



The Routledge Handbook of Architecture, Urban Space and Politics, Volume I

Violence, Spectacle and Data

Edited by Nikolina Bobic and Farzaneh Haghighi



THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF ARCHITECTURE, URBAN SPACE AND POLITICS, VOLUME I

For architecture and urban space to have relevance in the 21st Century, we cannot merely reignite the approaches of thought and design that were operative in the last century. This is despite, or because of, the nexus between politics and space often being theorized as a representation or by-product of politics. As a symbol or an effect, the spatial dimension is depoliticized. Consequently, architecture and the urban are halted from fostering any systematic change as they are secondary to the event and therefore incapable of performing any political role. This handbook explores how architecture and urban space can unsettle the unquestioned construct of the spatial politics of governing.

Considering both ongoing and unprecedented global problems – from violence and urban warfare, the refugee crisis, borderization, detention camps, terrorist attacks to capitalist urbanization, inequity, social unrest and climate change – this handbook provides a comprehensive and multidisciplinary research focused on the complex nexus of politics, architecture and urban space. Volume I starts by pointing out the need to explore the politics of spatialization to make sense of the operational nature of spatial oppression in contemporary times. The operative and active political reading of space is disseminated through five thematics: Violence and War Machines; Security and Borders; Race, Identity and Ideology; Spectacle and the Screen; and Mapping Landscapes and Big Data.

This first volume of the handbook frames cutting-edge contemporary debates and presents studies of actual theories and projects that address spatial politics. This Handbook will be of interest to anyone seeking to meaningfully disrupt the reduction of space to an oppressive or neutral backdrop of political realities.

Nikolina Bobic is an academic and an architect. After completing her PhD in Architecture at the University of Sydney (Australia), she moved to the UK and is now based at the University of Plymouth. Apart from her extensive experience in teaching in Australia, Hong Kong and the UK, Bobic has also given lectures in the Netherlands and New Zealand. Engaging with the two disciplines in which she is trained, architecture and sociology, her research addresses the intersections of power, politics, and space in their oppressive and liberatory mechanisms. Bobic is the author of *Balkanization and Global Politics: Remaking Cities and Architecture* (Routledge, 2019), and in 2020 she coedited *Interstices: A Journal of Architecture*

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PART I

Introduction



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1

SPATIALIZATION OF OPPRESSION

Contemporary politics of architecture and the urban

Nikolina Bobic and Farzaneh Haghighi

Considering both ongoing and unprecedented global problems – from the refugee crisis, the US–Mexico border, terrorist attacks, detention camps, numerous worldwide urban demonstrations, to climate change, the housing crisis and the coronavirus pandemic – the lack of comprehensive and multidisciplinary research focused on the nexus of politics, architecture and the urban is surprising. There have been a number of exemplary studies concerned with the spatialization of *politics*; however, what is missing is a wide-lens discussion. Current studies tend to treat architecture and the urban as an instrument of power,¹ focus on a single theory for a very limited audience² and/or interrogate neoliberalism as the only malicious force responsible for such crises.³ Such studies also mainly draw upon examples from the so-called Global North (particularly Western European and Anglophone contexts) and consequently remain limited in their geographical and institutional reach.⁴ This handbook addresses the identified gaps and maps and connects the complex spatial trajectories of *politics* across multidisciplinary fields while covering diverse geographical and socioeconomic contexts. The gap in the literature was first identified through a conference and an edited journal issue. In July 2019, we organized an international conference, *Political Matters: Spatial Thinking of the Alternative*, at The University of Auckland in New Zealand. An aspect of this conference included facilitating workshops and discussions with the presenters as well as the audience, which subsequently informed the coedited and peer-reviewed journal *Interstices: Journal of Architecture and Related Arts* on the same theme as *Political Matters*, published in December 2020. This process was foundational to the handbook, as it enabled some of the identified thematic concerns, collaborators and reviewers to be brought into this project. As well as the global list of contributors in these handbooks, when necessitated, we engaged in Zoom discussions with some of the collaborators, which further helped shape the focus and narrative.

A number of other critical handbooks have been written on architecture and the urban, all of which are commendable in their own right. *The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory* (2012), for example, is successful beyond its novel methodological process of production as the sectional topics open up a breadth of themes that assist in understanding the theorization of architecture.⁵ Although the *SAGE Handbook* notes that architectural theory has been largely Anglo-American, its rectification is minimal, with the inclusion of Australia and New Zealand amounting to only about six papers. At the urban level, we have the *Oxford Handbook of Urban Politics*, also

published in 2012, which addresses urban and political links across myriad examples and issues, from policy to sustainability; however, the focus remains on the US and Europe.⁶ Likewise, the urban tends to be understood through population growth and the densification of cities. Another example is the *Routledge Companion to Critical Approaches to Contemporary Architecture* (2019), which aims to define the architecture and spatial practices of the 21st Century from a broad range of critical perspectives (including architecture, art history, urbanism, geography, media studies, environmental studies and sociology).⁷ This *Companion*, however, does not clarify what such *critical approaches* may be and reads as a collection of essays with no instructions for use; that is, there is no attempt to 'guide' the reader through particular connections nor to suggest particular conclusions.

The Routledge Handbook on Architecture, Urban Space and Politics: Volumes I and II exceed these two limitations. Emerging and established contributors from diverse disciplinary backgrounds and practices (from art, fashion, environmental science, geography and international relations through to architecture and urbanism) present chapters that engage with an expanded geographical reach (from the so-called Global North to the alleged Global South) and utilize multidisciplinary methodologies (from ethnographic to theoretical). The chapters in this first volume of the handbook situate the question of architecture/urban and politics in various contexts, including Australia, Brazil, China, Columbia, East Asia (Bangladesh, Nepal, Philippines, India), Eastern Europe (Estonia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia), Iran, Israel-Palestine, Northern Ireland, the UK, the US and Western Europe (France, Sweden, Greece, Belgium). The significant geopolitical regions that are not covered in the first volume are Africa, the Persian Gulf, and Oceania; however, they are discussed in Volume II. The large scope of this project necessitates two volumes, something advocated and supported by the anonymous reviewers of the proposal for this project and welcomed by Routledge. As such, we invite readers to use the two volumes together for a more holistic global perspective. Nevertheless, and despite all efforts, the focus remains disproportionately on the so-called Global North. We identify ten themes through which the nexus between architecture, urban space and politics may be understood. In Volume I: *Violence and War Machines; Security and Borders; Race, Identity and Ideology; Spectacle and the Screen; Mapping Landscapes and Big Data*; and in Volume II: *Events and Dissidence; Biopolitics, Ethics and Desire; Climate and Ecology; Urban Commons and Social Participation; Marginalities and Postcolonialism*. Additionally, there is an introduction to each theme before a collection of chapters with a culminating conclusion to each volume.

This being said, our handbook is not the first to critically look at architecture or the urban and is not all-inclusive (from topics to geographical contexts). However, it is the first that spans across two volumes to investigate the complex spatial trajectories of *politics*. In Volumes I and II, we frame cutting-edge contemporary debates and present studies of actual projects that address spatial politics. For architecture and the urban to have relevance in the 21st Century, our position is that we cannot merely reignite the approaches of thought and design that were operative in the last century. Moreover, we can no longer afford to reduce them to a neutral backdrop of political realities. Architecture and urban space should be understood as political forces in and of themselves. There is explicit evidence of the inherent role that architecture and the urban play in numerous human-made crises. In Volume I, where each chapter was at least double-blind peer-reviewed, we first start by pointing out the need to investigate the complex politics of spatialization to make sense of the operational nature of spatial oppression in our contemporary times. To understand the nexus between politics and space, architecture and the urban have to be redefined. Without this reformulation, we argue, it is impossible to understand the political role of architecture and urban space, whether oppressive, affirming, neutral or liberational.

Our overall aim, across the two volumes, is to investigate how space can actively constitute political realities by offering real alternatives and fostering new forms of identification, while enabling the overturning of complicity and allowing difference to be expressed. To do so, however, we first need to better understand how architecture and the urban are used as tools for oppression. As such, the first volume of this handbook addresses the ways in which architecture and urban space are oppressed by, struggle against, operate within or are constructed by politics; the forthcoming second volume will specifically seek to foster more liberatory forms of architecture and the urban. Volume I examines modes of oppression through the five themes stated above. Each theme starts with an introduction on the topic written by established and emerging scholars, including William M. Taylor, Anoma Pieris, Stephen F Gray and Anne Lin, Francesco Proto and Ate Poorthuis, respectively. These introductions provide a survey of key historical and current issues around each topic, through multiple case studies and theories, and are written in an accessible way particularly for undergraduate students while also briefly describing the relevance to each chapter. This volume is concluded by Stephen Walker.

Why do we need to rethink the politics of spatialization now?

Our 21st Century contemporary situation is uniquely characterized by pervasive forms of neoliberalism, the declining role of nation-states, the rise of transnational corporations, new forms of surveillance, new aesthetics of extreme violence facilitated by techniques of media and broadcasting, the displacement of surplus humans produced by an economy of global violence and never-ending wars infiltrating every aspect of our societies – many of these characteristics were given a new visibility by the coronavirus global pandemic – and, at the time of writing this chapter, the erupting violence in Ukraine. Architecture and urban space are not only implicated within these forms of power, but more importantly are essential tools for the perpetuation of violence, segregation, inequity and surveillance. This is the focus of this handbook. By ‘contemporary,’ we draw upon the philosopher Giorgio Agamben’s definition of the term, that is, to sustain a particular relationship with our time while also keeping a distance from it in order not to get blinded by its lights, but to see the darkness of the present too.⁸ However, such distance is not reserved for critical thinkers alone: it must be accessible to all who are willing to be political subjects.

Neoliberalism, as a new chapter of capitalism which generates its own new crises, is undoubtedly one of the key and ongoing characteristics of our times. As pointed out by the political theorist Wendy Brown, neoliberalism may not only be about “economizing everything”; it also tends to be a moral anti-democracy project.⁹ Neoliberalism is not just about ending social regulation and wealth redistribution, or the removal of the obstacles that interfere with the market, nor a reaction to economic distress. In the name of the free market, neoliberalism eliminates democratic processes, marketizes politics and replaces legislated social justice with traditional morality.¹⁰

It is common knowledge that architecture and urban projects are highly tied to economies because of the way they are produced. For architect and critical theorist Nadir Lahiji, architecture is embedded in capitalism and has embraced the neoliberal economy and its ideologies since the 1980s.¹¹ Architectural theorist Douglas Spencer expands on this idea by suggesting that although the architecture of the late 1990s and early 2000s claimed to be dynamic and counter to dominant hierarchies, it was indeed deeply intertwined with, and reinforced by, neoliberal capitalism. In fact, it was used as a tool for refashioning human subjects into compliant figures, such as student-entrepreneurs, citizen-consumers and team-workers – a prerequisite for the global implementation of neoliberalism.¹² Hence, our 21st Century world is marked by an economic

model which might be an anti-democratic moral project well-supported by architectural and urban productions. However, *neoliberalism is not the only evil to be put on the table* – although it is the most obvious one. We argue that war and violence, as well as perception and aesthetics may be oppressive regulators and, as such, politically affect access to space, resources and information.

Borders, for example, have the capacity for violence, because they divide and segregate certain classes and ethnicities of people and are deployed as tools to fabricate information. The state narratives claim that borders are a natural part of the human world that they have to be militarized in order to keep the insiders safe against an outside threat. However, borders perpetually produce the violence that surrounds them.¹³ Borders may increase the chances of injury or death in the process of crossing; they deprive the poor of access to wealth, resources and various opportunities that are enclosed and guarded by the security infrastructure.¹⁴ To feel secure has become more essential than being free, which is a contradiction of the neoliberal order. For the philosopher and political theorist Achille Mbembe, a society of security aims to “control and govern the modes of arrival” rather than to affirm freedom.¹⁵ And borders – to be understood as processes, not just things – are clear manifestations of this contradiction. However, borders should not be reduced to a symbol or a symptom because they provide a space for racial segregation and annulling certain lives. Mbembe captures this idea well by defining the concept of ‘borderization’ as:

the process by which certain spaces are transformed into uncrossable places for certain classes of populations, who thereby undergo a process of racialization; places where speed must be disabled and the lives of a multitude of people judged to be undesirable are meant to be im-mobilized if not shattered.¹⁶

Our time is also marked by the rise of transnational corporations as a new form of governmentality that comes with the capacity to intensify inequality at a global scale and colonize every aspect of life with far-reaching and unprecedented surveillance technologies. One can see it clearly in the rapid change in information and surveillance technologies. For the Marxist sociologist Manuel Castells, the information age in the 21st Century is marked by a new mode of informational and global production. We are also dealing with *surveillance capitalism* that profits from the collecting and selling of our behavioral patterns, as theorized by social psychologist and philosopher Shoshana Zuboff. For Zuboff, surveillance capitalism is an unprecedented market form, a coup from above, that operates inside the digital milieu in which we are only raw material. To reemphasize, we are no longer products of the system, we are raw material *for* and *of* it. The system monetizes our every move online, commodifies human nature, and then sells the behavioral data to customers interested in “prediction products.”¹⁷ Eventually, surveillance capitalism modifies our behavior toward profitable outcomes. The dark side of it would be, for example, when these “prediction products” are sold to health-insurance companies that use data to exclude certain people from accessing healthcare.

Violence imposed on certain groups of people, facilitated by surveillance capitalism is, according to the philosopher Slavoj Žižek, systematic. Žižek defines different types of violence based on their degree of visibility to us. For example, the catastrophic effects of economic and political systems is the least visible form of violence and one that goes unnoticed due to the eruptions and effects becoming normalized within economic and political systems.¹⁸ While it is important to consider the oppressive side of control societies, the philosopher Gilles Deleuze reminds us to ask who benefits from these sociotechnological mechanisms of control.¹⁹ For example, by suggesting that cities have always been smart and intelligently built, anthropologist Shannon Mattern frames the idea of the ‘smart city’ as a catchphrase that is used by property

developers, technology providers and civic authorities to sell us certain products or claims.²⁰ Therefore, the excessive production of big data, made possible and supported by “algorithmic governmentality” (‘big data’ usually means anything that can be digitized and recorded), conceals who is making profit from it and hides the level of surveillance that it enables.²¹ What we lose as a result of this algorithmic governmentality, Mattern argues, is the exposure to alterity, something that was easily accessible and possible when one wandered physically through a city.

It is possible to believe that the smart city agenda is indeed here to enable greater transparency of information, security and better access to infrastructure. Simon Marvin and Andres Luque-Ayala suggest that “companies such as IBM, Hitachi and Cisco are increasingly targeting the urban market”²² through the rhetoric of smart urbanism by implementing the technologies of the corporate sector, and under the pretext that the smart software/hardware will “improve the quality of urban services while making the city more efficient and sustainable.”²³ Yet, the unspoken agenda is that these digital platforms are nothing other than a new city-scale system of operation imagined to establish new typologies and hierarchies of information as well as to map and predict their connections. For the urbanists Marvin and Luque-Ayala, the impetus for such interconnectivity is informed by the desire to establish a system of total control.²⁴ The smart city agenda is the new horizon of governing. It is there to establish the standards for the empirical cataloging and classifying of data to understand the relations between humans and nonhumans; however, such knowledge informs the imminent digital geographies of incarceration.

We are living in an era of “new visibility of extreme violence” facilitated by techniques of media and broadcasting.²⁵ According to the philosopher Étienne Balibar, the new technologies simultaneously cover and uncover extreme violence, and as such, they do not necessarily provide better access to reality, because they actively exclude certain events. The role of media – including how certain events are represented, framed or dismissed – is investigated by the philosopher Judith Butler who questions how images work, how they assault our senses, given that “the senses are the first target of war.”²⁶ Both Balibar and Butler go beyond a mere focus on the role of media in representing the various kinds of extreme violence; Balibar points out that violence circulates between economics and politics,²⁷ and what is produced as a result is “life zones” and “death zones” separated by a “superborder.”²⁸ As a result, there are surplus humans that can be, or should be, thrown away. Violence is not new. What makes our era different is that extreme violence has become more visible to us while creating an illusion that we have access to the whole story – which we do not. All images and narratives are strategically framed to serve hijacked political ideals.

Deciphering the ways through which violence operates, or the ways through which spatial tools are deployed for the perpetuation of violence, is not always simple or self-evident. The writings of the urbanist, cultural theorist and aesthetic philosopher Paul Virilio suggest as much. Virilio observes that the political landscape of cities is informed by war and militarization.²⁹ For the human geographer Stephen Graham, post-Cold War cities, from infrastructure networks to public spaces, are indeed fertile contexts where both military and terrorist violence are (re)produced.³⁰ The sociologist Paul Hirst affirms this by noting that space is not a neutral “container”; it shapes how human armed conflicts are fought. This becomes even clearer if we think of space (from temples to railway networks) as something to be conquered and deployed in war-making.³¹ The city is deployed as a creator and regulator of violence.

Softer versions of violence were seen in the transformation of cities from the 17th Century onward. Cities were imagined as being able to respond to various problems through the perception of them as either efficient or inefficient machines or bodies that were healthy or ill.³² Given the belief that all social issues could be addressed by redesigning cities and their infrastructure, the social became implicated with the civic and, as such, a sphere of politics. However, that such modes

of regulation were not exclusive to the city proper were seen with Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, which "turned utopia inside out," as the principles of regulation in the citywide transformation were implemented into architecture proper.³³ Indeed, for the architectural historian and critic Antony Vidler, modern architecture is inseparable from the conquests of modern urban planning. For Vidler, "[t]he great age of confinement" corresponded with using institutions such as prisons, schools and hospitals to protect "society against its own peculiarities."³⁴ Authority was placed at the center, and the transformation of cities and architecture was interconnected through regulation.³⁵

Indeed, architecture has historically been a nexus of space and oppression. We see this in the earliest theorization of architecture, the treatise of Vitruvius, where a relationship between the dwelling (the structure) and the inhabitant (the body) was established, alongside instructions on the design of war machines, such as *ballistae* (bolt-throwers) and catapults. The 'Vitruvian body' was under attack from its inception. Even if we neglect reading the chapters of Vitruvius dedicated to war machines, the much-repeated image of a man inscribed in Euclidean geometry that we have come to call 'Vitruvian man' was itself the imposition of a standard of measure thrust over all bodies and buildings to come. The normalization of a body whose geometry did not correlate to any existing human body continued with the modular body of Le Corbusier's Modulor. Here the body and the architecture were simultaneously deployed to promote the virtues of the machine in the name of efficiency, hygiene and standardization. At the level of the city, normalization has historically been implemented through a system of gathering, cataloging, organizing and publishing truths that perpetuate inequity.³⁶ Evidence of this is found in the social disadvantages documented in detail through field surveys and the science of statistics, or the ways in which the early 20th Century Chicago School of Urban Sociology empirically analyzed crime, urban poverty and social relations. Certainly, the urban was seen to have economic and political implications. Le Corbusier's utopian urban plans were social reformers, and the reformation was a scientific process that required standardization. Despite the focus of modernism on standardization and functionality, even furniture design was produced only through craftsmanship, with restricted access to products by the wider social fabric. Indeed, products of modernism were mass-produced after the style was modified and practiced at an international level in what became known as the International Style. Undeniably, governance is intimately connected with architecture and the urban.

More recently, the intimate relations of the urban and industry are manifested in Laleh Khalili's writings on international relations, where she points to maritime ports as "the clearest distillation of how global capitalism operates today."³⁷ She argues that our time is marked by contemporary global capitalism, with China as its factory fueled by oil derived primarily from the Arabian Peninsula. In total, 90% of the world's goods manufactured in this factory travel by ship, hence the significance of maritime trade, logistics and hydrocarbon transport. The resulting system of maritime transportation and trade is not, she writes, "an enabling adjunct of trade but is central to the very fabric of global capitalism."³⁸ The invisible borders at sea, maritime transportation and ports are sites where racial labor hierarchies are maintained to reinforce colonial regimes of profit, law and administration.³⁹ Violence also operates through mundane spaces we hardly notice. The architectural and urban designer and educator Michal Sorkin notes an increased insecurity manifested in barricades placed in front of buildings and public spaces such as airports, and by parents who track their children using GPS in constant fear of the 'other,' showing the reverse effect of demand for security in the aftermath of 9/11 and the war on terror.⁴⁰ Here, we should point out that although architecture can influence human behaviors, it is not always deterministic as Michel Foucault reminds us.⁴¹ Architecture can support the exercise of power, as evident in the example of the panopticon, but there is nothing inherent in the form that guarantees liberation or oppression.⁴²

The phenomenon of governance and borderization in our time has gone beyond border walls and is manifested in urbanization. Spatial regulatory frameworks at an urban scale can be instruments that reinforce social, class, race and gender divisions, as evident in the zoning of Los Angeles,⁴³ or an instrument of warfare, as evident in urban development in Beirut in anticipation of a near-future armed conflict.⁴⁴ Borderization can also lead to the rise of ghettoization and slums, which, according to the Marxist historian Mike Davis, are conditions of neoliberalism and symptoms of economic and political inequality.⁴⁵ The 1990s saw urban dwellers become the majority of the world's population,⁴⁶ and nearly a billion were living in slums. The result of this is an ever "deepening polarization of cities, caused by neoliberal globalization, [which in turn] is providing many conditions that are ripe for extremes of civil and militarized violence."⁴⁷ From the automation of urban warfare to the ways in which the military operates in urban terrain and the ways in which military battlefield techniques find their way into popular video games, the line between war and peace is fuzzy. Creativity has merged with defense, and the Pentagon and Hollywood work side by side.⁴⁸ To a great extent, the world of culture has been hijacked. For example, much of the wealth of the Guggenheim Foundation is due to its violent ties with global mining and resource extraction in the Congo and Chile; its legacy of power and control is concealed under the global branding of buildings designed by star architects all around the world. The Guggenheim Museum has depoliticized the space of the museum by defining it solely as a zone for aesthetics.⁴⁹ We can no longer distinguish news from noise or trust museums when they are sponsored by arms manufacturers, as noted by the filmmaker and writer Hito Steyerl who questions the plausibility of making in this context.⁵⁰ Indeed, as 'the masses,' we are given freedom of expression, yet we are not given the right to change the legitimized model.⁵¹

The importance of politics in relation to architecture and urban space

Discussing politics is impossible without discussing its relation to space. Exclusion, colonization, division, warfare, denial of access to space or staging a politically constructed rhetoric are all inherently spatial. The literary critic, philosopher and Marxist political theorist Fredric Jameson notes:

[E]verything about the discussion of architecture itself is now political; and also that political discussion somehow seems quite impossible without reference to architecture, that is, to space generally, to the way the urban is organized, to the way geopolitics is organized.⁵²

Indeed, organization of space has become an inevitable part of any political practice. In the complex unfolding of contemporary politics, architecture and the urban are tied to an entangled web of violence; image production; colonization; discrimination on the basis of gender, sex and ethnicity; and the already established evils of neoliberalism. To treat space and the spatial as empty or neutral seems to deny the lived experience of space as a contestation. Violence continues to be integral to the exercise of political systems and is most explicit when it reduces complexity. For the architect and architectural theorist Mark Wigley, there is "no space without violence and no violence that is not spatial."⁵³ We see this violence operating on a geopolitical level. The formation of nation-states in the seventeenth century was contingent on balkanization (decentralization/fragmentation) through the artificial construction of borders. While on the one hand, the invocation of liberty and humanity during the French Revolution coincided with mass killing, on the other hand, sovereign states were created by uniting citizens based on factors such as language or common descent; newly created states were largely ethnically homogeneous.

Evidence of decentralization is also seen on an urban level for purposes of creating enclaves, or as a spatial strategy to control racial diffusion, for example, the “browning of America.”⁵⁴ The desire for homogeneity results in a discriminatory regime that allows the state to label certain acts as violent on the pretext of promoting justice and peace. For example, post 9/11, placing anyone who looked Arabic under notable scrutiny at US borders was permissible, as it was done in the name of security. Likewise, the change in planning regulations post 9/11 was facilitated in the name of homeland security, morality and emergency preparedness. Values such as justice and freedom have been taken for granted, with their framework and social implementation often unquestioned.

For Deleuze and his psychoanalyst collaborator Félix Guattari, there is no empty, neutral or ‘background’ space in which violence and war is perpetrated. Indeed war results only when sedentary space “striated, by walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures” runs up against nomad space which is “smooth, marked only by ‘traits’ that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory.”⁵⁵ The point is that space cannot be differentiated from its occupations and expressions. In Northern Ireland during ‘the Troubles,’ the main prison in which republicans were held was called the ‘H-blocks’ by the Protestant population and ‘The Maze’ by the Catholics. It is not that the space was a singular thing named in two different ways. It was, in this context, two very different spaces, depending on which side of the war one found oneself. Overall, terms such as ‘terrorism’ and ‘state intervention’ are near meaningless and merely political assignations that seek to codify different spatialities associated with violence. The architect and spatial/visual theorist Eyal Weizman suggests that when morality is exercised in the name of justice, it is a little like a “criminal being able to solve a crime.”⁵⁶ In other words, it is not about justice but the immanence of law as its ability to announce and define the guilty from those who are not. Thus, power is contingent on reducing complexity and monopolizing the narrative whereby violence is used to justify actions for the justice-oriented purposes of those who hold power. Enacting violence is connected to the perpetuation of justice and morality, exercised in the name of peace.⁵⁷ Thus, for the smooth space to become codified, the government deploys the military to maintain peace, thus ensuring it is maintained only through violence and war.⁵⁸

Although violence is not new, and even though space is never completely smooth and uncoded, what makes it unique in our times is the pivotal role of the media in any information war;⁵⁹ the recruitment of the audience is linked to a theater of spectacle. The critical theorist Samuel Weber likens the nexus of theater and violence to a stage on which violence is enacted and is never completely contained.⁶⁰ For the spectacle to operate, “images must appear to be clearly localizable [...] appear to be intelligible in and of themselves, without requiring the spectator to look elsewhere.”⁶¹ This was evident in the reporting of the Gulf War, whereby CNN provided the first live coverage of a conflict in the world – a war constructed as a spectacle for spectators of a consumer society. For the sociologist Jean Baudrillard, there was an absence of ‘real’ images of the Gulf War, meaning that what *actually* took place is not known given the construction of distant images and loose narratives that accompanied it.⁶² History was inscribed ‘live.’ The reporting of this war was mediated by digital technologies that were later deployed in schools of architecture with direct impact on architectural representations.⁶³

We live in an age of myth, with mainstream broadcast media being the most powerful medium in this fabrication. Virilio likens the media screen to Alzheimer’s disease, in that it “collapses memory’s close-ups and cancels the coherence of our fleeting impressions.”⁶⁴ It projects a frictionless, slippery and flat world that stretches “from shipping ports to airports, from banking software GUIs (graphical user interfaces) to web browser layout engines and data security protocols,”⁶⁵ enacted in the name of info terror, where fabricated information is used to justify the military/policy response to terrorism.⁶⁶ In this frictionless and tenuous vacuum

of information, an obedient culture is established through a crisis of meaning. Yet, meaning can be rediscovered through humanitarian interventions undertaken in response to the crisis.⁶⁷ For Virilio, both the Kosovo and Iraq wars were waged with electronic counter-measures;⁶⁸ this was multimedia warfare from a distance that enabled a twisted narration of what actually took place. For example, during the Kosovo humanitarian intervention,

[t]he U.S. Airforce destroyed the countryside, bridges, electric power plants, etc., but according to these figures provided by NATO, they destroyed only thirteen tanks, twenty tank transporters, and some fifty or so vehicles – all that for a bombardment that lasted seventy-eight days with one thousand sorties – four hundred in the beginning and one thousand in the end.⁶⁹

On home turf, the screen is used to create support for such *humanitarian* responses, through a combination of fear and entertainment.⁷⁰ While there are more channels, the news sources are not only reduced in complexity but also homogenized. This age of myth dominated by global broadcasting media has created its spectators, the consumer society. As famously theorized by the philosopher and filmmaker Guy Debord, image is the final form of commodity. We are ideologically manipulated by the mass media to buy the appearances they produce. Being drawn into this spectacle means that images produced in this mass culture colonize our unconscious.⁷¹

The unceasing production of images, and the freedom to produce them, is reminiscent of Benjamin's philosophical critique of the mechanical reproduction of works of art. While he notes that the unique existence of a work of art disappears in a plurality of copies, he also maintains that the "growing proletarianization of modern man and the increasing formation of masses are two aspects of the same process."⁷² Benjamin likens this to fascism, which gives the masses freedom of expression but not the right to change property relations.⁷³ Consequently class relations cannot change – relations that reduce people to wage laborers and create a society in which the masses can wear a dress on which "Tax the Rich" is painted but they still cannot *tax* the rich. Here, we are referring to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's gown at the Met Gala 2021.

Architecture and urban space are intrinsically political not only because they are a mechanism for the organization of people in space or used as objects for a consumer society, but also because aesthetics plays a key role in the production of politics. It is philosopher Jacques Rancière who reveals the commonality between aesthetics and politics by arguing that both delimit "the visible and the invisible, the audible and the inaudible, the thinkable and the unthinkable, the possible and the impossible."⁷⁴ Aesthetics are not about art theory or art;⁷⁵ aesthetics are what constitute a sensible experience that distinguishes those allowed or able to share this experience.⁷⁶ For example, similar to a kind of literacy, one requires a level of knowledge to understand, appreciate or enjoy an architectural monument – just as one needs to know what facilitates safety, wellbeing or participation in a neighborhood. If a person cannot make sense of what is a good city, what is a bad one, what is a good home, what is not, then that person is excluded from a life of informed decisions and participation in society. To be a political subject, a person must have access to equally distributed common knowledge. Without this experience, a person cannot be a political subject and thus remains voiceless and invisible. At a basic level, the aesthetic experience can also be understood through the lens of experiential access to space and sights. For example, the 35-kilometer-long highway in Paris – Boulevard Périphérique – which separates the city from the suburbs, has a very uneven logic of access to the Paris municipality. Those living in the wealthiest western suburbs have visual access when they enter the city because they can use the bridges that cross over the highway, while those citizens who live in the precarious and

marginalized northern suburbs use underground tunnels. This is an unconscious experience captured in Matthieu Kassovitz's 1995 film, *La Haine*, and dramatized in the Paris riots of 2005.

Those who are relegated to the margins, and are forced to participate in 'silence,' are those who have been colonized and discriminated against. Investigating the spatial contours of racism and sexism that create injustice in urban life and urban space, and juxtaposing this with the way in which architecture contributes to the formation of national identity, produces an excellent example of politics at play. For bell hooks, our current period of postmodernity and its rhetoric of openness, difference and rejection of one size fits all veils the presence and continuation of injustice and power relations.⁷⁷ Architecture, for example, maintains an "inherently patriarchal" value system.⁷⁸ It operates within the intersection of oppressive systems of gender, class, race and sexual domination.⁷⁹ The marginalization of women in architectural practice is called a "tragedy" by the architectural historian Despina Stratigakos,⁸⁰ who traces the absence of women from architecture back to the 19th Century.⁸¹ However, their lack of presence does not mean that women have not been fighting to achieve equality – quite the opposite. However, the ongoing gender discrimination in architecture is because the profession's gendered borders have remained near-invisible and impenetrable.⁸² This absence has been enforced by various regimes, including but not limited to missing female role models, lack of representation of female architects in popular culture, the politics of prize-giving, erasure of women architects from historical records and lack of public awareness about the deep-rooted bias against women architects. Indeed, the politics of space is always sexual,⁸³ and architecture has a multifarious role in the construction of gendered identities or sexed subjectivities.

Architecture as a system of representation is particularly gendered. It can construct women as the object of the gaze of men. We have only to think about the architecture of Adolf Loos and his earlier work, such as Steiner House (1910) and Rufer House (1922), where the gaze is directed inward toward the interior, and a traditional everyday domestic life is framed by the architecture; to his later work, such as Müller House (1930) and the House for Josephine Barker (1928); and the staged photographs of Le Corbusier's works, such as Villa Garache (1927), Villa Savoye (1929) and Immeuble Clartè (1932). The gendered nature of architecture has been well examined by the architectural historian Beatriz Colomina, whose psychoanalytical analysis of space shows that the organizing geometry of architecture is not gender neutral.⁸⁴ Architecture is an active constitutive element that produces gendered subjects by creating spaces in which gendered identities perform and are made visible,⁸⁵ influencing our sense of gender.⁸⁶ As architectural theorist Hilde Heynen points out, while modernity located women in the domestic realm, men were placed in the public sphere.⁸⁷ Significantly, the development of skyscrapers has been accompanied by the deployment of phallic language such as shaft and tip to describe various parts of the structures.⁸⁸ Indeed, the development of cities in the 19th and 20th Centuries had a direct impact on gender. Looking at the same period from a different perspective shows that despite factories being tied to the regulation and governance of the working class, they also offered the opportunity for women to enter the workforce and participate in paid labor, meaning that they attained a level of independence. However, such a move toward independence had an impact on the cleanliness of homes, and this was perceived as a gender-based domestic failure.⁸⁹

While advocacy for equal rights has continued in various waves of feminism, it is now self-evident that not only do architecture and the urban have a role in the construction of gendered subjects, they also have an inherently discriminatory structure that remains a subject of contention. If architecture does not respond to gender diversity, it runs the risk of being a marginal profession.⁹⁰ During the 1990s, developing ways forward through changes in policies and standards in the US was a responsibility largely assigned to the American Institute of Architects, Equal Employment Opportunities Commission or the universities. However, even if equitable numbers were achieved,

spurred by the establishment of charters such as the Athena SWAN in 2005, we still run the risk of entering ‘corporate feminism’ territory, in which the glass ceiling has apparently been eliminated and women have attained the right to earn as much as men. However, this ultimately fosters only the universalization of gender and the structuring of power,⁹¹ rather than challenging the very construct of gender.

That inequities in education are more than gender-deep is the investigative focus of architectural scholar Carla Jackson Bell. Bell shows that African American architects have been made invisible throughout architectural history, theory and practice.⁹² One of the ongoing structural problems in architectural education is the limited and exclusionary scope of Eurocentrism, which consistently underrepresents different ethnicities, minorities and women.⁹³ By silencing certain cultural perspectives in the curriculum, specific groups of students are unable to identify with the content taught or find role models among the teaching staff. For architectural scholars Huda Tayob and Suzanne Hall, the architectural curriculum is built on the centrality of privileged and normalized knowledge. This curriculum is one “of racialized hierarchies endemic to capitalist systems and cultural life that extend from colonialism to coloniality, slavery to incarceration, liberalism to subordination, and sovereignty to populism.”⁹⁴ The Eurocentrism of architectural education has shown little change over the last 50 years according to Carla Jackson Bell, who writes that architectural education has remained virtually unchanged since the Bauhaus.⁹⁵ In other words, the field of architecture has turned a blind eye to the necessity of transformation in education.⁹⁶ Whether architectural education is to provide training for a service profession or to teach architecture as cultural discourse,⁹⁷ it is subject to a political narrative whereby it ignores questions related to whose story is being told and whose voice is being silenced. Pedagogical approaches matter because they have a direct consequence in a “society that reproduces itself through its school systems.”⁹⁸ Inequity is seen in degree classifications, with white students being four times more likely to obtain a first-class degree than minority ethnic students in England.⁹⁹ Additionally, only 26.5% of architecture students have been female.¹⁰⁰ The gender pay gap in higher education in the UK currently sits around 15.5%, and the race pay gap is 17%.¹⁰¹

At the class level, the architect and scholar Kevin Rhowbotham argues that access to British education is correlational to relative wealth, where “the rich get the best education.” This is in stark contrast to the 1960s, when access was based on a meritocratic and mass-education model, and the “last time people moved significantly between classes.”¹⁰² Given the impact and spread of the ever-pervasive capitalist mode, and the embeddedness of architecture in this economic model, architecture is limited in its reach to make the city democratic or sustainable. Likewise, with the neoliberal and corporate model invested in profit and optimization on one hand, and standardization and complicity with various professional and statutory regulations on the other hand,¹⁰³ architectural education remains incapable of dealing with the current issues. Instead, architecture schools compete between themselves around identity and distinctiveness and overall rankings. Such preoccupations rob time and energy and hinder schools from addressing “grand problems of the moment” and cooperatively working through “issues beyond the fettered territories of commercial practice.”¹⁰⁴ For Rhowbotham, architecture schools have lost a sense of direction.¹⁰⁵ Their operational systems are outdated, with the design ‘crit’ remaining one of the most unchallenged methods of presenting and reviewing design projects,¹⁰⁶ grounded in the legacies of the 19th Century examination model.¹⁰⁷

One way of engaging with the grand challenges is to reimagine the thinking and structuring of pedagogy. The accepted thinking is that ‘pedagogy’ is reserved for, and synonymous with, educational environments. Likewise, it is often identified as an educational technique or practice. For the architectural scholar Thomas A. Dutton, however, such identifications undermine the potential of pedagogy, and pedagogy needs to be identified “with the social production of

meaning generally.”¹⁰⁸ Thinking pedagogy from this perspective creates an opening to challenge the normalized meaning of society and to create opportunities for the “voiceless and powerless to construct counterhegemonic processes for social advancement.”¹⁰⁹

According to Mbembe, racial injustices preceded those associated with class.¹¹⁰ Mbembe’s argument is that the concept of humanity in Euro-American thought has been framed by excluding blackness, given that this ‘other’ race is a degraded one and as such is there to be exploited.¹¹¹ This manufacturing of knowledge is traceable to the Atlantic slave trade and mercantile labor and is operational to this day. Ultimately, to engage in discussions around race is also to engage in questions around territoriality.¹¹² At the level of urban planning, race issues were obvious in the US from 1846, when ethnic, racial and gender segregation became a matter of planning policy. At the level of architecture proper, these issues were manifested with the 1956 construction of the Pruitt-Igoe complex in St. Louis, where modernist progress not only regarded social welfare but also race as a concern to be managed through planning. Moreover, the nostalgic nod to the community life found in the writings of Jane Jacobs does not take into account the presence of discrimination against people of different gender, ethnicity and race.¹¹³ Undeniably, this discrimination remains present today, with the recent deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor signifying the pernicious nature of ongoing racial violence, and discussions about the incidents confirming the long legacy of colonial conceptualizations of race. It is such conceptions that pedagogy must confront, and architectural education is not immune to colonial assumptions and bias. Dutton was likely right in noting that a political vision is correlational to proposing a pedagogy.¹¹⁴ Put simply, pedagogy is inseparable from politics.

The need to maintain Western European and Anglophone contexts as the ‘center’ is driven by the compulsion to establish a periphery, defined by its lack of the values and knowledge found in, prescribed and controlled by the center. We see this very clearly in essentialist stereotypes about the Orient – for example, where the Arab is aesthetically constructed as a deficient, unchanging social and political entity.¹¹⁵ In other words, the Orient is always set against an ideal West and framed within a position of lack; Orientalism is about asserting oppositions, and is directly connected to western colonization.¹¹⁶ Likewise, we see this with the semicolonial historical construct of the Balkans as the abnormal and monstrous peripheral zone of Europe.¹¹⁷ Colonization did not end in the 19th Century; instead, it was simply altered through the production of knowledge aided by aesthetic depiction.

For Virilio, colonization through aesthetic means is manufactured through technology. He argues that the West and Anglo-Saxons “have derived a sense of superiority from their technical superiority, a determination to treat the rest of the world as nothing more than an object predestined for their machination.”¹¹⁸ This is inclusive of the ways in which spaces are colonized through war, from the use of digital technology and robotics to the ways in which technology is used to defend the accused during trials. In the Nuremberg Trials, for example, the Nazi architect Albert Speer used technology and its developments “[t]o prove that he was only an instrument, certainly guilty, but that technological advances, in particular in the field of communications, had issued in the catastrophe.”¹¹⁹ Since WWII, the visibility of such paradoxes is harder to place on trial given that war is “buried in respectable laboratories and well-funded research agencies.”¹²⁰ With this in mind, the question that arises concerns the relevance of architecture as we know it, and the role of the urban.

Defining and redefining architecture and the urban

For architecture and the urban to have relevance in the 21st Century, we cannot maintain the approaches of thought and design that were operative in the previous century. Likewise, to

understand the nexus between politics and space, architecture and the urban must be redefined. Without this reformulation, we argue, it is impossible to understand the political role of architecture and urban space, whether oppressive or liberational. Traditional definitions reduce architecture to the passive background of political action and regard it as an object devoid of any agency, in addition to treating the city and the urban as interrelated and bounded. Such reduction means that architectural discourse and the profession are unable to face contemporary challenges. As such, we argue that architecture should be understood as a political force with agency.¹²¹ Moreover, the city and the urban should be understood as processes and relations on a planetary scale. Thus, when focusing on architecture and the city, solutions cannot be sought in nostalgic replicas of times gone by or found in supposedly apolitical technology and the technological fabrication of buildings.¹²² Moreover, if architecture and the urban are to contribute to everyday life and the various processes of living, then experience and knowledge need to be positioned in a way that leads to “more transformative notions about how life might be lived, both theoretically and practically.”¹²³ Likewise, from form to program, answers need to be sought beyond mere theorizations or pragmatic solutions.¹²⁴ Dutton argues that there is a need for architects to “link organically with politically transformative movements, which, in turn, necessitates developing professional practices that ensure a mutual interaction between publics and architects.”¹²⁵ For Vidler, who remains an admirer of socialist utopian ambitions, and utopia in general, change – via Jameson – should be based on “resistance to present conditions, the potential for critical assessment and the reimagination that is essential for any future action.”¹²⁶

To reach a more affirmative definition of architecture, the architectural theorist Andrew Ballantyne draws upon its difference from mere buildings. He questions the architectural history that has documented and displayed the most remarkable monuments such as palaces, cathedrals, castles and pyramids, while failing to consider that these extravagant buildings are irrelevant to the majority of architects whose job is to design comfortable, economic everyday spaces.¹²⁷ What architecture is, Ballantyne suggests, is contact with the solid object of a building, when a building induces an unknown feeling, an unpredictable epiphany in the observer or the user of different cultural backgrounds.¹²⁸ His broadening of the definition of architecture to include the multiplicity of affects on different people is a political matter on which Rancière has elaborated. For Rancière, aesthetics are intrinsically linked to politics, because aesthetics represent a sensible distribution system:

I call the distribution of the sensible the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it. A distribution of the sensible therefore establishes at one and the same time something common that is shared and exclusive parts.¹²⁹

Consequently, architecture is intrinsically a matter of politics not only because it is a mechanism for the organization of people in space,¹³⁰ or an object of spectacle shaped for a consumer society,¹³¹ but also because aesthetics are an inherent part of architectural discourse, which is in itself a political matter.

Another lens through which architecture is defined beyond an autonomous object is found in Marxist and neo-Marxist critical writings, many of which are informed by the works of architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri. These studies have extensively examined the relationship between our discipline and its productions (buildings and cities) and capitalism and its ideology. Mainly concerned with modern architecture, Tafuri writes that “the entire cycle of modern architecture” emerged and developed to resolve the contradictions of the “capitalist

reorganization of the world market and productive development.”¹³² He portrays a tragic destiny for architecture in *Architecture and Utopia* because the ideology of design has been essential to the “integration of modern capitalism in all structures and superstructures of human existence.”¹³³ Design is used to sustain capitalism: it is not extraneous to it. It is not necessarily the connection between architecture and the economy that constrains architecture, but rather that architecture is produced through the ideology of capitalism; it is integrated into the logic of capitalism.¹³⁴

However, despite architecture (and invariably the city) being implicated in capitalism, the philosophers and political economists Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels drew our attention to the significance of cities as creators of public life that they associated with action and change given that the modern city and industrial capitalism are entangled with each other.¹³⁵ More recently, the philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre reminds us that the overthrow of capitalism must be urban given that that is where space is produced.¹³⁶ Likewise, the geographer David Harvey reaffirms that the overthrow of capitalism will indeed begin on the urban street, not in factories.¹³⁷

The implication of defining architecture as more than a building, with aesthetic qualities produced within the capitalist mode of production, is also to acknowledge architecture’s relationship with contingency. For Jeremy Till, “architecture has avoided engagement with the uncertainties of the world through a retreat into an autonomous realm,”¹³⁸ and he calls for an understanding of architecture as a “complex social and institutional mess.”¹³⁹ The uncertainty and contingency upon and through which architecture operates means that architecture as a profession and a product cannot be detached from the economy, society, politics and culture.

What all these approaches have in common is the emphasis on defining architecture as a static, defined, determined and fixed object without agency. This point is partially picked up by Albena Yaneva, who examines the agency of spatial practices by discussing buildings in terms of what they *do* rather than what they *are*, via actor network theory (ANT). For Yaneva, “space is not a neutral, passive and inert backstage of political actions; rather, it has an impact on political efficacy by virtue of physically preventing or mandating certain actions.”¹⁴⁰ Yaneva argues that buildings are not solely representations of ideas but artifacts that are connected to other objects and peoples, and have an impact on them. Yaneva’s argument is therefore different from studies that limit the relation between architecture and politics to ideology, states or activism. For her, the nexus between politics and architecture has been historically understood in six ways: architecture reflects politics and can produce political effect; architects are agents of power, and architectural styles mirror political shifts; politics is imprinted on cities; architecture helps the construction of identities; and, building types embody politics. Politics and architecture in all these frames are understood as dichotomous and from two different worlds. However, their nexus is more complex than a simple binary: it is not unidirectional, it is always causal and mediated. Buildings are not static – far from it, they are dynamic and coproduced. Architecture is enmeshed in a complex process-based building-making people network.¹⁴¹ Although Yaneva expands the definition of architecture by analyzing the transformation of buildings to-be, buildings in-use, buildings in-renovation and buildings in-becoming, all the examples she uses are single buildings, and none are linked, not even remotely, to the challenges of our 21st Century, such as the refugee crises, climate change, racism, inequality, colonization and surveillance.

Unlike Yaneva’s use of ANT, the sociologist Harvey Molotch uses this method to understand the processes of making various gadgets, appliances for buildings, in order to reveal the ways in which contemporary society operates between humans and objects; the operation and experience are largely – he argues – commodity-driven.¹⁴² The links between capitalism and space are also resonant in the thinking of David Harvey, for whom urban planning emerged as a tool of economic governance. Harvey argues that through the infrastructural reengineering

of mid-19th Century Paris, Haussmann “helped resolve the capital-surplus disposal problem by setting up a proto-Keynesian system of debt-financed infrastructural urban improvements” by situating the *Crédit Mobilier* and *Crédit Immobilier* banks on Saint-Simonian lines.¹⁴³ Undeniably, the urban can be designed by restructuring social relations and influencing the behavior of its citizens.

Since the fall of Keynesian welfare and the establishment of neoliberalism, the sole connection of finance, banking and capital with *specific* buildings or *specific* cities has subsided. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre’s concept of planetary urbanization, urban theorist, geographer and sociologist Neil Brenner maintains that capitalism has stretched beyond the city. Brenner argues that the urban needs to be reconceptualized beyond the physical confines of cities because

[m]ore than ever before, it can be said that the Earth’s entire surface is urbanized to some degree, from the Siberian tundra to the Brazilian rainforest to the icecap of Antarctica, perhaps even to the world’s oceans and the atmosphere we breathe.¹⁴⁴

Indeed, the association of this urbanization with densification and population increase is outdated; to understand the urban, one needs to seek answers in the hinterland, given that the planetary stretch is correlational to the neoliberal forms of urban governing.

The significance of the global city has been magnified in studies focusing on neoliberalism’s ties with globalization. As Marvin and Graham suggest, the emergence of neoliberalism coincided with Anglo-American countries experiencing intense infrastructural privatization, which continued with the fall of the Eastern Bloc, where various networks became unevenly incorporated into the global capitalist divisions of labor and flows of capital, information and technology.¹⁴⁵ For the sociologist Saskia Sassen, the global city is not bounded; it is a complex network of production from financial innovation to small investment, including the export of raw money.¹⁴⁶ Brenner moves beyond Sassen’s belief that global cities are a series of globally connected nodes eclipsing the significance of place, where the “highly digitized economic sectors turned out to be the first step towards conceptualizing the Global City function.”¹⁴⁷ Brenner sees global cities not as nodes, but as “sites of both socioeconomic and institutional restructuring in and through which a broader, multi-scalar transformation in the geography of capitalism is unfolding.”¹⁴⁸ His thinking is driven by the impetus to reconceptualize the urban beyond an expansive city, because the globe has been urbanized, and there is no outside in a world dominated by global capitalism. Within the urban, we simply have variations of implosions (concentrations) and explosions.¹⁴⁹ His spatial thinking is reminiscent of Foucault’s writing on heterotopias, which he considers to be spaces essential to the city,¹⁵⁰ even as counter sites that operate “in such a way to suspend, neutralize, or invert the set of relations designated, mirrored, or reflected by them.”¹⁵¹ Despite some heterotopias proving resistant to disciplinary regulations, given that they are still a part of the system and structure, there is, for Foucault, no ‘outside.’

Another body of work that deploys the urban beyond something bounded includes writings that address how the expansion of urbanization is driven by infrastructure. The period from the 1850s to the 1960s was one of intense centralization and the standardization of urban networks and the creation of the invisible city of pipes and conduits. Thus, infrastructure networks became not only sets of connections within the city, but embedded symbols of hidden territorial scale and space.¹⁵² The factors that have enabled the intense spread and development of urban infrastructure include the sheer scale and reliance on technology, including the speed at which infrastructure is connected and optimized.¹⁵³ Infrastructures are not only underground pipes or cables, but also regulatory conditions, tariffs, arrangements and rules that structure the spaces around us. These infrastructures remain invisible yet they control and regulate our lives, and extend beyond the

reach of governments in the global market. The architect and urbanist Keller Easterling brings the discussion of infrastructure (free trade zones, the expansion of broadband wireless networks, and the International Organization for Standards) into architectural discourse, first by suggesting that these seemingly apolitical, technical concepts intersect and maintain a disposition that impacts global economies and governance; and second by questioning the role, agency and autonomy of architects in a time when most urban plans and buildings are all administered without the aid of architects.¹⁵⁴ For Molotch, designing infrastructure, from airports to streetscapes, in the name of security is suggestive of spatializing systems of power – at all levels of their design, consumption, implementation and experience.¹⁵⁵ Seemingly, security is a way of governing and suggestive of militarization.

For Graham, militarization is tightly interconnected with colonialism, given that the imposition of neoliberalism becomes the means to ‘de-modernize,’ disconnect, immobilize and destroy the physical, social and cultural matrix of a city in an attempt to control environments that do not conform to a neoliberal and colonialist ideal.¹⁵⁶ The deployment of these colonially tested strategies of walls and forts, together with the law, is what Graham calls ‘Foucault’s Boomerang.’¹⁵⁷ Here, Graham is using Foucault’s thinking on disciplinary spaces to argue that disciplining is not just exercised in colonial zones but is also like a boomerang that returns and is implemented on home turf. The relationship between a colony and colonizing the ‘homeland’ is not a new one, remembering that the ‘Haussmannization’ of Paris was influenced by the text *The War of Streets and Houses* (*La Guerre des Rues et des Maisons*) authored by the French General Thomas Robert Bugeaud who served in Algeria in the 1840s.¹⁵⁸ We also see this in the concept of the concentration camp, which was invented during the colonial wars between the English and Dutch over the control of Southern Africa at the beginning of the 20th Century, and then later imported into Europe as German National Socialist policy. Foucault’s relational disciplining was evident in Nazi Germany and has since been implemented in the Israel-Palestine conflict, as seen through the use of language. Effi Eitam, a retired Israeli Defence Force (IDF) brigadier, described Palestinian settlements as “‘cancerous tumours’ within the ‘ordered host’ of (greater) Israel,”¹⁵⁹ the metaphorical narrative replicating Hitler’s descriptions of Jewish enclaves in his autobiographical manifesto *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle).¹⁶⁰ Here, language is used to construct an image of an elusive Palestinian cancer within the healthy body of Israel; the construct is used as a justification for the deployment of the IDF to clean up and sanitize the decaying body of the nation.¹⁶¹ This linguistic construct is a common tactic in any nationalist discourse, with clear polarization whereby a threat can only be resolved through a military response.¹⁶² Today, the colonially tested tactics, seen in barriers and checkpoints in places such as the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, are significantly altered and deployed in the West, and according to Graham, they are particularly evident during political summits or sports events. For example, in 2014, during the NATO summit, parts of Cardiff and Newport were surrounded by a ‘ring of steel’ fence that criss-crossed roads, parks and public spaces to keep the world leaders safe, while severely affecting the public’s movement and access to space.

In the outlined hyperreal and planetary spread of the urban, the understanding and relevance of the contemporary city through the much-referenced lenses of the historian and sociologist Lewis Mumford and the urban planner Kevin Lynch appear to be prodigious. For Mumford, the city is first a social institution, with the “the physical organization of a city, its industries and its markets, its lines of communication and traffic” being subservient to the social.¹⁶³ He writes that the city “is a geographic plexus, an economic organization, an institutional process, a theater of social action, and an aesthetic symbol of collective unity.”¹⁶⁴ For Lynch, a city extends beyond its physical form to include human experience, perception and social life. The city is not a machine that wears out over time due to mechanical repetition, and nor is it a biological cohesive

organism or a cosmic order with eternal form; rather, the city is unified by signals.¹⁶⁵ Similar to a settlement, the city is a continuously changing arrangement, whose overlapping systems are tied to different parts, each with a history and a context.¹⁶⁶ Each part of the city “contains information about its local context, and thus, by extension, about the whole.”¹⁶⁷ The ability to understand the whole clearly started fracturing in the 1960s.

Even at the level of the city proper, we can observe that invisible power relations and class struggles are problematizing the belief that a city is bounded. For example, ghettos are not only a lower-class district, but as sociologist Loïc Wacquant shows in his works on urban marginalities, they are also a constructed symbol to advance marginality and territorial stigmatization. In fact, the reorganization of the city through such symbols is driven by deep-seated power that governs the ways in which certain cities or parts of cities evoke symbolic struggles of class and ethnicity. For Wacquant, such symbols mark territorial stigmas which not only signify the lived experience of those living in adversely affected areas, but also can play a determinist role in their identification and perception.¹⁶⁸ In other words, Wacquant suggests that these zones are a symbolic expression of deep-seated and wider socioeconomic problems.

From a different perspective, the sociologist Sharon Zukin examines ghettos in terms of the formation of retail zones and the tailoring of consumer aesthetics, which are connected to a whole network of exploitation found in factories from India and China to Bangladesh. For Zukin, engaging with questions concerning the politics and economics of ghettos is intimately and equally connected with concerns of culture.¹⁶⁹ That is, the formation of the new middle class is correlational to the development of an aesthetic associated with retail culture, immigration and deindustrialization.¹⁷⁰

At the other end of the socioeconomic spectrum, we also have a culture of ghettos called ‘gated communities.’ Their presence was prominent in the writings of the 1980s LA School of Urbanism (an academic movement centered on the urban analysis of Los Angeles) which provided a new lexicon to map the city – from gated communities and corporate citadels to zones of consumption opportunities and spectacle.¹⁷¹ Later authors drew on Octavia Butler’s futuristic 1993 novel *Parable of the Sower* and the concept of balkanization to describe a divided population in terms of those who live in gated communities and those who did not, with the repercussions leading to various forms of inequity and strife. In the LA lexicon of the city, this condition was driven by global restructuring and market economics, the outcome of which is a series of balkanized enclaves distinguished from each other socially and culturally, yet also politically and economically polarized. In other words, the divisions have become polymorphous and aspects such as gender, skill and ethnicity are amplified. For the urbanist and environmental planner Daphne Spain, the rise of gated communities is correlational to “the increase in women’s labor participation,” and invariably “their inability to provide informal security,” as they are no longer at home.¹⁷² Indeed, the ‘new’ middle class puts into question the role of gender, given that for the urban historian Dolores Hayden, domesticity is now tainted with the privatization of labor, products and designs.¹⁷³

Even at the level of architecture proper, architectural design can no longer tell us what is happening inside a corporate building, unlike in the 1960s when glass towers were synonymous with office work.¹⁷⁴ Previously, the significance of this was seen with the rise of ‘star architects’ and the spread of shopping centers and gated communities. Architecture was a way to brand cities, as seen in Frank Gehry’s Bilbao Guggenheim Museum, whereby the iconic building transformed the city’s identity.¹⁷⁵ Dubbed the ‘Bilbao effect,’ it is an example of what Ballantyne sees as the “index of the value-system of the society” in that the authorities invest more in the brand than in the needs of those living in that city.¹⁷⁶ Even when architecture is sustainably regenerated, it is used as a tool to spike-up prices and foster gentrification. Moreover, this is a

likely outcome of regarding architecture and the city as separate; however, for Vidler, to think of them as separate not only leaves questions regarding “the form of the public realm unanswered,” but also treats a single building as a “designer accessory” and a symbol of progress amid “a sea of urban blight.”¹⁷⁷ In this context, the city is indeed a museum, and the urban pervasively stretches across the planet. Indeed, the 21st Century requires a reconceptualization of both the city and the urban. For this reason, this handbook brings together the city and the urban using the term ‘urban space,’ which will be further addressed in Volume II. Analyzing architecture and urban space together is critical, given Deleuze’s warning that “we are taught that corporations have a soul, which is the most terrifying news in the world.”¹⁷⁸ This is seen in the 2018 proposal by Apple/Foster and Partners to create an Apple Store in Stockholm. The proposal represented Apple’s general attempt to blur the “boundaries between public and private space” given that Apple stores are usually identified with a town square, a gathering space, “where everyone is welcome.”¹⁷⁹ Although the proposal was revoked, it signifies the role of corporations in further privatizing urban public spaces.

It is not that Foucault’s disciplinary societies have been abolished, but that the conditioning of governance has become more carefully and surreptitiously regimented in control societies. Control extends beyond institutions and specific object(s) of technology to encompass a whole territory: legal, economic, geopolitical, historical, public and private. The control has become continuous and extreme. By way of relating this to a geopolitical context, it is clear that it is not that the ideologies of the Cold War are over, as we see with the Russia–Ukraine crisis, but that their implementation and spatialization have become more complex and subversive; violence and the justification for violence can be (dis)guised through a digital interface, made operational from the air alone despite the deployment of ground forces, hijacked through economic means, where the human body becomes a tool through which the various technologies and territories addressed by Deleuze can operate. The transformed Cold War appears to be enmeshed in the emergence of a new political spatial order, the contours of which remain foggy as we prepare this volume.

To conclude, the nexus between architecture, urban space and politics is far from simple, binary or singular. There are multiplicities of politics involved that architecture fosters, neglects, enacts or evades. With the complex and invasive roles of information technology, neoliberalism, media and globalization, it is becoming more and more difficult to identify where and how spatial practices – including architecture and the urban – inform, retain or sustain agency. This handbook is seeking to do this by mapping the constitutive elements of our contemporary world, as well as spotlighting the role of architecture and the urban in ever-expanding centrifugal and centripetal regimes.

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PART II

Violence and war machines



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2

INTRODUCTION TO VIOLENCE AND WAR MACHINES

William M. Taylor

The following collection of chapters address current and historical concerns as well as issues of specialist interest for philosophers, humanities and design scholars, architects, urbanists and activists. Broadly speaking, the specter of violence and war threatens the values and aspirations for civil society, diminishing our common humanity and restricting opportunities for progressive action. Philosophers and public intellectuals have expressed similar views. Contributing to his political philosophy, John Locke believed that certain circumstances made some acts of aggression – like a nation’s declaration of war following an attack – appear reasonable and necessary, although (paradoxically) the commencement of warfare made “reasonable” action impossible, rendering the combatants less-than-human.¹ Giorgio Agamben elaborated on the concept of “bare life” to describe the violent circumstances and setting of the concentration camp, where its victims are reduced to beast-like existence.² Hannah Arendt distinguished between power and violence. Observing what she believed to be the diminished capacity for political action in her day, Arendt noted there followed:

an open invitation to violence – if only because those who hold power and feel it slipping from their hands, be they the government or be they the governed, have always found it difficult to resist the temptation to substitute violence for it.³

Relations between the forms and sources of aggression – including relations between *violence and war*, as the title of this collection proposes – are multiple and call upon wide-ranging sources of scholarship to critically appraise them. Humanities scholars including Laura Westra, Victoria Collins, Dawn Rohe and Douglas Spencer seek to explain violence in the contexts of globalization and neoliberalism.⁴ Ann Stoler, Greg Grandin, Gilbert Joseph and Anoma Pieris, among others, have advanced understanding of violence in colonial and postcolonial contexts.⁵ Rob Nixon writes about the “slow violence” inflicted on impoverished communities worldwide by environmental degradation and global climate change.⁶ Over the past two decades, the 9/11 terrorist attacks and their aftermath have encouraged much research.⁷ Seeking to establish a distinctive method of theoretical and historical inquiry, contributors to the edited book *Spatial Violence* aspire to position their subject as intrinsic to architectural knowledge and practice.⁸

A number of scholars have cultivated belief in the so-called revolution in military affairs (RMA) to explain manifold strategic, technological and organizational changes in the conduct

of warfare, including the War on Terror that followed 9/11. Early proponents of this theory, Eliot Cohen and Martin Libicki, were mostly interested in developments that have come together and accelerated since the end of the Cold War.⁹ John Robb, Gregory Rattray and Michael O'Hanlon have further elaborated upon the impacts of these, including developments in new surveillance and information technologies, laser-guided 'smart bombs' and the prospect of warfare in cyberspace.¹⁰ Given that many of these technologies, particularly in the data harvesting and processing sectors, raise concerns for individual privacy and civil peace, the history of wars and warfare has implications for understanding violence in broader society and the sociopolitical realm.¹¹ Likewise history tells us there were earlier upheavals in military matters, like the 16th Century gunpowder revolution and 19th Century industrialization of warfare that were each socially transformative in their own way and impacted on urban space and modes of its occupation, assault and defense.¹²

Philosophical issues

The scope for scholarship on violence and war includes philosophical and methodological issues that have a bearing on research in the field. One can understand these to frame a set of problematics or realms of possibility concerning: (1) the responsible actors or agency of violence, (2) the relationship of built environs or spaces to violence and (3) the distinctions in language and theory between violence and war as historical forms of aggression, each with attributable (though perhaps imprecise) origins and causes. Consider these, briefly, in turn.

Firstly, concerning the sources of violence, one may believe that aggression originates with established authority, for instance, with the nation-state, as conventionally understood by political theorists to be an entity formed of an established and governed territory whose citizens are believed to share a common history and identity. Max Weber was referring to such an authority when he described the state's historic "monopoly" on violence, a power clearly, but not exclusively, exercised during the conduct of war.¹³ Weber observed that "the modern state is a compulsory association which organizes domination. It has been successful in seeking to monopolize the legitimate use of physical forces as a means of domination within a territory."¹⁴ Though the aforementioned scholars (Westra et al) may not frame their subject matter and analyses as critiques of the nation-state *per se* (itself), theories of globalization and neoliberalism pose challenges to Weber's view of the state's domineering hegemony in that these theories typically credit extra-territorial sources of agency (such as global corporations, international regulatory and development agencies, like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF)) and belief systems (such as belief in market-led capitalism and free-trade ideology) whose powers extend beyond national borders.¹⁵

Shadowing the domination of the nation-state, another source of overarching or top-down authority and potential source of violence is believed to arise from networks of agents like the "military-industrial complex" US Army General and President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned his compatriots about.¹⁶ This entity has since been enlarged given the growth of 21st Century media and entertainment industries with their global reach and mass audiences, data- and image-saturated worlds so that one is purportedly faced with the coordinated actions of today's "military-entertainment complex" or "military-industrial-media-entertainment" (MIME) network.¹⁷ Arguably, one can relate current anxieties over our so-called 'post-truth' age to the impacts of such complexes of knowledge-power-producing agents, as scholars Steve Fuller and David Block have done.¹⁸

Secondly, considering the relationship of built environs to violence, one can question whether and how urban planning and architecture may operate to assault, disempower or oppress certain

individuals and sectors of society. Bechir Kenzari provides a compilation of such operations, although the range of contributions to his edited book and collection of essays *Architecture and Violence* confirms there are different understandings of violence and its settings. In Kenzari's book, these range from the slow-burn estrangement pervading suburban residential districts to the horrors and "bare life" (Agamben) of the concentration camp imposed upon its internees.¹⁹ The variability of these understandings and settings suggests that what counts as violence depends to a large degree on the obviousness and character of evidence for aggressive acts. Eyal Weizman and his research collaborators appear to understand this. They establish the provenance and character of relations between architecture and violence on the basis of a set of research case studies they call *Forensic Architecture*, the short title of their book.²⁰ Their methodological intervention can be likened to the approach of police detectives whose concern to ascertain the perpetrators of violent acts leads them along a critical itinerary composing a series of crime scenes. Paul Jaskot's book *The Architecture of Oppression* asserts the violent criminality made possible by the built environment by means of his historical examination of the forced (slave) labor underpinning Nazi Germany's monumental building economy.²¹

The possibility that there is *some* kind of connection between violence and built environs, urban planning and architecture leads one to examine whether there is a necessary link between violence and space generally, an area of research in urban studies and cultural geography.²² Belief in the spatiality of violence allows for multiple theoretical perspectives and historical interests. These include Colin Flint's so-called *Geographies of War and Peace* counterpoising death camps and diplomatic spaces, Derek Gregory's and Allan Pred's *Violent Geographies* of fear and terror and Reece Jones' *Violent Borders* concerning immigration and refugees – to highlight a few recent book titles.²³

While featuring in these geographical distributions of violence, urban space is also subject to temporal transformations – to continual, sometimes rapid change and development involving a range of demographic, economic, technological and social drivers. Foundational scholarship engaging the dynamism of urban space includes the broad, multidisciplinary perspective on the city pioneered by philosopher and urban historian Lewis Mumford.²⁴ Subsequently, the varied circumstances whereby cities evolve, expand and diminish suggest critical possibilities for research into the impacts of violence on urban space and communities that are not only synchronic (evident for a specific period or historical era), but also diachronic (that occur over time). Hostilities arising within the urban realm can highlight circumstances of demolition and new construction imposed on communities without their consent or interests served. Jane Jacobs's landmark book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* was published in the same year as Mumford's *The City in History* in 1961, though the former is more closely attuned to these possibilities and circumstances. Jacobs expressed concern that then current 'urban renewal' and 'slum clearance' demolition programs ignored the needs of city-dwellers and destroyed communities, a perspective that underscores studies of gentrification pioneered by German-born British sociologist Ruth Glass.²⁵ Steve Graham and Simon Marvin have coined the phrase "splintering urbanism" to account for contemporary drivers resulting in "urban and infrastructural change" including globalization and the post-communist geopolitics. They cite the work and influence of Mumford and Jacobs, particularly the former's adoption of a "transdisciplinary" approach to urban and infrastructural change.²⁶

Scholars have enlarged the study of urban dynamics and violence to include catastrophic transformations involving ruination and environmental disaster accompanying development. Ruinous settings were a favored subject of 18th Century aesthetic philosophy and picturesque theory; recent scholarship has come to understand these predilections as means for "appropriating" ruins and their landscapes by property-holding elites keen to redevelop their country estates and

enrich themselves.²⁷ Ann Stoler and contributors to her edited book *Imperial Debris* shift the critical focus from ruins as aesthetic appropriations to ruination as “the toxic corrosions and violent accruals of colonial aftermaths” manifest in changeful urban environs.²⁸ Contributors to *Imperial Debris* include Ariella Azoulay, who describes how Palestinian children are taught to imagine ancestral homes destroyed by the Israeli military during their occupation and redevelopment of Palestinian territories.²⁹ Vyjayanthi Rao writes about villages submerged by dam construction in India, a chapter and topic that draws on Rao’s expertise on the South Asian city and globalization.³⁰ Sharad Chari examines communities obliged to live alongside the toxic wastelands of oil refineries in apartheid-scarred Durban, South Africa, providing further insight into the environmental impacts of development in the Global South.³¹ Cities that have been wholly or partially abandoned for a variety of reasons, including environmental despoliation, de-industrialization and de-population have also inspired research.³²

Possibilities for research into violence and space are multiplied by considering whether and how the impacts of urban dynamics and transformations may be symbolic or programmatic, or a mixture of both the aesthetic and functionally coercive, along with the juridical or socio-legal contexts for aggressive urban interventions. Timothy Gibson describes the socio-legal dimensions of urban development and dispossession.³³ He writes about the aggressive use of statutory planning powers, compulsory purchase orders or “eminent domain” laws in nations like the US in the 1940s and 1960s and the UK in the 1980s and 1990s to replace inner-urban public housing estates (derogatorily called slums in America) with private-sector construction. Recent memory takes us to New Orleans in 2005, following Hurricane Katrina, when such laws enabled the controversial destruction of much of the city’s public housing stock and its replacement with mostly privatized residential developments, enraging displaced residents and stirring up housing activists nationwide.³⁴

Thirdly, regarding distinctions in language and theory between forms of aggression, war and warfare describe the most extreme form of violence inflicted on communities, although the terms can also denote nonmilitary actions targeting forces operating within society. Hence, the history of violence includes circumstances and language that have precipitated the much publicized and costly ‘wars’ on poverty, crime, drugs and terror.³⁵ In these cases, the spaces of intervention and resistance are not battlefields *per se*. Rather, these wars are fought in communities of the unemployed; they target overseas factories and other sites of outsourced labor. Defensive measures connect such widely distant locations as schoolyards and other venues, where drugs are feared to be sold, and remote Colombian and Bolivian coca plantations, where the illicit substances originate. The offensive is taken to airport security zones and via drone missions to places like Afghanistan and Iraq.³⁶ John Head describes international development agendas and agencies, like the World Bank and IMF, as engaged in a type of “development war” in which otherwise laudable goals of common economic enrichment, social stability and peace in much of the Global South are being lost owing to the mismanagement of international aid as well as the regressive forces of bilateralism and regionalism.³⁷ A different perspective comes from seeing this particular form of warfare as a series of attacks on much of the world’s population by forces aligned with global economic powers, neoliberalism and globalized capital.³⁸

Just as the language and metaphors of *war* and *warfare* are freely, sometimes questionably used, likewise, as many of the scholarly publications and titles cited in this introduction suggest, the term “violence” is widely applied to a range of aggressive forces and oppressive circumstances.³⁹ For Daniel Silva and contributors to his edited collection *Language and Violence*, the semantics of violence operate in distinctive ways, particularly when it “tends to obliterate precisely the contexts that undergird meaning-making, mutual intelligibility and engagement [...] Violence thus tends to affect contextual orientation, one of the basic resources for living in a world with

others.”⁴⁰ By this Silva seems to mean that violence in language fundamentally undermines shared understanding and breaks social bonds.

Violence, war and language informs scholarship in this collection. In his chapter contribution, John Hanna writes that the discourse of terrorism has created new urban experiences and spaces of violence by means of “activating particular geographical imaginaries, at different scales.” He directs our attention to Paris and the terrorist attacks of November 2015, when gunmen and suicide bombers targeted the Bataclan concert hall, a major stadium, restaurants and bars simultaneously, leaving 130 people dead and hundreds wounded. Hanna describes how language and spatial metaphors derived from conventional representations of the nation-state – of sovereign territory attacked and national identity threatened – deployed by French President François Hollande and his government served to falsely portray culturally and geographically heterogeneous Paris as unified and therefore integral to the French homeland. Thus, the terrorist attacks were represented by Hollande’s government as an act of war against the nation and its citizens, while the language of official pronouncements on the attack served to distance the attack’s perpetrators from French civil society as hostile agents – as enemy *others*.

Violence and military affairs

The Prussian army general and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831) once famously described war as “the continuation of policy by other means,” and scholars commonly cite his claim and landmark essay *On War* when writing about the mutually formative relations arising between the exercise of governance and military matters.⁴¹ His essay also provides an opportunity to historicize evolving relations between violence and war as forms of systemic aggression. Clausewitz coined several terms and ideas about modern warfare that are worth considering, particularly when thinking about parallel sources of hostility that arise in social contexts. He described the condition of total or “absolute” war when the effort of combat increases to an extent that it subsumes all other sectors of a combatant nation’s political, social and economic activities.⁴² An abstraction, more or less, similar circumstances may nonetheless require all able-bodied citizens to be enlisted as soldiers, civil servants or factory-workers; industry to be re-directed to produce armaments and essential supplies; and nonessential government activities and social programs to be suspended. With the idea of total war, in other words, the wages of warfare include significant costs for civilian populations and their way of life, particularly for urbanized populations for whom much war-related industry is required and sacrifice demanded. A parallel condition of escalating aggression and social forfeiture is conveyed by the moral caution from the Gospel of Mathew that “violence begets violence.”⁴³ Martin Luther King Jr was inspired by the warning in his speeches that encouraged nonviolent protest as the only true path to civil peace.⁴⁴ The idea of total war reappears, in altered form, as *Pure War* in Paul Virilio’s and Sylvère Lotringer’s book of that title.⁴⁵ The authors propose that modern society’s reliance on technology and technology’s propensity for regular and systematic failure make for a kind of warfare that is unceasing and renders cities and urban populations indefensible. This far-reaching proposition calls to mind the philosophical pretensions of Lebbeus Woods, whose provocative drawings dramatize – arguably aestheticize – urban vistas devastated by war-related technology.⁴⁶

Clausewitz also wrote about “friction” being the idea that distinguishes the oftentimes “petty circumstances” that influence the course of “real War” from the abstractions of “War on paper.”⁴⁷ The former includes the multiple sources of contingency, uncertainty and risk that arise over time, which invariably impede the strategic deployment of combative forces, like territory and terrain that prove to be unassailable or a battle plan that goes wrong.⁴⁸ Thinking about friction and aggression in the social context of policy-making, sources of purposeful obstruction include

historic examples of riot and insurrection like America's Whiskey Rebellion (1791–94), when protestors resorted to violence and intimidation to prevent government officials from collecting tax on the spirit and England's Luddite riots (1811–16), when protesting textile laborers destroyed mechanical equipment rather than accept the loss of their jobs to industrialization.⁴⁹ In modern times, friction includes acts such as Mohandas Gandhi's Salt March (1930) to protest the British Crown monopoly on the essential commodity, King's and Nelson Mandela's (initial) respective nonviolent protests and the latter's subsequent active rebellion against South Africa's apartheid regime, rent strikes, school strikes for climate and the myriad recalcitrant acts of inmates that habitually occur in institutional settings such as prisons and detention centers.⁵⁰ The idea of friction alerts us to opportunities for activism made possible by critical theory and conveyed by the following chapters and their case studies.

Paul Hirst described Clausewitz's essay as "still the most profound reflection on war," while emphasizing that its subject concerns more than simply the historical or technical performances of combat.⁵¹ Rather, for Clausewitz, warfare was about statecraft, and so the essay's scope is relevant for understanding the rise of European nation-states, nationalism and international political systems in which states maneuver to secure strategic advantages.⁵² Hirst found much in Clausewitz's treatise that speaks to our times, though this required the study of history to understand the evolving scope, modes of performance and spatialization of violence and war. Surveying the relevant literature and historiography, he identified two major "revolutions" in military affairs that preceded the one of current fashion. These former disturbances had significant geo-spatial, urban and architectural aspects and assisted the rise of the nation-state and its monopoly on power as the foremost authority governing relations of empowerment and oppression in the modern era.

The first revolution began at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when the French King Charles VIII invaded Italy, setting off a decisive period of military innovation responsible for the increased mobility and firepower of gunpowder weaponry and resulting in the widespread destruction of antiquated walls surrounding Italian cities and fortresses by canonry. There followed the rapid 'adaptational response' of cities, first in Italy, then across Europe and, later, to European colonial cities as the notoriety of French military successes spread, resulting in new ideas about cities and how to fortify them. One thinks of cities like Lucca, in Tuscany, with its comprehensive encirclement by wide bastioned masonry walls, ditches and earthen embankments (*glacis*) to resist bombardment. Palmanova also comes to mind, a comprehensively planned and fortified town built to protect Venice from mainland enemies. The design suggests how far innovation could go and complement utopian thinking about *the city* as a comprehensively planned and governed entity with advances in projectile geometry and military engineering sciences extending to the town's interior arrangement, its street layout and administration. In either case, considerations of military affairs from this era provide background and an underlying rationale for thinking about the spaces and spatialization of aggression.

By the 19th Century, the second revolution in military affairs coincided with urbanization, industrialization and the exponential growth of the European metropolis and cities globally modeled on them, including European colonial contexts, their strengths and weaknesses no longer mostly the consequences of walls, offensive weaponry and a community's capacity to resist siege warfare waged by extramural enemies. Rather, a growing matrix of technologies evolved to defend urban populations and the powers that relied on them against multiple threats from within. Technological innovation, however, in areas such as sanitation, manufacturing industry and transport, introduced additional vulnerabilities into the urban fabric. The failure of infrastructure and services in any one of these sectors could result in the collapse of the others with remarkable speed. The study of the history and theory of technology and infrastructure

thus introduces additional opportunity to counterpoise research into the violence of war and *everyday* hostilities characterizing the social milieu.

Clausewitz's essay provides a convenient reference and starting point to consider matters relating to war and additional sources and settings of violence. The essay was mostly written during the period of Europe's Napoleonic wars, at the time of this second revolution and an era of rapidly changing warfare. It was a period when cutting-edge military hardware amounted to new artillery with vastly increased firepower and extended ranges, the acquisition and control of ever greater national armies and widening industrialization that allowed weaponry to be produced in ever greater quantities by competing states and their armies to be readily supplied and deployed around the world. It was also the period in which Jeremy Bentham's panopticon was conceived.⁵³ The model prison and its architecture of surveillance contributed to transformations in a range of European institutions, including hospitals, asylums and schools, whereby Western governments sought to monitor, control and reform their subject populations.⁵⁴ Clausewitz did not write about these transformations or the panopticon, though clearly the evolution of modern warfare must be viewed in concert with other sociopolitical developments that enlarge the field of study into war and violence to include broader patterns of hostility, control and compliance. Scholars have observed how the nation-state and – what Michael Foucault called – “disciplinary society” evolved alongside military organizations and organizational models inspired by martial disciplines.⁵⁵ The army, Foucault wrote:

[...] guaranteed civil peace no doubt because it was a real force, an ever-threatening sword, but also because it was a technique and a body of knowledge that could project its schema over the social body. ... There was a military dream of society; its fundamental reference was not to the state of nature, but to the meticulously subordinated cogs of a machine, not to the primal social contract, but to permanent coercions, not to fundamental rights, but to indefinitely progressive forms of training, not to the general will but to automatic docility.⁵⁶

Clearly, there are important *spatial* or *geo-spatial* conditions supporting surveillance and control that connect Clausewitz and Jeremy Bentham, the field of battle and house of inspection and incarceration. Arguably, in view of these connections, one could turn Clausewitz's claim around. One could see policy-making and urban planning policies, in particular, as the continuation of war “by other means” as nation-state and municipal governments at times have focused considerable resources on eradicating risks to security from ill-defined agents and socioeconomic dynamics arising within territorial borders and city limits. One could also call upon the familiar ‘swords to plowshares’ formula to describe this inverse dynamic, although the outcomes are not necessarily civil peace and prosperity, but rather the assertion of authority and imposition of normalizing regimes. In their book *5 Codes: Architecture, Paranoia and Risk in Times of Terror*, Gerd de Buyn and his collaborating editors and coauthors appear to acknowledge such regimes though authority is not imposed with panoptical walls and military organization *per se*. Rather, the scholars take as their starting point the five-stage, color-coded warning system adopted by the US Government's Department of Homeland Security in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks – a seemingly commonsensical bureaucratic move that nonetheless could be interpreted as an assertion of power, having contributed to the normalization of terrorist risk and its incorporation into everyday life and government control.⁵⁷ Also writing about 9/11 and its aftermath, David Simpson describes the “culture of commemoration” that worked to exploit the events to forge political consensus around narratives of national grief and mourning and promote further violence and war.⁵⁸

Moreover, the title “Violence and war machines” adopted to head the following collection of chapters is fitting, for there is a common thread running through them to do with the means and technology – including the architecture, building plans and urban planning – arising from or contributing to violence and war. War *machines* call to mind the historic, operational and aesthetic aspects of these means and technologies. One thinks of the Renaissance period and the popularity of novel engineering and weaponry, particularly siege machines, to conduct historic forms of warfare. Bentham famously described the panopticon as a machine or “mill for grinding rogues honest and idle men industrious.”⁵⁹ Today, the language of information technology, of software and hardware, digital platforms and precision-guided weaponry or smart bombs may have displaced more overtly mechanistic images and metaphors to describe the technology of violence and war. However, the commanding functional and systemic effects of this variety of *architecture* (another common metaphor) remain obvious.

The biopolitical dimensions of power

Whichever way one looks at it, Clausewitz’s theory of war can be read as an essay on power, its exercise during the conduct of war and peacetime and its far-reaching consequences. Thus, the essay *On War* contributes to a tradition of political writing that counts in its foundational literature figures and texts like Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan* and Benedict (de) Spinoza’s *Tractatus*. Machiavelli wrote about war in relation to autocratic governance, famously observing: “There are two kinds of combat: one with laws, the other with force. The first is proper to man, the second to beasts; but because the first is often not enough, one must have recourse to the second.”⁶⁰ Machiavelli adopts an Aristotelian view of human nature, so that leaders and their subjects are in parts: beast, man and something akin to a divine or godly essence.⁶¹ Humans are thus uniquely political animals. They may not always do the right thing or behave humanely, though in striving to constrain animal passions and direct their powers for the prudent governance of society, princely rulers aspire to higher virtues.⁶²

Hobbes is known for his work on sovereign government, an early exponent of social-contract theory that asserts the absolute authority of the state over individuals.⁶³ The frontispiece of his book carries the celebrated illustration of the “Leviathan” by French artist Abraham Bosse.⁶⁴ The image depicts an immense crowned figure, scepter-in-hand, composed of countless human bodies. The illustration was intended as a dual emblem of society and sovereignty, but it also says something about control and compliance. Hobbes believed there could be no humanity outside this ordered arrangement, famously writing that life outside of society would be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”⁶⁵ It was a violent world although one can ask whether and how the alternative was better. Nigel Warburton observed that:

[...] Hobbes, like Machiavelli, had a low view of human beings. We are all basically selfish, driven by fear of death and the hope of personal gain, he believed. All of us seek power over others, whether we realize this or not.⁶⁶

Hobbes defined peace narrowly as the “absence of war,” an understanding that Spinoza rejected, calling it instead “a virtue which comes from strength of mind” or a “union of harmony of minds.”⁶⁷ As Justin Steinberg observes: “It is one thing for a state to persist or to avoid the ravages of war, it is quite another for the state to flourish.”⁶⁸ Spinoza appears to be saying that violence and war may seem to summarize the natural state of things, but there are reasoned grounds that human beings can rise above them. He argues this point by making an organic metaphor:

So when we say that the best state is one where men pass their lives in harmony, I am speaking of human life, which is characterized not just by the circulation of the blood and other features common to animals, but especially by reason, the true virtue and life of the mind.⁶⁹

The following chapters could likewise be read as essays on power, illustrating, each in their own way, how authority works strategically and functionally but also with undisclosed or ambiguous intentions and oppressive outcomes. The chapters enlarge foundational literature with critical theory, but they also engage a broadened domain of inquiry into politics, violence and war that speaks to the modern era and distinctly modern discourses – including, for instance, interests (like Hanna's) in language and meaning. Consider, for instance, that when Machiavelli wrote *The Prince*, sociology and biology were only a distant horizon of possibility. As “domains of being” the age-old dichotomy of nature and culture was not yet reinvigorated by the rise of these empirical sciences so that certain questions concerning violence were off the table.⁷⁰ Was aggression, for instance, an attribute of an essentialized human nature or outcome of social relations and environment? While Machiavelli in his day might ask whether war was *proper to man or beast*, the contemporary scholar is unlikely to use such terms. Rather, they seek to establish context and to ascertain the range of dynamic factors that explain why violence and war occur and why they matter. Moreover, while Hobbes may have contributed ideas to pseudo-sociological reasoning – his figure of the Leviathan composing a kind of social formation though largely an emblematic one – subsequent advances in biology and allied fields, like demography, epidemiology and statistics, cast “society” as subject to multiple disciplines and novel lines of investigation. Sociology and biology were given an immense filip with urbanization, industrialization and the ensemble of related demographic, technological and cultural developments that background Handbook section chapters and their views on the spaces of power, violence and war.

Chapter authors Daniel Grincer and Lieven De Cauter acknowledge the biological perspective on violence and war by way of elaborating architectural and urban contexts for understanding the spatial dimensions of power. They take their cue from Agamben's and Foucault's respective writings on *biopolitics* and the aforementioned concept of “bare life.”⁷¹ The writings account for how the nation-state evolved in the modern era with the essential aim of caring for the life of the population, most clearly urban populations. Biopolitical rationality is concerned with the health of citizen-subjects, their corporal and productive capacities and sentiments – even their fitness for war. To care is to control so that state efforts to mitigate disease and infirmity results in a normalizing architecture of confinement and exclusion. Quarantine stations, surveilled and securitized workplaces, territorial border barriers and refugee camps are all biopolitical settings – potential flash points for aggressive government intervention and transgressive behavior.

Grincer enlists Agamben's concept of “bare life” to convey the architecture and brutality of Australia's detention camps on Nauru and Manus islands where that nation's offshore transfer of its human rights obligations denies asylum seekers access to legal representation, medical and mental health care and imposes indefinite confinement – stripping inmates of personhood in a manner of speaking. De Cauter enlarges the theory and vocabulary of biopolitics, introducing the additional term and concept of *zoöpolitics* to describe a particular characterization of humanity evident at the intersection of urbanism and warfare. Whereas biopolitics operates to control populations by *giving* life (by urban planning that promotes sanitation and impedes pandemics, for example), *zoöpolitics* is concerned neither with giving nor taking life, but with reducing human beings to numbers that can be counted, recorded and controlled.

Infrastructures of violence and war

Scholars have come to view the material culture of urban planning and infrastructure as a crucial setting for the exercise of power, either the target *or* means of aggression, control and compliance.⁷² Keller Easterling clearly develops this view, writing about “organization space” and the “power of infrastructure space” that challenges conventional sources of authority, revealing new sources of agency and alternatives to the nation-state’s monopoly on violence.⁷³ She writes about cities like Dubai and the growth of free trading zones worldwide, whose *raison-d’être* (reason for existence) appears to be the unbridled exploitation of global networks and flows of investment capital, communication and transportation. Consequently, Easterling writes, “the zone harbors not the violence of nations but the violence camouflaged by nations, and while some zones advertise their presence, others remain hidden.”⁷⁴

Scholarship on infrastructure and power varies in critical focus, though two complementary trends stand out. On the one hand, research is directed to sites of violence and war, particularly urban sites and architecture, but also critical infrastructure such as transport networks and industrial complexes that deliver energy, water and other essential supplies to cities – their targeting serving belligerent purposes including the destruction of public morale during wartime.⁷⁵ A useful term and theory to introduce here is “urbicide” whereby elements of the built environment are directly targeted during periods of conflict as means of destroying traces of the past along with the cultural- and place-identity of a people. Contributing to research on the subject in his book *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War*, Robert Bevan writes how “there has always been another war against architecture going on – the destruction of the cultural artefacts of an enemy people or nation as a means of dominating, terrorizing, dividing or eradicating it altogether.”⁷⁶ The theory of urbicide acquired particular currency following the series of military and ethnic conflicts, wars of independence and insurgencies precipitated by the breakup of Yugoslavia from 1991 to 2001. Bevan’s views were informed by notorious incidents like the systematic destruction of mosques in former Yugoslavian territory by Christian nationalist forces, the 1992 shelling and burning of Bosnia’s National Library in Sarajevo and the 1993 blowing up of the historic Mostar bridge in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He paraphrases Bogdan Bogdanović, the architect and former mayor of Belgrade who fled Serbia during the Bosnian war, who argued that urbicide is “the intentional attack on the human and inert fabric of the city with the intent of destroying the civic values embodied within it – the very spaces for interaction where cultures are generated and shared.”⁷⁷ However, providing further evidence of the fluidity of war and violence as imaginative and critical categories, the term “urbicide” was first coined by science fiction and fantasy writer Michael Moorcock in 1963, and it was taken on by critics of 1960s urban renewal schemes in the US, particularly architecture critic Ada Louis Huxtable in the 1970s.⁷⁸ Sociologist Marshall Berman also adopted the term, describing urbicide as “the murder of a city.”⁷⁹ Scholars who have extended this or provided further understandings of urbicide include Martin Coward and a number of contributors (including Coward) to Stephen Graham’s edited book *Cities, War and Terrorism*.⁸⁰ Graham’s opening chapter contribution to the book shows how urbicide can be considered, broadly, as an ingredient in modernism and modern urban development generally, while subsequent chapters engage with the contexts of war specifically, including place and identity annihilation owing to acts of terrorism. In his chapter contribution to the following collection, De Cauter develops his thinking around the concept of urbicide.

On the other hand, scholarship on infrastructure and power examines how urban planning and infrastructure appears to work at times, aggressively, to sow or perpetuate divisions within society such as the disunities driven between socioeconomic classes, ethnic communities and

gendered identities.⁸¹ In this case, the aforementioned wars on poverty, drugs and terror resonate with “combat” that appears to be waged variously by urban planners, municipal authorities and private developers worldwide on the underprivileged, the alien and vulnerable. This line of attack entails restrictions on citizens’ “right to the city” – a rallying cry and subject for research – by means of limiting their access to participation in planning processes, to public spaces, transportation, communication and cultural resources.⁸²

Gavin Shatkin writes about constrained opportunities for participatory planning and urban citizenship in South Asian cities owing to ubiquitous development of large-scale “Urban Integrated Mega-Projects” following models in Singapore and Shanghai that result in “displacement and disruption of existing economies and social relations.”⁸³ In a similar vein, in the following collection of chapters, Redento Recio and coauthors reflect upon what amounts to the authoritarianism of urban planning policies in the Asian region, specifically in the cities of Dhaka, Kathmandu, Mumbai and Quezon City. Their research interprets violence to entail “the politics of unseeing” whereby the civic participation, needs and aspirations of residents in poorer urban districts and “informal” industries are sidelined or misinterpreted by municipal governments and planning officials in order to facilitate private-sector, large-scale development aligned with neoliberal ideology and practices. The authors initiate their study by citing Johan Galtung’s concept of “structural violence” whereby “violence is built into the sociopolitical structures and manifested in unequal power and uneven distribution of resources” in these case study cities.⁸⁴

Scholarship on infrastructure and power can be positioned relative to the broader field of research interests in urban geography, urban vulnerability and social collapse.⁸⁵ Geographer Stephen Graham observes how:

It is one of the great paradoxes of urban life in the Global North that it often requires the collapse of the great, stretched-out infrastructures that sustain the city – the power grids, transport networks, water systems, and digital circuits – for their critical importance to become manifest.⁸⁶

Communities of scholars approach this field in different ways. Researchers from the adjacent disciplines of disaster studies, disaster preparedness and the science of risk management are commonly concerned to elaborate the ideas of urban vulnerability and designing for urban resilience.⁸⁷ Historian Jeffry Diefendorf adopts a complimentary approach in his research, proposing we can better design urban futures by understanding wartime destruction and reconstruction in times past, especially the rebuilding of European cities following WWII.⁸⁸ Humanities and design scholars are commonly attuned to questions of social justice arising from the intersection of urban destruction and rebuilding. Circumstances of capitalist exploitation and geopolitical upheaval, terrorism and environmental catastrophe are provocative and conducive to their research.⁸⁹

Chapter authors Hélène Frichot and Sepideh Karami write about the spaces and technology of infrastructure in their chapter contribution. They further enlarge the scope for research into violence and war to include the extra-urban settings of extractive industry that make modern cities and urbanism possible – but also vulnerable to systemic and sudden assault posed by risks to industrial communities and global supply chains. The authors compare recent events at the Sari Gunay gold mine in Kurdistan, Iran and Juukan Gorge in the iron-mining Pilbara region of Western Australia (WA). The former was the site of an unfolding environmental disaster when toxic mining wastes were discovered in 2020 to have polluted underground water supplies of local communities. The latter was the scene of cultural catastrophe when, in the same year, mining operations by corporate giant Rio Tinto resulted in the destruction

of ancient cave shelters that contained evidence of human habitation for tens of thousands of years. Frichot and Karami propose that “technical failure” can be construed as “social and political” failure, an equation that calls to mind Arendt’s belief that it was the “failure” of political systems that results in violence.⁹⁰ Thus, the pattern of negligence responsible for Sari Gunay’s contaminated aquifer bears comparison to the self-serving neglect of Pilbara mining company authorities and WA’s failure to strengthen its Aboriginal cultural heritage protections.

In conclusion, the following chapters highlight themes and case studies that establish research into violence and war as a rich, multidisciplinary and topical field of inquiry. Violence of different kinds and sources arise from the operations of technology – including material cultures and technology of architecture and urban infrastructure – but also from evolving patterns of agency, urban space and language. Above all, research into the field frames realms of conceptual possibility that push boundaries of thinking in the humanities and design-related disciplines to include multiple, complex and dynamic relations between knowledge and power.

Notes

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