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Editorial

War and Cities

In 2002, an issue of Open House International had already addressed the subject of war and the city. Scholars with different backgrounds and experiences reported on a number of cities. They analysed and reflected on the situation before the armed hostilities, both in physical terms and in terms of the conflicts of ethnic and civilian character, and the role of external forces and actors; the war in its different manifestations: a never ending conflict, a succession of battles and precarious truces, bombing, the threat of bombing; and the prospects of reconstruction, with particular reference to the different effects for the various groups and interests.

Today, 17 years later, the ambition of this issue, which renews OHI’s attention to the theme, is not only to provide further empirical investigation but to contribute to the broadening of the discussion, at a moment in which both the number and scale of urban conflicts does unfortunately not seem to have diminished.

Indeed since then, both the number and scope of publications dealing with the war in, and on, cities has continued to expand, with new entries alternating between reports of devastation and reconstruction projects. Quite often these documents include war as one among the many natural, and therefore “inevitable”, disasters we must all be prepared to face and mitigate.

Resilience, that is the ability of a city to resist and react to the various “shocks, stresses and hazards, that may occur”, and adapt to changed circumstances, is the key word of this paradigm, which transforms complex political problems in mere technical challenges.

The supporters of this approach place at the core of their assumptions the fact that as “natural hazards are becoming more intense and frequent...armed conflicts are also becoming increasingly complex” (Unesco and World Bank, Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery, 2018). Hence they task built environment’ professionals with making cities “less vulnerable to shocks such as violence or full-blown conflict”.

As a consequence, experts in urban management are nowadays asked to prepare safe and defensible urban environments and combine resilience with development. Similar recommendations are addressed to the organizations and institutions involved in the relief of war victims, which should not only provide assistance to the affected communities, but finalize their intervention to the promotion of the economic development of the war-ravaged territories.

The slogan “bridge the humanitarian action and development divide” well captures the desired cooperation of all the actors involved in the rebuilding of “conflict affected” states and cities, whose roles are divided as follows: “humanitarian actors respond to crises, development actors build from them”.

The convergence of humanitarian, security and development concerns has been canonized in 2016 at the United Nations’ first World Humanitarian Summit that resulted in the creation of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises. The Alliance gathers 65 organizations working on “post conflict development and humanitarian action”, and is premised on the idea that bringing together “the two constituencies of urbanists and humanitarians will engender collaborations which meet both short-term humanitarian and longer-term development needs of urban populations and their environments”. As a matter of fact, the adhering organizations commit themselves “to work to enable urban communities to prepare for, cope with and recover from the effects of humanitarian crises, including forced displacement, natural disasters and/or armed conflicts”.

The emphasis on resilience risks to conceal the structural causes that trigger war; from the unequal distribution and control of resources to the role of financial investors and their political allies who foment mutual hostility among different groups of population.

Besides, the combination of the term resilience with that of development, appears as a lexical artefact to make it acceptable that whilst war brings death and woes, for some it still is an extraordinary opportunity for profits. Put in order words, war is a powerful accelerator of “modernization and development”.

Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that, whether they are resilient or not, cities will continue to be battlefields.

General Michael Evans (2016), the former head of the Australian Army think- thank and a Professor in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Deakin University in Melbourne, is convinced that “the art of war must seek closer interaction with the science of cities”, and that western military must control the narrative of the events if they want to become better prepared to confront the challenges of future conflicts in an urban dominated world.

“In the decades ahead”, he argues, “it is a melancholy possibility that some cities in the developing world may become contested battlegrounds… these zones of conflict will require the integration of the military art with the physical morphology and social geography of modern urban planning”.

General Evans is aware that “such an interdisciplinary effort may prove to be challenging for scholars who harbour sensitivities towards the employment of military force in populated areas”, but reminds urban scholars that “if they refuse to engage with security officials on the challenge of controlling and ameliorating armed violence in cities, they are only likely to contribute to increased numbers of civilian casualties”. The interest of military strategists for urban planning is not a novelty. The “command of the cities” has now become a branch of the “command of the geography” and in the United States, many analysts have been calling for a long time for the creation of a dedicated urban warfare school, claiming that “the US army has jungle, mountain and arctic warfare schools, but not an urban one”.

What might surprise is that General Evans’s paper was not published in a journal of the armed forces, but in the International Review of the Red Cross (IRRC, 2016, vol. 98, n.1).

In actual facts, however, the cooperation between militaries, urban planners and humanitarian organizations is openly encouraged by the international institutions involved in the “recovery and reconstruction” programmes.

For example, in November 2017, the conference “Armed conflict in cities: humanitarian implications and response”, jointly organized by the...
International Institute of Strategic Studies and the International Committee of the Red Cross and supported by the Swiss Federal Government, brought together practitioners and experts from the “communities of architecture, development, humanitarian action, international law, security and urbanism” (IISS, 2018).

All the participants agreed on the imperative convergence of “warfare, humanitarian action and development”.

This sinister message is well received by the many architects and urban designers who compete for the generous assignments offered by the very same international institutions that often played a pivotal role in the breaking out of conflicts.

In the websites of such professionals the messages that underline their willingness to seize the opportunities offered by the war are not rare. To give an example, Mangera Yvars architects say “the fact that war has taken place does in many ways provide openings in the city fabric where replenishment and redevelopment can provide improvement above and beyond the prewar baseline condition … conflict, however terrible, also provides hope and opportunity for change beyond the status quo” (MYAA, nd).

A completely different attitude is shared by the authors who contributed to this special issue. All of them currently live or have lived in the places they are talking about, and draw on both theoretical and empirical field based research.

Above all, their papers concern more the people- individuals, families, communities- than the buildings or, to state it more correctly, their narrative is organized in a way that the transformations of the physical fabric can be understood only in connection to what happens to the human beings.

The case studies deal with conflicts that broke out at different historical moments and have involved different types of warring parties. Some are not yet finished. In Syria, for instance, the regime’s war against the citizens is still ongoing but the gold rush of the reconstruction has already started, whilst in Palestine the Israeli’s military occupation and the annihilation of the inhabitants seem destined to never end.

In other cases, the calm is only apparent. This happens in former Yugoslavia, where the western powers have imposed peace agreements after reaching their goal to dismember the national unitary state in order to accelerate the shift to a market economy. However, the many grievances that contributed to the spread of violence have not been fully addressed or resolved.

In Cyprus the fighting has also officially ended, but United Nation’s peace keepers are still patrolling, since 1974, the buffer zone that divides the two communities, each of which identifies itself with a motherland far away, which contributes to persistent suffering and insecurity.

The oldest conflict taken into consideration took place in Hong Kong, where the traces of the colonial rule mark the ground and impact on the land use plans and urban design projects decades after the end of the British empire.

The two opening papers deal with Syria and provide an accurate and dramatic picture of how urban planning machinery has been and still is systematically used as a war weapon.

Nura Ibold’s investigation starts with the analysis of the political situation that led to the uprising of 2011, with particular attention to the relationship between socio economic deprivation and the growing sectarian divide. Both these phenomena have been exacerbated during the war and now, after seven years of violence and death, and the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, the society is more divided than in the past. Social disruption and fragmentation are manifest on the ground.

On the other hand, there is a serious risk that the reconstruction process will reinforce discrimination, privileging area held by the regime, pushing out impoverished communities. Not without reason, the regime’s leaders proudly proclaim to have “reshaped the demographics” and built a “healthier and more homogeneous society”. Very suitably, in her analysis of the different strategies, actions and interests at play, Ibold underlines the ambiguity of international institutions which do not recognize the legitimacy of the regime but seem fearful to miss out on the reconstruction business.

Edwar Hanna and Nour Harastani concentrate their attention on the impact of the reconstruction policies on the Syrian citizens. The interpretative key is the legal framework developed and applied by the regime to strengthen its alliance with developers, some segments of the private sector and crony capitalists. Their detailed analysis of the property laws aimed at demarcating zones where take ownership, dispossess and evict inhabitants and prevent displaced people to return is particularly relevant and timely. As a matter of fact, “peace” will bring a surge of private investment and a number of powerful urban development companies, both national and international, are already targeting Syrian cities.

Hanna and Harastani’s paper also examines some of the megaprojects launched before 2011, positing that they have become feasible thanks to the conflict that has cleared the land from the people who were living there. Entire neighbourhoods have been razed and wiped out by the regime’s bulldozers, not during, but after the fighting. This raises disturbing similarities with what happened in Beirut twenty years ago, when the government took advantage of the war to clean up prime real estate areas and transform them into enclaves of privilege and financial investment.

A similar manifestation of “the productive capacity of war” is emerging in Damascus where the reconstruction process is at the same time a political tool that facilitates the authoritarian stabilization and the return to the pre-conflict neo- liberal order and a huge deal for investors.

In this situation the area-based approach adopted in the templates prepared by UN Habitat and the World Bank will very likely help the regime to advance its political agenda. The lack of transparency regarding the selection of neighbourhoods targeted for rehabilitation and the priority for interventions in the loyalist areas, will only strengthen inequality.

Besides providing information on the actual situation, the two papers on Syria poignantly contribute to the discourse on the gap between the alleged technical nature of urban planning tools and their impact on the people lives.
The vicious intertwining of zoning, demarcation of administrative boundaries and building regulations intentionally aimed at destroying a community is also at the heart of the research developed by Yara Saifi and Maha Samman. The impact of the urban planning machine on the geopolitical map of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel is a well-studied issue. Countless fieldwork surveys have clearly established how, through the seizure of land and dispossession, demolition and displacement, the occupants have built a landscape of apartheid.

Saifi and Samman contribute to this conversation by showing how a neighbourhood can be devastated even in absence of its physical destruction. Dahiyat al Bareed was built 60 years ago within the municipality of Jerusalem. Today the territorial redrawing imposed by the Israeli government, and the shifting of municipal boundaries has had among its nefarious collateral damages the effect of stripping inhabitants of their residency rights, thus presenting them with the dilemma whether to “spontaneously” leave their homes, or staying in them whilst losing their right of residence. Both alternatives do substantial harm to the affected individuals and families who are forced either to hide, or to damage their own homes in an effort to make them appear uninhabited. In addition to worsen living conditions, such attempts at circumventing rules against which people are powerless, undermine the population’s dignity and weaken community cohesion.

The research that Shahd Adnan M. Qzeih and Rafooneh Mokhtarshahi Sani have conducted in the Balata refugee camp, adjacent to the city of Nablus, also deals with the relationship between material living conditions and human dignity. Originally designed to provide temporary shelter for 5000 people, Balata has become the largest and most densely populated Palestinian camp in the West Bank. Since its establishment, in 1950, the environmental conditions have constantly deteriorated. Qzeih and Sani adopt an original approach in documenting the situation as they filter the description of the physical conditions through the perceptual sensory experience of the inhabitants of the camp, where four generations have now been living. The darkness in the narrow passageways, the constant loud noise, the unpleasant smells, the extreme cold or hot temperature, the absence of any constant loud noise, the unpleasant smells, the erations have now been living.

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Gaza, which suffers from a long blockade and is often defined as the biggest open-air prison in the world, is another laboratory for observing the dire impact of military occupation on human beings. Yousef J. M. Abukashif and Müge Riza focus their research on the multiple constraints - the limited available land, the rapidly growing population, the economic decay - that affect the development of Gaza City.

Through the comparison and analysis of a series of maps, their paper highlights how the pattern of land occupation and the built fabric has been shaped by war, resulting in a situation so desperate that the UN warned that by 2020 Gaza will be “unfit for human habitation.” Stress and trauma have a lasting impact on the population. This happens in many places overwhelmed by the war, where survivors struggle to adapt to the new environment in an alternation of resignation and resistance. Quite often a sort of prolonged frozen conflict is apparent in situations where the territorial disputes are still far from being resolved and a strong resentment persists despite the absence of visible violence.

Such is the case of Cyprus, where Aysu Arsoy and Hacer Basarir have studied Varosha, a tourist ased suburb of Famagusta whose inhabitants, after the division of the island in 1974, have been evacuat-ed and never allowed to return. The border established back then is still controlled by the United Nations troops, and after more than four decades of abandonment most buildings are decaying and Varosha is labelled as a ghost town. Still its urban landscape is an archive from which the inhabitants of the two conflicting communities draw to build two divergent narratives. It is not surprising to observe controversial perceptions among social groups when they recall stories of the past and their living spaces.

However, the research’s findings suggest that this attitude deepens the cleavage and weakens the prospects of the re-unification of the island.

In the last group of papers the authors look at the ways in which meaning and significance of architecture are transformed by the war.

Dijana Alic explores how during the long siege of Sarajevo the physical transformations challenged long established relationships between the built fabric and the inhabitants, introducing new modes of thinking and interpreting the city. Focusing on Bačaršija, the oldest part of the town, the research contributes to the debate on the notion of “thirdspace” introduced by Edward Soja. Alic elaborates on this and argues that through direct experience, responsive thinking and personal interpretations of the city, the citizens of besieged Sarajevo gave new importance to the specifics of place in understanding the human condition. On the one hand, the continuation of daily life has been central to survival and “the home”, the domestic space that provides physical shelter and holds the family’s memories has been the core of the people’s resistance. On the other, reconfiguring the built fabric and reshaping the landscape of war appeared to inhabitants as the only possible concrete way to refuse the inevitability of war, a way to prevent the physical destruction from bringing with it also the deletion of the memory of a normal life.

Cyprus is the subject of the research done by Sevil Aydınlık and Hüfşiyen Pulhan, whose aim is to surface the complex relationships between nationalism and educational institutions.

Education was segregated during the period of British colonial rule, and the authors show how in different historical moments school buildings were intentionally used to exacerbate the hostility between the local communities. During the last years of the British occupation, which ended in 1960, the adoption by some Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot architects of an architectural language inspired by the International style raised hopes of the possible shift towards a unified education model. After 1974, however, the political authorities that govern the two sides of the island imposed two different educational systems, whose intentional opposition is magnified by their architectural language and forms.

The long lasting legacy of the British colonial occupation is also the subject of the paper by Jing Xiao and Charlie Q. L. Xue. The two carefully exam-
ine the vicissitudes of Victoria Barracks, a physical remnant of the British empire in a strategic site in Hong Kong, through the lenses of what is defined contested heritage. More specifically their aim is to document how the disappearance of a military landscape of cultural significance is entangled with the laissez faire strategy of urban planning. The paper highlights how corporate interests and authoritarian planning institutions are cooperating to transform the site in a financial investment opportunity erasing its historical significance.

Taken as a whole, the papers selected for this special issue not only provide interesting empirical investigations on the many deliberate attempts to kill cities and their inhabitants but combine an empathic approach with scientific rigour thus contributing to the broadening of the discussion going beyond the case study logic. They are an important reminder to us - scholars, academics, professionals of the built environment - to reject the widespread approach that considers cities ravaged by war as opportunities, dots on a map waiting for investment and flagship projects.

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POST-CONFLICT SYRIA: FROM DESTRUCTION TO RECONSTRUCTION – WHO’S INVOLVED AND TO WHICH EXTENT.

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Abstract
The wave of popular unrest in the Arab world reached Syria in March 2011, and what started as peaceful demonstrations with simple demands of justice and freedom turned into a brutal armed conflict and a full-scale civil war. Over seven years of conflict resulted in the deaths of over half a million Syrians, the forced displacement of millions more, and a huge loss of the country’s social and physical structures. What began as another Arab Spring movement against a dictatorial regime has turned into a proxy war that has attracted the interests of the world and regional powers. The paper discusses Syria’s political history and investigates the motives for the Syrian uprising and argues that it is related to socio-economic deprivations rather than sectarianism. The work underlines the interests of the countries involved in the Syrian conflict focusing on Russia, USA, Iran, and Turkey, as well as their contribution to the future reconstruction of the country.

Over the past few years, the Syrian regime and its allies targeted many cities and destroyed opposition-held neighborhoods. The work considers if this destruction was part of an overall strategy adopted by the al-Assad regime to terrorize those who opposed it and change Syria demographically, examining the new laws issued by the government to transfer public properties into the hands of its loyal businessmen factions, as in the case of the reconstruction project in the city of Homs.

Seven years of war exhausted Syria’s financial stocks, and the country (and in turn the regime) is suffering the consequences of military spending. But like any other war, destruction is also a great opportunity to generate money through reconstruction and growth. It is a “win-win situation”; the regime will use the fund designated for reviving the country to its own benefit, gaining future profits. Already invested in the conflict, involved countries will be part of the reconstruction process to secure their presence and control in Syria.

United Nations agencies like UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) are working closely with the Syrian regime and its governmental representatives. This research examines their involvement and how their ‘humanitarian mission’ is being exploited to prop up the al-Assad regime.

Keywords: Syria, Civil War, Urban Policies, Reconstruction, UN agencies, International Involvement.

INTRODUCTION
The pro-democracy uprisings and anti-government protests of the Arab Spring broke out in Syria in March 2011, and unlike the preceding movements of the Arab Spring, which resulted in regime change in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, the Syrian civil movement turned into a proxy war which is overrun by other nations operating on the Syrian soil.

In order to understand the complexity and roots of the ongoing war, one has to examine the history and development of the Syrian social-political structure over the last 100 years, and how the Syrian regime under the leadership of the Al-Assad family was able to sustain its power over the country since the 1960s.

Looking at the country’s modern history over the last 500 years, one could trace how far the sequence of Syria’s rulers and the hierarchy of the political system have deviated both the country and its people from any form of democratic or judicial experience. These five centuries -mind the gap of three years period between 1946 and 1949- were dominated by either foreign conquerors or martial autocrats. This part of the Syrian history is gloomy indeed and recognized through its adverse characteristics: poverty, atrocity, and multiple wars which left the Syrian people longing for freedom, civil rights, and dignity (Saghieh 2011:65-69).

SYRIA FROM 1914 - 1970: POST-COLONIAL TURMOIL
Until the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the region known as Greater Syria had been under Ottoman rule for nearly four centuries. Once World War I ended in 1918, the Ottoman empire was dismantled, and in 1922 the League of Nations divided the region into contemporary states of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine. France was granted mandate over both Syria and Lebanon, while Jordan and Palestine were put under the British authority (Hourani 1968: 52-55).

In this era, the concept of a mandate was perceived as a progressive attempt at breaking from colonialism, bestowing sovereignty through prepara-
tion of a national government capable of democratic self-governance when the mandate period ended. However, the French government acted in its own interest and at the expense of the countries under its mandate and continued to suppress freedom of speech, and political and civil rights. The French acts of injustice were faced with mobilized Arab nationalist movements, and Syria moved towards nationalist autonomy (Khoury 1987).

In 1944, Syria was granted sovereignty by both the Soviet Union and the United States of America; in 1945, Britain joined the allied nations which pressured France to end its mandate in Syria. Syrian Independence was secured in April 1946 and thereafter the country underwent a state of strife and instability as competing parties fought to take over its government. That era, which roughly lasted until 1961, was known for infamous coups d’état and counter-coups; many individuals acted as head of the Syrian government during this period (Library of Congress 2005:3).

Between 1958 and 1961, a brief political union was established between Syria and Egypt forming what was known as the ‘United Arab Republic’. Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser was appointed the head of this coalition and soon after ordered the dissolution of all Syrian political parties including the Arab Socialist Resurrection party (al-Baath party). As a result of the Egyptian domination over the Syrian political life, Syria decided to secede from the union in 1961, triggering yet another military coup in the capital Damascus, which marked the start of another period of instability and changes in the government (Parker 1962).

In 1963 that the al-Baath party lead its own military coup, the so-called ‘Baath Revolution’, acquiring the rule of the country. Many leaders of the Baathist regime were appointed as the head of state, precipitating another military coup, in November of 1970, known as the ‘Syrian Corrective Revolution’, at which point Minister of Defense, Hafez al-Assad seized power (Library of Congress 2005:4).


Shortly after a popular referendum in 1971, al-Assad was appointed the president of Syria and his thirty years presidency was sustained through shifting the utter control into his hands, by controlling both the military and security intelligence services. Al-Assad created an authoritarian regime where security and high influential positions were handed to people from the Alawites sect, to which his family belonged. It was evident from day one that the regime portrayed itself to be totalitarian with one exclusive political party; any dissent would be repressed and eliminated, by any means necessary.

The constitution of 1973 granted the Baath party and its head al-Assad absolute primacy over Syria’s government; Article 8 of the Constitution appointed the Socialist Arab Baath Party as the political leader of both ‘society and the state’, which means that the president and his chosen guards dictated the political, security and economic life of the country. It is true that the Syrian Constitution describes the government to have a republican scheme and to be “a democratic, popular, socialist, and sovereign state” [Article (1.1)]. However, this description does not reflect the reality of Syria’s government, which is militarily-dominated, one-state party and authoritarian. Syrian citizens cannot effect changes within the government, and the president is not elected but rather approved through a popular referendum (Carnegie Middle East Center 05/12/2012).

The domination of the Baath party, as well as the martial support of the regime and the state of emergency imposed on the country as part of the ongoing struggle against Israel, assured the ruling of Hafez al-Assad for the following three decades. As part of his plan to keep the national cohesion fragile, al-Assad encouraged pre-existing social conflicts and delivered threats against organizations he perceived to be dissenting from his agenda. He personally eliminated any dissent movements, massacring members of the Muslim Brotherhood and their families in the city of Hama in 1982 (Rodrigues 2011).

Notably, the Syrian regime distanced itself from the other formal regimes in the region; establishing strong bonds with Iran, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine, and nominally forming a defensive front against Israel on behalf of the pan-Arab nation; these alliances provided a deceptive legitimacy to the regime as a regional populist movement. (Hirst 2011).

Reforms concerning politics and economy were initiated during al-Assad’s era but never saw the light of day. Stifled by corruption; emergency law, in the country since 1963; the monopoly of the state over freedom of expression and the violation of civil and human rights; the vast number of political detainees; the Syrian people were pushed to the precipice of rebellion (Human Rights Watch 2006).


Bashar took office in 2000 after the death of his father, and despite the rising concerns about the succession of power within the al-Assad’s family and turning Syria’s rule into hereditary, a modern image of this young, educated, and secular leader was circulated among the Syrian public and abroad.

Unlike his dictator father, in his early ruling period, Bashar was considered a reformist, and accepted by the majority of Sunni and Christian bourgeoisie who used to despise Hafez for his rural and poor Alawite background and allies (Hokayem 2013: 21-22).

Despite the perception that Bashar had a reformative approach for the country, freedom of expression and civil rights continued to be restrained: criticizing the president, his family, the regime or questioning its legitimacy continued to be forbidden.

People sympathized with the new president who openly discussed his struggles with implementation of reforms, both within the al-Baath party itself, and in resolving the culture of corruption amongst the country’s government officials. (Hokayem 2013:22).

Immediately after occupying the presidential chair, Bashar faced the so-called Damascus Spring, during which several intellectual individuals met secretly and formed political groups to discuss the necessary steps for the political reform. As part of al-Assad’s plan to seek legitimacy to his presidency, he responded to the demands and released many political prisoners, activists, and journalists, and a progressive outlook was then foreseen. Unfortunately, the brutality of the regime resumed primacy, hindering all negotiations, and ultimately terminating the reforms...
Sectarianism

Poverty; lack of freedom; years of suppression, dictatorship, and corruption; supremacy of the Alawite minority over Syria’s capitals drove the frustrated Syrians into protesting, as the news of a flourishing Arab Spring reached their country. Civilians took to the streets with simple demands of freedom and end of corruption, but were faced by the government’s deadly forces and calls for the president’s resignation have erupted.

When the anti-government protests spread all over the Syrian cities, violence escalated; the Syrian regime responded to the civil movement by killing protestors and detaining many others. In response to the régime’s brutality, several political groups of the opposition armed themselves for self-defense, and to protects civilians in their areas (Rodgers et al. 2015).

Even though the Syrian revolution occurred within the context of the Arab Spring, it developed in a completely different way from its precursors; shifting from nonviolent protests into extreme brutality by the régime, which in turn resulted in the militarization of the movement (Bonfatti 2017).

Deeply rooted sectarian and ethnic divisions within Syria played an important role for fuelling the conflict. After the first popular wave of protests; Syrians started clinging to their sectarian identities, either for feelings of socio-economic unity or simply as a way of surviving.

This division which has been mounting for decades and upheld by the systematic sectarian discrimination and prejudice of the régime and the Alawite dominance over the army and the security apparatus, soon moved to shape the nature and narrative of the conflict from a movement of national unity into a sectarian civil war fought between the Sunni majority population against the country’s minorities with the Alawite president as their protector (Balanche 2018).

Within this scope, it is important to point out that Syria is not a secular country. Even though Islam is not allocated as the state’s religion, the Syrian constitution states that the Syrian president has to be a Muslim (Article 3.1) and Islamic jurisprudence is the fundamental legislative source (Article 3.2). While most of the Sunni Muslims backed up the uprising, the main confessional minorities supported al-Assad and considered him the defender of their existence in the region (Carnegie Middle East Center, 05/12/2012).

The conflict revealed a profound fact of sectarian and ethnic divisions within the Syrian population and worsened alongside this sectarian fragmentation, which is deep-rooted in the Syrian society and dates all the way back to the Ottoman rule era and later to the adopted policy of Hafez al-Assad “divide to reign” (Balanche 2018: xi).

But still one must conclude, that unlike the popular assumption that the Syrian revolution is caused by sectarian divisions, the uprising was basically rooted in the deteriorated social and economic situation within Syria before the conflict, that drove hundreds of thousands of Syrians to the streets. In other words, the policy of neo-liberalization and privatization of the Syrian economy since Hafez’s Al-Assad’s era, which continued to exist and even worsened the situation from 2000 on when his son Bashar was made president, are the main drivers for the Syrian revolution (Bonfatti 2017).

Economic inequality

Syria’s urban population had a major shift in numbers in the 1970s, and as the main cities and their surrounding areas were not equipped to deal with the sudden growth, most of the new incomers inhabited what is known as ‘informal settlements’ which expanded geographically to host approximately 40% of Syria’s population in 2004 (Clerc 2013).

Even though Syria’s national policy states that all Syrian citizens are entitled to decent houses, the state housing policies proved to be insufficient and the issue of informal areas was never resolved (Alsafadi 2009). In 2000, informal housing issues were tackled and allegedly became a ‘priority’ to the government. Many urban projects and master plans were developed for those areas but never took into consideration the question of affordability: the developed housing zones were high-priced and people with low income couldn’t afford to buy a property within those areas included in the master plan, which puts the government commitment to resolve the problem under enormous suspicions. The issue with informal settlements in Syria is not limited to the lack of infrastructure and/or facilities but extends to cover property rights and registration. In those settlements (Wakely 2008): “the ownership of the land is in dispute and/or is not legally registered; and/or the settlement is in contravention of the master-plan zoning regulations; and/or planning standards are not met; and/or dwellings are constructed in contravention of building standards and regulations”.

Drawing on this information, it could be
argued that the Syrian government deliberately ignored the informal areas and denied those inhabiting them any property rights, which was part of an agenda to exploit the cities’ expansions later in upscale development projects where poor people have no records of land entitlements/registration. It is important to note that the informal settlements, social stratification, and the struggle over land played an undeniable role in the Syrian uprising.

Economic expert, Jihad Yazigi argues that the Syrian government used the management of land and property, especially within the informal areas, as a tool to assure its political dominance over the country particularly in the period between 2000-2010 with Bashar al-Assad’s plans to liberalize Syria’s economy. As a result, many new regulations and laws were passed to guarantee the regime’s supremacy over Syria’s both public and private properties, as well as to attract investors from the Gulf region and expatriate Syrian businessmen. One of those laws, was Law number 26 of 2000 which authorized the government to confiscate lands within city centers at reduced prices, as well as Law 41 passed in 2004 and amended in 2008, which requires inhabitants of border cities to pursue a “security clearance” in order to sell their properties, which was in many times denied in order to pressure those selling into paying bribes or giving away properties to government-figures for unfair prices. Both laws paved the way for Law 15 issued in 2008, which gave a green light to initiate many high-end residential and commercial construction projects. To allow foreign investment in those projects Decree No. 8, in 2007, granted the ownership of land to foreign investors which plausibly led to the increase of land prices and left those with lower income with no choice but to move to the cities’ outskirts and informal areas (Yazigi 2017).

The regime’s economic agenda which focused on foreign trade liberalization came at the expense of Syria’s poor population: the rising prices of property; the laws that favor commercialized housing and deliberately ignore the needs of the domestic population; the unwillingness of the government to include informal areas into their development plans as well as centering all projects in the capital Damascus and Aleppo, those reasons and many more created more tension and pushed the Syrians to revolt in 2011.

By 2012 the heavy fighting reached Damascus, Syria’s capital. The increase of violence and the violation of human rights pushed the international Red Cross to declare the Syrian conflict as a ‘civil war’ (Blomfield 2012).

THE OPPOSITION WITHIN SYRIA: FROM THE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY TO WAR OVER POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

In August 2011 and as violence escalated, a moderate armed-opposition faction was formed and named the Syrian Free Army (FSA). The group contained members who used to fight alongside the regime, then deserted the Syrian army for believing in the eligibility of the Syrian revolution. The FSA had support from both the Western and the Gulf countries such as the U.S.A., U.K., France, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, among others. Over the course of the Syrian war and despite the international backing, the FSA has split into many different armed-groups, which unfortunately has extremist Islamic roots and the fight against al-Assad to them was merely to topple the miscreant Alawite-regime and to create an Islamic State (BBC 13/12/2013).

From that point on, many fighters tied with one of the major militant groups, the al-Nusra front - a Jihadist group that joined the Syrian conflict at the beginning of 2012-, while the remaining groups allied with Turkey, thereby aligning in its fight against the Kurdish forces within Syria. Only a small percentage of the original FSA maintained following its primary principles of toppling the al-Assad regime to create a democratic state with freedom of expression and civil rights. The religious-political division among the FSA fighting groups, as well as the uprising of extremist Islamic militias within Syria made it hard to distinguish factions and their causes and goals (BBC 13/12/2013).

The al-Nusra Islamic militant group was declared a terrorist organization by the U.S. in December 2012 after carrying out a series of suicide bombing attacks and killing dozens of civilians. It is true that both al-Nusra front and the later Islamic State of Syria and Iraq (ISIS) are branches of al-Qaeda, but they operate as separate groups and do not engage with one another (Gordon and Barnard 2012).

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN SYRIA

What began as peaceful national protests against the government escalated into a multi-sided armed international funded conflict that has been fought between the Syrian regime with its head Bashar al-Assad and its allies -Russia, Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon- and the opposition factions on the Syrian ground, that are funded and backed up by -Turkey, the United States, UK, France, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Seven years of devastating war turned Syria into a battlefield for multiple conflicts driven either by regional advantages or those of the world powers, each with their own agenda. While the war is only getting deadlier and more complicated as time passes, it is safe to say that international powers are determining Syria’s future outside of the country’s borders.

To understand the nature and the multitude of conflicts, one must analyze the international actors involved as well as their motives for engaging in this war. Therefore, two categories can be identified: first the regional factors - and second global interests of the major world powers. Translated into the situation on the ground within Syria three intertwined conflicts and the involved players can be pointed out:

A) the Syrian regime backed by Russia and Iran vs. the anti-government rebel groups supported by the U.S. and its western allies;
B) from 2015 on, the U.S. led military coalition vs. the Islamic State (ISIS);
C) the Turkish military operations against the Syrian Kurdish militias with Syria. Each of these conflicts is contributing to deepening the struggle and making a peaceful settlement which could end the war, impossible.

ISIS: foreign jihadist claiming a new caliphate between Iraq and Syria

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) began its operations in Syria in 2013. The entity concentrates its presence in the northern and eastern Syrian provinces and has started with as many as 3,000
jihadists that came from foreign origins. It has been argued that ISIS cooperated with several opposition rebel groups, as for example in capturing two military bases which belong to the Syrian army. But on the other hand, the group committed many killings against other competing Islamist militias, which lead to the worsening of the relationship between ISIS and other fighting groups (BBC 13/12/2013).

Outside of Syria ISIS gained recognition when in 2015 the organization claimed to be responsible for a series of terrorist attacks across Europe. An international coalition was formed including U.S. as the leader, U.K., France, with the support of both Turkey and Saudi Arabia with the purpose of carrying out airstrikes to defeat ISIS. In October, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) were created as an alliance to include both Kurdish and Arab fighting militias against the Islamic State and to create a democratic, secular, and federal Syria, with the lead of the Kurdish People’s Protection Unit (YPG) (Sheppard 2016).

The SDF received both funds and military support from the U.S. led coalition and in August 2016, Turkish troops entered the Syrian soil in coordination with Turkish-aligned Syrian rebels, to fight against ISIS and to contain the Kurdish expansion in northern Syria (Shaheen 24/08/2016).

Russia: keeping Al-Assad in power to protect its geostrategic interests

During the Cold War, Syria pledged allegiance to the Soviet bloc and therefore received economic aid, arms, military assistance and training from Russia and other former states within the Soviet Union. Syria held an ideological resemblance to the Soviet Union especially in its socialist economic plan and activating the role of the Communist Party in Syria’s political life (Library of Congress 2005:20).

Shortly after his military coup in 1970, the elder Hafez al-Assad visited Moscow seeking advocacy, funds, and weapons to secure his presidency (The Economist 30/09/2015). He consequently created an unbreakable longstanding bond with the Russian regime when, as part of their deal, in 1971 he built the sole Russian naval base on the Mediterranean Sea in the Syrian port city of Tartus, and thus secured the Russian existence in the Middle East (Gardner 2012). The strong ties continued to exist when Bashar took power, especially as he expanded the Syrian-Russian weapons-deal and appointed Russia as his biggest supplier of arms (The Economist 30/09/2015).

When the protests of the Arab Spring under support of western allied NATO-air strikes toppled the Libyan regime and its head Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, Russia feared reducing its leverage in the Arab world and considered the uprising against autocrats and their dictatorial regimes as an U.S. American lead conspiracy to gain power in the region, together with genuinely fearing the increasing influence of Islamist groups which have emerged in many Arab countries, which could spill over to the Russian Federation. Shortly after, President Putin started seeking the strengthening of the Russian influence and hence turned into supporting its closest ally in the region, al-Assad to secure his regime (Rahman-Jones 2017).

If it is true that the Kremlin played a crucial role in protecting al-Assad and his government, it is worth mentioning that the Russian involvement in Syria has as well more to do with its role towards the western world than with Syria itself. President Putin saw the opportunity to bring Russia back into the roundtable of global powers and to remind the western world of Russia’s diplomatic influence and its indispensable role in solving intricated political issues in the region (The Economist 30/09/2015).

Russia limited its interference in the first couple of years of the conflict into supporting al-Assad by vetoing any attempts made by the UN Security Council for a military intervention led by the United Nations against the Syrian regime. In September 2013, Russia and the United States were engaged in negotiation talks over a possible military strike against the Syrian regime in the light of the chemical attack carried out by the Syrian regime against its own people. As a result, the American threats were withdrawn after Russia -on behalf of al-Assad- agreed to surrender its chemical weapons (Borger et al. 2013).

It was only in October 2015 that Russia started to engage in aggressive raids against opposition fighting group within Syria. While Russia argued that these airstrikes are targeting the extremist Islamic organization ISIS, US officials have revealed that these strikes were targeting the moderate rebels and anti-regime supporters, and in many cases even civilians (BBC 07/09/2018).

Since those airstrikes, al-Assad did not just reverse his losses, but from 2015 on expanded his gains of the Syrian lands as well. Russia has provided the regime with financial support and even more important weapons, air-support, troops on the ground, while parallel diplomatically represented the Syrian government in the UN peace-talks and negotiations with the Syrian opposition.

United States of America: topple the regime and gain influence in Syria

In the early years of the revolution, the United States sought to contain the conflict by advocating Bashar al-Assad to step down. Washington’s role was limited to training and arming the ‘moderate’ Syrian rebel groups on the ground, which led the fight to overthrow the al-Assad regime (Pearson 2017). However, it must be noted that America’s intentions to terminate the Syrian government are still in question as the armaments were limited which left the opposition fighters in a constant struggle to settle the battles in their favor.

It was only in 2014 with the rise of the Islamic State that the U.S. led an international coalition of nearly 60 countries and engaged in conducting airstrikes against the group and took responsibility to cease the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime against its people (The National 14/04/2018).

Although the Obama administration considered the use of chemical weapons a ‘red line’ which requires immediate action, the United States never used force against the Syrian regime, but signed an agreement with Russia instead to destroy Syria’s stockpile of those weapons and proved again that they are not concerned about the Syrian people nor the rebels fighting on the ground (Calamur 2018).

It is important to note that the al-Assad regime was accused of using chemical weapons against Syrian civilians dozens of times, this act of violation was faced with condemnation from the international community in 2013, 2017 and 2018 (al-Maghafi 2018).

Another major reason which pulled the U.S. deeper into the battlefields was its desire to contain the...
growing influence of Iran and to limit its regional and international power by supporting its political and religious opponents within Syria. Throughout the conflict, Iran played a major role in keeping the Al-Assad regime in power.

Iran: strengthen the axis between Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon

Although Syria ostensibly is secular, its alliance with Iran had religious and ideological aspects. As a matter of fact, Syria’s Alawite sect was considered as part of the Shia sect in the 1970s, that is when Hafez al-Assad seized power and sought to establish an Alawite dominated government with the support of the Iranian regime, against the rule of the Sunni majority in the region (Harvard Divinity School 2016: 11).

Syria is known to be Iran’s closest ally in the Middle East since the Islamic revolution in 1979. Later during the Iraqi-Iranian war between 1980 and 1988, Syria was the only Arab country to stand explicitly by Iran against the regime of Saddam Hussein. The ties grew tighter as both countries declared full commitment to form a ‘resistance front’ against Israel (Gelbard 2010: 37-39).

The ongoing conflict between Iran and Israel, gave Syria’s strategic location a great value against any possible Israeli attack on Iran, as well as having the possibility to arm Hezbollah in neighboring Lebanon, which is Iran’s ultimate supporter in its war against Israel. Tehran’s involvement in Syria was sustained when Bashir inherited Syria’s presidency in 2000, Iran and Hezbollah’s leader Hassan Nasrallah became the guardians of the regime and the Syrian land was transformed into an Iranian-like territory to transfer weapons to the fighting Shia militias, Hezbollah (Calamur 2018).

Since the beginning of 2011, Iran has supported the Syrian government and its head al-Assad and aided the regime with funds, weapons, military training, and intelligence divisions. The accumulating won-battles by the Islamic State and other opposition groups stoke serious fears on the regime’s ability to sustain its rule, Iran then intensified its interference and provided troops on the ground including the elite force of the Iranian military, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Shiite foreign militias from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. In addition to mobilizing and deploying Hezbollah fighters from Lebanon to fight against the Sunni terrorists. It has been argued that Iran, through its intervention in Syria, aims to create a Shia-controlled land corridor which extends all the way from its land to reach Lebanon, through Syria and Iraq (Pearson 2017).

The Iranians are in Syria to stay, the Hezbollah ‘state within a state’ status in Lebanon is being replicated in Syria but by the Iranian proxies which in many areas forced out populations that do not support the Iranian intervention or do not belong to the Shiite sect. These acts have led and are leading to a devastating demographic change within Syria (Alaaldin 2018).

Iraq joined Iran in supporting the al-Assad regime because of the rising fear of Sunni terrorist groups in the region, Iraq has militias fighting on the ground as well as delivering Iranian arms and supplies to the Syrian army.

Turkey: weaken a regional competitor and hinder the creation of a semi-autonomous Kurdish region within Syria

The relationships between Turkey and Syria were tense even before the Syrian war mainly because of the alleged Syrian government’s support for the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) and for matters related to the shared territories on the borders between the two countries and the clashes over the water of the Euphrates River (Library of Congress 2005:21).

The Syrian-Turkish ties improved in 2004 as part of Erdogan’s plan to increase both military and economic cooperation with the Syrian regime. Soon after the eruption of the protests in Syria, Turkey openly backed up the Syrian opposition and president Erdogan called for al-Assad to step aside. Ankara then joined the international coalition against the Islamic State and carried out many airstrikes as part of the U.S.-led coalition (Harvard Divinity School 2016:15).

Even though Turkey has supported the rebels since the beginning of the conflict, it should be underlined that the Turkish interest is focused on banning the establishment of an independent Kurdish territory in northern Syria, and thus Ankara used the Syrian rebels to fight its own war against the Kurdish militias. Turkey is also interested in terminating any efforts for a Kurdish autonomy when the war settles. Ankara argues that the Kurdish militias in Syria have ties with the terrorist group PKK which carried many attacks against Turkey in the last decades (Almukhtar and Wallace 2015).

The UN: mediating conflicts on the sidelines

The U.S. and EU sanctions imposed on the Syrian regime and its associates since 2011 were deemed ineffective for many reasons. The failure to put an end to al-Assad’s brutality could be attributed to the military and financial support he is receiving from the allies, but one could ascribe much blame on the humanitarian mission led by the United Nations in Syria.

The regime’s involvement with the humanitarian mission started when it forced the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to centralize its work in the capital Damascus (Sparrow 2018), and used its basic mandate of the UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182, which states that (United Nations 1991): “humanitarian assistance should be provided with the consent of the affected country” and that “the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory.” Thus, the Syrian government assured its complete control over the relief mission and its funds.

Despite the claim made by the UN that its aid program in Syria is designated to help the Syrian civilians, there have been many reports suggesting that this program is compromised and exploited to prop up the regime that is responsible for the deaths of half a million Syrians. Tens of millions of dollars is the worth of the contracts awarded by the UN and its agencies to the regime’s closest circle of business partners and family (Hopkins and Beals 2016).

The World Health Organization (WHO) provided the al-Assad regime with $30 billion designated for international humanitarian aid, however, these billions are being used to overcome the sanctions implications, as well as sponsor the regime’s war spending (Sparrow 2018).
The UN mission awarded a considerable sum to individuals or companies that suffer the international sanctions, as well as governmental institutions and new-founded charities or shell companies: like the one chaired by Asmaa al-Assad, the president’s wife, and another one run by his cousin and business partner Rami Makhlouf. While the UN declared that it is doing its best to oversee that the funds are well spent and reaching those in need, the organization is working hand in hand with the dictator’s family whose concerns are far from helping the vulnerable citizens that have been crushed by al-Assad’s killing machine for the past seven years (Hopkins and Beals 2016).

The Guardian published in 2016 a detailed report that exposes hundreds of lucrative contracts which were granted since the launch of the UN mission in 2011. Most notable was the $8.5m contract awarded by two UN agencies to a Syrian organization set up by Asmaa al-Assad, named as Syria Trust charity, as well as $54m included in procurement documents which show that the United Nation did business with at least another 258 Syrian companies that are directly linked to the al-Assad or those close to him (Hopkins and Beals 2016).

UN argues that its work with the Syrian regime is necessary and unavoidable in order to provide relief to the Syrian civilians. This claim could be true to some extent but the argument to be made here is if this business of millions of dollars is actually in the interest of the Syrian people at all. Another point is the agencies’ policy in prioritizing people who live in the regime-held areas and being unable to provide relief to those living in the besieged opposition-controlled zones, who are in the greatest need.


With the Russian and Iranian support, al-Assad is regaining both political control and major territories he had lost over the course of the conflict. His utmost gain was the fall of Aleppo in December 2016 which was achieved by Iranian and Afghan Shiite fighters. Al-Assad hailed this victory and considered it a critical moment in Syria’s history as it arguably secured the survival of his rule and regime (Shaheen 15/12/2016).

There have been many peace talks between the government and the opposition representatives to resolve the conflict but they have mainly failed. The most famous were the Geneva peace talks in February 2016 under the auspices of the UN for facilitating a peaceful political transition. However they were deemed unsuccessful. Russia initiated more peace talks in early 2017, in Astana the capital of Kazakhstan, including delegates from the Syrian government, opposition leaders, and representatives of both Iran and Turkey, with the intention of discussing political settlement in the post-conflict phase. The negotiations resulted in truce and cease-fire, but they were violated soon after when the Syrian regime continued to bomb rebel-held areas (Al Jazeera 2017).

By the end of 2018, Syria has returned in large parts under the control of the Syrian regime. The country is in large regions within a condition of a standstill. The opposition on the ground has been widely defeated and its leftovers are concentrated in a few places in the north around the city of Idlib and in the south near the Jordanian border. A defeat of the remaining armed groups seems inevitable. Iranian, Russian and Hezbollah forces are still operating on the ground conducting military operations to restore the power of the Syrian regime on the entire country. But what are the costs of the 7 years longing conflict, which started as a popular uprising resulting in a brutal civil war? To which extent are the national and international actors part of Syria’s future reconstruction?

LEVELS OF DESTRUCTION DURING THE CONFLICT

In the period between 2012 - 2018 the Syrian civil war caused widespread and extended levels of physical and humanitarian destruction throughout Syria. A recent World Bank study summarizes the major challenges regarding the physical destruction, economic losses, and social fragmentation (Batrawi 2018:2-3):

- 7% of housing stock destroyed and 20% damaged;
- 50% of health infrastructure is damaged and 16% destroyed;
- huge economic losses as for example GDP loss of 63 % between 2011 - 2016 while the country needs around 200 Billion $ for reconstruction funding;
- a decline of business activities - not only within urban areas but especially within the important agricultural sector caused by the lack of supply of electricity, fuel;
- mass unemployment: 75% of Syrian workforce not officially employed; 60% of Syrians live in “extreme” poverty, while prices for basic goods, food, supplies increased heavily over the past years;
- 31% of the Syrian population are registered as refugees outside of Syria and estimations conclude the same number of people is displaced within the country.

These points represent a great challenge and it is not clear how fast the reconstruction process can return to normal, even though the regime is back in control of large areas and even though the conflict came to an end in most regions of Syria at the end of 2018.

CURRENT EFFORTS OF RECONSTRUCTION

So far reconstruction efforts are limited, and the country is within its own Zero Hour. Still the process of shaping Syria’s future has already started behind the public scenes. EXEMPLARY of this process is the “Damascus International Fair”, which was held in 2017 to serve as a platform for national and international actors who will be directly and indirectly involved in the planning and reconstruction process of Syria. Countries loyal to the regime as Russia, Iran, China, and others were primarily invited, while Russia was hosted as the prime partner for future reconstruction. Even before this conference since 2016 reconstruction deals between Russia and Syria have been made worth approximately 850 Million Euros in funding. Currently, the Syrian regime is independent of consultation or funding by the EU or US. The only notable UN agency involved in the process is UN-Habitat (Batrawi 2018:7-9).

Parallel to funding efforts the Syrian government approached the reconstruction on a legislative level with implementing a new law called “decree 66”, allowing the government to evict land and buildings of...
its residents despite ownership rights. This lays the foundation for the removal of damaged buildings and infrastructure to create the opportunity of renewal and reconstruction, disregarding inhabitants needs and wills. The removed residents are paid a relatively small monthly compensation for their losses but still have no right of objection. The decree 66 is for now only legally binding in the Damascus Governorate, but it could be used as a blueprint for other places and communities, where the redevelopment of entire quarters and districts should happen without the need of dealing with existing unharmed buildings (Batrawi 2018:7-8).

RECONSTRUCTION BUT FOR WHOM?
The reconstruction of Syria’s destroyed cities is not only essential to achieving recovery of the Syrian society; it is a useful tool in the regime’s hand as well because it secures its dominance over the country and prevents any potential unrest. It was argued by Swiss-Syrian activist Joseph Daher that the regime’s reconstruction strategy comprises two main goals, which could be summarized as (Osseiran 2017): a) increasing the economic and political ties to influential wealthy Syrian families, in order to strengthen the regime’s supporter base b) re-shaping the social structure in former opposition-held areas, in order to prevent future uprising. To accomplish that, al-Assad reinforced the regime’s known policy of ‘divide and reign’.

A key issue for the regime is financing the reconstruction process since its monetary reserves have vanished and its debt levels have increased for the continuation of the war. The new projects depend heavily on private sector investment as well as foreign financial credit aid. To move privatization of public assets forward, the regime created in 2015/2016 an economic scheme based on the model of Public-Private-Partnership (PPP). Joseph Daher argues that the legal basis has been created—through several presidential decrees such as Decree 19 of May 2015—that allowed governmental and administrative bodies to create private investment companies. Afterward, Law No. 5 which is known as the Public-Private Partnership Law was implemented in January 2016 to enable private companies to co-own and manage public assets (Osseiran 2017). These two steps created the ‘legal foundation’ for a long-lasting relationship between the Syrian regime and the influential affiliated-businessmen and their profiting companies.

Privatization and real estate profits became fundamental aspects of the post-war in Syria. The al-Assad regime made sure through its national urban policies to polish its economic image and to demonstrate that the development projects are still evolving despite the ongoing war. In tracking patterns of the aftermath destruction during the conflict, one could conclude that the regime targeted certain parts of the country not only because they were in the opposition-held areas, but for achieving certain high-end projects once the war is concluded, as its opponents are stripped from their land rights and are replaced by its loyal supporters.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE BABA AMR NEIGHBORHOOD IN HOMS
As a case in point is the former rebellious Sunni residential neighborhood of Baba Amr in the city of Homs which was razed to the ground due to constant shelling by the regime between 2012-13. While the neighborhood didn’t pose any military value to the regime, the examination of the destruction patterns revealed that they were somehow compatible with a 2010 redevelopment initiative called “Homs Dream” which was supposed to be realized in the central districts of the city, including Baba Amr area to replace its high-density population with skyscrapers and shopping malls (The Syria Institute and Pax 2017:18-19).

The project was rejected by most Homs’s residents because it evidently didn’t include any Alawite-populated neighborhoods and was then thought of as a strategic-cover used by the Syrian regime to change the city demographically (Solomon 2017; Wimmen 2016). These plans aimed to (The Syria Institute and Pax 2017:49): “redistribution of the population to strengthen the economic and physical control of the city by the pro-government Alawite community.”

“Homs Dream” project was led by then city-mayor Iyad Ghazal and comprised since 2009 demolition, land seizures and forced evictions of residents. The project was abandoned prior to 2011 because of local opposition but had paved the way for another project in 2014 formulated by the new governor Talal al-Barazi to reconstruct Baba Amr in accordance with the pre-war plans. With that being said: “the conflict has given the government the opportunity and means to implement, accelerate, and expand pre-war demographic changes goals” (The Syria Institute and Pax 2017:49).

Like its preceding project, the new calls for the construction of luxurious high-rise towers and shopping malls replacing the destroyed poor neighborhoods and displacing their former residents which can never afford to return. Yazigi states that: “Whenever there have been these expropriation projects in Syria, compensation has been extremely low. It is a very clear dispossession of these people”, he continues saying: “this is a transfer of public assets, tax-free, to private companies – and it will be a big boost to regime cronies” (Quoted in Solomon 2017)

Notably, Homs’s new governor, al-Barazi is a regime-affiliated businessman who owns several private companies and new established real-estate ones designated especially for post-war reconstruction in partnership with Bashar al-Assad and Rami Makhlouf (Naame Shaam 2015:33)

While plans and funds are being developed and organized by both domestic and foreign donors, Baba Amr remains a ghost town and its original inhabitants are not allowed back. The fate of Baba Amr and many other ‘opposition’ neighborhoods within Homs is in the hands of the Syrian regime who apparently won’t tolerate their ‘betrayal’ and support for the opposition, which can be clearly detected through the new redevelopment projects which aim to expel the old population and replace it with a new one of his supporters and ethnic sect.

INTERNAL RECONSTRUCTION AND RESSETLEMENT POLICY: LAW 10
Since the beginning of the war, the Syrian government passed many laws that restrict the displaced population from claiming what was once theirs: property rights, business statuses and so on. The Syrian regime passed in April 2018 a new Law No. 10 concerning the reconstruction and reorganizing of destroyed areas throughout the country. According to this law, people need to prove their ownership of property by appearing in person with the legal documents within
30 days. This law has been widely criticized as it contributes to the refugees’ crisis: many Syrians who oppose al-Assad have fled the country and may never return home as they will face detention, and therefore will lose their properties claim for good (Fisk 2018).

This confiscation of property by the Syrian regime is highly debatable: it serves as a tool in the al-Assad’s hands to write a new social order in the areas which rebelled against him by appointing a high percentage of them for his supporters. This can be detected in the suburbs of Damascus where seized properties were given to the Iranian militias and their families, in a clear demonstration of the regime’s strategy: rewriting Syria’s future using planned demo-graphic change (Haugbolle 2018).

Human Rights Watch warned that law No. 10 (Human Rights Watch 29/052018): “poised to confiscate and redevelop residents’ property without due process or compensation,” as “The procedural requirements in the law coupled with the political context in which it operates create significant potential for abuse and discriminatory treatment of displaced residents and residents from areas previously held by anti-government groups. In addition, several of the Syrian local land registries have been destroyed during the war, and only 50 percent of Syrian land was officially registered even before the war.”

THE ROAD TO RECONSTRUCTION

Syria has entered a new phase of conflict immediately after the city of Aleppo was recaptured by the regime and its allies in late 2016. While nowadays most of Syria’s major cities are under the government’s control and its Russian and Iranian partners, northern Syria is still partly being controlled by the SDF and its U.S. American allies.

True that Russia and Iran are the regime’s biggest supporters, it is important to draw attention around the different agendas of these two countries and the means they are employing to reach their goals. While Iran is fully committed to achieving a victory for the Syrian regime that would assure its geopolitical security, Russia seems to be more interested in shaping Syria’s political and economic future (Stratfor 04/01/2017).

Having secured its presence in the region, and invested a considerable amount of funds in military, financial and diplomatic support to the Syrian government, Russia is looking to recover its capitals and securing the permanence of the al-Assad regime, through a manifold plan for reconstructing the country. With an estimated $400 billion dollar needed for the reconstruction process, Russia is arguably inviting other countries such as the U.S.A., EU member states and China to contribute with funds as well as creating the future image of Syria (Stratfor 21/08/2018).

It should be noted that the Russia advocacy for reconstruction is not exclusively aiding in stabilizing the country, nor making profits but more about boosting Russia’s indispensable position in the Middle East and deciding Syria’s future in front of the Western world.

Moscow negotiated the returning of the Syrian refugees as part of its plan to convince both the EU countries and the United States in its reconstruction plan, however, both have expressed unwillingness to working directly with the Syrian regime and its head al-Assad.

THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS

As the war boils down to an end, Russia and the Syrian regime are pleading for international funds to reconstruct the cities destroyed over seven years of war. The attention of the regime and the international community is focused on reconstructing the devastated city of Aleppo which was divided between the government and the rebel forces since late 2012 and ended up under the al-Assad regime’s control four years later. Being Syria’s economic capital before the war, Aleppo’s reconstruction is of high significance because it determines the way many engaged powers are being balanced in a post-conflict Syria. Reports have revealed that the United Nations have signed off a deal with the al-Assad regime to rebuild Aleppo. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) collaborated with the Syrian Ministry of Local Administration and Environment for planning the reconstruction phase (Beals 2017).

The rebuilding and repopulating plans are biased as the priorities of the reconstruction are the historic old city and the regime-held areas. The displaced population from Eastern Aleppo that fled before the falling of the city to al-Assad forces, is not considered and not even allowed back in the city. The reconstruction process of East Aleppo started as the Syrian government released a plan which reveals 15 areas that are considered priorities for population return. Soon after, the UN carried out an assessment of security and refugees’ needs in those areas and mapped over 8 “Shelter Clusters” in coordination with the al-Assad’s plan. The rebuilding resources were focused on three areas as part of a “multi-sector” pilot project (Beals 2017). The process might seem promising to many, but it is important to note that some of the eight neighborhoods identified as priorities in both the regime’s and the UN’s plans are not located in Eastern Aleppo but in the Western part of the city which remained under the al-Assad’s control throughout the conflict.

The aftermath of the conflict is not limited to the physical loss of properties within the old or the Eastern side of the city but includes the damage done to up to 30,000 property records which were destroyed entirely during the war. Without these records, residents of those areas will not be able to prove their rights and ownership and will be facing permanent displacement consequently (Beals 2017).

UNHCR announced in its Shelter monthly publication-September 2017, as part of its Syria Humanitarian Response Plan, the initiation of a humanitarian program named as Rebuild Syria Reconstruction Program (RSRP) in coordination with Rebuild and Relief International (RRI) which is a German-based NGO operating in partnership with UNHCR, German Humanitarian assistance, UN-Habitat and many more to protect the rights of refugees from both Iraq and Syria (UNHCR 2017).

PRI started its mission in Syria and particularly in Aleppo in June 2017, the German NGO claims to be neutral and not siding by the al-Assad regime as its sole motive is to help the displaced Syrians. But its transparency has been suspected because it is carrying out its work on the Syrian soil with the Syria Trust for Development (STD) and its founder Asma al-Assad. In late 2014 UN agencies like UNDP and UNHCR expressed interest in rehabilitating and reconstructing some destroyed neighborhoods within the
city of Homs, Syria’s third largest city. Their efforts were supported by donor states and were carried out in partnership with the Syrian government. The selection of the neighborhoods and the nature of the projects were directed by the Syrian authorities and raised many ethical concerns regarding the transparency of these agencies and how the Syrian regime was manipulating them to fulfill its plans in depriving its opponents of their rights in the city. None of the displaced population has been consulted regarding their properties and their rights were completely ignored during the execution of the plans (The Syria Institute and Pax 2017).

**CONCLUSION**

After years of oppression and social injustice, the Syrian people revolted in 2011 against the ruling regime of Bashar al-Assad, who succeeded his father. They both kept the country suppressed for more than four decades. With no end in sight, al-Assad reign was kept intact by the support of the close allies Russia, Iran, and the Lebanese Hezbollah. The foreign interference within the conflict in Syria reached a new level and the current Russian and Iranian troops on the ground could be considered an occupational force, keeping the regime’s governmental and socio-economic structures stable.

The Syrian regime and its allies have already formulated conditions and laws which the reconstruction projects should fall under, those terms when realized would have a huge impact on Syria’s future: they would assure the total supremacy of the al-Assad’s family over the country; prop up the regime with financial stocks to recover its war losses and generate millions in profits; contribute to the pre-war plans of demographic change and displacement; and would put Syria’s capital in the hand of a network of regime-affiliated businessmen and other emerging warlords.

The proposed reconstruction project in the city of Homs is considered a blueprint to be implemented in other cities, especially in Aleppo where the opposition forces achieved some remarkable victories. The regime is indeed using reconstruction to inflict a penalty on those who opposed it: either by implementing new laws or even following old plans, the future of Syria’s cities does not seem to be so bright.

The Syrian conflict is far from over and only getting more complex as time passes, it is true that military battles came to an end in many regions within the country – but the crisis is just taking another turn regarding the future economic, social and health infrastructure, that desperately needs to be rebuilt not only for the population within Syria but regarding the millions of Syrian refugees outside the country as well. The international community which portrays its involvement to be merely humanitarian has failed to find common ground for a political solution or to provide the Syrian people with a perspective of a better democratic Syria. The same patterns of the corrupt and shadowy governmental style of the al-Assad regime, which lead to the uprising in 2011 are just being repeated. Not only have these patterns emerged within the reconstruction processes of the Syrian cities that are being led by prominent regime members, but in the relief missions of different U.N. agencies, whose close financial ties to the regime have been revealed by several international reports as well.

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THE LATERAL CONFLICT OF URBAN PLANNING IN DAMASCUS.

Nour Harastani, Edwar Hanna

Abstract
With no fund in the horizon for large-scale reconstruction in Syria due to the absence of any political deal, the Syrian government has been designing and implementing neoliberal reconstruction policies that are socially unjust, economically exclusive and politically driven.

The focus of this paper is on the latest urban policies that have been set regarding reconstruction since 2011, such as Decree 66/2012 and Law 10/2018. It also looks at the extent these legislations are negatively affecting Syrian citizens and cities. The paper explores the impact of the current reconstruction policies on the Syrian citizens starting from removing people from their home without adequately compensate them, dispossessing people of property rights, advancing the agenda of external ‘developers’ and in many other ways showcasing the mentality of leveraging urban reconstruction as a powerful political tool in the conflict.

Keywords: Reconstruction policy, Conflict, Displacement, Law 10, Decree 66, Syria, Damascus, Marota City, Informal settlements.

Introduction
The Syrian conflict is entering its eighth year. With no fund for reconstruction in the horizon, coupled with the lack of any peace deal, the Syrian government has been designing neoliberal reconstruction policies that tend to be socially unjust, economically exclusive and politically driven. The recently issued legislative reforms imply a clear shift of the state’s role as no longer the sole provider. The state becomes an economic-driven actor which aims at achieving profit in partnership with a biased private sector. With the absence of fair participatory processes or freedom of expression, coupled with the uncertainty the country still experiences, this shift would probably do more harm than good for Syria’s citizens and cities.

Damascus and Urban Injustice
Damascus is spread across 10,500 hectares of land and as of 2014, was home to a population of 1.75 million with an additional 2.85 million living in Greater Damascus (CBS, 2005; OCHA, 2014). Damascus accommodates people of Arabic, Kurdish, Assyrian, Circassian, and Armenian ethnicities and has welcomed waves of internally displaced Syrians and other refugees from regional conflicts (Slim and Trombetta, 2014). In such a diverse context, paired with a rapid population growth, urbanization and rural exodus, and inadequate planning tools in various forms of contestation and division across its different urban geographies have emerged (Ahsan, 1984). Socially speaking, class disparities, religious prejudice and ethnicity have been drivers of further polarisation (Ahsan, 1984; IRFR, 2011). Spatially speaking, 40% of the population lives in informal settlements referred to as ‘zones of collective contraventions’ where land tenure and/or building regulations violate Damascus’ master plan (GoS, 2010; Clerc, 2014). Additionally, Damascus has peri-urban areas, close suburbs that are neither within the urban realm of governance nor within the rural one. This refers to Greater Damascus.

Like most Syrian cities, Damascus has experienced varied dimensions of socio-economic fragmentation and social injustice, which in turn, have sparked different manifestations of urban contestation (Slim and Trombetta, 2014). Stemming from Soja’s (2010) concept of the inevitable correlation between spatial and social justice, exploring the trajectory of injustice in Damascus requires an in-depth investigation of how injustices are socially embedded in spaces, and how injustice produces division that [re]produces further injustice (Soja, 2000; Marcuse, 2009; Gaffikin and Morrissey, 2011). Mapping these injustices in today Damascus from the perspective of binary oppositions embedded in space, however, is profoundly deterministic in nature, particularly considering that Soja (2010) critiques how binary categorisations oversimplify the overriding complexity within the urban conditions. Therefore, investigating urban injustices within Damascus’s current construction projects in a context of uncertainty attempts to reveal in which context these binaries are produced, and acknowledge the differences and disparities even within each side.

Throughout its modern trajectory, Damascus has experienced many political shifts which have played major roles in changing the production of multi-layered injustice. It can be argued that the aforementioned socio-spatial fragmentation has been mostly reflected through multi-layered dimensions, including, but not limited to, irrational distinction among inhabitants, periphery-core dichotomy, and exclusionary treatments of informality through oppressive planning policies. Such dimensions have collectively emphasised the socio-economic fragmentation...
which was one major cause in sparking the current conflict.

**Informality and (Re)construction**

Mazzeh today is a mixed-use quarter in the western part of Damascus. It contains diverse typologies including high-income villas, middle-income residential buildings and low-income informal settlements, military social housing and cooperative housing schemes. Mazzeh accommodates most international organizations, embassies, ministries, and one of the presidential palaces. This gives the quarter a strategic standing in Damascus. In Ecochard’s Master Plan, Mazzeh was designed as the central area of Damascus, while the informal settlements in southeast Mazzeh were categorised as an ‘internal agrarian zone’ (Wifstrand and Jia, 2009; Verdeil, 2012). The rapid urbanisation of Damascus over the last decades along with massive rural-urban migration put great pressure on housing in the city. The desirable location of Mazzeh has increased the number of informal settlements on agrarian land due to shortage of affordable housing. Within Mazzeh there is one particular informal neighbourhood called Al-Razi. Al-Razi contains 6733 informal units in four main neighbourhoods: Al-Ikhlas, Al-Moustafa, Al-Farouk and Al-Basatin. The informal areas span close to 215 hectares, with 55% of the land being used for informal settlements and 45% for agrarian purposes (Harastani, 2016).

The Damascus Governorate developed a master plan 2009-2012 (Clerc V. 2014). The plan dealt with informal settlements in Damascus by defining whether such settlements should be reconstructed or upgraded. This master plan has been put on hold because of the conflict situation. On September 18, 2012, Decree 66 was issued by the government to initiate the first and the second implementation phases of reconstruction in the so-called ‘post-conflict reconstruction’. This decree defines two zones with collectively 1094 hectares in southern Damascus:

- **Zone (1):** The first implementation zone (214 hectare): Al Razi neighbourhood.
- **Zone (2):** The second implementing zone (880 hectare): Kafersouseh, Al-Qadam and Daraya. (Fi1)

Damascus Governorate has adhered to the decree 66 and developed the master plan (Fi3). This new master plan was published in October 2012 and has increased the percentage of informal settlements on the list to be demolished from 40% to 60% (as compared to the previous master plan) (Clerc V. 2014). The government worked tirelessly on circulating decree 66 through media channels, radio, and the national newsletter. The project concentrates on the reconstruction of Al-Razi through urban schemes that contain residential towers, business offices, modern schools, and other such modern facilities. Officially this plan is meant to achieve social justice along with performance efficiency and financial returns. The main principles have been claimed by the Damascene Governor in a series of TV interviews: “Three main principles have been fundamentally taken into account in this project: social Justice; the high performance of implementation; and financial returns for Damascus governorate which allow sustaining services provision and initiating new projects” (Hanna, 2018).

**Fig 2: Al-Razi Master Plan. Source: Damascus Governorate.**

The so-called ‘Post Conflict Reconstruction’ project is geo-strategic in nature, and contains a political motive led by powerful actors. A senior security official in the government proudly declared that “partial demolitions of pro-rebel neighbourhoods in and around Damascus are a key element of an ambitious counterinsurgency plan now unfolding” (Dagher S. 2012:8). Having said this, the master plan of the reconstruction process is apparently being used as an excuse to embark on further deconstruction, in order to make political and financial interests taking advantage of the current conflict. Afterwards, the Damascus Governorate started a documentation process according to the Articles 5-8 from decree 66 to convert the informal units’ area...
into a share scheme to define owners’ rights in the rehousing schemes. However, this process is sensitive and challenging for both inhabitants and the governorate since only inhabitants with verified land tenure will be compensated in the rehousing schemes. Two main problematic issues emerged in this case: the first concerns how property value would be fairly converted into a share scheme, while the second questions the eligibility of inhabitants to access this scheme and who is choosing the criteria.

### Eligibility Criteria: Tool of Exclusion

Decree 66 defies what was stated earlier in a previous decree enacted in 1975, that any cemented informal unit has the right to compensation regardless of the ownership status. The previous decree preserved the tenure security which has since, completely vanished. Decree 66 classifies the inhabitants in terms of their land tenure and designates them to one of four categories (Fi3). The table (1) shows that only legal tenants and owners of the informal units who built on their land have the right to the rehousing scheme while people who don’t own the land or only have agrarian land are not entitled to be compensated.

The table (1) shows inhabitants’ rights to the rehousing schemes regarding their land tenure according to Articles 43-44 from Decree No.66. Source: Hanna, 2016.

Additionally, the government limited compensation schemes to people who have been living in their houses during the documentation process, and who remain until the destruction process takes place. By arbitrarily limiting who is included, the government is able to exclude inhabitants who have fled their houses due to the shelling and attacks (Al-Sabban B. 2015). Moreover, the rent compensation given by the government would not enable an average resident to afford even a small apartment in the adjacent areas, especially in Damascus which has been experiencing a severe housing crisis due to the number of people internally displaced by the conflict. In many interviews, inhabitants raised concerns that the annual amount for rent would only suffice to cover a maximum of six months, and this is only possible in suburbs located far outside the city centre. Despite their concerns, nothing has changed although such discriminatory compensation in this kind of project is remarkably undervalued and is largely considered to be unfair (Clerc V. 2014).

The problem of decree 66 is that it deals with informality as if this was the problem without addressing the systemic political shortcomings that led to its occurrence. Along with the shortage of affordable housing, access to land tenure was a big issue in witnessing the phenomena of informality in Damascus (Wifstrand & Jia 2009; Verdeil E. 2012). Therefore, designing a scheme that classifies the inhabitants based on their land status, is an exclusionary process by nature.

Decree 66 also ignores the complexity of informal settlements where the informal unit is not only used as house, but also to provide income generation and economic opportunities (Fi4). Instead, the neoliberal reconstruction scheme adapted by Decree 66 deals with the land as an absolute cadastral map, ignoring the previous socio-economic dimension of the informal neighbourhood.

### Property Redistribution: Tool of Eviction

The politics of property in informal settlements is not limited to fixed individual ownership, it includes family property, communal and even undefined property. Thus, centralising the value of property over other factors, particularly in the context of informal settlements, excludes people who don’t have official, or state-recognized evidence of ownership (Blomley N. 2004, Fawaz M. 2014). This is what happened in Al-Razi since the designed schemes challenge the politics of the informal units, their right to exist, and residents’ right to the unit in the first place. The schemes also ignore the land’s area and the inhabitants’ income.

The share scheme of decree 66 has also played a factor rendering the reconstruction project in an exclusionary way that used the claims of prosperous economic interests to justify a systematic process of eviction and gentrification. The share scheme defines the conversion rate as [1] $qasba^3$ values $[2,381,940]$ share$^4$. According to this, informal units will be compensated based on their house area that is converted into shares. The residential towers in the new master plan contain three types of apartments categorised by surface, namely 70, 90, or 120 square meters. The smallest apartment -at 70 square meters according to the government’s rate-costs about
people will be left homeless, and also the morphology tool to maintain injustice. As a result, more and more conducting exclusionary projects that will be used as a neoliberal reconstruction scheme, the government is sions of the previous neighbourhood. Through this cadastral map, ignoring the socio-economic dimen-

sion has developed a neoliberal reconstruction scheme that deals with the project as an absolute
ment has worsened the possibility of buying shares and left this, the claimed prosperity aspect, can be argued,

However, since most of Al-Razi people cannot afford this, the law states that citizens relinquish 20% of the
value of their properties in favour of the local author-
ities, under the pretext of providing services in return,
which makes people’s chances of getting rehousing in
the new schemes lower.

According to Law no.10, the local administra-
tion unit (LAU) decides whether their area needs to be reconstructed or not, supervises the inhabitants’ registration process to choose an apportioned plot in the selected area and chooses the plot itself on their behalf. The LAU can also decide on behalf of the people according to their shares value on what options they should go for. Under specific circumstances they can also put the shares into a public auction. The law centralises all decisions in the hands of local administration units, without any consideration for the incapability of the LAUs in dealing with large scale projects in terms of resources, staff or even experience. Corruption and clientelism play a major role in the way of which the units are selected and elected by tak-
ing into account their affiliations and the role they offered during the conflict. This will affect people’s rights and participation in the context of uncertainty which Syria experiences at the moment.

Two problematic clauses have been included in the Law no.10 which challenge Syrian urban identity.
and the right of all Syrians to participate. The former is clearly evident where the law states that selecting the targeted area depends only on the economic turnovers of the projects neglecting all the social and cultural aspects that are integral to these [ancient] Syrian cities and not taking into account the complexity and the difficulty of the process which exceeds the average citizen capacity. The private sector has the only major role in shaping the new identity and monopolising the market.

The second concern comes from the circumstance of having more than 6 million refugees outside the country. According to the law’s procedure, they are unable to claim their property due to the lack of access to their documents, or the impossibility to provide a proof of ownership or even certify their proofs. Besides having this as property rights issue, it also leads to total exclusion and isolation for the Syrian diaspora to any reconstruction projects that might take a place sooner or later.

Unlike Decree 66, Law 10 could be applied in any Syrian city, town or even neighbourhood, whether it has been destroyed during the conflict or not. These places did not lose only houses, facilities or infrastructure but also lost their inhabitants who have memories and stories of their areas. Those inhabitants who had to flee the country seeking refuge have also the right to participate in shaping their cities and reclaiming their memories. Any just reconstruction agenda should definitely consider rebuilding the memories which shape the city’s identity rather than just rebuilding houses and infrastructure. Most of the refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) today are aware of the condition of their property - whether it is damaged, destroyed, or occupied by others. However, the presence of the new legislative frame of reconstruction does not make them confident to return home or even take efforts to claim ownership due to raising doubts about being able to.

The Challenges of Law 10
The danger to heritage and culture
Law 10 neglects all the social and cultural aspects that are integral to the Syrian cities by stating the targeted area of reconstruction depends only on the economic turnovers of the projects in this area.

The challenge of lack of access
Most refugees and IDPs are aware of about the condition of their property - whether it is damaged, destroyed, or occupied by others. Based on the survey, this does not make them confident to return home or even think efforts to claim ownership after they have established a new life in their host countries as they do not have any access to their property.

The challenge of time
It takes a long time to process cases which discourage refugees and IDPs to proceed with the process. Large-scale HLP restitution program funding is very problematic for a recovering country in which compensating people or rehousing them would be challenging.

The challenge of evidence
Law 10 has specific procedures related to claiming ownership of a property which are exclusionary and not feasible for more than 5.5 million refugees living abroad. Although it is difficult to regenerate ownership evidence for people who lost it during the conflict, it is still doable for people who have their property registered in the Land cadastre in Syria. Yet, only a few are processed if HLP rights were held under customary, tribal, or other form of informal tenure but without the collective pressure needed to secure tenure. Refugees and IDPs can have a significant amount of valid evidence, but this evidence is under threat of lose or neglect over time during resettlement due to the lack of awareness of its value as evidence. Prolonged resettlement causes the losing of informal or recognised evidence which could help the people in their claims – such as intimate knowledge, photos, stories from elderly people and neighbours. All this evidence disappears during the long time of healing. Therefore, evidence collection should definitely start before it is lost.

The challenge of local government administration
Law 10 centralises all decisions in the hands of local administration units, which don’t have the capacity, experience or resources for these large-scale projects. The latest reconstruction Law 10/2018 focuses on decentralised reconstruction projects on the national level following the framework of Decree 107/2011 that defines the local administration law. This decree outlines the definitions and goals of administrative units as governorates, cities, towns and municipalities, with each unit having an elected local council. The tasks of these local councils cover the areas of urban planning, industry, agriculture, trade, education, tourism, transport, services, and so forth. In a way, it paves the way to promote decentralisation, to enable local councils to execute development plans, to increase financial revenues for local councils, to improve society at the local level and facilitate services for citizens. The implication of this decree is that owners with property outside of where they are registered (civil registration) have no right to be part of the local administration unit decision-making processes about their properties and the neighbourhood reconstruction plans where their property is located. These voters in some areas compose less than 10% of inhabitants and are the only ones who can vote and have their interests represented and grievances heard.

Conclusion

The Syrian conflict has resulted in more than 5.5 million people leaving the country, and 6.3 million people being internally displaced (OCHA 2017). With the context now changing from displacement to ‘reconstruction’, although the conflict continues, the millions of Syrians who fled their homes are now confronted with legal threats to the ownership of these homes.

The new urban policies and laws deal with the country as an absolute cadastral map, ignoring the socio-economic dimension of Syrian cities, and resulting in people being further isolated and dispossessed. Eviction and gentrification will be widely present due to the economic fragility of the inhabitants, as they will not be able to cope with these processes. Later, in the absence of a just relocation and compensation process, the voice of local residents will be replaced by the interests of private sector, and most of the inhabitants might tend to relocate themselves, which may likely lead to developing new informal settlements and introducing a new urban conflict to the Syrian cities.
End Notes:

1. A share scheme is the right to buy a certain number of shares at a fixed price, sometime in the future, within a company. In the case of Al-Razi, it indicates converting the unit’s area into shares.

2. In 1975 a presidential decree stated that any “informal buildings built of cement with a door and a window and covered with a reinforced concrete roof could not be destroyed without offering a dwelling in compensation” (Clerc V. 2011:4). This decree was an important legal document that played a role in the physical identity of Informal settlements in Syria. And it had an influence in increasing the urban violation with a trust in the land tenure insured by this law (Harastani N. 2016).

3. Local measurement unit used in Syria and values 23.75 square meter. 12 One share values one Syrian Pound.

4. One share equals one Syrian Pound.

5. For more information about Law no.10 please see also Syrbanism infographic video explaining it under: https://www.syrbanism.com/2nd-project


7. Ibid


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Abstract
Urbicide, domicide and memoricide are terms associated with destruction, whether of the tangible or intangible human and spatial capital. This paper discusses how, as a result of the Israeli imposed geopolitical map in Jerusalem, another face of these three “cides” is experienced. The Dahiyat al-Bareed neighbourhood, built in 1958, demarcated outside the municipal boundaries after 1967 and outside the Separation Wall boundaries after 2002, is used as a case study. The study illustrates how both the political conflict and the produced geopolitical map have indirectly forced the inhabitants of Dahiyat al-Bareed to abandon their homes. They need to reside in apartments within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem to maintain their legal status in the city. This produced a gradual process of domicide, memoricide and eventually, slow urbicide in the Dahiyat al-Bareed neighbourhood. The three “-cide” attack is tackled by the owners as a survival dynamic. This is done by deliberately accentuating neglect and decay of the built structures to camouflage the owners’ sporadic presence and to affirm the abandonment dynamic.

The study discusses the dynamics of the urban battle-ground in three ways: By reading trails through architecture and the measures Palestinians use to hold on to their homes, by observing and analysing the deliberate changes on the buildings and gardens designed to expose abandonment and withering, and through interviews with the owners of the houses. The purposeful withering and decay of spaces within the neighbourhood produces a state-of-being torn between the past place of dwelling and the new place of residence. This perpetuates a continuous dual conflict which inflicts a chronic trauma within the experience and memories of their homes as they tackle the memoricide dynamic. The study shows that the tensious choice of practicing a sense of dwelling beholds lengthy suffering inflicted by political injustice.

Keywords: Jerusalem housing, urbicide, domicide, memoricide, urban abandonment, urban battle field.

INTRODUCTION
Obtrusions in the well being of a home, a neighbourhood, or an urban setting do not only affect the physical environment but also the human attachment to these spaces. Obtrusions could happen in different ways, degrees and with different temporal dynamics. Wars and conflicts could lead to a devastating impact on urban areas, a situation termed as “urbicide” or “violence against the city”. Even more devastating is when one’s home is destroyed. This act is called “domicide”. Urbicide and domicile are also related to “memoricide”, or destruction of memories and cultural treasures. Thus, the terms domicile, urbicide and memoricide (the three “cides”) are not only associated with one’s home, surrounding environment, but also with other values like memory and dwelling.

Indirect enforcement of home abandonment is not less harmful. Though actual physical destruction does not happen but can lead to the decay of houses when left vacant for lengthy periods. This could also lead to prolonged suffering of the owners, and a slow version of domicile, memoricide and urbicide. This happens when conflicts use geopolitics to control the weaker. Power in this sense is practiced in different ways to indirectly affect the lived space of the people. This is evident in Jerusalem where Israel has used its power to inflict a new geopolitical setting that has, directly and indirectly, affected the human and spatial dynamics of Palestinian life.

With the aim to discuss the contradictory attitudes of maintaining dwelling through flourishing or through destruction, the questions that this article pose are: how could an imposed geopolitical setting lead to a different version of the three “cides”? and how could self-inflicted destruction manifest a dynamic of survival? Could such destruction be a tool to dwell?

Several urban areas that are located along and outside the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, face various combinations of the three “cides”. Many Israeli policies force Palestinians with Jerusalem resident ID cards to shift their lives in order to maintain their legal residential status in the city. Examples of such areas include Beit Iksa, Beit Hanina al Balad, Bid Nabl, Qalandia, Al-Ram, Dahiyat Al-Bareed, Hizma, Anata, Az’ayim, Ezariyeh, Abu Dis, Assawahreh ash Sharqiya, and Asheikh Saed. These areas either represent village cores or outskirts of the city. The article selected the case of Dahiyat Al-
Bareed, which shares the essence of the three “cides”. The difference however, is that this area developed as the first housing cooperative outskirt and therefore manifests a particular communal attachment to the place.

The case of Dahiyat al-Bareed will show how another face of the three “cides” is manifested. Despite the non actual physical destruction carried out by another human agency directly, an imposed geopolitical condition could force the inhabitants to abandon their houses. The inhabitants’ reaction to the built environment and their memories are practiced as a survival dynamic. The people who witnessed the flourishing of their neighbourhood earlier, are forced to leave their houses in Dahiyat al-Bareed. They seek residence within the imposed boundaries defined by the Municipality of Jerusalem to maintain their legal status. Owners are utilising measures to make their houses appear abandoned. The fact that they are involved in such an act, makes them unwillingly part of the production of the three “cides”; domicide, memoricide and urbicide. Such dynamic shall be explained through understanding the geopolitical context and by reading through the architectural trails the tactics that reflect the inhabitants’ abandonment and interaction with their houses.

Accordingly, the wider context of this article relates politics and its impact on architecture, and its main objectives are:

- To contribute to the discussion about the theory of “urbicide” but within the context of ongoing political conflict that provides a certain geopolitical setting.
- To document the architectural characteristics of the houses with significant architectural values and suffer from a certain geopolitical setting.
- To trace and analyse the deliberate changes on the buildings and gardens implemented by the owners to depict abandonment and withering.

The paper argues that a kind of slow urbicide, domicide, and memoricide in the neighbourhood of Dahiyat al-Bareed is practiced, which is not less harmful than the actual destruction of the homes. That is since domicile and urbicide resulting from direct wars may destroy the built environment in a quick and sudden manner, and appear purposefully as direct targets. Yet, slow “cides”, take place on a slower and less sudden manner and may not appear as a result of another force or human agent. On the contrary, people’s abandoning their homes or altering them to show abandonment causes withering. This is as a result of an imposed geopolitical force, which may appear less sudden and less related to the act of violence during wars.

To elaborate further on the question of how an imposed geopolitical setting lead to another face of the three “cides”, the following sub questions are posed:

- Why are people forced to change their place of living?
- Do the original houses reveal traces of being inhabited?
- If the people altered their houses, what did they alter?
- To what extent did they alter the original buildings and why?
- What are the stories that owners have in relation to these alterations?

While direct domicile actually happens in certain areas in Jerusalem due to complications in having a building permit, the above specific questions are posed due to the specific geopolitical map that differentiates between areas in Jerusalem, where houses in some areas are still intact but exposed to a different face of the three “cides”.

THE THREE “CIDES”

Although home is a noun which entails a place, a building and architecture, it is also associated with acts, practices and experiences of the everyday life. Gaston Bachelard in The Poetics of Space (Bachelard, 1969), defines home from a philosophical and poetical sense, where his understanding of home cannot be separated from the human soul. He explains how a home is associated with the thoughts, memories, experiences and dreams that emerge in our souls in an unconscious manner. It enables daydreaming that can create a poetic image that only home can protect; something that history, geography and psychology are incapable of.

Home is also a place of dwelling and attachment. Martin Heidegger saw that places happen through use and experience. Dwelling according to him in Building, Dwelling, Thinking is associated with creating “a space within which something comes into its own and flourishes” (Heidegger, 1971:154). In psychological approaches, scholars relate the dynamics between home and dwelling through attachment. Place attachment is joined with place identity; Hernandez (Hernandez et al, 2007) sees that both attachment to a place and place identity are overlapping terms. That is, attachment to a place forms the character of the individual and identity. The more the attachment takes place, the more people will identify themselves with respect to that place – city, nationality (Giuliani, 2003). Attachment to place and identity has a complex relationship with the environment. It is developed within the conscious and unconscious beliefs, ideas, feelings, values and goals (Proshansky, 1978). A house becomes a home as a result of a long term transformation effort to reflect an individual or a group identity (Moore, 2000). Therefore, the experience of home is a subjective phenomenon with qualities and values that cannot be easily quantified, although it has a physical structure. Furthermore, a home is associated with occupant’s memories, identity, sentiments and other quantitative and qualitative values. It also holds an architectural value and comes within a certain geographical and political setting.

Since “home” entails multilayered levels of dynamics whether as an architectural building, or a place of living and attachment or as part of an urban context, a threat to any of these levels could affect the sense of dwelling. This threat is intensified in contexts of conflicts, wars or natural disasters. While the experience of a home and dwelling happens slowly it can be disturbed quickly (Brown and Perkins, 1992). Disturbance can vary in its scale and degree, from the destruction of an individual home (domicide) or whole urban area (urbicide).

The term domicile, rooted from the word domus (home in Latin) and homicide, which means a
deliberate destruction of a person’s home by human agency, has its affect on both the individual and family scale. The term was coined by Proteus in 1988 and later by Proteus and Smith in 2001, defined as “the planned, deliberate destruction of someone’s home, causing suffering to the dweller”. The conditions of domicile according to the authors can differ. The “extreme domicile” or destruction can be a result of war or political conflicts. The “everyday domicile” can happen as a result of a legal situation where “common good” can be a reason for home destruction, like building new roads or expansion of airports. Regardless of the differences, their traumatic impact and the consequences on the human beings are much linked to the meaning of home, the place of attachment and dwelling.

The other term urbicide is the violent destruction of cities and their character. It was introduced by Michael Moorock in 1963, in reference to rapid urbanization in the U.S cities that led to increased violence and destruction. Its early beginning was referred to as “killing of cities” through planning, policy and development decisions. However, urbicide can take place in different forms: deliberate and direct or unintentional and indirect. Deliberate destruction denotes complete physical destruction of urban areas selectively, like public buildings with symbolic values that represent the identity of the city, its people and their collective memory. The cause may be violent during wars or could be for ethnic cleansing (see Mike Davis, 2006). Indirect destruction on the other hand, is less visible physically, like laws, actions and control which may eventually lead to the destruction of cities (Coward, 2004; Graham, 2004).

Similarly, Bogdan Bogdanovic (1995) and Robert Bevan (2006) introduced different dimensions of violence against the urban environment and architecture during wars. The concept of “urbicide” is used by Bogdanovic as a continuation of genocide after the wars in former Yugoslavia. His definition of “urbicide” is related to the destruction of houses in order to destroy people. According to him, having heterogeneous and multicultural cities might stop this type of violence during wars. On the other hand, Bevan shows that cultural artefacts are destroyed in order to reject the presence of the enemy in the place, where violence towards monumental buildings is rational and politically motivated iconoclasm in different parts of the world.

As for “memoricide”, it is a term coined by the Croatian doctor and historian Mirko D. Grmek in 1991 which refers to systematic eradication of cultural monuments associated with a specific ethnic or religious group. It was also referred to after the attack on the National Library during the Sarajevo siege in April 1992. Memoricide is the willful destruction of a vanquished people’s memory and cultural treasures (Civallero, 2007). It is therefore associated with the destruction of intangible values that one holds through a period of dwelling and identity building in a place.

Consequently, urbicide, domicile and memoricide are terms associated with destruction, whether of the tangible or intangible human and spatial capital. The violence whether human or natural associated to the destruction, could lead to forced movement and/or displacement of people. In conflict zones and during wars, urbicide and memoricide become inevitable. The destruction of the architectural character of the building affects its aesthetics, the lived space of the people and their dwelling dynamic.

In Jerusalem, the effect of the three “cides” is taking place in many areas and in different ways. Destruction of houses is due to Israeli issued demolition orders. These are issued when building permits are not available. Palestinians are obligated to build on some of their lands without permits because attaining a building permit requires a very complicated, long-term and expensive process. Such complications are imposed through urban planning policies, laws and regulations to decrease the Palestinian presence in Jerusalem. Urbicide also takes place when a whole community is expelled from one place to another like the Bedouin communities in Jerusalem. On another level, destruction due to the three “cides” is taking place in Jerusalem without real physical terms or evidence of direct violence. In this case, the three “cides” could have a total effect on the built environment through being direct and indirect at the same time:

1- Directly, the geopolitical maps imposed by the Israeli municipality in Jerusalem affect the decision of the owners to change their place of living.

2- Indirectly, people willingly choose self inflicted destruction of their houses as a tool of survival whilst preserve the act of dwelling, without the municipality directly implementing the destruction itself.

GEOPOLITICAL MAP OF JERUSALEM
The geopolitical map in Jerusalem imposes itself upon the option of place of living and place of dwelling of Palestinians (whether by choice or forced) and affects their political and legal status. Living outside the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem could lead to falling into legal traps designed to eject Jerusalemites from the city. This geopolitical map was developed gradually by the Israeli power to control the Palestinian population of Jerusalem.

At the heart of the center of East Jerusalem, is the walled Old City. It is surrounded by different Arab villages. During the late 18th and early 19th centuries people started migrating outside the wall to meet with the modern living standards. New neighbourhoods were built at the outer circles of the villages’ core surrounding the Old City. Towards the East, the village of Abu Deis and Ezariyeh (Bethany) as well as Ras al-Amood neighbourhood were growing from rural to semi-urban areas. Towards the North-East, the main neighbourhoods of Wadi al-Joz, Suwanah around the Mount of Olives area later expanded to include Az’ayim and the village of Issawiyyah. On the main road towards Ramallah in the North, Beit Hanina and Shu’fat villages extended towards Dahiyat al-Bareed, Al-Ram village, Bir Nabola and Qalandia.

In 1948, Jerusalem was divided along a strip of a buffer zone referred to as the “green line”. The western part was under Israeli rule and the eastern was Palestinian under Jordanian administration until the year 1967. That year and following a war, Israel occupied the eastern part of the city and the West Bank. While Jerusalem became physically re-connected, Palestinians and Israelis lead separate lives in the city. Israel created a new municipal boundary of the city after the war.

The demarcation included as much un-built land with less Palestinians inside the new municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, and thus came under the control of the Israeli municipal administration. Those
outside these boundaries were governed by an Israeli military government under the rule of the so called Israeli Civil Administration (ICA), established right after the war in June 1967 and commanded by a military governor. This structure has its own laws (essentially military orders), its own military courts and detention centers designed for controlling the Palestinians in these areas. This system still controls the West Bank despite the presence of the Palestinian Authority. In contrast, Israeli settlers in the West Bank are governed by Israeli civilian government institutions, laws and courts. Therefore, the new demarcation of the municipal boundaries of the city determined whether the Palestinians became under Israeli civilian rule or military rule which practiced flagrant violations of human rights according to international law.

During the Jordanian Rule, the city boundaries included less areas in comparison to the Israeli municipal boundaries, however, residents of all Jerusalem, whether the municipal or district boundaries were ruled by the same laws. The new Israeli demarcation meant that some of the Jerusalem areas such as Dahiyat al-Bareed and Bir Nabala became under Israeli military rule and outside the Israeli Jerusalem municipal jurisdiction.

Following the Oslo Agreement¹ in 1993, the Palestinian Authority was established and it administered some of the areas in the West Bank. East Jerusalem, however, stayed under full Israeli administration pending final status negotiations which did not culminate. Most of its suburbs were excluded and separated through the closure policy which was implemented after 1993. The closure entailed checkpoints at the entrances of the city to control movement and to prevent access to non-resident Palestinians of East Jerusalem to the city. People who did not hold a Jerusalem Identity card were not allowed to enter the municipal boundaries of the city except when granted special permits. This was also exacerbated after 2002 with the building of the Separation Wall which even excluded some areas that were part of the municipal boundaries.

People holding Jerusalem identity cards, i.e. considered residents of Jerusalem, were obliged to live within the municipal boundaries according to the “center of life” policy, which the Israeli Ministry of Interior began implementing in 1995. This policy enforced only on Palestinians (and not Israelis) required from Palestinians holding Jerusalem identity cards to live within the new defined municipal borders in order to maintain their legal status in the country (Jefferis, 2012). Till today, they still have to provide documented proof that their “center of life” is within the Israeli municipal boundaries of Jerusalem. Inadequate or no proof of living within these borders (like residence tax forms, water and electricity bills, public health insurance), might lead to revocation of their residencies by the Israeli authorities through the Ministry of Interior, leaving them without legal status.

Palestinians living without a residency, means that they live without official identities, cannot have access to travel documents, and become illegal residents. They will not be admitted or allowed to enter Jerusalem, and would not get social welfare including health insurance and other social allowances. This essentially means that they fall out of the legal system; are deprived of any legal status, and have no alternative but to lead a life without any legal administration (Latendresse, 1995; Bimkom, 2014; Mansour, 2018; Tabor, 2010).

To maintain their legal status, Palestinians living in the suburbs of Jerusalem are indirectly forced to abandon their original homes² to reside within the defined boundaries imposed by the Jerusalem municipality. Some people have not abandoned their original homes completely in the hope of returning one day. The division of Jerusalem areas has led to different problems, mainly:

- Hardship of movement between the neighbourhoods, where by-pass roads created longer routes with manned checkpoints.
- Fragmentation of the neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem.
- Isolation of Palestinians in East Jerusalem from others in the West Bank.
- Overcrowding of East Jerusalem which created high Palestinian population density and a persistent housing shortage.

Land for Palestinians to build on, has been limited to favor Israeli settlements and a small amount of building permits is allowed. This resulted in building without permits and becoming exposed to demolition orders and direct destruction of homes (Kaminker, 1997; OCHAoP, 2012; Margalit, 2014).

People who hold Jerusalem residency and live in the neighbourhoods of Jerusalem such as Ezariyeh (Bethany), Abu Deis, Dahiyat al-Bareed, Bir Nabala and others, face financial burden to pay for rentals as they abandon their houses to adhere to the “center of life” policy. The prices are high due to the limited number of houses within the municipal boundaries.

Within these geopolitical circumstances, the abandoned houses in the neighbourhoods of Jerusalem slowly face the “urbicide” dynamic. However, people of these areas reject surrendering to this result. They have rebuilt their dwelling dynamic in a way different from the conventional.

THE CASE OF Dahiyyat al-Bareed

The Dahiyat al-Bareed neighbourhood, to the north of Jerusalem, was built in 1958 during the Jordanian Rule in East Jerusalem, as the first cooperative by the
employees of the post office. A group of Jerusalemites (40 at the time) who were employees in the central post office (phone and mail central) came together and decided to buy lands in the northern areas around Jerusalem and form a cooperation. This is where the name Dahiyat al-Bareed comes from, in Arabic “Dahiya” means suburb and “Bareed” means the post office. Their aim was, like the other residents of the old city, to move into houses that met the new living standards, which the old houses could no longer cater for. The owners of Dahiyat al-Bareed perceived the houses in the old city as being old. Smaller nuclear families lived in small rooms within a larger house that belonged to the same extended family. Service rooms (kitchens, toilets) were shared, and could not accommodate their increasing number. Moving outside the old city, purchasing and building new properties were also seen as means of investment. At the time, cars and motor vehicles, and public transportation were becoming available and could accommodate their movement.

The lands were bought individually from the village of Beit Hanina, and Al-Ram. They were at a close proximity to each other, and the roads network was paved through the cooperation money between 1961 and 1962. Saeb Al-Nashashibi, the manager of the post office at the time, was appointed as the head of the cooperation and mediated most of the lands purchase. Payments were made in monthly installments borrowed from different banks and sources. This helped employees with limited incomes to buy land there.

The cooperation owned a bus that would transport residents from the neighbourhood into the city center. A second bus was bought ten years later and was outsourced. Stories were even told that the residents during a full moon on a summer night would take the bus together and go for entertainment to the Dead Sea in the Jordan Valley. The neighbourhood had a water installment from the main source in Ramallah and electricity from Jerusalem. Previously, sanitary issues were solved through digging a large ditch in the ground similar to today’s septic tank at the houses’ back garden. Sanitary infrastructure was only introduced later in 1983. Many planted berry or Eucalyptus trees next to the ditch. These trees helped in absorbing the sanitary and limited its overflow. The houses are intact till the day, and are affected from the political context in different ways.

To examine the houses of the neighbourhood, the below methodology was followed:

- Visiting houses that allowed entry and interview.
- Outlining the typologies and architectural characteristics of the houses at the time they were built.
- Interviewing and recording the stories of the owners who have witnessed the construction of the neighbourhood. This allowed understanding the socio-economic context at the time.
- Recording alterations done on purpose on main façades and front gardens.

Reading the architectural trails through the alterations revealed the approach of the owners towards their houses.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HOUSES IN DAHIYAT AL-BAREED

The houses in Dahiyat al-Bareed were not built with the help of architects, therefore original plans could not be obtained. The people were not obliged to follow a certain building style, and buildings were not arranged in rows or followed a certain defined form.

After Israel occupied the rest of the city in 1967, most residents turned to architects to draw the existing houses and applied for registration in the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) fearing from future penalties. The houses were mostly of one floor; and when topography allowed, a basement floor could be found. Through the visits of the houses, it was noted that although the floor plans of the houses are not the same, they represent a common typology with slight changes. The common characteristics are (see Figure 2 & 3):

- The house centralizes the land and is surrounded with a low concrete wall which encloses a large garden planted with olive and citrus trees.
- The structural system of the houses is based on posts and beams of reinforced concrete.
- A semi open balcony (referred to as veranda) at the entrance leads to two different doors: one for visitors that opens to the formal living room (referred to as salon, a French word to give it more formality) and one for the residents that opens to the central hall.
- A central hall (referred to as liwan) is a common transitional space into different functions and rooms. It is larger in dimension than a corridor, and is used as a daily living room. The liwan was typically inspired from the courtyards in the Old City, but roofed.
- The liwan would still have a door that opened to the formal living room from the inside.
- Bedrooms, kitchen and toilets are accessed from the liwan.
- Most houses have an average of two spacious bedrooms, one for the parents and one for children.
- Kitchens did not have cupboards until the 1970’s; they had only a stone counter top. Storing shelves were covered with curtains. Kitchens had traditional stoves (referred to as Wajaa), which are chimneys built with cement to funnel out evaporating steam from the cooking. Also, fridges were not available in every house and people bought ice blocks to cool food when necessary.
- Walls and floors of toilets were tiled. Tubs were introduced, and toilet closets changed from the squat-type (referred to as Arabic toilet) to the seat-type depending on the owner’s preference. Sometimes, both types of bathrooms can be found.
- Some houses have other balconies at the back, covered from top and open on the sides. Some families covered balconies with glass depending on the orientation. South facing balconies are used as a living room in winter, while west oriented balconies are used at night in summer.
- Windows and doors are made from iron attached to glass with special glue. Many are replaced with aluminum frames today.
- Floors were tiled with simple tiles lacking ornamentation, terrazzo tiles were widely spread.
- Buildings had flat roofs and could be approached through a staircase.
- Buildings were all covered with irregular stone (Toubzeh). At the time, (ashlar) flat stone was expensive and formed in situ, which limited its usage on cer-

3.1
tain areas facing the street.

Socially, the neighbourhood replicated the life in the Old City, where people lived in specific streets and houssh. Other relatives and close families who did not work in the post office bought land privately and built following the similar trend and typologies described above. Interestingly, people were given address numbers according to the sequence they came in to build and live in the neighbourhood.

Donations were collected from different places and a private school was built called “Al-Ummeh College”. It was open to people from all over the area in the early 1960’s as it had dormitories for students to stay during the week. The cooperative owned a market and club to meet the needs of the residents; the club would host different activities such as cinema shows every few weeks. Later donations from the residents were collected and a mosque was built.

The residents became attached to the neighbourhood, and they gradually developed a relation of dwelling with the house. The buildings became their home in the full sense of the word: a place of dwelling, a place of attachment and part of their identity.

The neighbourhood kept growing over time and new houses were introduced. Many houses had more floors added in the 1980’s and 1990’s. As the neighbourhood grew, it expanded towards Al-Ram village in the north and Beit Hanina to the south. During that time the neighbourhood represented the middle upper classes and was desired by many tenants and investors. House-values increased and demography increased as well.

DAHIYAT AL-BAREED AND THE IMPOSED GEOPOLITICAL MAP

Dahiyat al-Bareed became one of the neighbourhoods critically affected by the geopolitical dynamics. The neighbourhood was demarcated outside the municipal boundaries after 1967 and outside the Separation Wall boundaries after 2002. This affected the residents of the neighbourhood who hold Jerusalem Identity cards. The imposed geopolitical map has indirectly forced the inhabitants of Dahiyat al-Bareed to abandon their homes. They seek rented apartments or buy new houses within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem to maintain legal status as Jerusalem residents. Also, Dahiyat al-Bareed became more isolated due its close proximity to the checkpoint of Qalandia - the main checkpoint in the northern part of Jerusalem. The checkpoint creates heavy traffic by the cars trying to pass between the two major cities, Jerusalem and Ramallah, thus creating daily delays. Due to all this, a drop in the real estate value occurred, and Dahiyat al-Bareed became a less desired neighbourhood.

The Dahiyat al-Bareed neighbourhood became more and more isolated and almost left abandoned. However, the owners sustain a sporadic presence but rationally maintain the abandonment appearance of the houses. The owners adopt techniques reminiscent of destruction and withering to make them look abandoned in case of inspections by the Israeli authorities. The alterations implemented have taken place forcefully in order to appear abandoned, whilst its residents still maintain it from the inside. Others are left for natural decay, and become a target for thieves.

Houses were visited, and the emerging alterations were examined and analyzed with respect to the building’s exterior appearances including facades, openings, walls, trees, signs and symbols. Eight interviews were prearranged with people of the generation who had witnessed migrating from the Old City to the Dahiyat al-Bareed and could remember the stages of its growth. They were asked about the inspected approaches of the abandonment dynamic and the reasons behind them. Pictures of the purposeful alterations were not allowed. However, a main façade sketch was done according to the existing situation of the building and then interviewees pointed to the alterations implemented after the imposed “center of life” policy. The examined alterations are purposefully and rationally done to achieve the abandoned state of the buildings. The repeated alterations in most of the houses revealed interesting approaches by the people. These were categorized according to their similarities in approach and in accordance to their architectural elements within the building as walls, gardens, openings, car parking, maintenance and signs and symbols.
1- Walls
- Garden walls are raised to a height that interiors could not be seen, although this trend is reminiscent of mansions with gardens for privacy, interestingly the majority of the walls were raised after the new “center of life” policy emerged.

The relatively lower garden walls surrounding the buildings allowed for more social relationships in the past between the neighbours. As indicated by one of the interviewees: “neighbours would sit during the summer afternoons in the garden till late hours, it was safe. Privacy was not an issue since all residents knew each other, we lived as a large family”. Today, people feel to be exposed to the outside, also since many houses are abandoned it feels dark and unsafe. Such social relationships are now lost from the neighbourhood, and houses exist physically without souls.

2- Gardens
- Some gardens are left purposely unmaintained, and wild plants grow among the trees and grass.
- Some do not collect the fruits and leave them fall naturally and appear unattained.
- Laundry hanging in the garden is avoided at distances close to view, which can indicate that someone inhabits the house.

Gardens in many houses were a source of food supply to many families, like olives, vegetables and fruits. Some existing trees were old and huge but due to the lack of maintenance, some are dying. Although, large vacant lands are available, people are not planting new ones as one of the interviewees said: “new trees mean new life, a new planted tree will show that someone is living in the house, I cannot afford to be exposed, I would rather buy my fruits ready”. Another neighbours referred to the issue of not planting new trees to the need of water to nurture these trees. Bills that show usage of high amount of water could be used as a proof against people- as living in the house and are consuming.

3- Openings
- Shutters and curtains are closed at openings exposed to the streets. People use side or back windows for ventilation. In one case the front window was covered completely with concrete blocks.
- Some houses are decaying and feature broken window glass and destroyed walls. Some are not restored on purpose.

The houses in Dahiyat al-Bareed represented modern building standards for the people who chose to leave their traditional houses in the Old City at the time. One of these standards was the use of large openings (unlike the Old City) like windows and balconies where the construction techniques of curtain walls allowed for. Having to keep the windows closed reminded some neighbours of their old houses when they were children, however in a negative way. According to one of the interviewees “the house is now very dark due to the continuously closed shutter, there is not enough sunlight or air for ventilation, we suffer from more mold and humidity that smells like our old house when I was a child, I do not like it and it is costly to maintain every time”.

4- Car parking
- Car-parking spaces are created and closed so that people are not identified by the car number plates.

When people moved into their neighbourhood in the past, cars were not much available and not every household owned one, therefore, car parking was not considered in most of the original designs. However, the availability and need of cars changed in time, and now every household owns a car in Dahiyat al-Bareed if not many. This created a problem for the people as they seek ways to hide their cars from the street in order not to be detected by the number plates. Such problem was solved by sweeping away gardens to allow for cars to park. According to an interviewee, creating a place for the cars to park meant cutting old trees that his parents planted in the past, and he could not save it. This brought tears to his eyes when he explained.

5- Maintenance
- Some of the fences, balustrades and garden gates are purposefully left unpainted after the decay of the older paint.
- Using front garden light fixtures are avoided. But, when street lights are broken, people immediately have fixtures, to avoid dark streets where strangers could not be quickly identified.

Maintenance is associated with living and flourishing to the people in Dahiyat al-Bareed, something they believe is taken away from them in order to sustain their existence in the city.

6- Signs and symbols
- Signs that carry family names and doorbells are removed. Doors are not opened except with pre-arranged appointments by phone.

This is considered the most direct way to depict their existence in their houses and ownership. To a stranger visiting the house, entry is not easy as garden walls do not allow anyone without a key to enter or knock on doors. It also helps one to see the neighbourhood as outdated and old.

These images bring frustration to many of the residents who are reminded of the decay of their neighbourhood they have built together on every visit. To some of them, these images and the whole political situation is a reason they are facing depression. Not maintaining their houses is considered a survival tactic. They are aware of the fact that lack of maintenance would eventually lead into decay of the original features at the houses, yet they purposely chose to lose these features rather than lose their rights in the city.

Physical domicile entails demolishing of buildings and inflicts tremendous suffering from the loss of a home. Yet the houses can be rebuilt to represent new beginnings. The Dahiyat al-Bareed case however, with people having to maintain the status of the houses as abandoned property to prove they are not living there anymore, has imposed a prolonged suffering. The purposeful withering and decay of spaces within the neighbourhood has produced an extended un-dwelling process, and a state of being torn between the past place of dwelling and the new place of residence. This process inflicts social and psy-
CONCLUSION: THE OTHER FACE OF THE THREE “CIDES”

Studies show that within the span of time, displaced people tend to adapt to their new place of residence (Bogac, 2009; Hurol and Farivarsadr, 2012). In the case of Dahiyat al-Bareed, though, after fifteen years the owners are still not adapting to their other place of residence. This could be regarded as the second displacement as they forcefully fled their houses in the war of 1967 and left their homes, but were able to come back to them again. Because they do not want to live the tragedy of the 1967 war again, they still maintain the relation with their homes. In Dahiyat al-Bareed, many people could choose to let their houses for rent, which could generate some income, however the owners do not do that. This is done on purpose since many believe that once the house is rented then forgetting becomes easier for them and their families. One interviewee has even mentioned that: “If I do not forget then my children will eventually do. Therefore, I have to make them visit every week.” The hope of return for these people might not be limited to the first generation only but to their following generations as well. People who have made the alterations to their houses and gardens suggest that once a political solution is reached, they can go back to their old neighbourhood and their old memories.

The relation of the three “cides” carried by the people, is interrelated with a dynamic of “to be and not to be” in the house at the same time. This uncertain situation that has lasted and still ongoing for more than fifteen years, drains the owners of these houses. The more it continues, the more this neighbourhood is facing an “urbicide” without actual destruction of the buildings by a direct force or bulldozer or tank. The act of the owners’ temporarily dwelling in their homes, in the form of maintaining the abandonment dynamic, is a stressful situation causing long-term suffering to the people and homes. The attachment relation between the people and the space is still maintained, but the building is slowly withering and thus “domiciding”. This attachment is maintained because people are still allowed to visit their houses. Yet, facing the trauma of abandoning them, causing constant “memoricide” in a prolonged and continuous manner. Although most theories would show cases of intentional destruction by one force against the other, the case shows the degree that people can perform in order to protect their sense of dwelling and memories through deliberate self-destruction of one’s home. All through the fifteen years, every visit to their homes in Dahiyat al-Bareed, denotes a constant hardship, since it entails witnessing self-destruction of their own home. This is endured because people continue to carry their hopes of return.

Displaced people around the world, live in the hope of return regardless to the fact that their past life cannot be revived when returning, yet they continue to live with that hope. Like the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Syria who continue to carry the keys of their homes as a symbol of not forgetting and persisting to return, though they know that their houses or even neighbourhoods do not exist anymore. In Palestine the political situation keeps on producing more different cases of displacement. Dahiyat al-Bareed is a case of displaced people in their own home. It shows that the imposed geopolitical map produces a gradual process of domicile, memoricide and eventually slow urbicide. The three “-cide” attack, is tackled by the owners, as a survival dynamic, by deliberately accentuating neglect and decay of the built structures to camouflage the owners’ sporadic presence to affirm the abandonment dynamic. The result is an aesthetic canvas depicting a geopolitical urban battle-ground, rather than what at first sight be regarded as a dying neighbourhood. This could be regarded as a reinvention of the sense of home. The owners of the building of Dahiyat al-Bareed deal with the situation as a temporary kind of a dwelling dynamic, until the time comes to go back and live there, whether for them or for the coming generation.

This also implies how injustice is multilayered. With conflicting internal dynamics to maintain their right to dwell, the people of Dahiyat al-Bareed are forced to select the hard choice of destruction rather than flourishing of their houses. This is unjust, because it maintains a kind of dwelling that contains a lot of suffering within. Also, not being able to see the end of the tunnel, the continuation of the uncertainty of the situation is another aspect of injustice that causes a lot of suffering and sorrow. This uncertainty is not only temporal but could have a prolonged impact that does not only affect the current generation, but the successive generation or even beyond.

Although this injustice continues and the people face this contradictory way of dealing with dwelling, the case shows that the idea of resistance through destruction is the only possible way to dwell, and preserve the memories. To preserve the legal status in the city, destruction is the ultimate tool, where people are ready to do anything to survive. They shall not give up on their homes!
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INTRODUCTION

Components of the built environment, especially dwellings, have a tremendous effect on both physical and psychological vigor of inhabitants. This is more often witnessed in marginalized communities lacking formal stability. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ (UNHCR) 2018 statistics show that around 68.5 million individuals face displacement worldwide, marking the highest record of displacement ever. As a result, a person is being displaced every two seconds while 21 people are asylum seekers every minute (UNHCR 2018). Due to the events of the Nakba (Catastrophe) of 1948, between 400 and 600 Palestinian villages were sacked and over 750,000 people (85% of the population) were displaced or expelled from their original residences in historical Palestine (Feldman I. 2014). Besides losing their homes, the refugees lost their sense of livelihood (Al-Khatib I. and Tabakhna H. 2006) and gained the feeling of threat for their lives. Most refugees moved to neighbouring countries (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon) or to other parts of Palestine (now known as West Bank and Gaza Strip) that were not targeted at that time. Palestinian refugees were scattered throughout 58 camps within these areas and were prevented from returning to their homes or reclaiming their property (Feldman I. 2014). The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) defines refugees as people whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period of 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 (UNRWA 2017). These people moved into encampments after they temporarily sheltered under trees with the expectation of returning to their homes within days or weeks at most.

Now, 70 years have passed while refugees have been waiting for the issue to be resolved. Their lives have been shaped by the living conditions of the camps because feeling is the basis of recognition. Sensory stimulation is required to understand the world and human experiences of it by providing raw materials for the brain to organize and interpret (Kopec D. 2006). When feelings are translated into awareness and interpreted in the mind it is called sensory perception. As a result, sensation and perception are two distinct steps in the course of acquiring information and understanding the environment. This research focuses on the perceptual experience of the built environment of Palestinian refugee camps using five different sensory receptors as part of the sensory awareness system.

The sensory slider tool of Malnar and Vodvarka was used to observe and measure interactions between refugees and the camp environment. Due to the fact that the built environment of all the Palestinian

Keywords: Sensory Perception, Sense of Space, Sensory Slider, Refugee Camps, Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

SENSORY PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE IN BALATA REFUGEE CAMP

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Abstract

Wars and conflicts have caused millions of people to seek asylum outside their homelands and the issue of refugee camps has become a pressing subject in international policy discussions. Conflicts continue to escalate in different parts of the world, especially in Middle Eastern countries. In 1948, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict forced displacement of many Palestinian people. The resulting camps have developed into cluster camp shelters of three to four stories in the West Bank, Gaza, and other regions around historical Palestine; some are perceived to be like gated communities. Being self-sufficient environments, refugee camps have rarely been approached from the perspective of urban psychology. This research deals with sensory perceptual analysis of Balata, the largest refugee camp in the West Bank of Palestinian Territories. Balata is situated in Nablus and has raised four generations of refugees since its establishment. In order to explore the spatial characteristics of such specific environmental experiences, the research adopted a mixed-method approach – systematically evaluating the related literature on sensory perceptual spaces and applying content analysis methods. The study modified the sensory slider tool of Malnar and Vodvarka according to the framework matrix based on the content analysis. Moreover, the case study analysis consisted of observation of the chosen area and 30 in-depth interviews with refugees who were forced out of their homes and settled in the camp as well as some who were born in the camp. The research results show that investigating what camp residents perceive of the five senses can capture meaningful sensory perceptual experiences and can generate a holistic mental image of the refugee camp. Particularly, perceptions of the built environment reflect the difficulty of life experiences. The study concludes that the characteristics of camps in this seventy-year-old conflict environment may not be found in other parts of the world.
camps are very similar in all their characteristics and rarely highlighted, the challenge in this paper is to shed light on the everyday living experience of Palestinian refugees via the residents of Balata.

**BALATA CAMP AS CASE STUDY**

Balata refugee camp, which is the biggest camp in the West Bank of Palestinian Authority, was chosen as the case study. The 252-acre camp (UN 2006) was established one kilometer from the eastern part of Nablus (Dabbagh M. 1965) in 1950. Over the years the camp has grown to more than 460 acres. Statistics from the UNRWA in 2017 show that around 23,600 people now inhabit the shelters of the Balata refugee camp (UNRWA 2017) and have access to limited facilities and public services provided by Nablus municipality (Figure 1).

The camp is composed of compact residential units arranged in long rows separated by narrow alleys. There is one main street in the camp along which there are shops and a mosque. Despite these residential, commercial, and religious facilities, the camp lacks the public services and municipal facilities available in the city; it relies on the city of Nablus for many of its needs (Mansour K. 1996). From the existing montage, one neighbourhood (Figure 2) inside Balata was specifically selected for this study because all the current residents came from the same city in 1948.

**STAGES OF CAMP’S ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT**

Due to the issues affecting Palestinian Refugees, the United Nations established the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) in 1949. UNRWA defined refugees as people whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period of 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 (UNRWA 2017). The main purpose was to provide refugees with employment, health care, and social and educational services (Halabi Z. 2004). The UNRWA responded to the needs of 750,000 Palestinian refugees by providing food and building a brick room for every family. A family’s room did not include kitchen or toilet facilities but there were communal toilets distributed throughout the camp and communal water sources were provided (Al-Khatib I. and Tabakhna H. 2006). Electric services were not made available. From the onset, living conditions were difficult and the health conditions were poor.

Palestinian refugee camps developed in four main stages (Figure 4). The first stage (1948-1955) involved setting up the tents provided to the refugees in their respective asylums by the relief organizations operating in the hosting areas. Following that stage came the stage (1955-1975) when the UNRWA launched the shelter-building program which aimed to replace the tents with small huts or rooms made out of hollow concrete blocks and metal sheet roofing (Shihada Y. 1978). The third stage (1975-1995) was a period of horizontal expansion prompted by natural growth of families. Gradually, as time passed and their hopes for a near-future solution faded away, the inhabitants started to add kitchens, additional rooms,
and toilets to their own living units. Refugees tried to define lines of quasi-ownership by constructing walls on the edges of their assigned shelter zones. These walls also increased the privacy of the shelters. The expansions infringed on the size of roads, open spaces, and alleys between the houses. The final stage (1995-present) features vertical expansion.

In more recent times, camps are witnessed to have lively main streets intersected by a variety of side streets and all filled with crowds. A variety of small workshops were also opened to meet the needs of residents. Some refugees became professionals, so a few doctors and lawyers opened offices inside the camps. The self-sufficient camps act like complex clustered districts inside their host cities. As the camps evolved through these stages, the refugees also evolved new perceptions of their surroundings.

**BODY AND THE SENSES: SENSORY PERCEPTION OF SPACE**

Sense of space is a philosophical domain of thought that merges social and perceptual experiences in order to make holistic sense out of the spaces utilized. Merleau-Ponty's (1962) contribution to the philosophical matter, phenomenology of perception, placed the human body at the center of the perceptual process. Perception, as argued by Denton (1992), is a combination of senses, feelings, thoughts, ideas, and theories. According to Rapaport (1977), perception is the awareness of the senses forming human-environmental relations. Myers (1989) also declared perception to be “awareness” of the surrounding world formulated by the data supplied from the sensory organs. As a result, perception is the method used to attain data about the surrounding environment through actions and interactions between sensory organs and the human brain (Myers J. 1989). Morris (2004) investigated the ‘sense of space’ and showed how it forms the basis of all social and perceptual experiences. Human beings’ sense of space ultimately draws attention to the relationships people have with the places they inhabit (Morris D. 2004).

Tuan (1977) suggested that experience is the substance extracted from reflex behavioral learning about the reality of space through the body and the senses. The individuality of perception is affected by experiences gained since birth. Humans interpret realities based on their background knowledge of and involvement with the encompassing surroundings (Tuan Y. 1977; Rock I. 1975; Denton C. 1992). The interpretation and organization of this process leads to a perception that aids in recognizing a certain environment (Fantino E. and Reynolds G. 1975). Christopher Alexander (1977) believed that the relationship between humans and dwelling places forms a repetitive rhythm of events, or patterns. Such patterns form the spatial experiences of space and the elements of space form the patterns that affect the individuality of spatial perceptual matter. A meaningful pattern is created through the process of perceiving various sensory impressions (Jafar M. 2004; Morris C. 1979). Furthermore, feelings formulated towards architectural objects are highly influenced by the sense of sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing (Holgate A. 1992). When reflecting on feelings or about the meaning of a place, people are able to recall different things associated with the space based on their different situations (AlSadaty A. 2018).

Environmental responses are formed by biological adaptations, creating emotional positive or negative reactions like aggression, pain, anger, admiration, and love (Denton C. 1992). These sensations form the alphabet of perceptual language (Holl S. et al. 1994), provoking a direct sense of amusement, aversion, or even nourishing erstwhile experiences (Holgate A. 1992).

**VISUAL PERCEPTION**

The visual sense has been agreed to be one of the most important senses. The sense of sight is a key tool used by both humans and animals to interpret their physical environirs (Gibson J. 2014). The eye is accountable for creating a discriminative pattern of stimuli, picking out groups of visual objects from the surroundings with quick glances called saccades. The eye peruses the patterns and tries to classify them in a ‘coherent’ order which can be further processed (Denton C. 1992). The visual information is arranged into patterns that reflect previous experience and cultural identity (Hiller B. and Hanson J. 1989). The built environment, which is an architectural production, is perceived visually as a set of forms according to Francis Ching (1996). These forms have specific properties such as size, color, position, orientation, and visual inertia. These properties are classified under two families: visual properties which include size, color, and texture; and relational properties including position, orientation, and visual inertia. This study focuses on the first family of Ching’s (1996) classifications.

**ACOUSTIC PERCEPTION**

The acoustic system functions when motion or vibration emanates from an object and forms pressure waves. In this natural physical manner of objects, sound is created, and it is audible (Atkinson R. et al. 2003). Perception of space through the auditory system depends on the ears which are shaped in a way that plays a meaningful role in regulating and filtering sounds. Similarly, in architecture, auditory spatial awareness was defined by Burngart et al. (2014) as the ability of capable listeners to analyze and interpret the spatial properties of sound sources in multifaceted auditory scenes. Listeners must maintain strong awareness of spatial properties to identify and sort out subtle changes while responding to them.

Sounds in architecture are able to increase the intensity of perception. “Soundscape” is a term introduced in architecture as the sound combination of a given environment which allows full comprehension of the space (Schafer R. 1993). Physically, environmental perception is linked with the way that human ears deliver the sounds to the sensory receptors. Finally, Panos (2010) stressed the fact that linking sounds to the environment involves human memory and narratives.

**HAPTIC PERCEPTION**

Our skin functions as a barrier between what is outside in the world and what is inside the body. The ability to perceive through the haptic system (touch sensations) provides our brain with an information stream about the environment. Sensations of temperature and hazardous situations such as pain and pressure are part of the haptic senses (Gibson J. 1966). As Pallasmair (1994) noted, the haptic system is highly effective in processing the material characteristics of both surfaces and objects. The whole body is involved in the touch-
sensual system. A strong case was made by Plato keeping the sense of touch from being attached to one specific physical organ. According to him, touch is linked to different kinds of sensations including pain, pleasure, and many other perceptual qualities related to the haptic sense such as cool and warm (Taylor E. 1928).

CHEMICAL PERCEPTION: SMELL (OLFACTION) & TASTE (GUSTATION) SENSES

The important point about the chemical senses for humans is that they are dominated by audiovisual stimuli. This is not only reflected in brain capacity devoted to the chemical sense but also in the expressible stimuli experience (Wilson R. 1998; Bosshomaier R. 2012). The neural pathways for olfaction and gustation are completely separate. Gastronomy relies on the tongue receptors; however, the taste sense is intensified by the collaborative effort of the olfactory sense. The chemical senses often work together to stimulate different combinations of odor and taste receptors (Dunning D. 2018).

The sense of smell is critical to human existence (Fraic G. 2010) human beings intend by instinct to use it in sustaining their lives. Only the sense of smell unconsciously links us to other sense memories such as a segment of a tune or a glimpse of a once-familiar scene (Wyburn G. 2007). In the case of smell, the brain is able to retrieve the memory attached to the place experience (Fraic G. 2010). Moreover, when building up an image of a space, the nose creates a deeper, sharper, and more distinguishable image than the eye can (Pallasmaa J. 1994). Olfactory perception also depends on environmental factors such as the weather or the surrounding atmosphere of the indoor and outdoor spaces.

In architecture, Goldstein and Brockmole (2016) study identified four basic tastes or gustatory qualities: salty, sweet, sour, and bitter. Unlike other senses, taste has received little attention in sense explorations. It formed the weakest part of Pallasmaa’s investigation (1994) since he believed that it had little to do with the architectural experience. He believed that taste had to operate with material that can unconsciously stimulate the tongue and make the mouth recall certain tastes (Pallasmaa J. 1994). The gastronomy of a space is connected with spaces that have relevance to the taste sensory experience such as markets and groceries (Zaredar A. 2015). Compared with the sense of smell and the auditory sense, taste also recalls and creates a feeling in one’s memory.

EXPLORING MEANINGFUL SENSORY EXPERIENCES IN BALATA

In order to shape a meaningful sensory experience, a framework with two major parts was composed after closely looking at the work of Malnar and Vodvarka (2004). Titled Sensory Design, their book aims to “explore the nature of our sensory response to the spatial constructs that people invest with meaning” (Malnar J. and Vodvarka F. 2004). More importantly, James Gibson (1966) took the five classical senses and developed them into active inclusive systems. He intensely wanted to know how people perceived the environment with a different approach (Gibson J. 1966). According to Pallasmaa (1994), Gibson replaced the senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch with visual, auditory, taste-smell, haptic, and basic-orienting systems. For this research, the sensory sliding tool proposed by Malnar and Vodvarka was adopted and adjusted based on the word matrix (Table 1) which was developed following the literature review of the five classical senses.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The sliding tool used “ordinal measuring scale” that allocates the values as variables that are relative and rank with respect to one another in data set (Kovera M. 2010). The measuring scale is used to figure out the intensity between contradicting qualities of sensory systems where -2 is the lowest intensity, -1 indicates low intensity, 0 is neutral, 1 is the high intensity and 2 is the highest intensity. To carry out the research inquiry, one specific neighbourhood of Balata camp was identified as having refugees who all came from same origin city in 1948: Jaffa City in historical Palestine. The case was assessed through observation and one-to-one interviews with thirty refugees who were divided into two groups: half were born in homelands before 1948 and moved to the camp, and half were born in asylum. Respondents in both groups completed the sensory slider questionnaire based on personal experience of living in the camp. Quotes of respondents provided in this article are numbered in Table 1. Theoretical framework.

Figure 4. Quotes of respondents provided in the article in reference to their shelters in Balata
reference to (Figure 4) showing each narrators’ shelter unit in the selected neighborhood of Balata, while (Table: 2) represents the sensory slider results from both observations and in-depth interviews performed in Balata.

Observations on Visual Perception
The space of the camp is limited. Construction usually takes the form of two straight, parallel lines. Each line contains a number of adjacent houses, or, in the case of shelters, shared walls separate the plots of families from each other. Refugees built one room after another until most of the plotted space was occupied and the passages between shelters were turned into narrow alleys of 40 to 70 cm wide. The sensory observation pointer is at the maximum level of negative intensity. Camp shelters which are built from a fundamental building material (concrete) are said to evoke coldness. The color assessment of concrete definitely shifted the sensory bar towards cold. As a matter of fact, the reason behind this lies in the original grey color of raw concrete that, when perceived, visually contributes to the feeling of being chilled (Lisa W. et al. 2013). In line with this, the absence of direct sunlight penetrating the narrow alleys results in a dark, dense built environment and contributes to those alleys being cold in almost all witnessed cases. The façades of the exterior shelters are mostly finished with rough concrete plaster while some other façades are plastered and painted with a range of neutral colors. For this reason, exterior walls often impose the sensation of choppy, rough surfaces. In that case, the visual texture bar of the sensory slider in (Table 2) slides almost one point towards the scratchy side.

Refugees’ Visual Perception
The interviewees expressed that the outdoor spaces in the camps had become very narrow. Cars used to enter easily but because people expanded their houses horizontally, passageways became restricted to pedestrian use only. According to Narrator 15 (Figure 4): “Camp construction is so random and some alleys are so narrow to the extent that it is very difficult to insert a can of gas or to transfer sick people to hospitals or dead people to the cemetery and in some cases are very dark and do not provide ventilation.” The majority of interviewees agreed that the size of public spaces in the camp were small, while others said that the spaces fit their needs. Thus, the narrator’s pointer of the sensory tool shows a deviation of one point toward the smaller category. The expansion of shelters is regarded by the interviewees as forming dark, cold corridors devoid of all colors except grey. The concrete color is said to provoke depression and coldness, and suggest non-existence of life. (Figure 5) Consequently, the sensory slider bar shifts toward negative intensity clarifying the degree of color coldness that the environment has according to refugees.

As for visual texture, because the camp was built in an adjoining, random, and analogical manner, a vast number of refugees characterized it as a scratchy environment which bent the slider towards the highest intensity of texture (Table 2). Furthermore, the main reason behind the negative perception of the exterior walls is because they lay as remnants of Israeli military attacks which left some of the exterior walls dilapidated and worn. These markings on the walls remind refugees of their suffering, pain, and sorrow.

Observations on Auditory Perception
In the alleys of the refugee camp, “You will overhear conversations, music, and televisions playing inside homes as you pass by. When a stranger arrives, word gets around fast. Along with the community, comes a strong sense of social control” (Martinez 2016). Children who have no public spaces for play inside the camp end up playing hide and seek in the dark alleys.
Refugees’ Auditory Perception

Refugees explained that the camp’s alleys are used as places where they practice some of their casual routines. Strong relationships built between the refugees allow them to share their time and attend daily gatherings in the narrow alleys of the camp. Narrator 8 (Figure 4) expressed the degree of noise disturbance in the camp environment indicating some of the main man-made sources of noise: the sounds of children playing in the narrow spaces between houses, the sounds of street vendors, the voices of people practicing various activities in the alley, even the sounds of televisions projecting from adjacent shelters. Some other sources of noise are caused by natural sources such as the sound of pouring rain on metallic-sheet roofs. With refugees agreeing that their environments are noisy, the slider bar pointer (Table 2) reached the lowest rate of an overly noisy environment.

Observations on Haptic Perception

Abu-Loughd (1987) expressed touch experience in the refugee camp: “Step off the few main streets, and you’ll find yourself in a maze of dark alleys. Stretch your arms out: you can touch the buildings on both sides.” Tactile experience in refugee camps is highlighted by the rough texture of concrete which is considered to be the main component of the building typology of the refugee camp. The degree of roughness reflects on the sensory slider bar which turns to point out the highest level of roughness on the texture slider bar. Concrete material provides the observer with a sense of coldness, meanwhile when evaluated via the tactile sense, it guides the perceiver towards real impression expressed as ‘tactile warmth’ which measures material temperature indicating the material’s ability to transmit warmth. Despite the visual impression illustrated. Concrete is one of the materials that transmit coldness in winter and hotness in summer. Even more, concrete when stroked produces warmth. However, there are several transmitters of cold in the refugee camp environment; among those for example steel which is used in a heavy manner in the camp environment for stairs and hand rails mounting to upper floors. Due to the above-mentioned circumstances, the chart illustrating the haptic temperature indicates a moderate situation between coldness and overheating.

As part of the haptic measuring system, the pain pointer shifts one degree towards sore. The built environment of the refugee camp has witnessed different kinds of violence including several attacks by the Israeli military that left walls perforated with bullet holes and building in ruins after bombing them with heavy guns. For the same reason and at the same rate, the pressure pointer on the sensory slider indicates a stressful haptic environment (Table 2). The camp is regarded as a violent environment constantly subjected to attacks and intrusions by the Israeli military. In addition, the rigid materials that were used in erecting the shelters in the camp add to the negative perceptions.

Refugees’ Haptic Perception

Through the interviews, the refugees explained that the rough walls of the refugee camp are made of coarse and harsh bricks that are usually non-plastered or roughly plastered. They illustrate the gruff environment of the camp. Narrator 10 (Figure 4) mentioned how people try to avoid interaction with those harsh fabrics, although it is difficult to do so because the narrow alleys force individuals to squeeze past the unfinished walls (Figure 6). Few shelter houses are plastered while rare walls of shelter entrances are covered with tiles. The sensory slider tool pointer moves a degree toward roughness.

Temperatures in the exterior spaces of the refugee camp are tricky as refugees explained. On hot summer days, the shelters are highly sun absorbent and the alleys are a bit cooler than the interiors but still hot due to the transmission of warmth through concrete walls. In winter, the alleys become cold, humid areas as a result of water retension and they sometimes perform as wind intensifiers that increase the feeling of coldness. Narrator 27 (Figure 4) mentioned that in winter the walls transmit coldness to the hands, while steel rails usually feel frosty. According to the analysis of the interviews, the temperature slider bar (Table 2) shows overheating one interval towards high temperature.

These aforementioned walls of the shelters are harmful. They, along with broken manholes, gutters, and nails inserted through walls injure and scratch people. Asphalt isn’t used in paving camp alleys, instead smooth concrete is used. This causes people to slip and fall. Narrator 2 (Figure 4) expressed that the built environment is harmful, causing frequent injuries to the refugees. Their pointers in (Table 2) indi-
cata high pressure and stress. The stressful conditions affect the entire living environment of the refugees.

**Observations on Olfactory Perception**

Infrastructure problems are some of the major crisis in Palestinian refugee camps. Shelters, when established, had no planned, organized sewage system. Later on, when the units were built up, they were not supplied with water or electric services, nor did they have sewage systems to handle their waste. The good and bad smelled in this environment mixed with smells of sewage, uncollected trash in the narrow alleys of the camp, the smell of illness that has been correlated with overcrowding, and the smell of dampness, as a result of high humidity, in spaces shows the unhealthy environment of the camp. In contrast to the bad smells, the smell of food and coffee in the alleys bring hints of life. The refugees also recalled several types of Palestinian street food that was sold by local shops: hummus, ful, and falafel. The sensory slider bar indicated a high propensity for deliciousness based on a rich environment of food types. These fond recollections were countered by refugees mentioning the sorrow they tasted for every single piece of material used in building the camp reminded them of the bitterness of living there; therefore this perception could not reach the highest positive degree on the slider (Table 2).

**Refugees’ Gastronomy Perception**

Narrator 15 (Figure 4) explained that the refugees expressed several tastes attached to a wide range of food that is traditionally cooked in every Palestinian household. These foods include Maklouba, Maftoul, and other foods prepared in the alleys using barbecues. The refugees also recalled several types of Palestinian street food that was sold by local shops: hummus, ful, and falafel. The sensory slider bar indicated a high propensity for deliciousness based on a rich environment of food types. These fond recollections were countered by refugees mentioning the sorrow they tasted for every single piece of material used in building the camp reminded them of the bitterness of living there; therefore this perception could not reach the highest positive degree on the slider (Table 2).

**CONCLUSION**

The main focus of the literature highlighted the importance of cooperation between all the senses in integrating the understanding of any built environment. The studied literature aided in understanding the mechanisms of sensory perception as an integrated device operating in the human body. The extracted matrix was used in establishing the measuring tool recalled from the sensory slider tool by Malnar and Vodvarka (2004).

The sensory perceptual experience of the camp’s built environment illustrates and stresses the difficulty of life lived by the refugees in the camps (Table 3). Sometimes this idea might not be clear even for the refugees; they might fail to identify difficulties and bitterness perhaps because they became accustomed to the living environment. While the study bisects the interviewee sample into those who migrated from their homelands and those who were born in asylum, the results are consistent across the two groups.

The results in Table 3, which were corresponding between the observations and interviews, show that which is perceived by the senses on a daily basis and presents the characteristics of the camp environment. Visually, the camp has narrow and small
and are likely to continue to use the term ‘shelter’ until and often lacks the basic elements of a decent life. The camp has become a crowded urban environment characterized as extreme; the alleys are very hot in summer and freezing cold in winter. The chemical senses were assessed more with the intangible dimension of space characteristics. The olfactory sense explained how this environment suffers from poor sanitation, which is not well planned nor capable of handling the needs of the population. The services are randomly located and the piping is exposed in many cases. However, this did not override the refugees’ awareness of the aromas associated with food. Finally, the gas-
ter walls, the conditions indicate a neglected built environment, unrestored since the day erected. The environment exposes refugees to harm and they expressed dissatisfaction with the walls that surround them. The narrow alleys require the refugees to directly engage the discomforting shelter walls, adding pressure to the passer-by who uses the narrow passages on a daily basis. The temperature of the camp is characterized as extreme; the alleys are very hot in summer and freezing cold in winter. The chemical senses were associated more with the intangible dimension of space characteristics. The olfactory sense explained how this environment suffers from poor sanitation, which is not well planned nor capable of handling the needs of the population. The services are randomly located and the piping is exposed in many cases. However, this did not override the refugees’ awareness of the aromas associated with food. Finally, the gastronomy sense revealed a lively environment filled with favored cooking traditions. This sense also highlighted the bitter and harsh environment of the camp.

Neither residents nor outsiders can deny that the camp has become a crowded urban environment and often lacks the basic elements of a decent life. The refugees refuse to consider the camp a real home and are likely to continue to use the term ‘shelter’ until the conflict is resolved and they obtain their right of return to their homelands. Perhaps what exists in this environment after seventy may not be found in any other environment. Further inquiry should address the uniqueness of such environments, in addition to the absence of individual privacy and psychological well-being.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Texture</th>
<th>Sounds</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>Pain</th>
<th>Pressure</th>
<th>Smell</th>
<th>Taste</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Warm</td>
<td>Delicate</td>
<td>Quiet</td>
<td>Smooth</td>
<td>Overheat</td>
<td>Delight</td>
<td>Relaxing</td>
<td>Pleasing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 3. Graphical expression showing correspondence between observation and interviews results.

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INTRODUCTION

In our present-day world, which is highly urbanized, cities are the main and strategic place for violence and conflict. The negotiation and resolution of disputes related to the economy, religion, gender and ethnic differences are held every day in the urban arena. Thus, when tensions turn into conflicts and conflicts develop into violence, the urban arena becomes the battlefield (Barceló J. et al. 2015).

Urban development can be referred to as a system of residential expansion that defines and creates cities. Urban development is implemented through expansion into new, uninhabited areas or regeneration of degraded areas and conflict zones (Brooks A. 2017). Cohen (2009) expressed the challenge facing urban development, where local governmental institutions no longer have the capacity to manage rapid and large urban growth, as well as the inability of these institutions to manage tensions or conflicts. Former differences and tensions are one of the greatest challenges facing official institutions, challenging them to measure their ability to maintain and protect the regime. Moreover, these forms of chaos and violence are the result of material disputes facing urban citizens (Strachan A. 2014). These conflicts impact the shape of the built-environment in those cities, as well as their future development, directly and indirectly. There are many factors that lead to the instability and destabilization of economic, social and political systems. One of the factors that can lead to the weakness of central or national governments is the suffering of urban areas from a severe shortage of services, which makes them areas of imbalance or gaps that are characterized to be unregulated and ungovernable, as they are closely located to the centers of political power (Cohen M. 2009).

GENESIS AND EVOLUTION OF THE CASE STUDY

The Gaza Strip is a narrow strip of the Palestinian Territory that occupies the southern part of the Palestinian coast on the Mediterranean Sea and constitutes about 1.33% of the historic area of Palestine (Abuelaish & Olmedo, 2016). The Gaza Strip (Figure 1) is located in southwestern Palestine in the form of a narrow strip in the southern part of the historic coast of Palestine. It gained its name from one of its largest cities, Gaza City, the second largest Palestinian city after Jerusalem (Efrat, 2006). The strip covers an area of 360 square kilometers, a length of 41 kilometers, and a width of between 6 and 12 kilometers, bordered by Israel to the north and east, and the Mediterranean to the west. It is also bordered by Egypt to the south-west (Al Jazeera 2014). Based on the estimates prepared by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics for the year 2014, which were built on the results of the 2007 Census of Population, the estimated population of Palestine in the middle of 2014 was about 4.55 million, of whom 1.76 million were the population of the Gaza Strip (PCBS 2018). Gaza City, on its own, has 400,000 inhabitants, and most of the residents of the Gaza Strip include 1,948 refugees (Hazboun N. 1994). This sector is one of the most densely populated in the world, with a density of 26,000 inhabitants per square kilometer (PCBS 2018).

Urban development and planning in the Gaza Strip has undergone many changes and developments in terms of policies, characteristics, management and principles, beginning in the mid-nineteenth
century (Abuelaish & Olmedo, 2016). Accordingly, the urban planning system in Palestine has become unique in its composition and context. The reason for this uniqueness is that the planning practice was not under the rule of the local authorities and that it was subjected to many external forces that ruled the Palestinian territories for long periods of time (Abdelhamid, 2006). This poses a serious challenge to urban designers and other disciplines in the urban development of these available residential lands. In general, housing in Gaza City cannot afford much due to several reasons, including the unprecedented rise in prices of urban land due to the lack of places of urban expansion, in addition to the repeated wars between two conflicted sides (Asfour O. and Zourob N. 2017).

In the case of Gaza City, urban development is suffering many struggles. One of the most important concerns is the conflict taking place in the area because it has a strong and direct impact on all aspects of urban development. Due to this, Gaza City suffers from the limitation of the amount of land compared to the rate of population growth, which is very high (Asfour O. 2017). Thus, the impact of the conflict has extended to include other aspects, in conjunction with the agricultural sector, industrial sector, commercial sector and infrastructure of the city.

Reports from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2015) affirmed the worsening of the situation in Gaza after suffering from eight years of blockade, punctuated by three fierce wars between Israel and the Palestinians. One of the findings of the report explained the seriousness of the continuation of the Israeli policy without making any significant changes. The situation in Gaza is at stake and without these changes, the chance for Gaza to overcome its ordeal is very weak and as such, will become a place that is not fit for human life by 2020 (UN 2015).

Thus, the main objective in this paper is to shed light on Gaza City’s urban development as a case study throughout the conflict taking place in the area between 2000-2018. Further, we examine how to overcome this challenge, as this conflict environment is characterized as an overcrowded built environment. In order to do so, a mixed methodological approach was used, including maps analysis, using aerial maps and GIS maps. Moreover, in-depth observations on Gaza City have been done in line with the analysis.

METHODOLOGY

The present study involves the collection of topographic sheets from a survey of Gaza City and the city maps from relevant authorities in the strip. The required satellite imagery for the study area was scored from the Ministry of Planning of the Palestinian Authorities through Geomolg for the years 2003, 2007 and 2014. Maps were also picked from researchers in the field. Processing the imagery and image interpretation for the development of land use maps was done in ArcGIS 10.1 software. Further, the obtained maps were studied and analyzed to detect the change in urban development areas, while observations, data collection and analysis took place in Gaza City in 2018. A reflexive methodology is adopted that not only includes a collection of empirical material from respondents or texts but also goes beyond these methods, as the reflexive researcher relies just as much on experiential knowledge gained from being a citizen of the proposed case study (Richardson, 2003).

Image Preprocessing

Digital image processing was manipulated by the software used and the scenes were selected to be geometrically corrected, calibrated, and removed from their dropouts. These data were stratified into ‘zones,’ where land cover types within a zone have similar spectral properties. Other image enhancement techniques, such as histogram equalization, were also performed on each image for improving the quality of the image, along with the help of the survey of Gaza topographic-sheets and the city plan map, which were obtained from Palestinian authority governorate headquarter.

Land use and Land cover

There is no doubt that conflict has profoundly changed the land cover in Gaza City during the past 15 years. Land is one of the most important natural resources and all agricultural and animal productions depend on the productivity of the land. The entire eco-system of the land, which comprises of soil, water and plant, meets the community demand for food, energy and other needs of livelihood. In situations of conflict, land use changes, while observations of the Earth from space provide objective information of the effect of conflict on the utilization of the land. The classified images provide all the information to understand the land use and land cover of the study area.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Gaza City has gone through many difficult and critical times throughout its history, which has affected its urban development both directly and indirectly. However, over the last 18 years, conflict, wars and violence were considered the most critical factors that affected the urban development of Gaza City. The changes that took place in the last few years were considered to be the worst in the history of the city. This influence has affected all aspects of life in the city, including the residential, commercial, agricultural and
industrial development, which has directly affected the inhabitants in different aspects, such as behavioral settings and geographical distribution.

The map shows (Figure 2) the land use in Gaza City, which is divided into industrial lands, agricultural lands, market places, suspected urban expansion areas and other land-use patterns. The map also shows the industrial areas, which were allocated by the Palestinian planners who placed them outside the city on the eastern border areas due to multiple reasons. First, there was the intention to keep pollution and noise away from the city and second, to make the industrial zone closer to border trade crossings. However, one negativity in this place is set, which is the proximity to clashing areas between the two conflict sides. This has led to the significant disruption of work during the wars that have taken place due to the ongoing conflict between the Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The second area on the map is the agricultural area, which was divided by the municipality into agricultural areas A and agricultural areas B. Most of these areas are located on the eastern border, with some on the southern border of Gaza City. The presence of agricultural land on the borders of Gaza has pros and cons. On the one hand, they are distanced from the residential areas, which helps in keeping insects and harmful pesticides away from the population of Gaza City. On the other hand, the danger appears to be obvious as a result of the proximity of clashing areas located on the eastern border, causing harassment to the Palestinian farmers. In addition, these agricultural areas are closely located to the classified industrial lands, which are primarily responsible for polluting the soil surrounding the agricultural land. Another area indicated on the map is the built-up area, which was planned by the Municipality of Gaza, and points out existing buildings and future expansion areas. The map also highlights the proposed port area on the shore of the Gaza Sea, which has not yet been fully equipped due to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but is partially used by fishermen to set up fishing boats. The map also shows the only recreation area serving the entire city of Gaza, as Gaza’s coastal part functions as the main entertainment area for the city’s population. On the map, the fishing services area is labeled, located close to the sea and to Gaza’s port and allocated for the aim of serving the fishermen. Also on the map, are two wastewater treatment areas, which are both labeled. The first is located in the southern part of Gaza City, which is currently operating. The second is a proposed place for the implementation of the wastewater treatment and is located in the eastern area of the city. The reason for the delay in its implementation is knowing that the city is in dire need of its presence and its location in the eastern region being near clashing areas, similar to the agricultural region and industrial zones, which was previously explained.

**First Period (2000-2004)**

The importance of starting with this specific interval is that it came after prosperity and peace, preceding the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1996. This period launched the Al-aqsa uprising, ‘Intifada 2000.’ Serious clashes and attacks had taken place between both conflicted sides on the edges of Gaza City, especially the eastern parts. The majority of the inhabitants on the eastern borderers had to leave their residence for the fear of their lives. As a result, they had temporally moved towards the mid-city area, seeking safety. Some western parts had suffered from Navy attacks, which also made it dangerous to dwell. Although this period witnessed tensions between both sides, urban development and expansion in the built-up area continued. Workers in the construction sector had to work in Gaza City only after they had been working in adjacent cities, which enabled the construction field to sustain progress even through strikes and blockades.

GIS map (Figure 3) shows the boundaries of built-up areas of Gaza City in 2003, which shows the natural urban expansion of the city in four different directions. The larger proportion of development took place in the eastern and the southern region of the city. This is due to several reasons, the most important reason being the availability of empty land in these regions that can be used for expansion, which have already been classified by the municipality as future expansion lands. For example, these lands were used for expansion through the construction of the Tal El-Hawa Towers project in the southern area of Gaza City, which included services and infrastructure extensions. As for the northern side, the lands of expansion were implemented in large part due to the establishment of the Al-Awda City by the Palestinian Authority in 1996. This period launched the Al-Awda City project in the southern area of Gaza City, which included services and infrastructure extensions. As for the northern side, the lands of expansion were implemented in large part due to the establishment of the Al-Awda City by the Palestinian Authority in 1996. This period launched the Al-Awda City project in the southern area of Gaza City, which included services and infrastructure extensions.
Authority, which is a collection of residential towers as well as public services and open areas. Similarly, the western side of Gaza City does not have a large percentage of empty land that allows it to expand significantly, but it does contain some scattered lands, which range from 500 square meters to 1000 square meters. In fact, the lack of large quantities of land expansion in the western area of Gaza City is due to two main reasons. Firstly, is the establishment of the Al-Shati camp for Palestinian refugees, as the camp was set up near Gaza Beach on a random basis without being planned in advance. Secondly, residents of Gaza City were encouraged to move from their homes in the Old City to the western part of Gaza City. It appears that the planning was deliberate and not a random expansion through the form of street planning, which is shown on the map. The streets take the form of a network unlike the Old Town, which have an irregular shape.

Second Period (2005-2010)
After the previous period of urban development after the 20 uprising, that could be characterized as almost natural, a second phase began. In 2005, following the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza City, the expansion of built-up areas continued, but in a more difficult way than the previous period due to several reasons. First, the wars that were waged between the Israelis and Palestinians started with two wars in 2006 and ended with a war that began in late 2008 until the early beginnings of 2009. These wars had direct effects on urban development and the expansion of built-up areas. As shown in the heat map of the 2008-2009 (Figure 4) war below, the entire city of Gaza was under threat. These wars targeted all areas of Gaza City, so there is no longer an area that is safe from danger. However, the eastern and southeastern areas were subjected to more violence than others during the shelling of residential, governmental, educational and agricultural buildings, which were all affected, resulting in total and partial damage. The second reason for the difficulty of expanding and development is the siege that was imposed at the beginning of 2007, which is still present so far. This blockade is one of the most important factors affecting urban development due to the enclosure of the commercial crossings and the lack of building materials from the markets. Despite previous difficulties, the built-up areas have increased significantly as a result of the rapid population growth in the limited area.

The following map (Figure 5) shows the percentage of built-up areas in Gaza City in 2007. The map shows an increase in the proportion of built-up areas compared with the previous map in 2003 despite the difficulties mentioned earlier in this stage. Further, the map shows an increase in the built-up areas in the southern regions because these areas are somewhat far from the danger, and there is some availability of empty lands. This stage was also characterized by the filling of scattered land inside Gaza City, or small scattered lands on which separate buildings can be built inside a non-compounded system. The map also shows some expansion towards the eastern part of Gaza City, which did not constitute a large percentage of the expansion due to the danger of this area after the security belt was imposed in the eastern region. In addition, the lands of this area are classified as agricultural. There is also another reason for the lack of urban orientation to the east, which is the weakness of an infrastructural network, in addition to a significant lack of services because most services are available in the center of Gaza City. As for the northern and western regions, the expansion towards these lands is timid due to the unavailability of development lands.

Third Period (2011-2015)
Thereafter, there was a turning point, which was the stage between 2011 and 2015. To understand the urban development at this stage, it is better to divide it into two phases: the first is between 2011 and 2013, while the second includes the two years 2014 and 2015. The first phase was characterized by an increase in urban development, as building materials were provided at cheap prices, in addition to the availability of fuel and electricity. Thus, this stage seemed as though it served as a semi-dismantling of the blockade that was imposed on Gaza City. This renaissance was due to the opening of the borders between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, which allowed many products that were not available to enter Gaza. This led to a significant increase in the number of buildings constructed, where many of the buildings that were destroyed in previous wars were compensated. In addition, this renaissance also led to an unprecedented development in the expansion of built-up areas. After the renaissance period, the second period began during the years of 2014 and 2015, which were disastrous, as the State of Egypt closed its borders, the siege on Gaza City returned more severe than it was before and was then followed by a war. In view of the thermal map shown below (Figure 6), the extent of the intensity of this war is evident, as the shelling and destruction took place in all areas of Gaza City in a way that exceeded previous wars. Also, the map shows the extent of the completely destroyed areas and the extent of the partially destroyed areas. This war resulted in the destruction of entire neighborhoods, the demolition of towers and houses, and the destruction of the city’s infrastructure. Nevertheless, one of the main results that traces effects on the urban development of Gaza City is the expansion of the “no-go” zone area, which restricts the usability of the specified buffer zone between both sides (Figure 7).

The map below (Figure 8) shows the 2014 urban development in Gaza City. Furthermore, the map shows a significant expansion of the built-up area to the south of Gaza City and to the east of Gaza City in particular. The reason for this urban expansion is the renaissance that took place between 2011 and 2013, which was explained previously. Another reason for the expansion of these directions is the absence of empty areas in the center of Gaza City, the eastern and northern regions, in addition to rapid population growth. The map also shows the transformation of some agricultural areas into built-up areas, which are considered one of the most serious urban phenomena. This map is the latest map showing the extent of the intensity of the war.
built-up areas. After that, there was a general recession in the real estate markets and urban development as well, as the construction movement had become almost suspended while new buildings became few and scattered. Moreover, large projects have almost disappeared.

**CONCLUSION**

The results of the Gaza City maps analysis and conditions for the development of built-up areas, including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and infrastructural development shows that identifying the problem that the city suffers is vital and it is a priority to fix the issue. This is because the urban development problem in Gaza City is not only the destruction that the conflict causes, but also the lack of possibilities available to solve this problem. However, previous analysis has shown that Gaza City does not have sufficient resources to cope with these challenges. Blockade of Gaza City’s land and sea borders as a result of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a real challenge facing the urban development of the city. In addition, the most serious and complex problems facing Gaza City include the area of the city, which is very small, with 65 km² and the increasing population reaching a density of 600,000 people in 2015, according to the Municipality of Gaza. Secondly, the severe shortage of natural building resources is also a significant issue.

The following map (Figure 9) shows the results of the urban expansion in Gaza City by comparing urban expansion for the years of 2003, 2007 and 2014. This map shows the rapid pace of urban expansion in Gaza City over a short period of time, despite the complex conflict that the city is experiencing. The urban expansion situation in Gaza City is very dangerous, since the plan that was put into place by the Palestinian planners for future urban expansion was disrupted due to the rapid increase in urban expansion, which almost exceeded the proposed areas. Urban expansion began to encroach on agricultural land, as shown in the following map. Thus, urban expansion has become very difficult towards the northern and western areas and at the center of Gaza City. Moreover, there is difficulty in the expansion of the eastern region, which is considered to be a buffer zone, in addition to its original usage as agricultural land. The only area currently available for urban expansion according to the maps is the southern area of Gaza City.

The results of the residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural development analysis of Gaza City showed the following. First, residential development has shown a general shortage of housing units, in addition to the lack of safe housing places, as all areas in Gaza City are under the threat of war. Currently, there are some investment attempts, but the attempts are very humble as a result of the collapse of the economy in the city, high prices of land due to a lack of availability, and the high prices of construction materials.

This research concludes that to develop an area under conflict, the responsible authorities should follow a systematic framework as follows; first, the level of threat in case of war should be understood by the authorities to decide the suitable and safe locations for development. Secondly, authorities should understand the built-up development history of the area to predict the behavior of residents and to propose the best solutions that suit their norms and culture. Thirdly, authorities should understand the available resources and the economy of the area to propose possible and sustainable solutions. Finally, authorities should study the approximate expected growth rate and accordingly, design a tailored development plan to save the limited resources available.
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Abstract
Varosha (Famagusta) was one of the richest districts, and best known holiday destination of the region during the 1970’s. However, due to the war in 1974, half of Varosha was closed to residents and the other half became a bordered city. The demographic structure, in addition to the physical and cultural structures of the city was therefore completely altered. Postwar displacement and re-settlement in Varosha is the focus of this paper.

The main aim is to discuss the lifestyle in Varosha from a cultural perspective using memories from former and current inhabitants. To achieve this, a set of semi-structured interviews were conducted in which two main questions were posed during the interviews: 1) What was the lifestyle in Varosha before 1974? and 2) What was the lifestyle in Varosha after 1974? These questions were intended to shed some light on the post-war landscape of Varosha.

For this purpose, researchers followed a chronological order: Life before 1974: Interview group A, six Greek Cypriots who were former inhabitants of Varosha. Life after 1974: Interview group B, six Turkish Cypriots who were displaced and settled in Varosha; and Interview group C, six immigrant/settlers Turks from Turkey, who volunteered to move to Cyprus and settle in Varosha. The snowball method has been used to identify former and current residents of Varosha. The findings are based on interviews with the former, displaced and re-settled Varoshian residents.

The interviews revealed how displacement affected the city and the former and current inhabitants. Analysis of the findings were categorized under three headings: 1) displacement from/to Varosha; 2) belonging and identity; 3) lifestyle and culture of each group. The categorization is used to describe how displacement affected the city and its citizens. In other words, this research targets to describe pre- and post-war life (styles) in Varosha.

Keywords: Displacement; Spoils System; Post-War Settlements, Famagusta, Varosha.

INTRODUCTION
The main aim of this paper is to discuss postwar displacement and re-settlement issues in Famagusta from a cultural perspective utilizing memories of current and past inhabitants.

Varosha (Famagusta) was one of the best known holiday destinations in the region during the 1970’s. With the 1974 intervention/invasion of the Turkish army in Cyprus, Varosha was occupied (together with the rest of the Famagusta area), and its entire population had to flee the town, for fear of being massacred (Asmussen J. 2008; Arsoy A. 2017). After 1974, the coastal part of Varosha was closed to civilians, and it was controlled by Turkish military forces. Since this time it has been described as a ghost town (Arsoy A. 2017).

In 1974 the island was divided and in its de facto state, and Famagusta was located in the northern part of the island. Since then the northern part of Cyprus has been under Turkish military control. Following the division of the island, Famagusta has expanded and developed towards the north, especially with the establishment of the Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) in 1979. The closed district of Varosha, therefore, became a suburb or a ghetto (Basarir H. 2009). Before 1974, Famagusta had a population of 39,000 residents; the population of the historic walled old city was 15,000 (Boğaç C. 2002). The current population of Famagusta is around 41,000 in total.

After the war and the division of the island into the Turkish North and the Greek South - Turkish and Greek Cypriots were not allowed to return to their homes. Displaced Turkish Cypriots from the southern region were settled in the northern part of the island and displaced Greek Cypriots were settled in the southern part of the island. Some abandoned houses in the south were rented to displaced people, such as refugees coming from the northern areas. People from Varosha predominantly settled in Limassol, a coastal city in the south. To spark the falling tourism economy again, the government of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), subsidised exiled Varoshian hotel owners in order to support them to rebuild their businesses.

The coastal area of Varosha (Kaplı Maraş) has been closed to civilians since then. KatoVarosha (Ağacı Maraş) is partly open to civilians and houses refugees and immigrants. At present, there are two distinct groups in Varosha. In terms of literal definition, internal refugees, Turkish Cypriots and Turkish immigrant/settlers. Internal Turkish Cypriot refugees were displaced from Pafos (south) to Kato Varosha (north). The second group, Turks from Turkey, immigrants (or settlers), consisted of volunteers, a qualified work force.
of volunteers with a view to becoming resident citizens and to form and expand a nation, to actively support the development of the economy from agriculture to handicraft including governmental bureaucratic and administrative duties. Turkish Cypriots, who had been forced to abandon their homes in the southern part, were given exchange titles to their properties left in the south and allocated houses in Kato Varosha. The Turkish immigrants or new settlers from Turkey were given title deeds (fahsis) to (agricultural) land and houses prior to their arrival on the island (Kurtuluş H. & Purkis S. 2014).

HISTORY OF DISPLACEMENT IN VAROSHA (FAMAGUSTA)

Famagusta, the second biggest city in Northern Cyprus and formerly the third on the entire island, is situated on the north-eastern coast. The city, just like the rest of the island, was developed mainly during Lusignan rule (1192-1489) especially after the fall of Acre in 1291. The Lusignan period can be considered as the peak period for Famagusta, as the St. Nicholas Cathedral was built during that period in addition to almost 300 churches and the foundations of today’s city walls. Following the Lusignans, the island was annexed by the Venetians (1489-1571) and the city became the capital of the island (Gunnis, 1947). After the Venetians, the Ottomans conquered the island and ruled it for 300 years (1571-1878).

The Ottomans changed the demographic structure of the city by issuing a ‘firman’ (imperial edict) to all non-Islamic civilians to move outside the walled city to suburb: (Arsoy A. 2017), the new settlement was called Varosha/Maraş/(Arsoy A. 2017; Luke S. 1969).

Therefore, during the Ottoman period the city expanded outside the walls towards the south. Only Turks and Jews were allowed to reside within the walled city and the Greeks, Armenians, and other non-Islamic were forced to sell their properties and move out from the walls, thus both the Varosha and Kato Varosha districts were formed (Luke S., 1965). Although settling within the city walls was forbidden for non-Islamic citizens, they were permitted to have shops in the walled town during the day but at night they were obliged to move outside the town (Luke S. 1957, Drehhorn W. 1985, Başanır H. 2009).

SETTLEMENT IN VAROSHA– BRITISH PERIOD

During the British Period (1878-1960), with the opening of the Suez Canal (1869) Famagusta regained its importance as a port city (Başanır H. 2009). In addition, the rapid development of tourism reshaped the urban environment of the city. The expansion of the city outside the walls, towards the south, which had already started during the Ottoman period, was accelerated. The enlargement of the town was focused on Varosha and, therefore, new residential districts were formed incorporating new commercial, tourist and recreational activity areas (Başanır H. 2009).

Varosha city became a prime example of modernism and represented, internationally, an independent modern Cypriot identity (Arsoy A. 2017; Fereos S.T. & Phokaides P. 2006). The popularity of Varosha and the tourism business of the island grew by five stars [seven stars] hotel services, after British dominance and subsequently the foundation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) (Arsoy A. 2017; Boğaç C. 2002). Varosha was one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Middle East and Europe. Significant touristic investments in Varosha were subsidized by international organizations (Arsoy A. 2017, Boğaç C. 2002).

During the British period, development was focused mainly on the harbour of Famagusta and the district of Varosha. In 1960 Cyprus became an independent state, on the basis of a 70:30 ratio between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. A new administrative system was established in the walled city and because its population consisted mainly of Turkish Cypriots, it was administered by a Turkish Cypriot municipality, whilst the new districts outside the walls such as Varosha were controlled by Greek Cypriot administration (Keshishian K.K. 1985).

As a result of conflicts arising between the two communities, the walled city became a prohibited district for the Greek Cypriot community after 1963. This caused a difficult situation since the harbour was under Greek management whilst the Turks were protecting the walls and manning the bastions. Between 1963 and 1974, almost no development took place in terms of the built environment in the walled city (Başanır H. 2009). In contrast Varosha district continued to develop at this time. Architecturally Varosha consisted of structures conveying the characteristics of international style and some British colonial buildings that reflected trends in contemporary architecture (Başanır H. 2009).

THE POST WAR SITUATION IN VAROSHA

The closed coastal district of Varosha (Kaplı Maraş) is almost 11 km long. The bay is full of decaying empty multi-storey hotel buildings (see figure-2). The former Constantinos Hotel, now known as the Arkin Palm Beach Hotel, is the only one operating in the area, which is situated near the dividing fence in the open residential area of Varosha. The hotel shares its beach with the fenced-off Varosha (Kaplı Maraş) district. The remaining signs of the war are still clearly visible from the balconies of this hotel (details of the bombardment and abandonment are more visible in figure 3).

Photographing, video recording and any
other method of documenting is prohibited. Therefore, “fear of being seen and apprehended” (Dobraszczyk P. 2014: 53) or arrested by the armed forces is a constant issue. Police and the military constantly patrol the closed off district. We were also warned by the police not to record in the forbidden areas. Consequently civilians must ignore the city behind the fences. You are not allowed to view it; you must act like it does not exist. There was life in there. Living in that area, and ignoring the close area has become a constant practice (the description of ‘Ghost City’ makes absolute sense). Ghosts do not exist.

From the municipal town hall you have views of both sides. One direction is towards the walled city (see figure 4). The yellow building next to the town hall is another bombarded structure and is now a ruin in the city centre. The other direction from the town hall leads to the heart of Varosha, which is now forbidden and inaccessible. You are allowed to walk, drive and park next to the fences (see figure 5).

The city was famous for its orange orchards and the wonderful perfume of the orange flowers. Now the fields and orchards are filled with greenhouses (see figure 6), or left as ruined, waste lands (see figure 7).

Figure 2. View from Arkin Palm Beach Hotel’s balcony. The only accessible public beach and the boundary between the ghost town and the residential area, February, 2019 (Source: Authors).

Figure 3. Bombarded building in Varosha, next to the Arkin Palm Beach Hotel (Barnet, 2014).

Figure 4. View from town hall towards the walled city, February, 2019 (Source: Authors).

Figure 5. View from town hall towards the forbidden zone, February, 2019 (Source: Authors).

Figure 6. Previous orange orchards are now full of green houses, February, 2019 (Source: Authors).

Figure 7: Ruined empty spaces in Varosha, February, 2019 (Source: Authors).

After 45 years of abandonment nature is re-claiming the district, as plants and vegetation, such as cacti...
etc., are growing in the structures.

In the area of (kato) Varosha, where settlement is allowed, you can observe many empty and abandoned houses but you can also observe many old well cared for modernist structures (see figure 13, 14, 15, and 16).

METHODS OF DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

The main aim of this paper is to discuss postwar resettlement issues in Varosha, from a cultural perspective using memories of current and former inhabitants. Due to the division/separation of the city, Famagusta, and, therefore, Varosha kept changing its demographic structure. But who are they, who are living in Famagusta at present, in Varosha, and the surrounding neighborhood? How are they, living an inherited culture or ‘spoils system’ (ganimet culture) deviations? To achieve this aim, we are limiting our research to the pre and post 1974 period; to this end a set of semi structured interviews have been conducted with additional on-site investigations being carried out in order to provide some insights into the post-war landscape of Famagusta.

Thus the two main research questions raised by this study are:

RQ1: How was the lifestyle in Varosha before 1974?
RQ2: How is the lifestyle in Varosha now?

The forbidden or closed district of Varosha has been ‘asleep’ for a long time; but there was life in there. In order to understand today, we need to explore the past. For this purpose, we have followed a chronological order: life before 1974; Interview group A, Greek Cypriots who were former inhabitants of Varosha. Life after 1974: Interview group B, Turkish Cypriots who were displaced and settled in Varosha; Interview group C, immigrant/settlers Turks from Turkey who were volunteers to move to Cyprus and who were settled in Varosha. The snowball method has been used to meet/identify former and current citizens /residents of Varosha.

Data Collection Procedures

Initially we identified someone who overlapped our criteria; he/she/they live(d) in Varosha, and we visited him/her/them at their home to conduct the interview. Following this we asked the interviewee to recommend the next interviewee as per the snowball sampling method. We limited interviews to six people within each group. In total 18 interviews were conducted.

In order to understand the lifestyle before and after 1974 the subsequent displacement and the post war re-settlement in Varosha, we posed the following
In order to make our intention clear and introduce our research, we asked the following warm up questions:

1) Where do you come from?
2) Where were you living before 1974?
3) How old are you?
4) How was the lifestyle in Varosha during the 70’s?
5) How is life in Varosha now?

After breaking the ice with the interviewee(s), we directed further questions:

**For group A (Greek Cypriots):**
11) How was the lifestyle in Varosha before 1974?
12) Where were you displaced to and settled following 1974?
13) What are your most vivid memories of the place and the war?
14) What do you think/feel about Varosha now?

**For group B (Turkish Cypriots):**
11) When did you settle in Varosha?
12) How did you find a house in Varosha?
13) What did you know about Varosha before you settled there?
14) What kind of furnishings and household equipment etc., did you find in the house?
15) What are your most vivid memories of the place and the war?
16) What do you think/feel about Varosha now?

**For Group C (Turks from Turkey):**
11) When did you settle in Varosha?
12) How did you find a house in Varosha?
13) What did you know about Varosha before you settled there?
14) What kind of furnishings and household equipment etc., did you find in the house?
15) What do you think/feel about Varosha now?

Initially the Turkish Cypriots were not very willing to communicate. We observed that they were very upset and angry. They were feeling abandoned and treated unequally by both the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot authorities. Therefore, if we had any political agenda, they were not willing to give interviews. However after the first few questions, they relaxed and the initially short interviews extended to become 4 to 5 hours long. In general, all participants were very willing to share their memories with us. Therefore, snowball sampling (or chain methods) provided a successful network and method for this research, in respect of the confidentiality of the participants as well as their
privacy. Some particularly private notes have been removed from the main text. Most of the participants were senior adults. Observations were made and notes were taken during the interviews. No recording devices were used.

The following coding structure has been applied in the analysis to refer to the interviewees:

**Interview group A: Greek Cypriots (GC)**
Six Greek Cypriots (GC) who were living in Varosha, (until 1974) but had to flee the town.

- #1 Female, 60
- #2 Male, 67
- #3 Male, 55
- #4 Male 57
- #5 Female, 70
- #6 Female, 22

**Interview group B: Turkish Cypriots (tC)**
Six Turkish Cypriots (tC) who were living in the south and became refugees, and who resettled in Varosha after 1974.

- #7 Female, 60
- #8 Female, 58
- #9 Female, 62
- #10 Male, 70
- #11 Female, 66
- #12 Female, 70

**Interview group C: Turks from Turkey (tt)**
6 Turks from Turkey (TT) settlers/immigrants settled in in Varosha after 1974.

- #13 Male, 64
- #14 Male, 40
- #15 Female, 55
- #16 Female, 52
- #17 Female, 70
- #18 Female, 72

**FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

The findings are based on interviews of former, displaced and re-settled Varoshian residents. The interview questions were listed above in the data collection description section. Semantically, analysis of the findings were categorized under three headings: 1) displacement from/to Varosha; 2) belonging and identity; 3) lifestyle and culture for each group. The categorizations are used to describe how displacement affected the city and the citizens. In other words, this research is aiming to examine and describe the pre- and postwar lifestyle in Varosha. The findings of this research reveal feelings of attachment, and belonging to Varosha. Moreover, the findings represent an identity [a Varoshian] construction of the post war situation in Varosha.

**DISPLACEMENT**

Greek Cypriots argue that the northern part is occupied, and Turkey invaded their homeland. They also believe that after the war their own administration treated them unfairly which also created internal conflict within the Greek Cypriot community. Greek Cypriots believe that those who aligned with DIKO 1 received better compensation for their losses and others were not treated fairly. Former Greek Cypriot inhabitants such as GC#1, GC#4 and GC#6 mentioned (interview notes), were living a fairy tale life, and they believed that: “they were living in paradise, which was too good to be real”. In contrast, the older Greek Cypriot generation is struggling to accept that the younger Greek Cypriot generations are not making enough efforts to return to Varosha (as described by GC#5 and GC#6).

The following interview notes provide more insights on the perspectives of the participants.

**Greek Cypriot - GC#1**

“I was 17 years old, last year of school in Famagusta when the civil war started between anti-Makarios Greek Cypriots and the pro-Makarios Greek Cypriots. For almost half of that year we had no school, however it was not called ENOSIS during those years. There were lots of agitations from Greek officers in the army- a lot of demonstrations in 1973 and probably in 1974 until the coup took place. In 1973 I was in England as a student. That political climate I found very similar to today’s situation (oil and gas problems in the Aegean). The coup was a brilliant excuse for Turkey. In 1973 the UK was experiencing gas problems described in the UK newspapers and we were...

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1 The Democratic Party (Dimokratikó Kómma (DIKO) is a Greek-Cypriot ‘nationalist’ political party.
very scared."

The situation resembles very much to todays’ buildup tensions and characteristics.

GC#2
“i left Varosha in the 1970’s. In 1974 I was in Famagusta for holidays. A lot of bombing, we were scared. They were shooting from planes. We left, we thought we were coming back. We left to British bases, some people were sleeping in cars, some at the electricity power station and fishing harbour. The only hotel which was nearby was the Armenian hotel, many people stayed there. In the crowd we saw military dressed national service members, who were my classmates, even they didn’t, and nobody knew where to go… total chaos… even in the south part. People stayed in camps I think for many months. They thought they were going back. Many people went to Limassol for finding jobs. Only people who had family there came to Nicosia.”

Turkish Cypriot
TC#7
“We were living at Limassol. July 74 we didn’t leave our house, a year later Denktas and Clerides had a family reunification agreement then we left Limassol in 1975. We had/owned a bus, it was our family business. My father was a bus driver, and we possess properties, houses in rent. It was our income. We were students, 4 siblings, girls studied in English and Greek at the nurse school. Between 1974-75 we were scared to leave our house, the mayor sent us a message that he can provide protection for us to drive to/from school but we thought this will make us a direct target so we were afraid and then rejected his proposal.”

“Kalamara (Greek military) was patrolling around. They knocked on our door a couple of times, once in July 74; my father was in the courtyard of the house and he was on his knees; Kalamara asked me if we have any male in the house and they /forced us to let them in. My father was in the courtyard of the house and asked help to stand on his feet, they said this man is old, not a young man. We are looking for young Turkish Cypriots. They wrote/registered our names and they went out from the house. They marked us that there were males in the neighborhood and drove them with the bus to their deaths. They never returned. [This is known as ‘the missing bus incident’]. They were looking for Turkish Cypriots as well as empty spaces/houses to move into. We studied at the English school, therefore my sibling and I spoke good English and Greek. I open the door and I ask what he wanted (in Greek). Kalamara said, I thought the house is empty, and then I replied, we found an empty house and settled, and do you want us to move again, than he said sorry, and he moved away. He though we were Greek Cypriot refugees.”

“After ’74 we knew that we must leave. We put a table in front of our house and we wrote the price on the items and start selling goods from the house on the street. That was the money we took with us to the north. With the rest of the house hold, such as our bed and some other small items we loaded the bus and drove to the north with the guidance of UN. In the north they settled us in Famagusta, close to our family. First nights all exchanged and displaced refugees were staying in the dorm.”

“The day after we were driving up and down to find accommodation/or/house to settle in and we went to Varosha. Later we learnt that all our roommates knew about Varosha but none informed or recommend us to go there. Maybe competition, maybe jealousy. When you found an empty house, you walked in, then you informed the local administration to connect you to city electric, then it became yours. We came a year later, and as a result, the house that we found was a leftover that the Bafidies (people from Pafos called Bafidies) did not like.

TC#11
“In ’74 July, I broke my arm. My mum needed to take me to the hospital and she was holding me with my other hand. Trying to move quickly, we needed to pass through a small hill of covered bodies.”

Turks from Turkey
TT#13
“I came in here in 1975. After arriving in the Famagusta port by ferry, we stayed a night at the dorms. The government promised us to give a house, 10 donum (1 donum=1.338 m2) plus 2 donum more with water supplied agricultural fields, government work, and a car.”

“We didn’t find our houses at Varosha like the Turkish Cypriots. The houses were distributed by lots (through a lottery). All houses had a number on it. They took us to Varosha the day after. We found the number that I picked from the lot. The house was empty, not furnished, no kitchen tools, no fridge, or TV. Karaköşeler (area in Kato Varosha) was still closed in that time for settlement. They told us to go there and get your needs. I went there to get TV and refrigerator. I received everything which was promised to us, except a car.”

TT#17
“The 9th of July 1975 we came to Cyprus, (46 years living at Asağı Maraş). We were living at Mersin, Erdenli, I had reasonable assets, lands, houses etc. My love, applied to work as immigrant in Germany, and in that time we were not married so I didn’t let him go. Than one day he came and he said he applied to go to Cyprus. 3 days later he received the acceptance letter. It was very sudden. I said no to Germany and now I needed to accept this. Than we took out valuables and the beds with us, and left Erdenli.”

“He didn’t ask my opinion about Cyprus. He applied and we volunteered to go to Cyprus. We were first located at dorms for a night than we found our house that we picked from lots. I had a six months old baby. It was a difficult journey with the ferry. My child had wounds all around her. Famagusta port was a very isolated, deserted place. We called a Taxi to go to the Hospital first, and then to the dorms.”

“When we found our new house at Varosha, there were people inside, cleaning the house, they were in the wrong house. We found piles of books and newspapers on the veranda. The rest of the house was..."
empty. We found a table and four chairs. Many jars of jam (macun). We threw everything away. We thought the ‘gavur’ (infidels referring to Greek Cypriots) might have put poison in it. I was crying all the time, and to get used of living in here took me 10 years. The house was connected to the orange field, we found some plates under the trees, until the evening all plates disappeared.”

“I brought my bed with me. For the other stuff people were going to get it from other abandoned houses in the neighborhood. My husband didn’t let me to go, I was very scared to go out of the house anyway.”

**BELONGING AND IDENTITY**

Turkish Cypriots think that they are the losers in this situation. They argued that Greek Cypriots didn’t want to share the Republic with them and first they were victimized by Greek Cypriots, and moreover the administration in the north at that time was criticized as being unfair. They said they had not received equivalent exchanges for their properties. Turks from Turkey received everything freely and they didn’t need to work for it, however Turkish Cypriots had worked all their lives to build a life and then they lost everything that they had worked for, including their loved ones. Their children, the younger generations, still feel that they belong to Pafo. Another serious difference between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots is the naming of Varosha, in Turkish. Turkish Cypriots (TC#1 and TC#2) described the settlement as ‘Kahraman-maras’ instead of ‘Maraş’, which is a province in Turkey where many people migrated from Kahramanmaras to Varosha (Maraş). For Turkish Cypriots where they live themselves at Varosha, is known as Maraş. However the corner of the street where Turks from Turkey live is called Kahramanmaras’, as described by TC#1 and TC#2 (interview notes).

Turks from Turkey feel that they are ignored, or in other words victimized, and discriminated by Turkish Cypriots. After 1974, no state investments were made in Varosha. Further the Turkish settlers feel that they were always used as a tool in elections (interview notes TT#13 and TT#14). ‘Who’, were the residents of Varosha? Their children identify themselves as Cypriot, but they feel ashamed to mention that they are from Varosha or Famagusta because it signifies that they are immigrants. Having lived for 45 years in Cyprus, families and their children feel that they belong to Cyprus. They have lived longer in Cyprus than in Turkey. Most of their children were born in Cyprus.

Greek Cypriots believe that the biggest losers in this story are Turkish Cypriots. They themselves don’t feel safe in the north, therefore they also think and hope that Turkish Cypriots don’t feel safe either. Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots against the ‘enemy’ make them feel more bounded and connected.

The following interview notes give more details about how participants feel about belonging and identity.

**Turkish Cypriot**

TC#9

“My children never accepted to be from Varosha or from Famagusta. They always called themselves Bafidies (from Pafo).”

TC#9

“I’m from Pafos and my children also feel to be from Pafos, even though they were born in Famagusta.”

**Greek Cypriot**

GC#5

“I was very angry before, you should feel happy that you meet with me now. When I crossed the border and talked to anyone who dared to talk to me, I was swearing at them.”

You can see her pain and sorrow with Vamik Volkan’s definition “narcissistic wound” (Volkani, 2017, p.16). Until she meet a Turkish Cypriot who is searching her missing family:

“I was angry but for what? I am alive, my family is very healthy until now. Yes they/we lost our houses, belongings etc., but we have each other. Then I calm down, I start seeing her pain, and feeling guilty that she is trying to communicate, she forgave, why do I not forgive too?”

**Belonging and Identity**

Greek Cypriot

GC#6

“I call my self Famagustian, but I guess this is not a common thing. My generation is not really open-minded.”

Then she directed a question to us: “do you feel secure, living in here [denoting the northern part]?”

**GC#4**

“I think the heroes in this story are the Turkish Cypriots. I don’t want to come to Famagusta just for just sightseeing, I want to have some connections.”

**GC#3**

“I was around 15 years old in 1974 when we had to leave Famagusta… living there was an amazing, very different from the rest of Cyprus, it was way ahead of its time in many ways… I miss those days so much… every time I crossed after the gates opened I used to cry… It was affecting me too much. Approximately 5 years ago I bought a flat on a high rise building in Derinya, where I can see Varosha. Everyday, when I open the shutters, my town is in front of me... now I see it everyday, so I am getting used to this situation. I cross borders every weekend, some people say; “don’t go and give your money to Turkish Cypriots”, but I don’t care. This is my town and I love to be here. I start to enjoy it again.”

**Turks from Turkey**

TT#14

“I’m born here in Varosha, but I am from Erzurum. I faced serious discrimination and racism by TC’s. I’m ‘gaco2’ for them. I worked in the southern part as well. I always felt welcome by the Greek Cypriots. They think that they have a better life there. Here Varosha is more sincere and much better.”

TC#8

“We live in Maras(Varosha), they (Turks from Turkey) live in Kahraman Maras. Down the street from here is Kahraman Maras. Nothing to do with Cyprus or Cyprus culture. We have strong connections with our neighbours, but now they built a new house somewhere on the outskirts of Famagusta, at Engomi. I don’t think that they have a better life there. Here Varosha is more sincere and much better.”

**Notes**

1. One of the name Turkish Cypriots calls Turk from Turkey (http://www.yeniduzen.com/bello-turko-ve-gaco-15737h.htm). It means a male gypsy in the dictionary.

2. One of the name Turkish Cypriots calls Turk from Turkey (http://www.yeniduzen.com/bello-turko-ve-gaco-15737h.htm). It means a male gypsy in the dictionary.
invited me to their homes, their wedding ceremonies, we ate and drink together. I never had any bad experiences or bad memories with Greek Cypriots. They always gave the best seat on their table and the best food that they cooked. However, I was a Turk from Turkey, another "gaco" for the Turkish Cypriots. In the government office, Turkish Cypriots don't help us or finish our jobs. They always delay us or postpone it intentionally."

"We had a house and agricultural fields in Turkey. I didn’t want to come to Cyprus, but after refusing to go Germany, I had to say yes to my husband request. So we came in here. And my husband knew that I may try to go back/so he sold the properties in Turkey without asking or informing me. He passed away 22 years ago and we buried him in here at Famagusta cemetery. One night, I saw lights and heard fireworks like an explosive. I didn’t see fireworks before. So I thought a war started again. And I was struggling by myself how to leave since my husband was buried in here. Now it’s been 46 years. I get used to live in Varosha. When I go to Turkey I say; ‘let me go to my home’ (in Cyprus)."

**Life Style and Culture**

Hotels, restaurants, cafés, especially disco’s as entertainment places were highlighted by the former Varoshians. These were all places where Greek Cypriots socialized in daily life before ‘74. They had dressing codes, and specially designed interiors for each occasion. They knew about Turkish Cypriots and the Cyprus Problems "we knew in theory that there was a [Cyprus] problem. Both Clerides and Denktash were talking about it. Someone would solve this ‘political problem’, we never discussed it. It had nothing to do with our lives. Turkish Cypriots existed as if they do not exist. We lived in our bubble. They, the others were on the other side" (GC#1 and GC#2, interview notes).

Another important point is, "we don’t speak each other languages" (GC#1 and GC#2, interview notes). Greek Cypriots think that Turkish Cypriots knew the Greek language more than Greek Cypriots knew the Turkish language. "Still 1960 history books are used at the schools" (GC#1, interview notes). Additional Turkish Cypriots tried more than Greek Cypriots to speak both languages. Greek Cypriots were more ignorant on the language issue. They didn’t give any attention from the beginning of the RoC. For instance, the RoC didn’t establish a ministry of education to develop a politics for language and culture (GC#1, interview notes). The language is one of the major factors which keeps limiting communication between the two communities.

**Greek Cypriot**

GC#1

"Varosha was a ‘paradise’, everything was easy, safe and provided. Walking, bicycle, some cars… French lessons, music, ballet, afternoon tea parties, it was a world that does not exist anymore. No slim women, and it was okay, except my mother. No ideology except poor-against rich people. My father was a big dentist. Parties, dance with parents, good restaurants with European music, tango, waltz etc., or twist, rock and roll…"

"We had a dress maker for parties! Elenitza! She was making all the clothes. Amazing dresses, no photos left unfortunately. We left everything behind. In 1971 there were no direct telephone lines; you needed to arrange beforehand to get connected at the telephone central. No direct calls. But very soon when this technology came, my mother was calling me all the time. It was a totally different life, different times. People were happier and more relaxed. It was a world that does not exist anymore."

**Turkish Cypriot**

TC#8

"Our house was very modern and much more sophisticated than this one we have in Varosha now. We had a pond in the courtyard. Can you imagine in that time, we had solar panels for water heating systems? We also had a refrigerator, a bath tub, inlaid floors; all the doors in the house were wood and handcrafted with motifs."

"I went back to my village at the southern part. Refugees from Greece are living in our house now. I speak Greek too. I had friends before, we were working together. I visited them, they were happy to see me. I don’t go there anymore, whenever I go back to my village I feel sick later and take days to recover. Also we earn Turkish Liras and going there cost a lot’s of money (Euro), TL versus Euro is not affordable anymore."

"When they opened the borders, the previous owner (Greek Cypriots) of this house where I live now at Varosha also came back. They brought meat with..."
them. We cooked and made BBQ altogether. They visited us a couple of times. They do not come anymore.”

Turks from Turkey
TT#18
“We kept our traditions. My wife is Turkish Cypriot. She learnt how to cook our local dishes. I also learned the Cypriot kitchen. She cooks molehiya, kolokas, kleftiko…”

TT#15
“It was always difficult to access Varosha. It is somehow away and disconnected from the city centre. You cannot find public transportation and public spaces such as parks cafes etc. We used to have Çay Bahçesi, (tea gardens) however we don’t have such places in here. Men have Kahvehanes (Coffee-shops) to go to, but nothing for women. You can’t even find any indoor wedding hall, which can be used in the winter. So all the wedding ceremonies has to be in summer. Everywhere was full of orange gardens before. Not anymore. We used to continue practicing our life style from Mersin, such as supporting each other in funerals. Now, my children call themselves, Famagustians.”

CONCLUSION
The wider perspective of the post war situation can be observed through investigating abandoned properties at Varosha. After 1974, the displacement and the method of the distribution of the properties generated an unfair situation. This system caused confrontation between three community groups as well as creating internal conflicts. Varosha has always been a place where economically and culturally different classes existed together. Especially, in coastal Varosha and kato Varosha, these differences have existed in the past and this gap is widening.

Before 1974, Varosha represented high class culture and modernism. Structures at Varosha offered a quality life style, internationally connected with the rest of the world. For instance some buildings such as the Famagusta town hall, and some schools were constructed as a result of international architectural competitions. However in the post war situation, life in Varosha is like living in a suburb or ghetto, where it is forbidden to even look at the closed off areas. Everyday Varoshians are living right next to an abandoned city as if it does not exist. Moreover, if anyone tries to enter the ‘forbidden zone’, armed forces take the offender to court. Living next to an abandoned forbidden city, means that Varoshians live in a potential crime zone. The aforementioned famous orange trees and orchards were an important part of the natural landscape of Varosha that no longer exist. It’s all gone now and the orchards have been replaced with greenhouses for food cultivation. An urban texture has transformed into waste land.

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3 At Çay Bahçesi you can buy tea, coffee and soft drink, no alcoholic drinks can be provided.
The siege

The siege of Sarajevo, which began on 6 April 1992, is the longest blockade in the history of modern warfare. At the time, Sarajevo was the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, one of the six republics of the former Socialist and Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. By 1992 the war in the former Yugoslavia was widespread and brutal through most parts of the disintegrating country, and the siege of Sarajevo was perhaps the most public demonstration of this aggression.

Indiscriminate shelling rained daily on the city, resulting in numerous casualties and significant destruction of the city’s fabric, including the historic precinct of Baščaršija that dated to the 15th century. Barely a year into the siege, a report from the frontline of the infamous Luč hill stated, ‘there was almost no one here who, thus far, has not lost someone dear to them’ (Zaimović, 1993:12). The freshly dug graves that pock-marked the hill were a constant reminder of the random nature of the assaults that killed not only soldiers but also the kids who came ‘to pick cherries’ – and then had to be ‘buried on the spot’ (Zaimović, 1993:12).

My proposition is that wartime discussions about the rhythms and shape of daily life in Sarajevo made new connections between the city’s built fabric and its social and political life that are akin to what the cultural geographer Edward Soja has called ‘Thirdspace’. Thirdspace is conceived as a space of ‘extraordinary openness, a place of critical exchange where the geographical imagination can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered by the epistemological referees to be incompatible, uncombinable’ (Soja, 1996:2). Thirdspace provides the context for the discussion of war-besieged Sarajevo presented here.

Whether responding to the impacts of physical destruction or dramatic social change, the nexus of time, space and being shows that the concept of spatiality is essential to comprehending the world and to adjusting to and resisting the impact of extraordinary circumstances. Recognising the continuation of daily life as essential to survival sheds light on processes of renewal and change in a war-affected landscape. These shattered urban spaces also show the ways in which people make a sense of place in relation to specific socio-historical environments and political contexts.

Keywords: Sarajevo, besieged-city, Thirdspace, Urbicide,
Buildings as symbols: the historicality and sociality of Baščaršija

One year into the siege, in 1993, the Association of Architects of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Asocijacija arhitekata DAS) in collaboration with Sarajevo’s art and heritage institutions produced WARCHITECTURE (Curic, et.al., 1993).1 This large project included exhibitions, catalogues, a journal and associated smaller projects. The publication Warchitecture: Urbicide Sarajevo was an exhibition catalogue that recorded the destruction of the city’s significant structures and built fabric. Printed as loose sheets, the catalogue recorded the destruction through each sheet including a site map marking the impact of shelling, a short description of the building in question, and photographs illustrating the extent of damage on the site. Figure 1

Warchitecture identified four historical periods in the development of the city: the Oriental period, the Austro-Hungarian period, the interwar period and post–World War Two period. It was evident from the catalogue’s site map that the oldest part of the town, Baščaršija, was heavily affected by the war, with almost all historic buildings targeted by artillery attacks. The format of the exhibition echoed the familiar tradition of documenting Baščaršija as an urban entity and a place of symbolic significance.

Notwithstanding its relatively small size and peripheral position in relation to the modern city of Sarajevo in the 1990s, the Baščaršija precinct had an historical importance that underscored its significance in the daily life of Sarajevans. Established in the 15th century, it was fundamental to the origins of Sarajevo. It maintained its original principles of Ottoman urban design, the most notable of which was the division between public and private domains – the road separating the activities of the čaršija, the trade and business district, from the surrounding residential area, the mahala. The Baščaršija business sector also accommodated the most important civic and religious buildings, including the markets, Gazi Husref Beg’s Mosque (1531), the Jewish synagogue (original building 1581) and the old Orthodox church (1539–40). These structures coupled with the narrow, meandering streets gave an impression of the unique values of Sarajevo laid deep within the old precinct. Figure 2

The commercial growth of Baščaršija continued through the second half of the 16th century. The most significant commercial structure established in this period was the Brusa Bezistan, built in 1551 to facilitate the importation of silk from Turkey. In the 16th century, Catholic merchants from Dubrovnik arrived to the district, while the Orthodox population
settled near the northern boundary of Baščaršija, establishing church, with surrounding residential and commercial dwellings, in 1539. Later, Sephardic Jews arrived in Baščaršija, following their expulsion from Spain, building their first synagogue at the western end of the precinct in 1580.

Over the next two centuries Baščaršija retained its urban structure and the peripheral development of its various ethnic quarters. By the beginning of the 17th century, Bosnia’s four religious communities coexisted within the one square kilometre of Baščaršija. Over time, the symbolic value of the communities’ co-presence in Baščaršija came to underpin the construction and subsequent destruction of the country’s national narrative. Although the importance of multi-religious existence changed with different governments, the connection between the buildings and their respective ethnic (not only religious) communities remained.

Yugoslavia’s post–World War Two communist government saw the precinct as a burden of the past. Compelled by a Marxist understanding of history as a linear path of progress, the government initially proposed demolishing significant parts of Baščaršija, while preserving the historically important buildings as artefacts of the past. Despite efforts by the Institute for the Protection of Natural and Built Heritage, established in 1945 to halt the clearances, the collateral damage of unclear political direction was that significant parts of the precinct were demolished (Krstić-Galeb, 1988: 478). The individual buildings affected included Gazi Isa-begova tekija (a lodge of a Dervish order) and a musafirhana (inn), possibly the oldest structure of its kind in Bosnia and Herzegovina, built in 1462. The tekija, in the area of Bendbaša, which was surrounded by a graveyard that was in use until 1924, was under a heritage protection order when it was demolished in 1957. It was a registered monument, documented and described in the literature and it had received some early funding for restoration. Its destruction demonstrates the low regard in which heritage was held by the socialist authorities.

Government efforts to document the heritage precinct and identify structures worthy of preservation proceeded in parallel with the demolition. In 1949, the government called for a full report on the precinct’s state, which would represent ‘a scientific elaboration of Sarajevo’ and use historical and social lenses together as the main framework for understanding the precinct (Krstić-Galeb, 1988: 477-78). In 1950, a new executive body, the City Committee, was established, tasked with drawing on the report’s outcomes to produce a comprehensive study and historical record of the precinct. Among the outcomes of this
study was a site model considered a ‘masterpiece’ and that later became one of the central exhibits in the Sarajevo City Museum. Considered within that framework, the buildings of Baščaršija connected to the Ottoman period could be seen as relics from the past worth preserving for historical reasons.

Institutions such as the Museum of Sarajevo, founded in 1949, saw its main purpose as ‘assembling, studying, preserving, publicising and presenting the social, economic and cultural history of Sarajevo’ (Museum of Sarajevo, 1976:5). Its ethnographic collection, comprising items of ‘domestic, craft and factory production’, was intended to illustrate the ‘material and spiritual culture of the city’ (Museum of Sarajevo, 1976:17-21). The displays carefully integrated the interiors and domestic items of the traditional, or ‘Turkish’, house previously out of bounds to outsiders. The Museum of Sarajevo display included a diorama of a Muslim family in a traditional home setting, while the ethnological collection of the Natural History Museum (Zemaljski Museum) was updated to include a similar display. Carefully curated public buildings and local history museums were transformed into symbols of the national past. Together they contributed to an understanding of human history as ongoing and ever-evolving, effectively identifiers and spatial containers for representing the bygone time.

 tegenlig. sarajevo, its culture and history. Presented floating on the page, the buildings were no longer connected to their urban and social context but had become time- and spaceless, reminding the viewer of human and existential vulnerability. figure 3

Besieged city and the emerging ‘Thirdspace’

By mid-1992 most of Baščaršija’s structures had been shelled, suffering significant damage. Among the most prominent was the Town Hall (Vijećnica), located on the very eastern edge of the precinct. The building dated to the period of the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia (1878–1918), and was designed and built between 1891 and 1896 by colonial architects. The structure originally accommodated the activities of the Town Hall, but in the socialist period was converted to house the Bosnian National Library. In June 1992, the building and its collection of three million items, which included rare books, manuscripts, maps and recordings, was set ablaze following a grenade attack.

Another war-time project was a special issue of the journal WHY, titled Urbicide 1992 Sarajevo. Unlike the exhibition catalogue, which, in the documenting the destruction of individual buildings, focused on the objective and measurable records, the journal cover captured the destruction as a mosaic-like image of war-damaged monuments. Depicting the most significant city symbols – such as Baščaršija’s Town Hall, water fountain (sebilj), the clock (sahat kula) of Gazi Husrev Beg’s mosque and St Joseph’s Church of Marindvor as ruins – reminded the reader of war’s impact on these distinctive markers of Sarajevo, its culture and history. Presented floating on the page, the buildings were no longer connected to their urban and social context but had become time- less and spaceless, reminding the viewer of human and existential vulnerability. Figure 3

Published at the beginning of the siege, the journal carried the defiant message of a city that would not surrender. The ‘Declaration of the City Assembly’, held on 19 April 1992, only days after the city was cut off from the rest of the world, stated that ‘The City of Sarajevo, with [its] five hundred years of history of joint life in multicultural, multiconfessional and multinational community is INDIVISIBLE’ [original emphasis] (WHY, 1992:3). The declaration identified the specifics of the city’s spatial constraints – its besieged condition and cultural mix – as the determining factor in the discussion of its social context. Presenting the city as socially united through its time and place offered an opportunity to heighten the importance of understanding the spatial constraints in the discussion of this unique human experience.

Despite the journal’s effort to present the city as unit- ed, the war was a fundamental attack on its multiculturalism. ‘Who is fighting in Sarajevo?’, asked French philosopher Bernard Henri Levy in an article presented in WHY: ‘On one side Muslims [sic.], on the other Serbs and Croats. Muslim majority in power, Serbian minority which separates. In one word, a civil war. Fratricidal conflict’ (Levy, 1992:8). ‘Yet’, Levy continued, ‘the city tells you the opposite when, equipped by a good anti-sniper guide, you risk to run through it’. Highlighting the difficulties in superficially accepting the conflict as ‘civil war’, Levy described the city’s complexities both as visible and hidden:

Open city synagogues and minarets. Dark red and Ottoman colour of the building of presidency and further on, beside it, green and pink facades of the old Habsburg residences. All in all, mixture of styles. A parallel of aesthetics and different signs which could not be wiped off by the destruction. One-mixed – blooded city. A mixed city. A city which created its attraction and its law out of this short age of ‘cleanliness’. Sarajevo, a border city between civilization and empires. (Levy, 1992:8)

Positioned within this network of ‘mixture of styles’, ‘blooded city’ and the reference to ‘civilisation and empire’, the monuments of Sarajevo were no longer seen and described by local government and officials but became open to individual voices and personal interpretations. The creative combinations of diverse perspectives, formal and informal voices and accounts of events allowed for new narratives, seemingly not possible before, to emerge.

The absence of a presiding systems through which the official meanings were defined provided a space for lived experience to emerge. One article in WHY, titled ‘The Streets of Memories’, describes the
buildings of Baščaršija from such a perspective. In an emotional expression of his daily experience of walking the streets, the author recalls his ‘sad look’ at the Islamic Theological University in the heart of Baščaršija, which had been shelled by the ‘heartless men … from the surrounding hills’ (Stajić, 1992:5).

In a description of another historic building in the precinct, the author recalls the early post–World War Two period, when, in 1947, ‘[h]e saw the light of the day for the first time in that very building’ and remembered the story his father told him about the building’s founder, a Muslim who risked his life to save his Christian neighbours. ‘Unfortunately’, he concludes, ‘some neighbours today from the surrounding hills shoot at their yesterday’s neighbours’ (Stajić, 1992:5).

Numerous short texts, notes and editorials published in the daily papers presented the citizens’ emotional encounters with the changing streetscapes, buildings and social life. Noticing the transformations with fear, one person described the confronting realisation that the street of his ‘childhood and youth’, which ‘was only a few days earlier a stage of a horrible massacre …’ (Stajić, 1992:5). With familiar places no longer acting as markers of the city’s civil life, the streets of Sarajevo became an abstract landscape filled with uncertainty. Newly established relationships were put to the forefront, creating new ‘dynamic socio-spatial dialectics’ (Soja, 1996:72). Daily shelling changed the urban formation, making the city an active agent in the discussion of daily life. In his book *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre states that space ‘does not eliminate the other materials or resources that play a part in the socio-political arena’; rather, space becomes active ‘both as instrument and as goal, as means and as end’ (Lefebvre, 1991:410-11).

Both Soja and Lefebvre discuss the ‘trialectics’ of spatiality, historicity and sociality as an ontological quest, and recognise the importance of this relationship to many fields of understanding (Soja, 1996:71). Considered in the context of Sarajevo, the tripartite relationship between ‘space, time and being in the world’ highlights the historical privilege of the connection between the history and the social context of the built fabric. The former communist government’s deliberate attempts to connect the Ottoman-founded buildings of Baščaršija to the old empire framed the complex nationalist debates on belonging and identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Connecting the buildings of Baščaršija to not only their religious groups (Muslims, Orthodox Christians and Catholics) but also to their respective ethnic identities of Muslims/Bosnians, Serbs and Croats heightened the importance of the historio-social interrelations between those buildings, while also marginalising their spatial significance. The siege attacks were aimed at the symbolic value of the buildings, which represented established social and historical values. Although the buildings were long recognised as icons and as containers of social relationships, the shelling rendered their status less significant. The indiscriminate nature of the siege, the daily barrage of artillery and the imposed focus on the city itself provided an opening for renewed understanding of the built fabric, the sites and the social context.

**Conclusion**

Although always present in the tripartite relationship, historicity became less significant for Sarajevans during the siege, while spatiality gained importance in their relationships to the urban fabric. While the destruction of sites and buildings was deeply connected to the negotiating act of survival. The buildings’ physical changes, destruction and adaptability to constantly shifting circumstances made them a part of a dynamic body of the city.

The siege line redefined Sarajevo’s boundaries in the most radical of ways. The city that used to be defined by its urban structures, landscape and historical and social context became a city closed off by the frontline and drawn back onto its centre. Noticing the changing urban configurations, Dževad Karahasan wrote, in ‘A Portrait of the Inner City’, that ‘Technically closed (from) all the outside world and disassociated from everything with its mahalas, the city is so open in its inner being’ (Karahasan, 1992:7). The daily attacks reconfigured urban spaces in unexpected ways and involuntarily the city became a stage and a setting for embodied action. Direct experience, responsive thinking and personal interpretations of the city as a transforming landscape replaced the significance of hierarchical space, city grids and urban symbols. Focused on their daily needs and explorations of their surroundings, the citizens of besieged Sarajevo gave new importance to the specifics of place in understanding the human condition.
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1 The Urbicide Sarajevo exhibition was presented in Sarajevo in April 1993 and subsequently toured many European cities. For more about the exhibition and associated projects see, D. Alic, ‘Mapping the war: everyday survival during the siege of Sarajevo’, in Anoma Pieris (ed.), Architecture on the Borderline: Boundary Politics and Built Space, Routledge Architext series, (in print).


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Abstract
The terms Cyprus, conflict, crisis and war have been almost inextricably intertwined throughout the history of this Mediterranean island. The education system played an important role socially and school buildings played an important role visually first in the dissemination of nationalism when the ethno-nationalist movements within the Turkish and Greek-Cypriot communities increased dramatically under British colonial rule (1878-1960), and later in the dissemination of internationalism in the mid-twentieth century. Despite the increased conflict and nationalism, which was reflected by Neo-Greek architectural elements, the striking impact of the International Style turned school buildings into representations of the communities’ attitudes towards modernism. By the mid-1940s these attitudes towards modernism also served as a latent way for communities’ identity struggles and for the sovereignty of each community to exist. After World War II the style embodied by many school buildings conveyed science-based modern thought; modernization attempts for political, economic and social reforms; and the strong commitment of the first modernist Cypriot architects to the spirit of the time and the philosophy of the modern. Under this scope, postwar school buildings in Cyprus are identified as unique artifacts transformed from an ‘ethnicity-based’ image into an ‘environment-based’ form that is more associated with the modernization, decolonization and nation-building processes from which local nuances of mainstream modernism emerged. At this point the modernization process of the state, identity struggles of the communities and architects’ modernist attempts could be interpreted as providing a fertile ground for new social and architectural experiments, and could answer questions about how postwar school architecture managed to avoid reference to historical, ethnic and religious identities when there was an intentional exacerbation of hostility between the two ethnic communities and about school buildings predominantly followed principles of the International Style even though both the Greek and Turkish-Cypriot education systems were instrumental in strengthening local nationalisms and even ethnic tensions.

Keywords: Conflict, School Buildings, Nationalism, Modernism, Cyprus.

INTRODUCTION
Education has played a significant role regarding war and peace throughout the world, as reflected in the statement: ‘civilization is in a race between education and catastrophe’. Although education should be a force to foster peace and avoid war, it has had a significant impact in terms of ‘promoting and preparing for war’, an influence to which teachers and schools have contributed significantly (McCulloch & Brewis, 2016:3). Accordingly, Staley highlighted how ‘war is much too serious a thing to be left to military men’; likewise, ‘education is much too important to be left to professional educators’. Education is used as a tool to spread ‘negative stereotypes’ as well as to encourage increased violence and conflict, which is conveyed from generation to generation in societies affected by war (Staley, 1966:47). In particular, Smith addressed how segregated or separated schools in ‘conflict-affected countries’ are used as a tool to keep groups isolated from one another by highlighting the ‘relationship between conflict and separate schooling, based on identity factors such as language, ethnicity or religion’ (Smith, 2014:117). Due to the separate, identity-based social organization of schools it is difficult for education to be viewed as ‘neutral’ in conflict-affected nations such as Cyprus. For over four hundred years, Muslim Turkish and Orthodox Greek Cypriots have lived on the same island but have maintained separate education systems and schooling based on language, ethnicity and religion differences. This educational separation has been, and still is, used to inject negative stereotypes, which have unequivocally deepened the conflict in Cyprus.

With regard to their ‘formative role’ in communities, educational buildings are particularly important institutions that represent the intended ‘national character’. Schools are often the essential battleground between ‘conflicting languages, religious and ideologies’, and serve to strengthen the formation of national identity. In the first decades of the twentieth century a wide variety of aspects of the educational context were employed to represent ‘national character’ in many Cypriot schools. These aspects included the language of instruction, the literature and history included in the curriculum, the role of teachers and simultaneously the architectural style of the school building itself (Given M.1997). As Greek-Cypriot...
schools largely fostered the Hellenic ideal, school-teachers were used to disseminate propaganda for union with Greece (Orr, 1918:121). Generally, school entrances were embellished with ancient Greek temple porticos, although the same entrance definition also could be seen on Turkish-Cypriot school buildings. On the other hand, by the mid-1940s, Atatürk’s Reforms in Turkey were having a profound influence on the education system and architecture of school buildings within the Turkish-Cypriot community. Due to the function and the formative experiences that took place within these buildings, they constitute spaces planned and designed to impart an important system of values and therefore had special meaning within communities (Burke & Grosvenor, 2008:7). As Hille confirmed, ‘schools as educational institutions have an intrinsic didactic function’ which provides ‘unique opportunities for architectural expression’ (Hille, 2012:8). However, the architectural expression, appearance and style of school buildings underwent dramatic transformation in the beginning of the 1930s when the ‘International Style’ was first introduced. Johnson claimed that ‘international style in architecture is especially adapted to school buildings’, and that the main principle of this new style was functionalism such that schools needed to be designed ‘in sympathy with modern trends in scientific education’ (MOMA,1932).

Dissemination of the International Style since 1930s made a great impact worldwide after World War II, and it was rapidly ‘regionalized’ all over the world. Undoubtedly, the role of school buildings as vessels for disseminating the International Style during that period was great as is the role of school buildings of the postwar era (1945-1960) in fostering understanding in ongoing educational debates and the unique circumstances of that time period. The creation and emergence of new capital cities characterized by modern idioms, which became symbols of their nations, appeared either in the establishment of new republics or in decolonization processes of different countries during the postwar era. Respectively, modernization processes around the world have led to the ‘gradual globalization’ of various versions of the International Style (Khan, 1998:213). Like many of its modern architectural ancestors in the Mediterranean, Cyprus embodied the Mediterranean modern which juxtaposed vernacular dialogues and contested identities. In that sense, Cyprus school buildings designed in the spirit of the postwar period broadly fulfilled the requirements of the modern education system and represented the postwar experimentalizations of the first modernist Cypriot architects around the 1950s and 1960s. Their buildings were functional and human-scale structures that humanized and deinstitutionalized the learning environment by using mainly exposed concrete and local materials. Attention to environmental factors played a substantial role in forming a local version of mainstream modernism in this study. Educational buildings of such importance are often targets in the midst of war or conflict, and the island of Cyprus has been the home of various conflicts for decades. Today the island maintains the division established due to the conflict of 1963, which took place just three years after the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus. Turkish and Greek Cypriots now live in different sectors: Turkish Cypriots in the North and Greek Cypriots in the South. Although there is no longer active fighting on the island, people live in the wreckage of the conflict. People’s daily environments include buildings destroyed or abandoned in the fighting, which provide a strong reminder of the horrors of the past and have the psychological consequences of keeping them anxious about the future of the island. School buildings in particular, in which people developed their sense of belonging and national attachments, represent both the severe conditions of war as well as memories of the ‘good old days’.

RISE OF NATIONALISM AND EDUCATION IN CYPRUS

When the island was rented by Britain in 1878 after 307 years of Ottoman rule, the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities experienced a radical shift. Under colonial rule they were exposed to political ideals, influences and social reforms of the modern era. Cyprus finally declared independence in 1960,
but it was during the period leading up to this declaration when the first indications of intercommunal conflict between Turkish and Greek Cypriots were visible: signs of conflict between Turkish and Greek Cypriots rose dramatically in the 1950s and civil war continued intermittently until 1974, resulting in the division of the island. Constant intercommunal conflict led to the emergence and ‘development of nationalism’ on the island (Rappas A.2014). This particular manifestation of nationalism included the existing ‘regional rivalry’ between the motherslands (i.e., Turkey and Greece) as well as ‘cold war politics’. On one hand, Greek Cypriots embraced the ideology of ‘Enosis’; the desire to unite the island with Greece (Joseph, 1997:39). On the other hand the ideology of ‘Taksim’ emerged among the Turkish Cypriots, which focused on dividing Cyprus into two separate social and political entities (Lange M.2009). Based on religion, language and social hierarchy the British government had separated the colonial administration into three groups: ‘Greek’, ‘Turkish’ and ‘Other’ (Rappas A.2014). Under these conditions Christians and Muslims were introduced to an ‘modern education system’ in separate schools. There were two types of schools governed by separate ‘boards of education’ in Cyprus: ‘Christian schools’ (financially supported by the Orthodox Church) and ‘Muslim schools’ (assisted mainly by ‘Evkaf’, the Moslem religious establishment and colonial administration). The British colonial administration gave almost full control over the provision of education to the two societies: Greek-Cypriot schools were informally managed by the Orthodox Church due to its central cultural and political position; Turkish-Cypriot schools kept themselves apart from religious institutions in accordance with Atatürk’s revolutionary modernization of Turkey. Nevertheless, although the British government applied separatist policies based on ethnicity and race, they also transformed the social system from being based on religious identity to being based on ethnic national identity. In this regard education was used as key instrument of ‘ideological control’ and ‘transformed into a vehicle for nationalism’ (Lange, 2009:18; Latif, 2014:48; Bryant, 2004:155).

ETHNICITY-BASED IMAGES IN INTERWAR SCHOOL ARCHITECTURE

The spatial layouts and architectural languages of schools designed during the interwar era were obliged to reflect specific institutional missions: implement the educational curriculum, establish teacher authority and reinforce the supremacy of the colonial administration on the island. As Georghiou (2013) indicated, a ‘representational style of the architecture’ ensured emphasis on the authority of the colonial administration and helped gain Cypriots’ trust. Therefore, ‘British Imperial symbols’ were used together with local architectural elements during the interwar period in Cyprus. Ozguven (2004) mentioned that this practice aimed to highlight the British government’s ‘authoritarian image’ in Cypriot colonial architecture. Striking courtyards were designed to compare the formal splendor to local circumstances as a means of capturing people’s attention. According to Given, ‘the most straightforward mechanism for representing a culture or “national character” in architecture is by historical quotation’ (Given, 1997:63). He continued that the best way to display the autocracy and the power of the colonial government was through the facades of public buildings, particularly schools due to their prominent position in societies. In this context, the widespread use of ‘Greek Revival Style’ is visible in public buildings built around the 1920s as a result of the overwhelming desire for union with Greece on the part of Greek Cypriots. As Given emphasized, this style was particularly appropriate for Greek Cypriots to reflect their nationalist identities, which also had strong links to their ‘glorious classical past, and most importantly, the best carriers of this national message were schools buildings’ (Given, 2005:408). In particular, the Pancyprian Gymnasium (1923) in Nicosia is one of the most significant representatives of Greek revival style, designed by Theodhoros Fotiades, who was educated in Greece and applied this style widely on the island [fig.1]. The building has a projected porch supported by four Ionic columns and a facade embellished with more details and symbols of the style (Given M.1997). Yildiz also highlighted that ‘the schools set up by the Greeks since the early nineteenth century, were more Hellenic than any other buildings’ (Yildiz, 2007:203). Surprisingly, one of the Turkish Cypriot schools, named Famagusta Boys Elementary School, was designed according to the Greek revival style in 1926 [fig.2]. ‘Evkaf’ invited Greek-Cypriot architect Fotiades to design this school building due to the absence of Turkish-Cypriot architects on the island during the 1920s. According to the records, there was
no reaction against this Hellenistic style from Turkish Cypriots, which shows that their awareness of architectural style based on ethnic identity was not yet developed (Bilsel N. & Dincyurek O.2017). Yet, apart from these ethno-nationalistic images in the school architecture ‘the English School’, constructed by architect Odysseas Tsangarides and the Colonial Public Works Department (PVD) between 1936 and 1939, demonstrated the characteristics of traditional British style in combination with local architecture, applying arched arcades and using yellow sandstone materials (Pyle P. & Phokaides P.2009) [fig.3]. Overall, Georgiou (2013) best encapsulated the ‘architectural style’ of the schools, not only by the type of education served, but also the character, meaning and objectives expressed.

**ORIENTATION OF COMMUNITIES TOWARDS MOTHERLANDS**

In parallel with the strong socio-political ties, both communities were intimately tied to their motherlands such that the modernism and modern movements in Turkey and Greece ultimately affected the education system and architectural appearance of schools in Cyprus by the mid-1940s. Due to the absence of higher education in Cyprus, the majority of Cypriot students left the island for university education abroad, mostly in Turkey and Greece, which generated stronger ‘ethnic links and national loyalties’ (Joseph, 1997:41). At the same time, with the leadership of teachers who came from the motherlands to the island, Greek Cypriots were trained as Orthodox Hellenes and Turkish Cypriots became followers of the Kemalist reforms in secularized Turkey (Latif D.2014; Bryant R.2001). For all, this was an aspiration rather than an imposition (Bryant, 2004:155). Because of devotion to the motherlands, education policies, goals and orientations developed independently in the two communities, and thus two rival ethnic groups emerged rather than a united Cypriot state (Latif D.2014; Doratli N.2002). Consequently, education was further tied to the nation-building project, aimed at advancing the sovereignty of each community’s state (Hajisotiriou C. & Angelides P.2013).

In the interest of maintaining ties to the motherlands, Cyprus remained under the influence of modern Turkish and Greek architectural culture. Undoubtedly, the role of modernist local architects educated in the universities of Turkey and Greece had tremendous influence in this cultural interaction. In respect to modern Turkish school buildings, a modern education system that considered the ‘changing identity and public visibility of women’ gained increased significance in Turkish-Cypriot schools and their formal language had to represent these ideals of the new regime. It was declared that schools should not be designed like uniforms with an official style that represented the state, but that the architecture of schools should reflect local expression with an international image, considering environmental factors (Bozdogan S.2001). As for Greece, in spite of persistent attempts of traditionalists to revive the classical architecture, modern style had its most glorious time in the postwar era (Skousball K.2006). So the new architectural style which was a combination of regional traditions and the modern movement, was evident in residential and public buildings at the end of World War II (Moussa M.2012). Modern school buildings in particular, which consisted of flexible and functional design solutions, climate-sensitive strategies, radical identification between architectural and structural forms and the adoption of rationalist principles (Ferro L.2004), had profound influences on modern discourse and practice among Greek-Cypriot architects.

In general, the British colonial administration had profoundly contributed to the development of socio-cultural environment in Cyprus. Also, they provided the necessary ground to welcome and follow modern thought and way of life which was appreciated in the motherlands as well. People living on the island had already met with the western and modern entities, so that their engagement with the developments in the motherlands was smoother and gentle. In line with this, both Cypriot communities continued, and even further strengthened, their respective ‘ethnic ties and loyalties’ to Turkey and Greece in regards to modern education, culture, language, religion, and history during the colonial period and even after independence.

**INDEPENDENT STATE AND EDUCATION IN CYPRUS**

When Cyprus gained its independence from colonial rule in 1960 the new republic was established with the hope of opening an era of peace, freedom and prosperity during which the two communities would work together to develop the island for their common benefit (Georgiou S.2012). Although intercommunal cooperation did not survive long and the new republic never emerged as a nation, this era ushered modernization into different aspects of life and the environment in Cyprus. Markides et al. (cited in Papadakis, 2007:24) described this modernity in Cyprus as not only a substitute for tradition, but also as a form of economic development, a source of differentiation in the physical environment, and a means of adopting universal worldviews and social practices among the local people. In that sense the main goals of the Republic of Cyprus were to create a flourishing economy, increase living standards and to create a strong cultural life via a well-educated society. Therefore, the new government gave great significance to education (Solsten, 1993:73) and new school buildings flourished throughout the island as physical manifestations of the modern education system.

The understanding of ‘modern education’ and the modern image of school buildings, which had been initiated by the British colonials, were instituted by modernist Turkish and Greek-Cypriot architects according to mainstream styles in Europe and the US. Spatial layouts and formal configurations were employed and blended with local concerns and values by passionate modernist architects to create the ‘other

**Figure 3.** English School, 1939, Nicosia

*Photo by Costas Georgiou*
modern’. The ‘other modern’ created in Cyprus was in fact the new appearance of elite individuals, motherland oriented-communities and the young state; all emulating the modern contemporaries and struggling for identity. In this challenge architecture was a strong tool for conveying and practicing the ideologies of the state and the communities, especially by means of environment-based postwar school buildings.

ENVIRONMENT-BASED FORMS OF POSTWAR SCHOOL ARCHITECTURE

Environment-based postwar school buildings in Cyprus embraced the discourse of modernism and its faith in the power of design to change behaviour and improve society. Postwar school buildings were in sync with modern trends in scientific education and designed according to principles of the International Style, which brought educators and architects together in a collaborative effort to implement the newest educational methods and to create appropriate built environments in Cypriot towns under the influences of modernization, immigration and urbanization. Schools emerged from a complex interaction of technical concerns, modern education methods and the impacts of postwar expansion. Pyle and Phokaides (2009) highlighted that the construction of new public buildings reflected ‘an awareness of the postwar rethinking of modernism’ with the use of new materials such as exposed concrete and glass; climate responsive solutions such as structural shading devices and brise-soleil; simple and clean volumes; and sculptural overhangs such as folded plate or parabolic shapes, to name a few. In addition, according to Given (1997), through the end of the colonial period Turkish and Greek-Cypriot architects educated abroad had embraced ‘European modernism’ in their buildings and had moved away from using ‘traditional forms and motifs’. Furthermore, Ozay (2005) asserted that even though ‘local materials and traditional techniques’ decreased in importance, a climatic design approach came to the fore due to the frequent use of reinforced concrete. On the other hand, Uraz et al. (2010) pointed out that modern architecture in Cyprus was enriched by the moderate use of local materials such as yellow sandstone and river cobble without sacrificing the simplicity of modernity. Thus, using local materials did not only strengthen the bond between building and environment, but also created dynamic materials such as yellow sandstone were commonly used as surface texture on some parts of the facades and details. The lower parts of the buildings were shaped and developed (Michael et al. 2009:5). In this sense, the architects who carried the spirit and philosophy of the modern designed postwar school buildings as a catalyst of modern education.

Prior to the independence, around the mid-1950s, the first elementary schools were erected following the stylistic theories of rationalism. Lefkoşa Atatürk elementary school (1950) in Nicosia and the first elementary school (1955) in Limassol were both designed by the architects Rousou and Pericleous (Georgiou, 2018:273). These two buildings were almost identical in terms of massing, general planning and details. The lower parts of the buildings were empty and the entire rectangular prism rested on the pillars. A sense of lightness was imparted to the volume by this subtraction of geometry while creating a semi-open transitional space and allowing cooling breezes to pass in-between two-sided courtyards. Vertical circulation towers were emphasized and raised above the horizontal rooflines of the schools, which created movement and dynamism to avoid monotony as in many European contemporaries [fig.4]. In addition, Lykavitos elementary school (1957) in Nicosia, designed by Dimitris Thymopoulos, has one of the most significant features: brise-soleil. These filtered elements were especially adapted to hot climates because they prevent sunlight from entering but allow ventilation inside [fig.5]. Moreover, local cladding materials such as yellow sandstone were commonly used as surface texture on some parts of the facades as a stylistic feature of the ‘other modern’ in Cyprus. Due to the rapidly developing economy, technicians and skilled workers were needed throughout the island as part of the modernization process. Thus, new technical schools were built in different towns and regions to meet this urgent necessity, particularly in fields such as carpentry, construction and agriculture (Solsten, 1993:73). Along with European-educated Cypriot architects, technical school buildings in Cyprus were designed by foreign architectural firms, principally from the United Kingdom. Accordingly, Lefke Technical School and Limassol Technical School
were designed by Orman and Partners, whereas Lefkoşa Technical School in Nicosia was designed by Tripe and Wakeham in 1955. These three buildings featured movable horizontal louvers, mostly on the southerly facades, for protection against the sun while providing a better visual connection to the outside [fig. 6]. Foreign firms also paid attention to the use of local river cobbles on the planar surfaces at the entrances of the complexes to show the elegance of texture and the material itself. For example, Lefke Technical School sits on a sloping terrain and interacts with the natural environment in the form of an art object, levitating the volumes from the ground like a sculpture from afar [fig. 7].

When modernism was widespread during the first years of the republic and ‘the potential for both spiritual and economic development’ was high, one of the most significant characteristics of school architecture was its unified modern style (Fereos S. & Phokaides P. 2006). These conspicuously avant-garde buildings received considerable publicity and were widely known. Hence, some of the schools were published in prestigious architectural magazines at both the national and international levels. Firstly, Lefkoşa Turkish Boarding School for Girls (1960) in Nicosia was designed by Ahmet Vural Behaeddin, who was one of the pioneering modernist architects in Cyprus. It is not only a generic modern building of the period, but also a significant award-winning architecture. This building was featured in the international architectural magazine ‘Baumeister’ in 1964, solidifying its importance in the history of modern architecture in Cyprus. This building was celebrated due to its efficient design that was sensitive to both the climate and the urban context. The school building represented modern thought, material and technology of the time as well as the home of modern education, but it also served as a hospital just after construction completed in 1963. Due to continuing ethnic conflict between the two communities, the building was used by the Turkish-Cypriot security forces for health and rehabilitation purposes until 1968. In order to control the intense Mediterranean sun, vertical external shading devices were applied on the eastern facades, while ribbon windows were used on the western elevations [fig. 8] (Aydınlik et al. 2016). The folded plate roof on the front facade of the school was another remarkable feature that enriched the building’s volume and created visual interest [fig. 9]. However, the roof of the multi-purpose hall was not only an aesthetic element; it also represented Behaeddin’s modernist experiments that attracted many followers from both communities (Uraz et al. 2004). Secondly, Kykkos High School (1960) in Nicosia, designed by the Lakovos and Andreas Philippou brothers, was featured in the Greek architecture magazine ‘Architectoniki’ in 1966 (Fereos S. & Phokaides P. 2006). In this school vertical and horizontal elements projected towards the outside of the structure to act as sun-shading devices, mostly on the eastern and western facades. Also, exposed concrete was a new material applied on the outer surfaces of the vertical circulation zones. This school complex consisted of rectangular prisms horizontally developed to humanize and deinstitutionalize the learning environment [fig. 10]. With the environment-responsive abstract forms of school buildings designed by both Turkish and Greek-Cypriot architects, formal language had nothing to do with the ethnic identities of the architects or institutional representations of the communities. Yet, the realization of such kinds of projects with daring architectural language conveyed the cultural rivalry between the two communities in terms of modern thought, form and technology.

Access to modern building materials and technology was severely limited during the conflict years. Since importing cement into the Turkish-Cypriot sector was strictly prohibited, there could be dramatic delays in the completion of construction. This prohibition was designed to impede the Turkish-Cypriots’ ability to build defensive structures as reinforced concrete buildings were the primary defense structures during the period of intercommunal violence. For example, Lefkoşa Turkish Lycee (1960) in Nicosia,
designed by British architect Alister MacDonald, was used for defense purposes during the bi-communal clashes of 1963. Beyond being a modern and climate-responsive building, facade treatments of such buildings also made defense more convenient. In particular, glazing wall surfaces was used on the northern side of Lefkoşa Turkish Lycee to provide an abundance of natural light, whereas shading devices were used to control the penetrative sun rays coming from southerly and western directions [fig. 11]. Similarly, in Pallouriotissa Female Gymnasium (1962) designed by Demetris Thymopouloes in Nicosia, inset windows and egg-crate systems, in which both vertical and horizontal elements were equally projected from the volume in the southern direction, provided highly effective solar control [fig. 12]. This was one of the modern approaches to shading used in many postwar school buildings as well as other public institutions on the island due to its vertical and horizontal orientation options. In effect, these shading systems emphasized the functionality of the modern International Style and unexpectedly served to provide safety against attack (Pallouriotissa. 2018).

The abstract language of modern architecture was even traced to religious school buildings of the modern republic. Two Italian catholic schools known as ‘Terra Santa’ in Famagusta (1960) and in Limassol (1965) designed by Stavros Economou, are unique cases of this modernist experiment. Accordingly, horizontality and pure geometric volumes as well as the movement of distinctive parabolic eaves characterized both schools [fig. 13]. The level of abstraction was so high that even religious symbols such as sculptural cross figures were brilliantly stylized [fig. 14]. Overall, the technical details of structural elements, proportions, surface texture and material of pure volumes created both functional aesthetics and simplified decoration along the lines of international modernism in many postwar school buildings of Cyprus.

CONCLUSION
Despite the growing ethno-nationalist conflict, architecture in Cyprus had its golden age from about the mid-1950s to the early 1970s in the quest for modernism. Dissemination of the International Style and its relevance for school buildings played an important role in creating learning environments, which were not promoting or preparing for war, but encouraging a different sort of battle: a cultural rivalry between the
represented the national character of the community on the island—embracing and supporting modernity for survival and existence. This argument is echoed in the discourse and praxis of passionate, modernist Cypriot architects and in state policy of the modern republic.

Policies of the bi-communal state contributed to the development of the economy, the increase in living standards and adoption of a modern way of life, with great emphasis on educating the Cypriot communities. At the same time, modernist architects brought a contemporary spirit, universal trends and developments in architecture to the island. These avant-garde architects contributed to the contemporary image of the built environment with the new style, which was both adequate for technological developments and served the modern way of life.

It is undeniable that the new understanding of education, which was transformed with the socio-political developments of the postwar era, reshaped school architecture in Cyprus. It was renewed, reshaped and reformed by modernist architectural ideas that both reflected local traditions and the Mediterranean climate and considered rational planning and scientific reasoning. In this context modernist architects were achievement-oriented, precise and perfectionist professionals who served their communities as architects without political prejudices or connections. However, this uniform modern image of school buildings and modernist attitudes of architects were not sufficient for inducing a common education system and led to the development of separate schooling of Turkish and Greek Cypriots under the pressure of nationalism. Paradoxically, this marked another kind of conflict between the education system and modern appearance of school buildings.

Although education is supposed to unite people, segregated schooling in Cyprus became one force that contributed to the destruction of bi-communal republican ideals. Eventually internationalism was defeated by nationalism, and the two ethnic communities became totally separated from each other with the division of the island in 1974. Although school buildings are supposed to be non-military targets, many were used for defense or military purposes within both communities during times of violent ethnic conflict. Consequently, school buildings such as Sakarya elementary school in Famagusta [fig.15] were bombed, destroyed and became symbols representing the destructiveness of war. In spite of different opinions, this school building should have been preserved to show ‘the wounds of war’ to next generations in both communities.

In the post-1974 period school buildings have maintained neither the modern system of thought and education nor the architectonic qualities. Rather, the buildings have been continuously modified and adapted to changing circumstances and visions without considering the spirit of the recent past. However, a common understanding of peace-making and trust-building communicated through education could have been a way to heal from the conflict. As former UN General Secretary Kofi Annan affirmed ‘education is, quite simply, peace-building by another name’. Therefore, school buildings as homes of such understandings could be a tool for and symbol of peace in Cyprus. In addition, this process could start by revising schoolbooks that include hostility and progress to academic collaborations that produce joint curriculums, projects and programs in educational institutions throughout both communities. As Abraham Lincoln stated, ‘the philosophy of the school room in one generation will be the philosophy of government in the next’ (Boyle & Burns, 2011:17), which illustrates the potential for school buildings in Cyprus to influence the ideologies of states and people’s beliefs in peace.
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INTRODUCTION

When the Hong Kong government started the new underground South Island Line in 2009, there was a series of negotiations and contests around the construction site closed to the Admiralty Station, the first Mass Transit Railway station built on the metropolitan island. This area accumulates an extensive collection of post-war modern architecture designed by leading international architects such as Paul Rudolf, I. M. Pei, and Norman Foster [Fig. 1]. Another issue that addresses the project is the formation of the Hong Kong Park where a military campus called the Victoria Barracks once located. The Victoria Barracks dated back to the nineteenth and twentieth-century and was transferred by the British Forces to the Hong Kong government in 1979. The site is of critical importance because, in the official archaeological watching brief, its military heritage and underground artefacts require further onsite exploration and thorough examination. It aroused the public attention back to the entire post-military development, questioning its history, progress, and suffering during the transformation from a restrictive zone into the public realm. Although heritages of military buildings have been renovated and converted, we argue that there was little awareness of preserving the whole site regarding post-military landscape. While the public favour this redevelopment, we maintain that it implies a disappearing heritage being contested by powers, which can be reflected by both early versions of redevelopment planning and the following changes in the architectural space. This paper challenges the proto-concept of post-military landscape protection in the high-density urban area of Hong Kong through manners of cultural representation, urban design, and built environment, all indicative of a culture of disappearance.

This paper approaches the question of a military landscape from the perspectives of heritage, planning and redevelopment issues. It pinpoints the collective memories of the post-military landscape in defining contemporary urban life. In the second part,

Abstract

This research paper examines the post-military landscape of the Victoria Barracks regarding the high-density urbanism in Hong Kong from the 1970s to the 2000s. The article first interprets the concept of post-military landscape according to the ideology and urbanism of the then Hong Kong society. It then studies three plans of the Victoria Barracks of different stages, showing contestations between domestic, commercial and administrative powers in controlling the military redevelopment. Several contemporary architectural projects on the site will also provide an alternative view of the transformation according to the local economic laissez-faire policy. Its influence to the unsatisfactory heritage protection leads to the disappearance and false representation of the identity of this particular military and cultural heritage.

Keywords: Post-military landscape, Built Heritage, Victoria Barracks, Hong Kong Park, laissez-faire planning

Figure 1. Admiralty Station took shape with the Victoria Barracks on the slope in the background, April 1979 (Source: BJHKC, 1980:69).

it will examine three early zoning plans of the redevelopment. In so doing, it discloses a vicesissitude of compromise between the needs of urbanisation, commercialisation, heritage protection, public leisure and entertainment. By juxtaposing a final layout of the Hong Kong Park with a later architectural design on site, the Asia Society Hong Kong Center (ASHK), it demonstrates the unique strategies of either denying or promoting such a disappearing military landscape.
POST-MILITARY LANDSCAPE: HERITAGE, PLANNING AND REDEVELOPMENT

The Second World War has primarily changed the topological formation of both the rural and urban areas in many countries. Trenches extend along the sea coast in Northern France and remain there even today. Airfields spread all over the UK, covering a large amount of grassland, fertile crop fields, and transportation cores. Shipyards have been continuously tied to military-oriented and manufactured warships for several years. In the post-Cold-War period, this topology had to change. With military bases mostly closed, unnecessary costs of maintaining military infrastructure must be reduced to give way to productive civic modes and domestic functions (Robinson, 2013). How to recover the urban fabrics and lifestyles of these military sites becomes a dominant issue that addresses the disciplines of geography, politics, economics, sociology, and urban planning. The study of this recovery has been claimed either as ‘new military urbanism’ (Graham, 2011), or the ‘landscape of power’ by landscape sociologists (Crowe, 1958). On the other hand, many military bases, especially in the United States, had to be closed after the war and economic recession because of a limited budget to maintain the controlling network. They often occupy the places like central dock bays (e.g. Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston), railway crosses, or scenic views of the landscape along the straits (e.g. the Presidio of San Francisco). Apart from issues of heavy contamination or pollution, to make full use of these sites for domestic urban growth would bring economic benefits to post-industrial cities.

Only recently, the cultural significance of the ‘military landscape’ has been widely noticed due to its particular built heritage once open to the public. Military geographer Rachel Woodward identifies that this special military features of the site could intensively interact and manipulate ways of contemporary lives (Woodward, 2014:40-61). A place of the military landscape is always believed to associate with the process of different military features (Pearson, 2012:115-133; Osborne, 2004), defence (Gold and Revill, 2000; Philo, 2012:1-7), or conflicts involving similar activities. Domestic urban or rural space with military existence can also be shaped by its morphology, while infrastructure is highly controlled and altered according to the changing military needs (Pearson, Coates and Cole, 2010). Civilian experience is subject to the over-arching manner of this strange process of domesticity; and the infrastructure and memories of war that still remind visitors of stress and pressure, even after the disfranchisement of commercial and pressure, even after the disfranchisement of commercial existence from military landscapes.

Military sociologist Martin Shaw main- tains that a new type of social mobility around demili- tarisation will always confront two basic principles: the smaller professionalised and technologized forces on the one hand, and the growing space for non-militarized citizenry with more individual freedom on the other (Shaw, 1991). The post-military landscape, therefore, can potentially contribute to the latter and develop political and cultural heritages and memories that may be inherited by the civilian present as well as urban forms that are capable of regulating future urbanisation (Bagaeen, 2006:339-352). The consequence is to commemorate of the sites, recreation or spectacles to visit; and their built forms on site bunkers, trenches, dormitories, or ammunitions alike may be felt not only by that military personnel and their families but also by the civilians within the range of their power who share the memory of being once militarized.

Literature of urban planning and design, on the other hand, usually identifies the phenomenon as a partial success to the society, regarding its spatial characteristics, public and private intervention and planning system. (Ponzini and Vani, 2014:56-73) However in practice, what influences more upon the communities surrounding closed bases is the temporary loss of jobs and that they suffer initial economic disruption. Local communities have to adapt to new lifestyles and go through long-term economic recovery by increasing residential real estate value and diversifying retail sales and commercial functions. Besides, this kind of transformation often occurs when critical conditions of public finance and political reconstruc- tion of citizenship are underway. Stakeholders and governments struggle to maximise the revenue incomes from real estate conversion through the process, leaving local communities attained to inadequate living conditions and public services, sometimes even the relocation to undeveloped suburban areas, all of which dismantle original urban patterns and social appreciation.

Therefore, the redevelopment of the post-military landscape often leads to urban contestation due to mainly two reasons. First, conventional methods of renewal oriented by heritage and commemoration are at large incapable of dealing with this public issue from a critical point of view. They take indistinctive manners to interpret and represent military heritages comparing to other types of cultural sites. It leads to a situation that to preserve military sites into parks is more or less identical to that of a natural preserve. For most of the times, they require dominant interference by the government. Second, alternatively, the commercialisation of the sites during the process of outsourcing military facilities to public realms may seriously be subject to capitalist economies, urbanisation and dissolving communities. It follows the logic in seeking business potentials through land sales, facility renting, or government revenue. In either way, the rising expectation in conservation may instigate multi-level struggles between international tensions, social interests of power, and the civic maturation of self-identity.

In the postwar Hong Kong, the high-density urban transformation of the post-military society under the laissez-faire planning strategy only makes this economic and civic struggle even worse. Interests of private developers predominated the conversion process of all types of urban sites, also corrupting the formation and application of statutory planning ordinances (Cuthbert, 1995:293-310). The government claimed to take a ‘positive non-interventionism’ in pursuit of wealth, which led to an indiscriminable extinction of public domains when public space was gradually transferred into the hands of private sectors (Cuthbert and McKinnell, 1997:295-311). In this regard, the statutory plans amended since 1939 can only be referred to as guidance without legal power, and thus often override by private business development. Historical conservation and environmental protection received rare attention in official commitment until recently, and thus placed little importance on corporate interests during the 1980s, the Belle Epoque of Hong Kong’s urban growth. It was just during this years that the Victoria Barracks, one of the military campuses on the Hong Kong Island, was under transformation [Fig. 2]. It
would destine to be, as mourned by the prestige planning theorist Roger Bristow, a setback in the system of public participatory planning that may never recover ever since (Bristow, 1984:239). A thorough critical review of its historical transition, urban development, and social cohesion within the political and social agenda of Hong Kong can tell us how the barracks testifies the yet-to-recover urban contestation.

HONG KONG IN THE AGE OF POSTWAR BRITISH WITHDRAWAL

The tension of the worldwide military withdrawal of the British Army was all-encompassing in the around-1980s Hong Kong. Comparing to Singapore, Malaysia, and other typical post-colonial territories, Hong Kong formulated her idiosyncrasy in urban form and self-identity of citizenship during the rocketing progress. The disappearance of British authority over the island subjugated the locals into the paradox as ‘space of disappearance’, for which the entire society confronted with two futures – capitalism of the west and the forthcoming socialism of the mainland China. Between them, cultural scholar Ackbar Abbas identifies popular mental insecurity that was ‘contingency, on geographic and historical accidents, shaped by times and circumstances beyond its control and by pragmatic accommodation to events’ (Abbas, 1997:73). Subject to this particular ideological struggle, the rising concern about heritage without laws and guidelines turned to be part of actions that displaced memory by using unclear or even false representations of identity as a way to produce new ones. The act of converting old structures quite often kept their real history untold or distorted. By drawing the case in which the Victorian-style Flagstaff House in the Victoria Barracks was transformed into the Chinese Teaware Museum, Abbas argues that to make false representations in the name of preservation has distorted a place from its colonial context. Memories disappear and reappear as something else.

Cultural disappearance, entangled with the laissez-faire strategy of urban planning, has significant impacts on local historical heritage. The foundation of the first conservation body, the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance, was belated until 1976. Hong Kong Heritage Society was established in 1977 and was disbanded later in 1983, claiming its short-lived responsibility of heritage protection (Hong Kong Heritage Society, 1977:11-14). The Antiquities Advisory Board, active since 1976, struggled to secure 39 historical sites or architecture under the condition of low government funding. It said that the then Governor-in-Council would more likely to approve the cases located in distant areas rather than those in the central districts (Urban Services Department, 1979). More historic structures had been demolished or transferred to new locations in a principle of total sanitisation and gentrification, which quite often destroys the original structures, appearance and function.

It is particularly true in the perspective of post-military landscape protection in Hong Kong. The conversion of the Victoria Barracks started in 1977 [Fig. 3]. The early stage of its redevelopment showed by three rounds of zoning plans envisioned the future Hong Kong Park at the centre of a high-density commercial district, which is a rare local case of military redevelopment. Indeed, the park receives overwhelming positive feedbacks. This park design has multiple relations to the architectural projects within the site. Neither the making of this park nor architecture nearby has seriously reviewed the conservation strategy of the historical landscape. With careful examination, the whole process of transformation camouflaged the urban contestation. Cuthbert would have identified the Victoria Barracks as nothing but a total change, a feature that even still prevails the contemporary awareness of antiquity.

THE VICTORIA BARRACKS IN CONTESTATION: THREE ZONING PLANS OF THE LATE 1970s

The conversion of the Victoria Barracks started in 1977 when the British government decided to return a series of military sites to the general public. The location of the Victoria Barracks was a piece of land at the centre of the high-density urban area on the island, overseeing the commercial building district of Admiralty. The whole region underwent constant historical changes since the Sino-British War in 1840. When the site became part of the colonial city then...
known as Queenstown, the military forces choose to allocate the main headquarters on the hillside terrace, where visitors could enjoy the beautiful scenery up to the Bowrington Area (now called Causeway Bay). Besides, the British Navy also took a share of this central land by the sea. The two military sites cut off the connection between the towns already established at both sides (Lo, 1992:150-154 and 163). With passing decades, this urban pattern of military existence did not entirely change. Several rounds of urban proposals to relocate the campus out from the site turned out fruitless due to the negative feedback from the military forces (Bristow, 1984:37-38 and 231-242; Sayer and Evans, 1975:88). In 1957, some surplus sites around the Murray Barracks, Parade Ground, and Dockyard were on sale. A resultant statutory plan (LH3/12) was issued in 1961; and it foresaw the large-scale commercial construction around the location of Admiralty, wherein the first MTR line was announced in 1974 to connect the Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon City across the strait.

To explore the future of the Victoria Barracks, the then Governor-in-Council commissioned a special team of scholars to study the preliminary developmental scheme.4 After several months, the first planning proposal was announced in June 1977 [Fig. 4]. The Victoria Barracks Planning Committee identified at least three aspects of development that the conversion should maintain. Firstly and most importantly, the new district should provide sufficient land plots and infrastructure for the future commercial growth. Second, the entire development should return the government revenue as soon as possible by both direct (land sales) and indirect (e.g. rent rates, taxes, tourist incomes) ways. Third, if with both the first two goals accomplished, then it was also necessary to protect and convert a plethora of existing buildings according to their heritage significance (Victoria Barracks Planning Committee, 1977:1). According to this plan, the entire site of the Victoria Barracks turned into four parts: high-density development of commercial and residential buildings to the northeast, Supreme Court Building to the northwest, residences at the centre, and some other government and community facilities to the east and west ends. It seemed that the committee expected no high-density context in the area, as they kept the majority of the land of up to 16.8 hectares for the public good. Land sales would have refunded the public revenue by nearly HKD 900 million.

A large amount of natural landscape and built heritage would have also survived in the plan. The Hong Kong Island was very short of land as the coastal terrains in all directions flush into the sea without compromise. Therefore, the Victoria Barracks had a large area of wooded slopes that was not suitable for any building construction except for war tunnels. In dealing with this situation, the preliminary plan separated the entire site into three terraces of different heights. The lowest ground to the northeast was planned to allocate commercial/residential buildings. The middle ground belonged to semi-detached apartments, spreading and hiding into the beautiful landscape. Many existing military facilities would change into community centres and institutions. All of these design treatments would have rendered the new Victoria Barracks with the townscape of an urban village rather than the business district. Sufficient sports facilities and cultural institutions would have maintained the publicity of space and serviced the daily access and civic functions, in contrast with the commercial skyscrapers at the future Admiralty station nearby.

However, feedback from the following two-month public consultancy criticised the proposal by the committee. Participating groups included the Royal Town Planning Institute (Hong Kong Branch), the Hong Kong Heritage Society, the Conservancy Association and the Hong Kong Institute of Architects. Advisors from all these groups represented the highest level of academic scholarship on and social concern about the urban growth of Hong Kong. They contended that the Governor-in-Council had no right to commission the developmental plan of the Victoria Barracks to the hands of a “secret clan”. The whole action bypassed the ordinary procedure of planning commission of the government and therefore was illegal. Their fire powers were also concentrated on the sharing mode of public space, questioning and criticising the necessity of central apartments which occupied higher levels of the landscape. Thirdly, all groups agreed that the existing military buildings should be preserved as many as possible to integrate into a whole natural park that symbolically equalled the Central Park in the city of New York. There was an emerging ideological struggle and conflict in the public opinions that the Victoria Barracks should develop into a whole public domain, rather than an internal garden of private properties and privileged residents.

Three months later, the special committee finished the revised plan and was required to provide a detailed conversion scheme for each military building involved. It was in this new proposal that the future Hong Kong Park came to the surface of the officials’ table. The new Hong Kong Park would occupy more than 13 hectares of the area (Table 1). On the other hand, the proposal did not picture the urban design of the area as intensively as the previous one. There was only a brief planning concept stating the diagrams of existing buildings, slopes, platforms, tree coverage, and future land formation. What was mainly missing here was information like vehicular circulation, pedestrian links, built types and density, etc. It reflected, to a certain extent, a kind of reluctance to make an intensive interpretation of the design which might have drawn further criticism from the public. However, the protection of built heritage received more attention than ever before. Flagstaff House and the courtyard of the community and swimming pool (marked as HH in Fig. 5) were still of top priority regarding preservation significance. Southwest corner of the site would concentrate more dormitories of soldiers that represented many typical modernist design features. Minimalized landfill and excavation consolidated landscape preservation by keeping earth condition and topology as it once was.

The first two rounds of the redevelopment planning would have placed a good level of publicity to the reborn Victoria Barracks, if not disrupted by the Executive and Legislative Councils. The new order from the officials required another individual design office to take part in consultancy (Executive and Legislative Council Office, 1977:16). The Yunchen Freeman Ltd., an Australian architectural and planning company, was invited by the Urban Council and the Public Works Department to provide an entirely new concept over the district, and they submitted the third proposal (Plan No. LH 4/49) in August 1978.9
The role that the Legislative Council took in the whole procedure remained unclear and problematic. Urbanist Roger Bristow then complained about the authoritarian planning system. In his opinion, authentic public participation in the legislation of urban policy-making was seldom witnessed (Bristow, 1984:275). The third, as the final one, a proposal for the Victoria Barracks was never seriously challenged by the same monthly public forums and discussions as the Council took charge in for the previous plans. The consequence of it was that the new one was soon passed by the government a year later, and the public surprisingly found that what replaced and encroached the original landscape was the large-scale governmental/commercial development in pursuit of high-density urbanisation.

The final plan for the Victoria Barracks gave an intensive study of an open space system extracted from Chapter Four of the *Hong Kong Outline Plan* (Yuncken Freeman H.K., 1980:105). It also considered the detailed procedure of construction phases according to the heritage quantity, topology and landscape analysis [Fig. 6]. Under the veil of this implement, commercial building area ratio was four times larger comparing to the previous zoning plans. Heritages were also in danger in that many blocks. Many highly recommended before had to be demolished and make way for the commercial development due to their better locations close to the main road. Associating with the newly reclaimed commercial territories was the expected large-scale land excavation and fill for the high rises in luxury hotels and serviced apartments. The Legislative Council did not organise any form of public consultancy over these severe alterations in design, and approved merely and passed the proposal to the Architectural Office and the Town Planning and Highway Office for further implementation.

The scale of land excavation was too decisive to spare all the landscape features of the terraces from the height of +20m down to ground zero. The Swire Properties acquired the land plot of nearly 20,000 square meters through public auctions and planned to build the commercial centre – The Pacific Place I&II (BJHKC, 1982:20; 1985:30). It envisaged a cluster of commercial towers, including the Marriott Hotel, Conrad Hotel, and Shangri-La Hotel. The architectural design was made by a local company, Wong & Ouyang, whose fame rose during its collaboration with architect Paul Rudolf in the project of the Bond Center at Admiralty by the other side of Queensway. The massive underground podium contains twelve levels of shops and car parks. More than 120 caisson walls of 2.5 meters in diameter plunged beneath the towers and extended downward to 35 meters below the Supreme Court Road (AAB, 1988:8), keeping a high density of underground concrete construction even higher than European standard.

The three successive zoning plans thus reflect the contestation between heritage conservation and commercialised urbanisation when at times public interests advanced and compromised. In the case of the Victoria Barracks, the absence of statutory plans in power due to the *laissez-faire* strategy led to the hidden changes in land use back and forth in the post-military site. At last, government authorities provided an even larger share of profit in land sales for future commercial development. Only 10 out of 25 military buildings were recommended for retention and con-

![Figure 4. First plan of the Victoria Barracks (Victoria Barracks Planning Committee, 1977 1).](image1)

![Figure 5. Land zoning plan by the selected committee (Victoria Barracks Planning Committee, 1977 2). Revised by the authors.](image2)

![Figure 6. Site study (Yuncken Freeman H.K. 1980:22).](image3)

The new commercial development area would connect the Admiralty station nearby through a proposed pedestrian bypass.
The clear signature of military transportation, reminding functions. Iron trails extending to the Magazine B are bricks remain decent representations of their formal exposed material features of artilleries, stones and Magazine A is now a contemporary theatre. Besides, the Magazine B a contemporary theatre. Besides, the Magazine A is now a modern exhibition space, and woods into the distant magazine. The building called viewing platforms sinuating through the tropical first level could enjoy fantastic views from both sides, semi-open theatre space. The main lecture hall on the Chinese-garden style, a fashionable restaurant, and walls. It accompanies a ground-level courtyard of the one can see the original topology of the military landscape transformed intensively. It also underpins the future when the Colvin House was demolished for space to hold the entirely new architecture for the British Council and Consulate-General. These headquarters designed by British architect Terry Farrell in 1992 turned out to be a high quality of post-modern architecture, but forbid any penetrating views to the site from the east at the new Justice Drive.

The massive bodies of the Pacific Place and the Council separate the Victoria Barracks into two parts, leaving an indiscernible left-over in the east. It remained unnoticed to the public for the whole decade of the 1990s. The rediscovery and redevelopment of this site were very opportunist. By then, ASHK needed a central location for their new headquarters. (Cummer, DiStefano, and Lee, 2014:32). The advisory committee decided to take this large site occupied by the GG Building and a magazine compound. Negotiations between the Council and the Hong Kong government and the architectural competition followed in 2001. Out from more than 200 submissions, the winning design by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects (TWBTA) from the U.S. provides a horizontal extension of only two and a half stories high. It triumphs by the low-density strategy and the commitment in site preservation of historical significance of the GG building, the explosives magazine compound, and the vegetation in-between (Fig. 7).

The architects stick at their best to the topological post-military features. The main body of the centre is lifted from the rock surface, overseeing the whole landscaped area from high above. With only minor redecoration, the former GG building turned into office rooms, protected by newly installed curtain walls. It accompanies a ground-level courtyard of the Chinese-garden style, a fashionable restaurant, and semi-open theatre space. The main lecture hall on the first level could enjoy fantastic views from both sides, especially that of a double-deck walking bypass and viewing platforms sinuating through the tropical woods into the distant magazine. The building called Magazine A is now a modern exhibition space, and Magazine B a contemporary theatre. Besides, the exposed material features of artilleries, stones and bricks remain decent representations of their formal functions. Iron trails extending to the Magazine B are the clear signature of military transportation, reminding visitors of the intense atmosphere of wartime conflicts.

As we are about to step into the third decades of the 21st century, the re-urbanisation of the Admiralty districts around the Victoria Barracks is still on-going. HKJC joined with the University of Chicago to build a new academic complex on the deserted British Army’s fortress of Mount Davis, where a gun emplacement had once been used as part of the Jubilee Battery during the war. Losing the traces of the memory about the Special Branch of the counter-espionage force of the local police who once took it to detain both lefts- and right-wing activists, Canadian architect Bing Thom (1940-2016) from Vancouver took the military base and built a sleek academic institution above. Old facilities were transformed and renovated as a heritage museum and open to the public since December 2018.

So empathetic is it to find reporter Edward Donoghue lamenting about the fast disappearing urban features in the heart of a past Hong Kong. In an essay entitled “Goodbye Wanchai,” he documents this old district just at the foothill of the barracks in a way that “It seems just about ready to give up the ghost [of memory] and be transformed into a clone of Central District” (Donoghue, 1989:68). The transformation of the Victoria Barracks in the last three decades reflects a similar power of will and endures perhaps even more severe urban disappearance. However, such a ghost is far from being given up, as long as struggles between military power, corporate interests, authoritarian planning and citizenship still exist and continue to requiem the historical significance of post-military landscape in their own ways.
CONCLUSION
As a rare case of post-military landscape conservation in the contemporary high-density metropolitan areas in Hong Kong, the Victoria Barracks was a preliminary and valuable example of military landscape transformation even earlier than those counterparts in Europe and America. The result is, as Chris Chung, the then director of Peter Tan & Associates, said, the emerging use of landscaping to reflect and improve the awareness of people to use open space as a driving force to promote life quality (AAC, 1992:32). On the other hand, from it, we may see three interrelated logics of local military redevelopment. First, military existence may not “disappear” even after the closure or relocation of bases; the withdrawal of military power does not mean that the military consciousness would fail to regulate the perception of its physical presence [Fig. 8]. Second, it draws serious contestation of powers in controlling such redevelopment; they will challenge the legitimacy of the military landscape through planning systems regarding land use, built form and alteration in spatial functions. Quite often commercial development may prevail on these features and encroach public interests [Fig. 9]. Third, such redevelopment is sometimes suspicious even in the name of making public space. By adding more facilities and decorations appealing to the mass, a renewal may provide false representations of history and memory and replace the original military consciousness. It is particularly true in a post-colonial context where memories of being colonised would always be the first victims of nation-building. Although Hong Kong has no serious ideological confrontation due to a unique identity of temporality, we still witness special memories of militarisation being replaced and represented. The success of the ASHK in defying the disappearance of military landscape relies on the full awareness of the architects and landscapists to the significance of protecting the post-military site in its original forms. It demonstrates that the sustainability of the post-military landscape can be achieved by a strategic architectural design mainly depending on the protection of unique topology and authentic representation of military pasts through collective visual elements and structure. (This paper is part of a study supported by the Guangdong Philosophy & Humanities 13/5 Planning Foundation, Project No. GD17CYS01, and the City University of Hong Kong, Project No. 7005135.)

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