot-high steel columns would support a glass-enclosed pedestrian thoroughfare and mixed-use buildings that would be interconnected to adjacent buildings along the former tracks. Eric Owen Moss interprets his design as a dragon that changes as it moves through the neighborhoods: "starting as commercial gateway building on busy National Boulevard, it becomes a multi-use housing development as it crosses a residential development, then a small shopping area and theater, next an office building; and then, when it crosses an area of artists' studios, an art gallery. The project completes its transformation on an adjacent, city-owned lot, where it will become a hotel, amphitheater and community focal point".

The project works with existing infrastructures of flow and uses them to its own objectives but can also be considered as an architectural intervention that materializes and transforms the built form. That is a “parasitic” architectural touch. A parasitic approach is an adaptable, transient and exploitive form of architecture that forces relationships with the host context in order to redefine and reconfigure a built structure and to provide a new perspective or orientation to the public and potentially offer a new sense of space.



*Picture III.32. A.R. City project, Eric Owen Moss*

Parasites cannot sustain their own existence without aspiring the energy from the host environment. Rom Hoob's market obtains its livelihood from the realities of the existing flows, whereas SPAR City comparatively holds on the metaphor of flow as it used to exist one day. SPAR City circumstantially portrays an architectural intervention in a typical 'post space of flow' where the different pieces of projects - like the cars of freight train along the railroad line - are never seen as single, separated buildings on separated properties. But the principles of design decisions

including large scale strategies for land use, pedestrian flows, and the formal language are manipulated to manifest a sense of continuity. Yet, both Rom Hoob's market and SPAR City try to cope with the constantly changing flows of economic and social demands.

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A parasitic approach could be less superficial and more meaningful as for Eric Owen Moss "architecture is a way to create a community that can solve social problems". However, we leave the relation between SPAR City project and the fluidity from a socio-architectural<sup>149</sup> point of view beyond the scope of this study.

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<sup>149</sup> Socio-architecture is a phrase coined by psychologist Humphry Osmond and Canadian architect Kyo Izumi as part of their research for the best architectural form for Osmond's Weyburn Mental Hospital in 1951. Osmond also coined the terms "sociopetal" and "sociofugal" to describe seating arrangement that encouraged or discouraged social interaction. His 1957 article "Function as the basis of psychiatric ward design" is considered a minor classic. His work regarding architecture was continued by his colleague Robert Sommer.

**iv**

**Synthesis**

**Peter Eisenman's fluid surface**

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Some other groups of projects, rather than being (functionally or substantially) tamed by the flows of people, goods and vehicles through surfaces, may achieve the same objectives of fluxion by means of surfaces that themselves flow. These projects generate smooth-surface topographies that blur the distinction between building and the ground. We may find clear examples of such strategy in some works of Peter Eisenman such as his proposal for a design competition for the West side of Manhattan<sup>150</sup>.

The competition explores how twenty-first-century architects are imagining ways to heal the gashes that transport systems have left in the texture of the city. The site selected for the competition was a part of Manhattan's West Side, an area that played a key role in New York City's development during industrialization and the golden age of rail and sea transport and home to an impressive number of railways, warehouses and abandoned factories. However, a number of subsequent developments, such as the construction of a major rail terminal and the expansion of the Jacob Javits Convention Centre, indicate the potential of turning the area into a vital new center. The uniqueness and complexity of the site, given the many different elements it contains, render existing urban development formulas ineffective, both socially and economically. Competitors were encouraged to consider how to overcome the site's isolation, spark new forms of urban experience, and vitalize those forms that may have been overlooked.

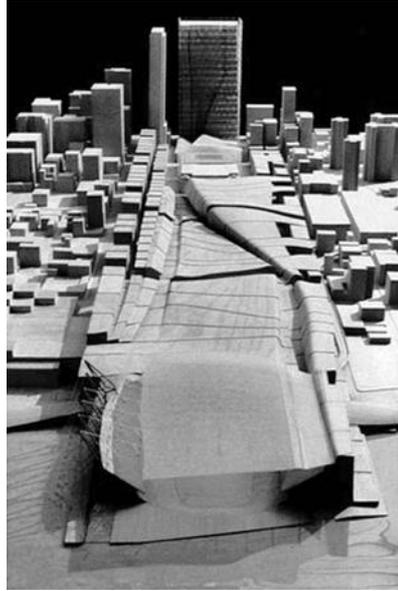
New City Park's multi-layered surface moves and folds, integrating a high density of public and private commercial, recreational, cultural, educational, and community-oriented programs. The proposal examines a strategy for making a public urban space that relates to the complexities, diversity, indeterminacy, and ambiguities of contemporary experience. The park functions as an

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150 namely IFCCA 2000

organizational strategy for a polyvalent metropolis. The scheme is built around lines of connection and displacement; it organizes the program topologically, in three dimensions – in contrast to the city’s typical planimetric organization. Superimposition, augmentation, and layering increase the utility of the site without sacrificing open space. Advancing ideas that initiated in our Paris Utopie (1989) and Vienna Expo (1995) projects, the park redirects many of the programmatic functions to the lower strata, a series of ground planes, or shifting datums. The diversion of midtown’s westward development across the project site protects the low-rise residential community of Clinton, currently in the path of development, and instead locates new density adjacent to the most intense multi-modal transportation system in the region. The transportation plan maximizes the utility of the existing infrastructure, and makes strategic additions to the network: a new street-based light rail loop and automated People Mover connect with Penn Station trains, subways and buses, and the ferry. The scheme takes advantage of energy flows on the site to create more sustainable, integrated systems: vents in the park structure convert the heat of the trains stored below into energy, turbines in the beach platform capture energy from the Hudson’s tidal flows, and the orientation of the park lies on the true solar east-west axis.

In this urban paradigm, development is dynamic; a flexible process that responds to changes in population, program, economy, energy, and transportation over time. The emerging urban construct is no longer linked to a singular city typology, but simultaneously embodies those of historical and emerging cities.



*Picture III.33. Eisenman's proposal for west Manhattan*

Eisenman challenges the site as a neutral ground and suggests a figure-figure concept instead of a figure-ground urbanism. He extends the form over a gridded space, dissolving the edges of building and the site. His proposal for the West side project entails a shift between the striated city grid and its interaction and interference with a newly imposed smooth surface. The two systems are engaged in the computer model and are animated to pull against each other, resulting in a variable series of rips between the smooth and the striated surfaces. The programmatic elements are contained within the ripped space. Binary digital computational processes process all information in the reduced format of “0” and “1” or simple “on/off” or “+/-” code. Eisenman claims that the computational paradox of “+/-” has the potential to achieve a new kind of urbanism, one with new densities and textures created by new spatial proximities<sup>151</sup>. He equates this with the virtual. Eisenman describes the virtual as a condition of oscillation between opposites in real space. Thus in the oscillation between smooth and striated space in the design of the west side project, the new folded topography overflows the grid between figure and

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<sup>151</sup> Imperiale, 2000:40

ground in an excessive matrix of interconnectivity. Eisenman ponders how, strangely enough, this “between condition of virtual paradoxically retrieves actual spatial content, that is the affective experience of space”.

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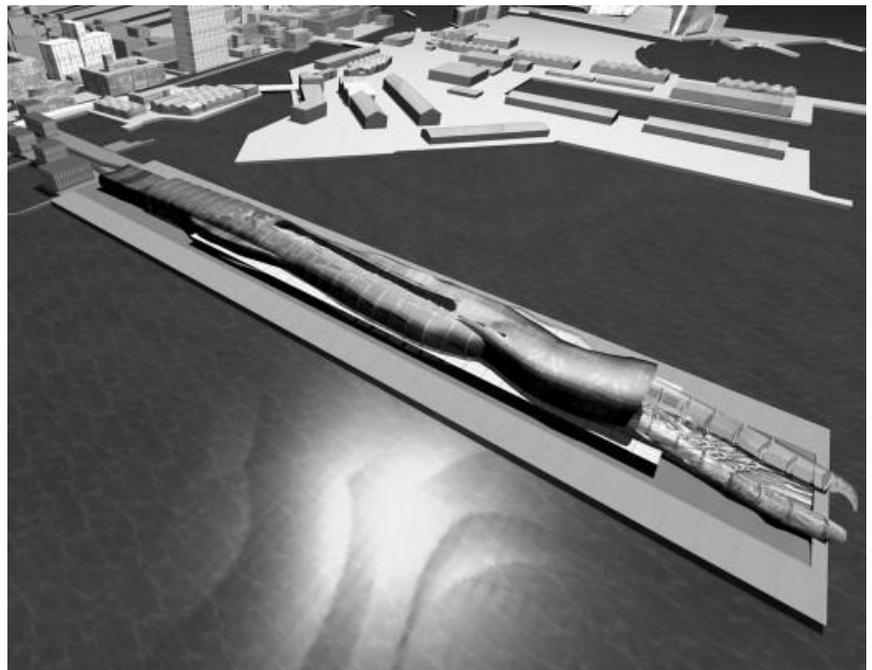
**v**

**Synthesis**

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**The concept of Motion (Kinetics) and the animated  
forms of Greg Lynn**

Accordingly, Greg Lynn asserts that architects are now, for the first time, able to sketch with calculus, thanks to animation software that allows them to work on topological surfaces with increasing levels of complexity and a smooth connection between landscape and building (animate form). One's ability to see is the ground of his creative power in the field of fine arts. As one is looking, he/she is receiving a flow of light stimulants, which are coming into him/her without any real order. They are not transformed into logical forms until our rooted "need to arrange" does so. Therefore visualization does not receive the substance from what it arranges, but from reality. The character and order of visual forms depend on the nature of our visual surrounding and on the nature of a perceptive apparatus' own logic of mental handling of visual (spatial) data.



*Picture III.34. Greg Lynn's proposal for Yokohama port terminal*

When observing a space statically, we see it only as a flat surface. A perception of depth is a matter of experience (ophthalmic parallax is not enough to achieve a spatial view). With a motion we

add to two-dimensional access data, which are mediated by our eyes, two new dimensions: depth and time (in sequence). A motion (in the space) determines how we perceive and become acquainted with a certain space. (Architectural) space receives its size, distances, scale and form only with motion, or only a motion separates the distance from size. While moving we become acquainted with the space from different viewpoints as consecutiveness of spatial images, from which we later construct a single space in our minds. Simply put, the motion is composed of reaching certain goals. These are significant spatial accentuations and points of attention, which we are approaching, going past them or they represent our final goal. A person perceives movement by detecting changes in relations between the objects and himself.

One of the strongest visual sensations is the relation between an individual and one's surrounding, a feeling that one has when "measuring" an empty space. We are talking about size and scale. With respect to the quantity of desired details exists an optimal distance of observation. The same applies for the design of space, when "everything" depends on the distance of the approach. We are especially attentive to the nearer objects, which seem to move faster than those farther away, which seem to be motionless. Fundamentally, objects can be approached from any desired side and under any desired angle. That is why in an architectural surrounding we practically cannot talk about front and back in an absolute sense, but only relatively according to a temporary direction of an observer. A sensation changes with the speed of the movement. Depending on how fast changes occur, an observer judges the speed of his own motion. Movement with a certain speed can be a way of reestablishing a new relationship with our surrounding. The pace and rhythm represent the core of every spatial image. The pace of the attention is an indicator of the quality of the approach. Surface characteristics, such as coloring - brightness, texture,

optical closeness (transparency), according to which we perceive objects emotionally, can cause the effect, in which the space can be essentially different from the actually established one. This difference can only be enhanced by the recognition or by the connection of the objects with a meaning<sup>152</sup>.

The relation between architecture and time, characteristically, lies in the representation of motion and fluxion. Sigfried Gideon was one of the first thinkers who explored the themes of space, time and architecture. There are two recent models for the modeling of movement in architecture; the first method involves procession and the second involves superimposition. The first is the idea that of Gideon where time is built into forms as memory. The second model of formal time is associated with Colin Rowe and his disciples. In Rowe's text *Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal*,<sup>153</sup> that he co-authored with Robert Slutzky, the idea of a formal, or phenomenal, transparency is proposed along with literal transparency. Phenomenal transparency is the tracing or imprinting of a deeper formal space on a surface. Examples of formal or phenomenal time include "shearing," "shifting" and "rotating" operations. For example, In 1970s, the avant-gardes architects James Wines and Alison Sky of SITE, and Robert Venturi and Denis Scott Brown created remarkable showrooms for BEST products company. Their iconoclastic approaches were rather giant sculptural installations included indeterminate facades which recalled the effect of architecture in a state of temporariness, instability and transience. Each of their projects, treated the standard "BIG BOX" prototype as the subject matter for an art statement, by means of rotation, inversion, fragmentation, displacement, distortion of space, and invasion of nature. By engaging people's reflex identification with commonplace buildings, BEST

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<sup>152</sup> Agosti et al, 1968:14.

showrooms explored the social, psychological and aesthetic aspects of architecture.

Superimposed snap-shots of motion imply time as a phenomenal movement between frames or moments. For instance, Kenneth Frampton's description of Charles Gwathmey's early work as "rotational" is one such example of time being used to describe the movement between superimposed formal moments. These motion picture models of time instance a sequence into frames that are later reanimated with motion. They differ from the processional models of architecture as a static frame because they introduce the idea of architecture as multiply framed and therefore dynamic. The model of multiple frames is similar to the processional model because architecture is a frame to which motion and forces are added.

Since at least the time of Louis Sullivan's famous dictum, "form follows function," modern architecture has developed novel techniques for generating building form, from formal geometries to diagrams of function to flows charts. These can all legitimately be called morphogenetic if they influenced building form. However, the dynamic relation to flows remained largely metaphorical until the easy availability of digital computation. Solar access and orientation were among the first elements to be used in morphogenetic studies<sup>153</sup>, but surprisingly a truly dynamic approach to architectural morphogenesis did not originate with environmental studies.

In a 1996 article on the premises of animation techniques entitled "Blobs (or Why Tectonics is Square and Topology is Groovy)" Greg Lynn argued that "the mobile, multiple, and mutable body, while not a new concept, presents a paradigm of perpetual novelty that is generative rather than reductive." The novel morphogenetic properties of the new body are made possible by the development and animation of "'isomorphic polysurfaces' or what in the special-

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<sup>153</sup> Knowles, 1974

effects and animation industry is referred to as 'meta-clay,' 'meta-ball,' or 'blob' models." Lynn explains that "in blob modeling, objects are defined by monad-like primitives with internal forces of attraction and mass. Unlike conventional geometric primitives such as a sphere, which has its own autonomous organization, a meta-ball is defined in relation to other objects. Its center, surface area, mass, and organization are determined by other fields of influence<sup>154</sup>." Those "fields of influence" can include anything from the motion of the sun to the movement of people or of brand identities, anything whose influence can be assigned a value.

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Greg Lynn also tries to explain the confusion between the terms "animation" and "motion". "while motion implies movement and action, animation implies the evolution of a form and its shaping forces; it suggests animalism, animism, growth, actuation, vitality and virtuality". Obviously the essence of animation is assignable to the nature of city. Yet, it is problematic for architects, Lynn believes, because they maintained an ethics of statics in their discipline. Architecture is one of the last modes of thought based on the inert due to its dedication to permanence. Such timelessness is challenged by introducing architecture to fluid patterns of organizing the environment.

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154 Lynn 1996

## **III.II**

**Synthesis**

**Architecture to tame the "flow"**

**(Architecture that propel the city into a sphere of flux)**

**i**

**Synthesis**

**Euralille, the practice of branding the flow**

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### **i.i. City-branding**

Place and the city can be regarded as products. This approach to architecture and city planning attempts to develop archetypes as a rational method of place making. At the close of the twentieth century, a substantial portion of the tenets of postmodern architecture, New Urbanism, and urban design looked at the past to define spatial typologies that have timeless qualities and can be applied as solutions to contemporary urban problems<sup>155</sup>. Aldo Rossi<sup>156</sup>, Leon Krier, and others in Europe, as well as the architects who founded the New Urbanism movement in the United States, have influenced the education and practice of urban design by incorporating observation with the notion of urban typology. So, the concept of “type” finds an added importance in architectural training, because it carries the irreducible characteristics of the constituent elements of cities. Furthermore, besides an apparatus for classification, the type serves as a catalyst for invention or, as Rossi calls it, “the essence of design.” Rossi<sup>157</sup> argues as follows:

“Type is thus a constant and manifests itself with a character of necessity. . . . Ultimately, we can say that type is the very idea of architecture, that which is closest to its essence. In spite of changes, it has always imposed itself on the “feelings and reason” as the principle of architecture and of the city.”

The product-oriented approach focuses on tangible aspects of place, shorter rather than longer time spans, and a specific type of clientele rather than the entire community’s input. This does not mean, however, that architects’ contribution to the

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155 Ellin 1997

156 Rossi (1982), for example, associates cities with a sense of “permanence” that captures the collective memory and significance of residential districts irrespective of the replacement of individual housing units throughout time.

157 Rossi, 1982, 41

collective place-making experience is limited to a specific clientele. In fact, to the extent that their outcomes are part of the public realm, they also continue mediating the place-making process. Because the cities have more varied users, owners and governors. Some urban design projects like la Defense in Paris, London's Canary Wharf and Euralille can be seen as products with which purchasers have particular ties. These branded ties and attachments give a building or city an identity which differentiates them from the others. According to Jon Lang, city branding, or similarly place marketing, refer to the process of building a clear and positive set of images and association for a city in the world's mind in order to make it more attractive, and, ideally, unique and thus more easily marketable. The process of branding consists of the following steps: identification of the present image, asset identification, vision development, project planning, strategy implementation and the evaluation of the impacts of the whole branding process.

Evidently, wise architectural intervention can propel the institution, revitalization and renewal of a city. Thanks to Gehry-designed Bilbao museum, scholars realized the increased marketability to donors and visitors of a building designed by a name-brand architect. This trend is called "Bilbao effect". The city of Bilbao, following the decline of its heavy industry and the shutdown of steelworks, had a traditional image as a dismal city with nothing to offer. At the time, when Seville was inaugurating Spain's first high-speed train and celebrating world's fair; Barcelona was staging its Olympic games; and Madrid was chosen as the council of Europe's cultural capitals, Bilbao was imagining her future as a city of culture and services. In 1991, the concept was using a museum as a catalyst for economic renewal and urban revitalization. In 1997, the museum opened its doors to the general public and since it opened, it has attracted more visitors than the actual population of the city, each year. The museum has had an important psychological effect on a city

struggling against the loss of its traditional heavy industries. They recovered their self-esteem and the building became synonymous with the new born identity of the city. Gehry's Bilbao (*Picture III.37.*) has combined cultural, economic and political interests, alerting all to what an impressive object in the cityscape can accomplish<sup>158</sup>. Even the biggest cities in the world were not able to resist the pull of what architecture critics have dubbed "WOW! FACTOR".

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*Picture III.35. Bilbao museum*

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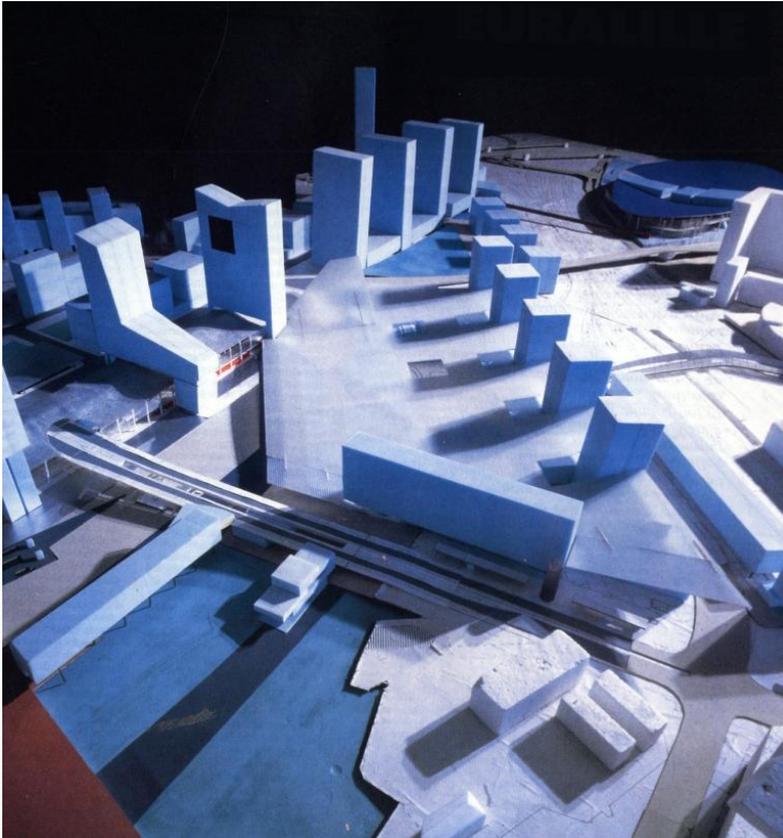
158 The most interesting aspect of Guggenheim museum is its achievement of new, successful economic growth patterns. New projects started soon after it: Fosteritos (little Foster) Metro system by Norman Foster, Bilbao's new airport and Zubizuri Foot Bridge by Santiago Calatrava, Zorrozaurre neighborhood Masterplan in Bilbao by Zaha hadid, César Pelli's Iberdrola Tower, Rafael Moneo's University library of Deusto, and Isozaki's Towers are among the legendary projects arrived in Bilbao soon after the museum. The effect was not limited to Bilbao. The concept diffused to the rest of the world and significantly influenced the American culture of architecture.

*Picture III.23. Bilbao museum*

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So, to survive in the world marketplace cities have to maintain a successful image, restore a past valid image or rebrand themselves after new images. The image of a city and therefore its brand are not static but evolving. An image gets adjusted over times by new experiences and information. The aim of branding is to diffuse new information and conception in order to sustain or change a city's image.

In this state of research, we tend to explore the qualitative transmutation of Euralille, master-planned by Rem Koolhaas, as a case study to examine how and through what process the identity and meaning are granted to what prima facie looks as ephemeral and uncorrelated as a nonplace or landscape of flow, but indeed has changed in nature and form to act as a branded image of the city.



*Picture III.36. Euralille master planned by Rem koolhaas*

Indeed, Euralille did not change its non-place role as a transit place or as a place where we can go anonymously and without having to talk to any one - as in shopping and retail centers, supermarkets, ... ; equally, there is not essentially ambiguous or indefinable schemas to be called non-places in an unfortunate manner. This process in some way, we argue, is on account of the process of city branding, and particularly branding the flows.

### **i.ii. Thematic presumptions:: Augé, non-place, fluid urbanism**

In the mid-twentieth century the itinerary of architectural movement coincided with a socio-cultural and technological shift in people's life style (less working hours, more leisure time, ...). With the rise of new patterns of transportation and instant technologies of communication the urban realms of cities were dramatically altered by new conception of space and time. As we discussed previously, Marc Augé, French anthropologist, assigned these conditions to the advent of a new stage of world in which the perception of time and space has been totally revolutionized.

We underline how Augé states that not only the sense of time is significantly complicated by the current overabundance of events, but also the sense of space is complicated by the present spatial overabundance. He proposes such characteristics of contemporary era as "supermodernity" which has provided notable opportunities for the birth of new ideas and also different principles according to which urban environments come to be judged and assessed.

Augé defined the spaces formed in relation to transportation, transit, leisure and commercial ends and the connections between these spaces, as well as the very means of transportation, among the idea of Non-place; where the "transition" and the "flow" is conceived as loss of identity, or at least as a

constantly ambiguous identity. We cited that the cities today are structured around and on the basis of these fields in so far that Koolhaas, for example, would like to theorize the convergence between contemporary city and airports. He dramatically alarms the occurrence of a dystopic scenario for our urban landscape in his manifestation, "Generic City"<sup>159</sup>.

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In today's complex world, the already discussed transformation in the conception of place and time has contributed to a picturesque and unusual experience of sites in which more priority is the case for quantitative rather than qualitative parameters<sup>160</sup>. The world and its habitants, therefore, were defined as objects rather than subjects and People were most often thought of as rational actors in a rational world<sup>161</sup>. Such view of humanity left no place for meaning and as a result was not concerned with place but only with location or distance<sup>162</sup>. Consequently, this insight proposed the narration of placelessness and non-place within the contemporary urban realms<sup>163</sup>.

The characteristics and features in these prevalence spaces, born with the name of non-places<sup>164</sup>, make us experience them quite different from the so called previously known "places"; because these non-places belong to an order for which no terminology yet exists. As a matter of fact, we live in a world that we have not been well educated how to look at<sup>165</sup>.

### **i.iii. Non-place versus Place**

The fast growing globalization and commodification of everything, even culture, has

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159 Koolhaas, 1995

160 Arefi, 1999

161 Cresswell, 2009

162 Norberg Schulz, 1988

163 Relph, 1976; Augé, 1995

164 Webber, 1964

165 Buchanan, 1999

generated a superficial, standard uniformity that displaces or makes use of the variety of local places, cultures and businesses<sup>166</sup> and tends towards the intelligence Modern technology, as wisely explored by Fritz Neumeyer, was to define a new changing urban identity, in both subjective and objective way. Neumeyer illustrated his argument with paintings by Adolf Menzell and Hans Baluschek representing the advent of Train in “Berlin landscape, 1848” and the “railroad within cityscape, 1890”, respectively (*Picture III.40 & III.41*).

The fast growing globalization and commodification of everything, even culture, has generated a superficial, standard uniformity that displaces or makes use of the variety of local places, cultures and businesses<sup>167</sup> and tends towards the intelligence of notions such as “The Generic City” or “Junkspace” as keenly labeled by Rem Koolhaas, or the non-places of urban realms in which shopping streets, business districts and urban realms in generally appear as always and ever the same and undistinguishable from one another. Mainly, the domains of highways, department stores, malls, train stations, transit and transportation zones and so on, being perceived as monotonous, raise the threatening remarks as “the end of place” and “the crisis of identity”, and, their competing academy of thought that “place still matters”.

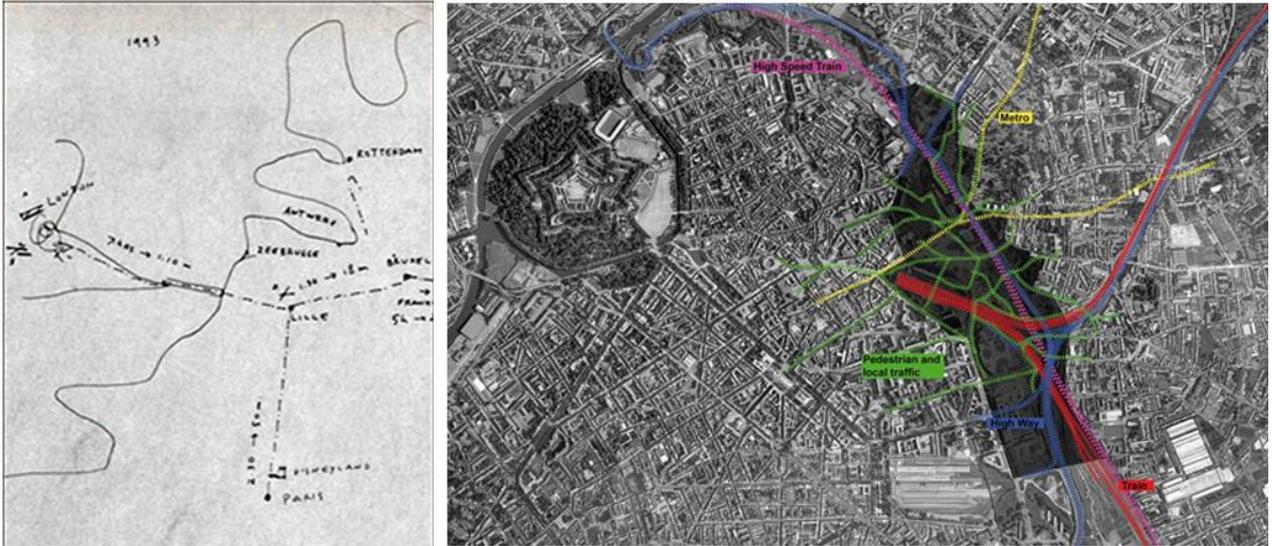
In this spot, fundamental questions such as “How important is a sense of place?” may invoke the discussion; but we are intended to explore a more challenging debate; that is to what extent the classic sense of place would response to the conditions and needs of contemporary spaces of flow such as Euralille? So we may argue that, however possible, it is irrelevant to assess the peculiarities of these fields with the qualitative frameworks of previously known places, already supported by classic literatures<sup>168</sup>.

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166 Sorkin 1992

167 Sorkin 1992

168 Lynch, 1981; Alexander, 1979; Jacobs, 1961



Picture III.37. The zero-hour of Euralille

#### i.iv. The zero-hour of Euralille

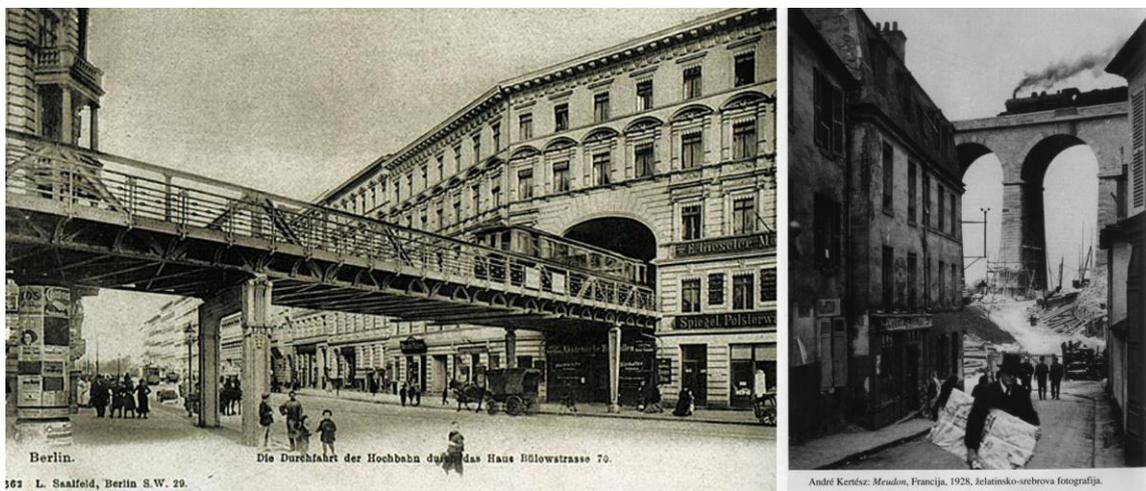
Owing to Lynch (1960) or Alexander (1979), the discussed qualities around the built landscape largely deal with inner conception or psychology of place rather than their objective counterparts, celebrated by Cullen (1961) for instance. Yet it is problematic to separate these interdependent twins. It is impossible to suppose that the physicality of spaces have remained the same over the time and only the subjective aspects have been transformed or vice versa.

Pointing out a photo of “the Berlin elevated railway entering a building” in early 20th century, he continued his impression with Andrea Kertesz’s Meudon photo in 1928, narrating a new, unexpected urban reality<sup>169</sup>; a kind of complexity which should not be viewed solely from the viewpoint of habitants, but also from the perspective of moving eyes who perceive the city always in transition. We leave this, rather, beyond the main scope of this paper.

169 Neumeyer, 1990



Picture III.38. Adolf Menzel, *Berlin landscape, 1848* (Left); H. Baluschek, *Railroad within cityscape, 1890* (Right)



Picture III. 39. *The Berlin elevated railway entering a building* (Left); André Kertész, *Meudon, 1928* (Right)

Yet, we are similarly witnessing bridges, highways and roads are climbing on top of one another to form a kind of Piranesian<sup>170</sup> complexity as

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170 Koolhaas's intervention to Euralille in central sector was not an addition but a subtraction. His "new urbanism" often manifests itself as a Derridean fascination with voids and absences, a virtual horror of buildings.<sup>52</sup> On that account, at the point of greatest infrastructural density, an absence of building reveals the highway, railway, three levels of parking, and the metro, which dives underneath the whole complex in one overtly metropolitan moment known as Piranesian space. In other words, his decision was simply to eliminate a part and

create a void, a hole, through a reverse process of creation to reveal all the surrounding forces. This practice was one of the main challenges in the early stages of the design process of Euralille to untangle the 'Gordian knot' of infrastructure including the high-speed railway, the ring road and local roads, the underground car park and the adjacent railway station. The way Koolhaas handled this problem made it one of the distinct and innovative elements of the Euralille design. The above-mentioned technique labeled as Espace Piranésien or Piranesian Space became code-name for Koolhaas's design scheme; an open space crisscrossed by bridges, elevators and escalators connecting the station, the metro, the car park and the ring road. That was a passage of suspended walkways and angled escalator ramps at the transfer point between the underground train tracks and the station.<sup>54</sup> A first view of Piranesian space strives less to reassure the people of Lille than to win them over the magic of spiraling motor routes.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, so detached was the conceptual thinking from sensual experience that OMA's creation of an oppressively disorienting "Piranesian space" was treated as a virtue.<sup>56</sup>

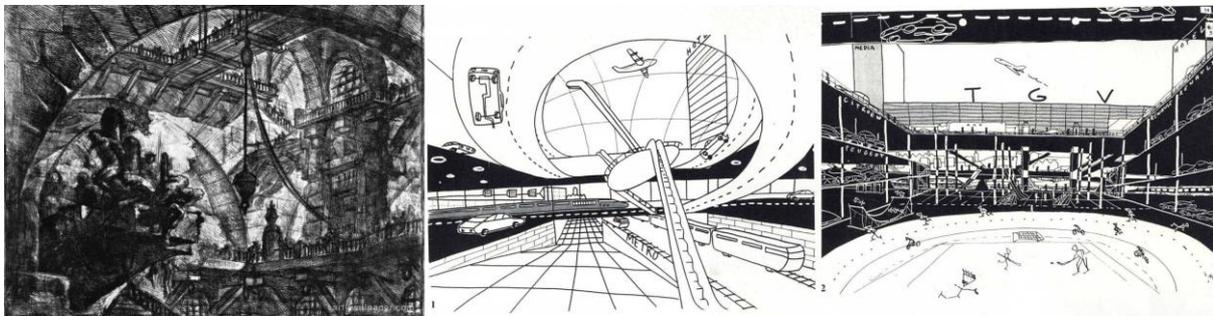
As for Koolhaas, it was meant to constitute a crater open to the sky where the theme of "interconnexion" between the traffic flows of the futurist metropolis would be expressed in spectacular fashion. Thus it was shaped like a well with an amazing spiral automobile route linking the Le Corbusier viaduct and the silo garages that border the opening on two sides. Underground trains passed in the depth, while TGV high-speed trains and cars rushed around its sides. Even though you are deep underground, there is daylight; you still have a window to the city and a view of the TGV. Subsequent to fire security regulations, and in order to limit the levels of intervention of the diverging architects-in-chief, the OMA proposed a solution no less unusual: the separation of space in height by means of translucent slabs acting like a skating rink!<sup>58</sup>

However, there is still a strong feeling that Euralille is a barrier and an alien element in the city, and in all objectivity it cannot be denied that it is both. The station itself, stretched along the ring road and high above ground level, increases the barrier effect, at least visually. Furthermore, the railway and the yard of Lille Flandres station separate the Grand Palais from the rest of the project. The scale of the whole project, as well as different parties, and its architectural 'language' are completely different from those of the

quintessence of our case in point, Euralille (*picture III.42*).

Less or more, a century later Euralille started in virtually vacant area which enabled a scale that Koolhaas could express his catchphrase "Bigness"; and in a non-city with nothing but some raw materials including spaghetti bowls of train tracks and roadway interchanges, primitively generators of non-place effects. Koolhaas interprets his working there as a shock for himself, and asserts that in matters related to the city, he has always wanted to minimize the power of architect, architecture and even city planning. When he saw himself obliged to create an order and to play the role of city planners in the most traditional sense, it was a great surprising:

*"An odd feeling, a mixture of humor and fear, came over him and brought him an uncertainty that if he was the one to be asked to deal with such serious issues?!"*



*Picture III.40. Giovanni Piranesi, bibliotheque nationale (Left), Koolhaas,s schemes for Euralille (Center & Right)*

He acknowledged his incapability of orchestrating a coherent civic milieu and ironically ignored planning and mastering the urbanity<sup>171</sup>:

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inner city (with the exception perhaps of the modern block opposite the Euralille Centre). So it is no longer part of any urban tissue according to Koolhaas`s famous manifestation, "bigness".<sup>59</sup>

<sup>171</sup> Vine, 1995; Ketcham, 1995

*“To choose to build cities at the end of the 20th century is to accept the city as it is.”*

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Hence, instead of trying to hide the transient impressions in the spaces of flow, in the case of Euralille, not only the infrastructure of movement is surprisingly revealed but glorified as an object of esthetic contemplation. The transportation elements are exposed to display the crisscrossing motion of automobiles, train, subway and TGV. That is due to the fact that the “transition” is not considered as loss of identity or as a constantly ambiguous identity, in Koolhaas’ point of view. In other words, almost everything is in transit, nowadays. Any conception of time simultaneously recalls that of non-time and any space is a non-space at the same time.

While a disappointing conclusion might be the fact that an individual, at the present moment, is confused with the crisis of identity due to his/her bound and transient relations with society and environment, we may hopefully suggest that he/she constantly exists inside transitory positions which are not commonly known places as defined earlier; however they are not essentially ambiguous or indefinable schemas to be called non-places in an unfortunate manner. That is to say, nowadays, we all live in times and places, at one and the same time, in non-times and non-places without feeling lost, vagueness or placelessness.

#### **i.v. The case of Euralille: Koolhaas versus urbanism of flow**

In 1988, diverse groups of architects-urbanists namely Claude Vasconi, Macary, Lion and Viguiier-Jodry from France and Norman Foster, Vittorio Gregotti, Koolhaas and Ungers from the rest of Europe, were asked to elaborate an oral response to the scheme of Euralille within a limited period of time (Picture III.40); and in 1989, OMA (Office of Metropolitan Architects) was chosen over Lion and

the others to be master planner of such vast program encompassing a station for the high-speed TGV trains, six overscale high-rises, a world trade center and 10million square feet of space devoted to retail outlets, offices, parks, residential buildings, hotels and cultural facilities on the site of the former city fortifications.

OMA`s selection was based far more on its working method than any concrete architectural proposal. The method attempts to reconcile the best

*1988, Oral responses to the scheme of Euralille*



*Picture III.41. Participants in oral competition for Euralille master plan, 1988*

of analytical rigour and subjective intuition in architecture. Koolhaas states that the town was primarily interested in exploiting the enormous potential brought about by the high speed train and the connected infrastructural measures in order to bring the programs that had been banned to the periphery back into the center. This meant not only creating the conditions for the smooth functioning of these programs, but also taking into consideration criteria such as architectural and urban dignity.

Working on Euralille was quite a shock for Koolhaas. He asserts that in matters related to the city, he has always wanted to minimize the power of architect, architecture and even city planning. When he saw himself obliged to create an order and to play

the role of city planners in the most traditional sense, it was a great surprising to him.

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The integration of a project into the city is one of the most significant patterns of urban design thanks to classic strategies. In Euralille, one objective was the connection and integration of the inner city with the neighborhoods on the other side of the ring road, while the integration of the Euralille project itself within the existing city was one of the main challenges Koolhaas faced when he conceived the urban design.

The site was a no-man`s land between city and suburb. Working in fringe-area situation, with Suffering from the gaps grown between their mythical role and the actual situations in which they work, in the viewpoint of Koolhaas, makes rchitects to find themselves in non-architectural conditions. The fringe areas, simultaneously, puts the architects face to face with their shortcomings and gives them the means to parry. It presents a sort of raw material state of landscape.

Previously, the Euralille site was occupied by a little-used park and even then the site was already considered an urban void; the ring road was also there at that time. There was no site, in the conventional sense. It was completely artificial. The site for bulk of the scheme was, indeed, devoid of recognizable architectural landmarks or references, and has few, if any, topographical features of note.<sup>39</sup> Comprising approximately one million square meters program, the strategy of EuraLille pursued the inserting an entirely new city in a complicated urban condition.

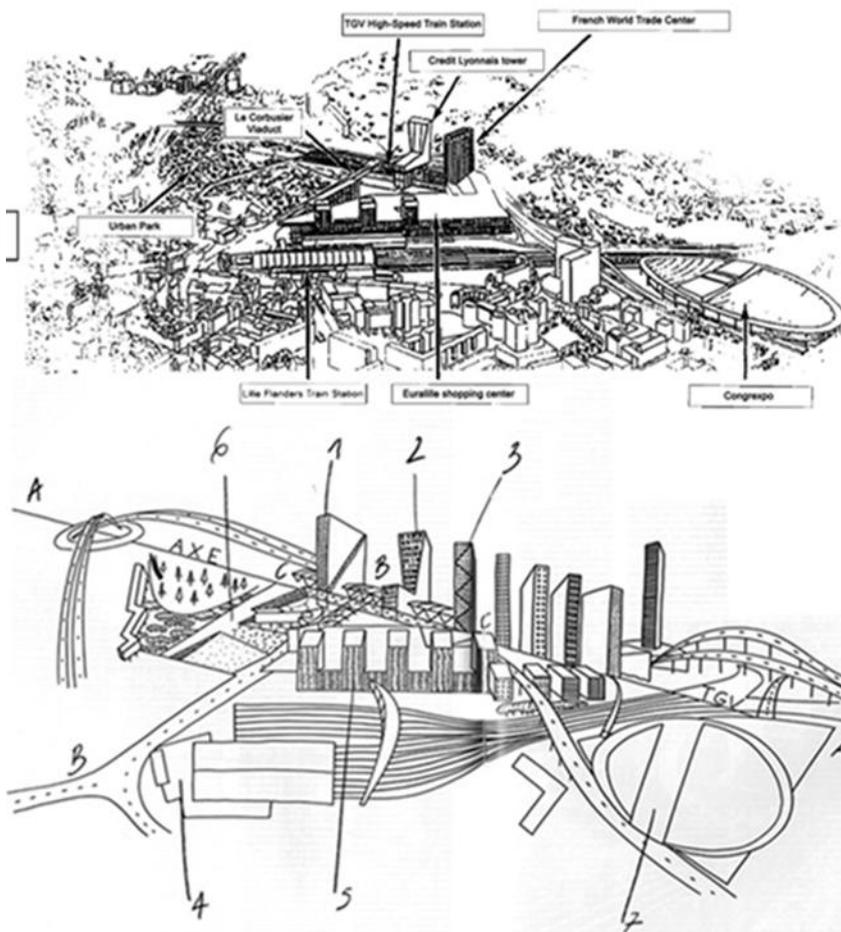
This fake city has not been spawned by Lille; it has just landed there. In simpler terms, it is and is not part of the old town. Koolhaas wisely noticed that both the investors and users of EuraLille are not initially interested in either the existing city or in any continuation or recreation of its traditional urban fabric.<sup>41</sup> "The qualities of a traditional city are simply not there...and we have been very frank about avoiding the ambition of creating such qualities",

Koolhaas asserts. The life of the scheme revolves around electronic media and inter-city travel. It is never going to be a regular part of the city, but a place in transit between London and Paris. It is nothing to do with Lille, nothing to do with “being there”. That is why he spoke of a project dealing with metropolis as being distinct and easy to perceive in it.<sup>42</sup> His fundamental refusal to copy and repeat the features of traditional cities was brave, honest and refreshing, but not without considerable risks.<sup>43</sup>

Great spaghetti bowls of train tracks and expressway interchanges, graceless boxlike towers, desolates plazas, the annihilation of any possibility of small-street-life- all the new-familiar elements of exurb sterility are here.

Located on the site of the old city walls, the project's territory stretches along the TGV high speed train line (Picture III.44:AA) for a distance of some two kilometers and a width of five hundred meters, covering an area of near on seventy hectares; in a narrow zone of “hyper-modernity”, between the historic city and its current suburb, Euralille is taking shape as a medley of works by various architectural hands. Set at a right angle to the TGV line, the Le Corbusier viaduct was constructed to link the inner city and the Euralille Centre with the station and the ring road and the La Madeleine and Saint Maurice districts beyond (Picture III.44:BB). In the middle of the site lies the large horizontal segment of the TGV train station, five hundred meters long (Picture III.44:CC) and rhythmmed by three one hundred meter-high towers namely a hotel by Lille architects Francois and Marie Delhay (Picture III.44:1) the Portzamparc's 20-storey boot-shaped Credit Lyonnais tower (Picture III.44:2) and French world trade center (Picture III.44:3). Between the old terminus train station (Lille Flanders station) sunk in the old fabric of the city (Picture III.44:4), the new regional train station- designed by Jean-Marie Duthilleul in collaboration with Peter Rice- and the Le Corbusier axis, lies the Triangle des gares, Jean Nouvel's gigantic business services complex covering

forty thousand square meters of floor space with the name of “Euralille shopping center” (Picture III.44:5). The Triangle’s compact mineral mass is balanced by a wide expanse of greenery covering ten hectares, the Urban park proposed by Yves Burnier (Picture III.44:6). Lastly, beyond the mesh of railway lines, lies the only architectural intervention of OMA which is a service zone with a congress and trade fair center, Congrexpo -also known as “Grand Palais”-, covering forty thousand square meters of floor space (Picture III.44:7).



Picture III.42. Euralille’s scheme

Koolhaas’s concentration was over the TGV station. He noticed the importance of making the TGV visible so that the people of Lille would be able to inspect the event that would completely transform the fate of the city ...” It has become a

mutual exposure of the TGV and the city. The station must have been much more than a place to get on and off trains. The section was developed in order to be permeable from many points to perform as connecting the different components of the new city including parking, towers, metro and commercial center. It is completely transparent and is in favour of the needs for a public Anti-Midas risk in Non-place of Non-city Working in peripheral areas, architects are supposed to stimulate a sort of anti-architectural aesthetic. This is one of the major contradictions of the profession and it is also tragic, a kind of Anti-Midas touch. Midas was a legendary king in Greek myths who received the gift to have everything that he touched turn to gold. Whereas King Midas turned all he touched to gold, everything architects touch in fringe areas, fades and becomes valueless. Discovering the periphery, architects began to formulate and articulate things that might have been better left to the unconscious.<sup>44</sup> However Koolhaas was aware of this issue, the Lille project approved him to experience the classic role of an architect and it was a golden occasion.

Perhaps even more explicitly than in any of Koolhaas' previous designs the themes of "density and multitude of different uses of the skyscraper" and "the highly commercialized space of the shopping centre and the amusement park" are evidently present in Euralille. These themes particularly keep returning in Koolhaas's writings as *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* in 1978, *Junkspace* in 2002, *Bigness* and "The Generic City" in 1995.

### **i.vi. Complexity versus diversity**

The city, herself, is a phenomenon of structured complexity, in general; and the task of building a sense of place or a "piece of city" is much more complex than planning even a new town. Apart from the physical attributes of our surrounding (buildings, spaces and street patterns) and the sensory or

imagery conception of it, the quality of urban place or urbanity stands on the ground of activities and events. The liveliest and the most attracting urban areas tend to be places of complex variety.

Koolhaas was well aware of the fact that the key to responsive and successful urban place is the transaction base<sup>172</sup> and such structure of city economy must be as complex and intricate as possible with networks of firms, multinational companies and businesses. This is the essence of growing a fine grain city economy, already underlined Jacobs' "The death and life of great American cities"<sup>173</sup>. Needless to say, not all transactions take a monetary form and not all are economic. So, what could be appreciated is an urban hybrid typology that creatively integrates experiential and socio-cultural values in addition to functional and economic aspects. It was strongly promoted by Victor Gruen and James Roues in their efforts to progress shopping center not simply to sell merchandise but to improve social and civic life. So, rather than retails, office and housing facilities, the aim is to highly fill the site by entertainment, culture and other complementing event components to shape a hub of experience entirely organized around the specific corporate's identity, be it an outlet center like Prada Universe, entertainment districts like Universal CityWalks, service centers as Potsdamer Platz Berlin or Zentrum Zurich North, leisure theme parks or, here, upgraded intermodal center as Euralille.

To achieve this goal, the concept of themed "urban entertainment destination" suggesting a mix of entertainment, dining and retail, as trinity of synergy, is taken into account<sup>174</sup>. This hybrid of urban program forms an experiential epicenter of activities and transaction, in broad sense of use. Accordingly, in Euralille, as far as Koolhaas and trustees were

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172 Montgomery, 1998

173 Jacobs, 1961

174 Beyard, 2001

concerned, the fundamental idea was to shift from a pure transition service area into an experience-oriented economy hub. The diversity of use and forms contributing to the users' ambition of having maximized degrees of option and choice, enrich the opportunities, and subsequently, vitality and responsiveness of an experiential urban territory. For this reason, Koolhaas in Euralille puts forward the "culture of congestion" in squeezing everything together into upwardly expanding space and not setting the buildings apart merely through their functions. Proposing a linear station building and the alignment of series of skyscrapers on it, he subtly reproduces the paradigm of train, hall and tower, which was once applied in Manhattan's Madison square garden, whose exhibition halls grew out of the train station and culminated in a tower (*Picture III.45*).

Such concept basically refresh the classical principle of fine vertical-grain to achieve urbanity, already highlighted by Jane Jacobs. Evidently, the themes of "density and multitude of different uses of the skyscraper" are crystal clear in Euralille. These themes particularly keep returning in Koolhaas's writings as *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* in 1978, *Junkspace* (2001), *Bigness and The Generic City* (1995). While neo-traditional urbanism tendencies pay much more attention to concrete terms like compactness, Koolhaas, quite contrarily, points to the problem of bigness, in which architecture traverse the architecture, the architect and even the city. It sets back the city as it is itself a city or at least it is the borderland outlook of city and non-city<sup>175</sup>.

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175 Arefi, 1999



*Picture III.43.* Manhattan's Madison square, New York

Besides, Koolhaas's interpretation of congestion did not merely proceed to physical or material terms, but a sort of pressure that is exerted on our lives by all sorts of networks, even immaterial ones such as the radio or telephone. In the light of this project London can be reached within two hours, Paris in one and Brussels in less than 30 minutes, and, Cologne and Amsterdam would be two hours away. So, Far can be near. What was of significance here was not where Euralille was but where it led, and how quickly. In this sense, even if Lille itself is not congested, it is in direct contact with general congestion as London and Paris. The infrastructural networks of Euralille, considerably gives rise to the process of time-space compression in Europe. It is a condition of modern society, in Koolhaas's point of view, that such situation and culture of congestion,

partly concrete and partly virtual, exists even outside of the city<sup>176</sup>.

Correspondingly, Koolhaas was inspired by surreal artifice and the mentioned congestion of the humming metropolis<sup>177</sup> and his scenario for Lille - already hinted at “delirious New York”- was a method, invented by surrealists known as “Cadavre exquis” (or exquisite cadaver or Exquisite corpse or rotating corpse), by which a collection of words or images is collectively assembled. Each collaborator adds to a composition in sequence, either by following a rule or by being allowed to see the end of what the previous person contributed. As for him, recently, all operations reveal something of such notion, even if unintentionally.

Indeed, various particles will be articulated piece by piece with disconnected and discontinuous roles (*Picture III.47*). On the basis of this technique, odd consequences will be seen on the end result. Hence, all sectors were obliged to fit into the clothes prescribed by the Koolhaas’s master plan.

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*Picture III.44.* Euralille brand

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176 L’architecture d’aujourd’hui, 1992

177 Jones, 1997

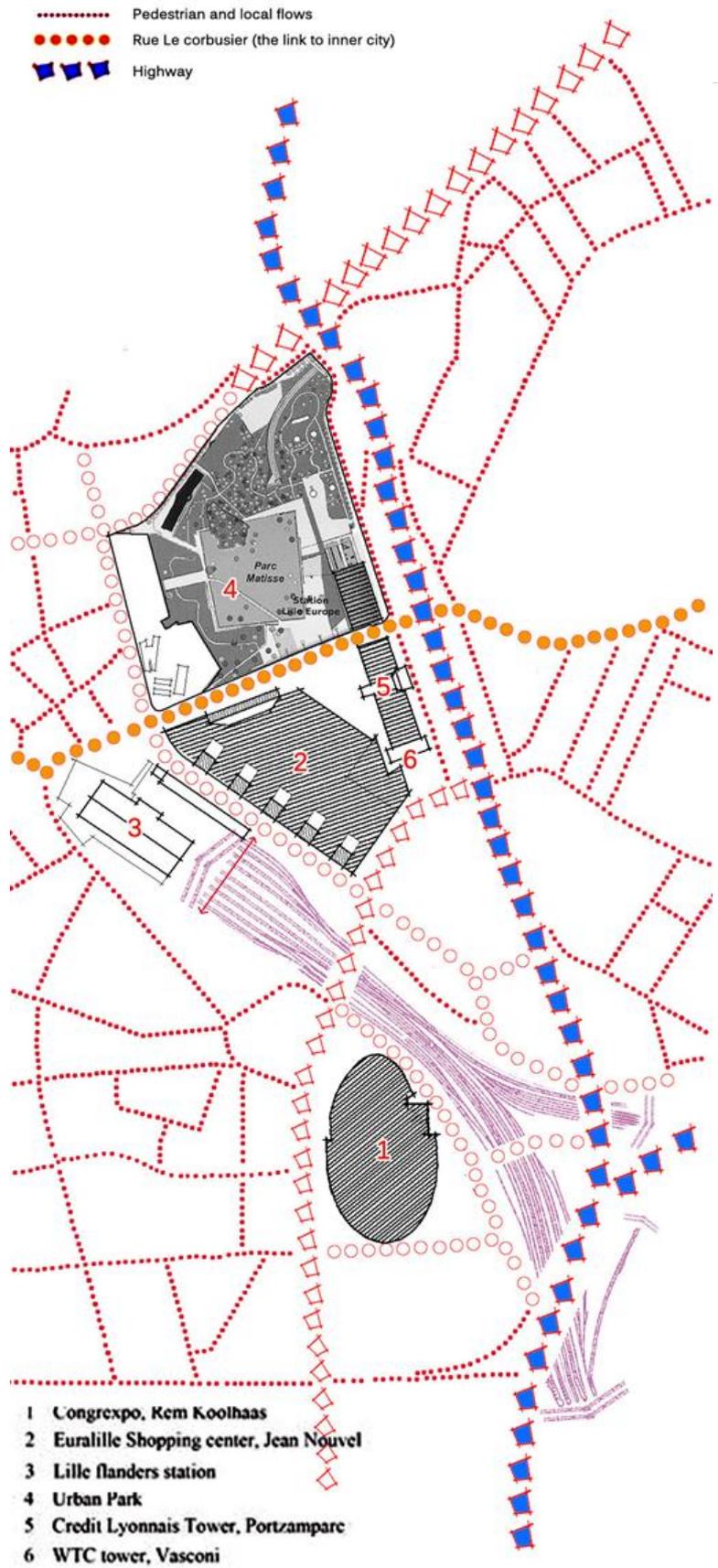


Picture III.45. Paul Citroen, *Metropolis*, Photomontage 1923 (Left); Brnard Dumaine, *Excquisite corpse* (Right)

In his master plan, Koolhaas narrowed the space by proposing a linear station building with the alignment of series of skyscrapers straddling the station. It was not the density of the development which necessitated building towers, but the will to create recognizable icons.

Kazuo Shinohara, Japanese architect whose proposal for the hotel was ignored to be built, suggests that the towers` line-up over the roof of the train station is evocative of a row of actors standing on a huge stage. There is no surprise as in the market-oriented era in which we live, every business is becoming a stage. Not only commerce is integrating to everything, also everything even culture is melting to commerce. The terms emotionalization and dematerialization of consumption spells out that customer do not buy purely material commodities any more but themes,

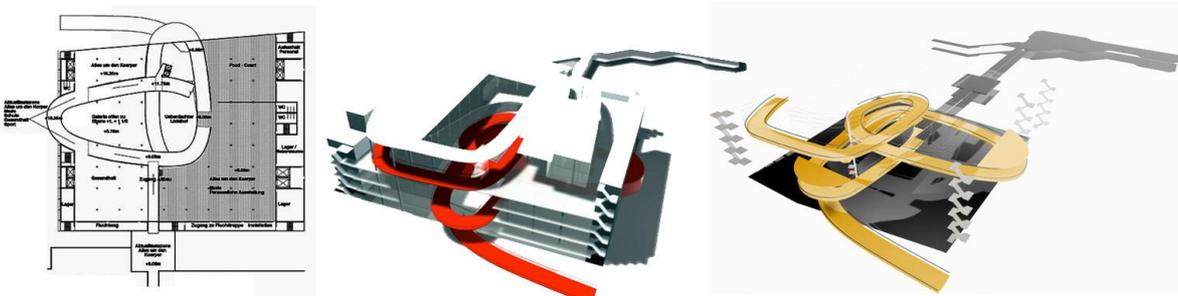
concepts, messages, symbols, events and experiences. Obvious that staging experience is not



Picture III.46. Euralille Analysis

just about entertaining customers. Comparable to theater, the sequence of events, including everything from props to stage directions, must be worked out in details to attract and engage the potential customers as actors rather than simply passive spectators<sup>178</sup>. Koolhaas, however, sets against this idea, pointing that the whole notion of shopping being thought of as a theatrical experience has been suggested by architects like Jon Jerde, who have been involved in creating these shopping environments, and it is a very distorted way of looking at them. It is a kind of excuse. In his interview with Arq in 2001, Koolhaas declares that Jon Jerde would like to think that he is an organizer of theatre, but actually it is wishful thinking. And by calling it theatre, shopping is made to seem harmless; harmless it doesn't deserve.

Appropriately, Bernard Tschumi, in his design proposal for the un-built K-Polis Department Store in Zurich in 1995 asserts that department store and museums have one thing in common: the need for seduction through a language of display. Each product exhibited becomes an object of desire, and walking is the preferred means to apprehend such objects of desire. So, he puts a ramp occasionally to intersect envelope of the building and appear as a volume on the exterior. The ramp ascends in a random manner and intersects with all parts of the building, defining intensity and area of use. It is the main street of the Polis, open at late hours.



Picture III. 47. K-Polis department store, proposal by Bernard Tschumi

<sup>178</sup> Pine & Gilmore, 1999

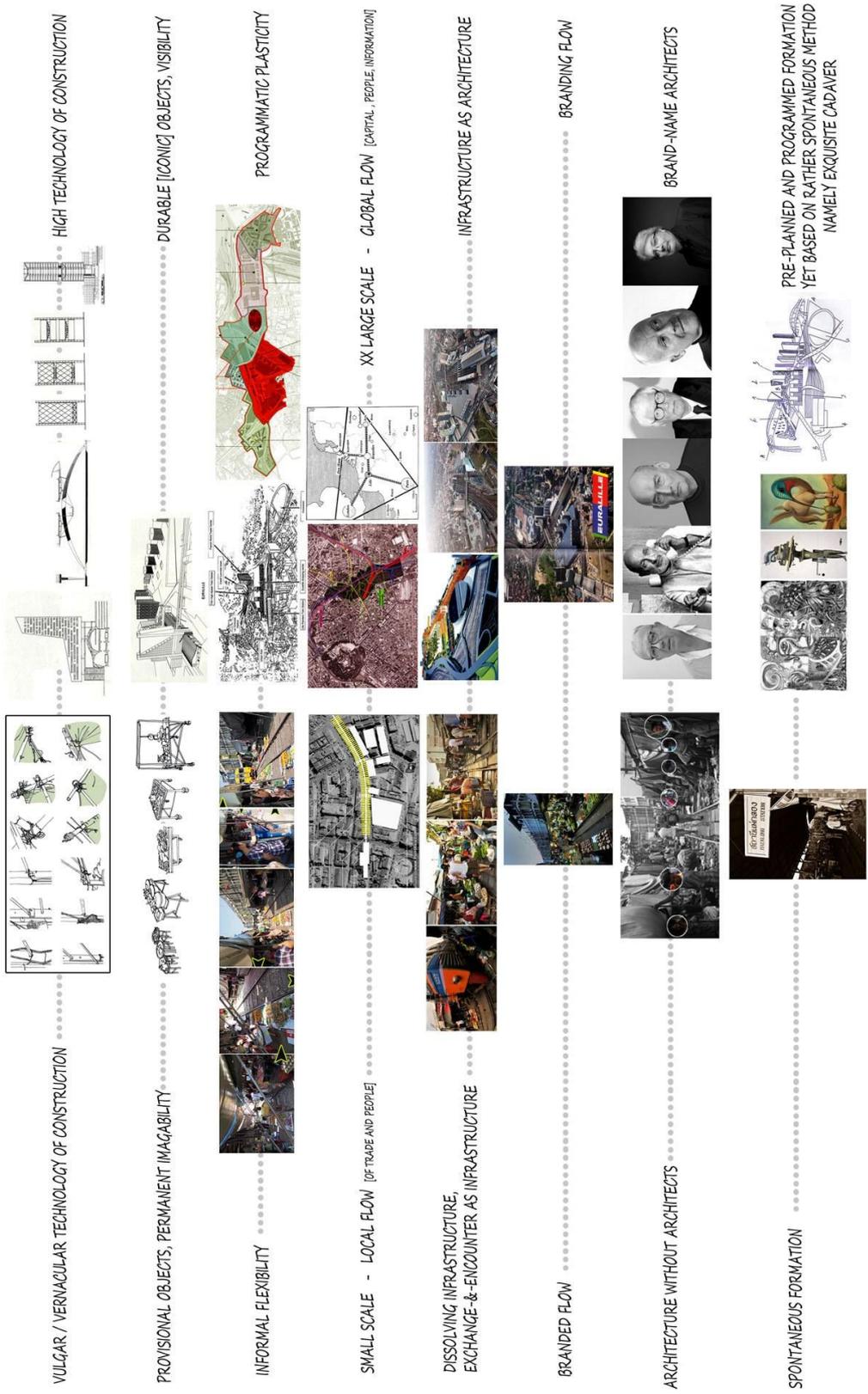
By and large, in the virtue of the previously discussed concepts of hybrid urban space and the high volumes of pedestrians foot fall, shopping, leisure and culture environments are not surprisingly secondary to the primary function of Euralille site as an intermodal setting. Our explorations on Euralille is interesting in what it strives to give identity and meaning to the place at first sight looks as a non-place. However it didn't change its non-place role and characteristic as a transit place and as a place you can go anonymously. it confirms a change in one dimension of place : Somehow the area has become monumental. This occurred to Euralille probably as a result of "BIG BRAND NAMES" (i.e. Carrefour, Ferrari, Moët et Chandon, Armani and so). But on top of that, this trend was due to being filled up with " brand-name architects' masterpieces" (i.e. Jean Nouville's shopping center, Christian Portzamparc's Credit Lyonnais tower, Rem Koolhaas' Congrexpo, etc.) as a row of actors standing on a huge stage or on red carpet, due to Koolhaas's exquisite cadavers method. Designed by signature architects, the aim was to mediate corporate identities to a broad audience in an experiential public space. As embodiment of symbols or a specific image or lifestyle, they are a veritable reification of the consumer commodity itself. These names are everywhere, turning any place into always and ever the same place. So, the idea is not only about the Branded chain stores, but also, covers the omnipresent branded architects' iconic forms. We are afraid to acknowledge most of the constructed pieces could not be considered as the most brilliant and notable practices of their starchitects. The whole project, as well as different parties, and its architectural 'language' are somehow uncommon. The brutality and ugliness in some parts of the area cannot be denied and the project is subject to many critics concerning the issues of walkability, responsiveness and the relation with the entire city in so far that Koolhaas, in a roguish manner, defends that critics of Euralille as a place hold no grounds against a non-place. Nevertheless,

an amenable mind would conceive aesthetic and responsiveness in the project, yet on the basis of Koolhaas' architectural accent.

For all that, this scenario is evidently a new approach to the conception of time, space and urban planning and is in quest of an unusual vision to face with it. There, a new landscape of globalization has imposed different logics of space and time; those of supermodernity or those of spaces of flow. Number of observations, though, asserts that people are talented at creating a sense of place, or being at home, even in such alien environments, and this might be the starting point of further studies.

**ROM HOOB'S MARKET**

**EURALILLE**



Picture III.48 A comparison between spontaneous flows in Rom Hoob's market and predesigned flows in Euralille.

ii

Synthesis

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**Foreign Office Architects and a smooth fluidity in  
Yokohama port terminal**

The Yokohama Port Terminal design by Foreign Office Architects (FOA) can be conceived as the continuity of Lynn's fluid and dynamic conception of space. The project attempts to refocus the life of city within the space of intense movement in a dynamic-oriented perspective, and casts the spaces of unimpeded flow as liberating and productive functions for experiencing the space.

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Picture III.49. Yokohama port terminal designf by Foreign Office Architects

The space shaped by circulation entailed a 'no-return diagram' creates a 'field of movement with no structural orientation.' the no return diagram for the circulation challenges the linear structure traditionally found on piers<sup>179</sup>. By collapsing the idea of ground, walls and ceiling into one continuously flowing skin, their investigation into the idea of an "enveloping ground" led to a building which integrates the city and the visiting cruise liners in a seamless flow of public space. The linkage of mobility weaves the seamless surface interaction from inside to outside and provides a function-mixer dominated by the flow of people, cars, ships, and information<sup>180</sup>.

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179 breathing, 49

180 Yuan Zhu, NEO-MAT-BUILDING, The 4th International Conference of the International Forum on Urbanism (IFoU),

The plan of the Terminal, with its swinging topography, looks like the sample of a meteorological map deformed by the flows that cross the site. It gives the illusion that the complex field of forces that Lynn simulates around his buildings was suddenly materializing, turning into the building itself. Thus, FOA's building is similar to a monolith through which voids are sculpted from the inverted pattern of flows of air and people, like a riverbed is sculpted by a relentless flow of water<sup>181</sup>.

By folding the ground surfaces like sheets of wet cardboard, FOA creates "geology of the hollow", where the ground is no longer a series of flat planes put perpendicular to the forces of gravity. It becomes instead a folded structure that remains stable by virtue of a geometrical structure that moves stresses through surfaces. By manipulating the ground surfaces, they manage to construct a continuous field where the different spaces of the Terminal distinguish themselves by the ground's subtle inflexions. For Alejandro Zaera-Polo, these manipulations of the ground are a response to the distortion of geographical, geological, cultural and economic grounds submitted to the influence of economic regimes of flexible accumulation. The issue for him was to make the artificial ground of the Terminal a material that could be manipulated, so as to respond and react actively to the repeated deformations of global geographies. The result is a complex artificial topography conceived of as a single and thick surface, including all the spaces and structural devices. Inside, the whole structure – the columns, the beams, the openings – are each absorbed in the folded surface.

The sections of the project do not express a complex juxtaposition of objects, but a thick and composite surface. In order to understand the role that FOA give to flows in the conception of the

Yokohama Port Terminal, we need to return to Zaera-Polo's earlier writings. In his article entitled "Order out of Chaos: The Material Organization of Advanced Capitalism", he stresses the role of hybrid building in post-industrial geographies. He suggests that, hybrid buildings such as the corporate towers of Manhattan and the fashion buildings of Tokyo's city centre act as local devices allowing the temporary fixation of economic flows. They are local devices that permit their solidification in urban topographies. By combining in a very compressed space a variety of programs, such as hotels, apartments, commercial activities, and headquarters as well as public spaces, they play on effects of punctual concentrations. Their concentration then enables them to produce a field of influence all around them, to become more attractive, and capture erratic flows of capital and people.

When we now look at FOA's terminal, their use of flows becomes clearer. Just like the hybrids buildings of New York and Tokyo, the Terminal acts as a local device whose function is to turn flows of passengers into an urban topography. The term "topography" is taken here in a very literal sense. For, instead of creating a hard spot of vertical density surrounded by a loose field of influence, the Terminal unfolds as a thick and horizontal topography. It thus integrates the field of influence that hybrid building use to create around them, and becomes its own field of influence, thus reaching a further degree of hybridization<sup>182</sup>.

Ignasi de sola-Morales Rubio, Catalan architect, historian and philosopher, outlined the notion of "liquid architecture" similar to the idea of flow urbanism. For him, an architecture that engages human flows in traffic connections, airports, terminals and railway stations cannot be connected with appearance or image. Becoming flow means to manipulate the contingency of events, establishing strategies for the distribution of individuals, goods or

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182 Delalex:37

information<sup>183</sup>. FOA's approach in Yokohama was achieved by the idea that circulation can literally shape space. Their design was an attempt to create a building that would break the linear organization of movement associated with the structure of a typical pier. So, the project provided endless circulating loops merged with the flow space of the terminal. Yet, this objective was developed by conceiving the structure and the circulation behaviors (flows) of people as a complex whole and within a unified seamless surface, a building without parasitic existence of stairs, columns and so on. The indeterminate form of flow urbanism, takes the advantages of the flow of people to shape a place of integration and gathering. The social potential of the project is conditioned and evaluated by flows, in temporal, spatial and behavioral terms of use. FOA asserts that "where statistic, enclosure and gates determined in the past the qualities of building in cities, dynamics, flow, connections and bifurcation have become the core of the contemporary urban phenomenology<sup>184</sup>.

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183 Stickells, heterotopia of flows

184 *ibid*

# IV

## Conclusion

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While preoccupation of architecture was traditionally about the resolution of forms and about photogenic structures attracting a great deal of attention, this research attempted to explore some of the most pressing socio-economic spatial questions of our times: the issue of flow. The way things are connected together and the way materials and data move between things, is more difficult to discuss, but more necessary, because it is what makes things work. Planners and architects, we argued, need to consider the flow of people through buildings, the flow of energy into environments, and waste out of them, the flows of information from/into spaces and the flows of any form capitals which influence the practice and experience of architecture.

In addressing the questions such as What is happening in all these spaces and to what extent the concept of flow correlate with architecture of the city, our studies ranged between the local the global, the empirical and the theoretical, the utopian and dystopian, the disciplinary and the transdisciplinary realms.

Space of flow, however, does not penetrate in all spheres of human experiences. The majority of people live in places- *where form, function and meaning depend on physical propinquity*. Nevertheless, not all places are rich in terms of livability and social interaction. Since, in today's world, power and functions are organized on the grounds of fluidity, the logics of flow change the meaning and vitality of spaces of place.

When we think about space of flow or non-place, where transit points and temporary abodes are growing, where dense networks of transportation and communication are conquering the cities, and where everyday life is integrated with loitering in supermarkets and malls, and with wordless, unmediated and contractual interactions with slot machines— we should not conceive such realities only as threats. But, is it really impossible to make significant attachments to place if we move about

too much, rarely stopping to linger and create roots? Variations of this argument, such as the demise of place or place still matters, are now quite commonplace.

Architects, planners and urban designers can address such concerns seeking to reconcile accessibility with propinquity, movement with settledness and so on. It is essential to think of new rites of passage that not only facilitate accessibility but also respect new sense of place and social and cultural interaction. But rather than such subjective aspect of flow, there is still dominated question around the shape of flows in contemporary architecture. Is it practical to shape the flows? And, if so, what form one should give to flows? Can we regard the flows as subject matters or as primary materials of design?

Against such backdrop, the main contribution of this research was to advocate the reciprocal correlation between flows and architecture of the cities. That is to say, in the same way that urban and architectural settings shape the flows in formal, functional and metaphorical senses, the flows are mutually shaping, taming and transforming the formation, configuration and the operation of buildings, and cities.

Having generalized the meaning of “flow”, we surveyed the theme of bazaar and the flows of people, as well as, their social, informational and commercial transactions. We tried to link the fluid, socio-architectural features of bazaar with the structure of the ever-changing city. Also, we explored an informal practice of architecture: the case of Rom-Hoob’s market. In general, informality defines the urban landscapes of particular cities, with vendors squatting in-between nodes that are either unanticipated or undetermined by urban designers or urban regulators<sup>185</sup>. However, the case of Rom-Hoob was not a left-over space. In fact, the compact

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185 Tiwari, G. 2010, *Informality and its discontents in “The endless city”*, Burdett & Sudjic Ed., Phaidon press, p.348

nature of the city and the need for land transformed the face of railway into a space of flows of people and goods. These two themes indicated a fundamental principle that links the growth of markets with the flows of crowd. Where there are high volumes of commuters' foot fall, such as main streets, railway station and transport oriented spaces, shopping facilities are highly likely to succeed<sup>186</sup>. Commercial structures, the mirror of prevailing consumerism, make it possible to delve into the chaos of flows and networks. But perhaps they also allow us to discover new boundaries of order and new paths for dialogue, addressing the archaic theme of the square as the "place of gazes".

Accordingly, we studied Rem Koolhaas' Euralille where the main problem was to give form, around the new station that connected the French and English railway systems, to a heterogeneous hub of flows on a 70-hectare triangular area on the urban fringe of Lille's historic center. We described his approach as the practice of branding the flows. In a fine recent book, Scandurra suggests that urban planners learn from the birds, studying their ways of flying in groups, the flocks continuously changing direction as they often gather in the sky and form changing flows. Euralille grasped and tamed potentials of flows in order to revive the prosperity of the city. Koolhaas understands flows in their most indeterminate and uncontrollable nature. In his projects, he often favours intricate combinations of programmes and spaces. These combinations respond to the unstable nature of movements around which he conceives and constructs his buildings, giving rise to various and often unexpected architectural devices : the spiralling ramp of the Zeebrugge sea trade centre, the hollow topography of the Agadir convention centre, the intersecting ramps of the Rotterdam Kunsthal, the enigmatic voids carved out from the solid block of the French

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186 Coleman, Peter, *Shopping environments: Evolution, Planning and Design*, Architectural Press, 2006, p.232

public library or the drive-thru road infrastructure that cuts through the Lille congress centre in the early stage of the project. These devices are similar to performative, or operative, structures. They perform a movement that engages the overall building into a form of action that often implies the mobility of cars, boats, activities or people. They take the shape of very determinate structures that allow multiple and indeterminate uses.

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For Zaera-Polo, it is not accidental that OMA is located in the Netherlands, a country which is the supreme domain of flows, whether hydrodynamic or commercial. OMA's work, for him, interprets a reality that is made of flows and remains in a perpetual state of change. It could be suggested that this is why OMA's buildings seem to be so permeable and compatible to flows. What characterizes OMA's design is the fact that it proposes a pragmatic mechanism which, instead of tackling the semantic issues of chaos and movement, tries to combine the actual indeterminacy of flows with an architectural specificity<sup>187</sup>. The way Greg Lynn and FOA touched fluid topographies, particularly in Yokohama's port terminal, were examples of dynamic conception of space and formal translation of flow. We discussed Lynn's distinction between movement and animation and FOA's approach to continuity and field.

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187 Delalex, 2006:40-41

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**Appendix**  
**Relevant publications in Persian**



II. Supermodernity : the narration of placelessness, *Persian ed.*, Shargh magazine, Iran, February, 9th, 2012, p. 16

سوپر مدرنیته

عبور از پست مدرنیسم و یافت روایت «بی‌گون» از مکانی



محمد مهدی معیت  
پژوهشگر و دکترای معماری

همه گام آمد به مکان جدیدی نیاز دارم. این را او گفت. جایی نه الزاماً دلچسب و جذاب فقط یک مکان ناشناس؛ بی هیچ هم‌خوانی جایی که در آن بی‌اندازه تنها باشم. مثلاً یک هتل!

ریموند جنرال، پلانو بریکه

اینجا در آغاز با پارادوکسی آشنا مواجیم؛ «مکان» شناخته شده که همچنان غریب و نامألوس است و در مقابل آن «مکان» این تضاد آشناست. حتی اگر به ندرت این گونه تعبیر شده باشد چرا که یکی از برجسته‌ترین ویژگی‌های زندگی معاصر را تبیین می‌کند. مثال آن فزونی فضاهای عام همچون هتل‌ها، فرودگاه‌ها، مراکز فروش، ازادراه‌ها و فروشگاه‌های خود است؛ یعنی فضاهایی که ما احساس می‌کنیم می‌شناسیم، با اینکه هرگز قبلاً آنجا نپدیدیم، با اینکه آنها آن سوی شهر یا آن طرف دریا هستند. حتی اگر کسی چندان سفر نکند یا ماشین شخصی داشته باشد یا همسر و فرزند و خوراکی جیبش را چندان دوست نداشته باشد، تجربه این عرصه‌ها همچنان در جریان زندگی روزمره اجتناب‌ناپذیر است چرا که ساختار شهرها امروزه پیرامون آنها طرح‌ریزی شده است.

اگر طریقی سفر می‌کنید پس این فضاها به نظر نمی‌مانند است که می‌بینید؛ شما از طریق یک ازادراه یا با قطار به فرودگاه می‌روید. در فرودگاه سوار هواپیما و از آن پیاده می‌شوید. زمانی که از محل سکونت خود دور هستید در یک هتل اقامت می‌کنید. از فروشگاه‌های دبیونی فیزی (بدون عوارض گمرکی) خرید خود را انجام می‌دهید و برای خلاصی از اجبار به تجربه غنای محلی احتمالاً یک غذای تند و سریع در KFC می‌خورید.

گراهی که در اینجا مطرح می‌شود این است که خواه ناخواه این جنبه از زندگی معاصر آنقدر متفاوت هست که ظهور عصر جدیدی را هشدار دهد و به اندازه کافی شایع و متداول هست که منشی‌نمایی و توصیف شود. مارک لوزه (Marc Augé) (۱۹۹۲)، به عنوان یکی از شارحان این وضعیت، آن را سوپرمدرنیته می‌نامد. سوپرمدرنیته با افراط excess توصیف می‌شود، نوعی فزونی که در سه حوزه ادراک فلسفی - یا به بیانی خاص‌تر انسان‌شناسی - رخ داده است: زمان، فضا و مرجع‌های شخصی. در خوش‌فروزی زمان، از نظر مفهومی، با حرکت به سوی پیشرفت مترادف است و به این سان، به زعم او به همان تقدیر مرکب برآمده از «حرکت و پیشرفت» تن درمی‌دهد. او همچنین بر این گزاره تأکید می‌کند که زمان با شک و تردید معینی با حرکت به سوی پیشرفت progress هم‌پراز می‌شود. این هم‌پرازی شکاکانه در تولیدی آمور نوینی می‌تواند چیزی جز منادی و جلوه‌دار نمایی ناخوشی‌های قرن بیستم - نازیسم، کمونیسم، کاپیتالیسم پنداشته نمی‌شود. اما در عمل، لوزه خوش‌زمان را در گروه تکنولوژی ارتباطات لحظه‌ای (instant telecommunication) قرار می‌دهد و نتیجه می‌گیرد: تشخیص میان آنچه که صرفاً رویداد نامیده می‌شود با آنچه که از بعد تاریخی معتبر و صحیح است - به بیان دیگر میان رویدادهای بدون معنا و لحظات با معنی -

که فضاهای جدیدی که لوزه در سر می‌پرورد به نظامی تعلق دارند که واژگان آنها هنوز وجود ندارند. صحبت لوزه این نیست که ناملکان‌ها تمامی دنیای معاصر را در بر گرفته‌اند یا دیگر آتری از مکان‌های شناخته شده با مفهوم متعارف وجود ندارند، بلکه او بر این باور است که چه مکان و چه ناملکان، هیچ کدام به شکل ناب و مطلق وجود ندارند. مکان‌ها ملم درون ناملکان متولد می‌شوند و روابط میان آنها شکل می‌گیرد. هیچ کدام به کلی از میان نمی‌روند و هیچ یک هرگز به تمامی تحقق نمی‌یابند. او ناملکان‌ها را مختص سوپرمدرنیته می‌داند و ویژگی‌های منحصر به فرد آنها را مشخص‌نمایی می‌کند. با این حال او اعتراف می‌کند که ناملکان‌ها نه هوبیتی بگانه به بار می‌آورند و نه رابطه‌ای معنادار، در عرض انزوا و همسایگی را دربر دارند. اگرچه ناملکان‌ها فضاهایی سرشار از جمعیت هستند، اما در آنها آتری از آنچه که ما پیش از این با عنوان رابطه و تعامل اجتماعی می‌شناسیم وجود ندارد. تناقض بزرگ فضاهای سوپرمدرنیته در این است که اگرچه انسان‌ها از زمانی که گرد هم می‌آیند، کار اجتماعی می‌کنند و مکان‌ها را نظم و نسق می‌دهند، اما افراد به‌شمار می‌آیند که هر روز در ناملکان‌ها جای می‌گیرند. مثل این است که در یک پارتی بزرگ قرار گرفته باشنده خبری از کیش و برهم کشش اجتماعی، آن طور که برای ما متعارف و ملموس باشد، نیست. کسانی که تحت عنوان کارگر، مشتری یا مسافر با ناملکان‌ها سر کار دارند، در مدت‌زمانی که کوتاهی یک سفر یا در طول یک صف انتظار هسان و هم‌شکل می‌شوند و پاسخ‌هایی یکسان می‌گیرند. لطفاً شناسه کارت خود را وارد کنید. سفر خوبی برای شما آرزو می‌کنیم. لطفاً در میان خطوط ایستادگی کنید؛ پیغام‌هایی که با شیوه استفاده از تسهیلات ناملکان‌ها از ارایه می‌کنند یا خطوط محدودیت‌ها را با نهایتاً به گونه‌ای تبلیغاتی از کاربر به دلیل حضور و مصرف قدرتی می‌کنند، بلک ما سفر خوبی برای شما آرزو می‌کنند. از اینکه از خدمات ما استفاده کردید بسیار متشکرم.

سوپرمدرنیته امکان تجربه و ادراک نوبنی از فضا را فراهم می‌آورد که سابقه تاریخی آن وجود ندارد. ویژگی بارز آنها گزار (transition) است، اینجاست که می‌توان میان واژه‌های همچون مسافر (Passenger) و جهانگرد یا گردشگر (Tourist) تمایز قابل‌شد.

ناملکان‌های سوپرمدرنیته همه جا هستند و هیچ جا نیستند. با این اوصاف، بی‌تردید نمود بی‌مکانی و نامکانی از طرفی چشم‌انداز آینده شهرها را متاثر از خود می‌کند و از طرف دیگر بر اهمیت بحث‌هایی که این روزها پیرامون «مرگ مکان» (The End of Place) و نخله فکری مقابل آن یعنی «مکان همچنان مهم است» (Place still matters) در می‌گیرد، تأکید می‌کند.

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# VI

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