

The Open City – A Matter of Access?

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Abstract

In this paper the authors attempt to relate experiences and results collected during an on-site workshop – The City Space Investigations 2009 held in São Paulo – to a larger discourse on marginality and citizenship. The ‘City of Walls’ increasingly transforms into a patchwork of segregated enclaves defined by ‘lifestyles’ with spatially hardened borders, confining marginals to an existence outside mainstream society. By combining the theoretical discourse on marginality-poverty and citizenship in their two dimensions, social (including political, economic) and spatial the authors identify public space as one root of the problem but also as important tool for change. Public Space continues to represent crystallization points that may accommodate forms closer to the ideal of the public sphere – an unconditional welcome, which bear the potential to strengthen new forms of citizenship. A systematic strategy centring on public space as a network may reverse the erosive tendencies of post-modern society. A historic overview of the transformation of public space and the city of São Paulo forms the bases to explore the workshop concepts of some participants and the question of the role of the architect in the process of change.

Introduction:

This paper emerged out of the concluding discussion within the City Space Investigations Workshop held in April 2009 in the city of São Paulo where underlying concerns present during the on-site period concretized: What possibilities do we as architects and planners have to change such situations?

Despite all fears public space is not dead and even the hardliners crafting apocalyptic consequences of new technologies on society had to acknowledge that their impact did not erode the meaning of cities as socially constructed human life worlds. However interrelated forces have altered the backbone of cities and led to a fragmentation of public space which ceases to represent focal points of the (universal) public sphere. The commercialization of public spaces, the creation of off-worlds and fortifications are increasingly replacing

traditional forms by reducing accessibility. This development is not intrinsic negative, but in practice highly imbalanced and on the costs of the least powerful, the urban poor.

This conference contribution is an attempt to cast a larger light on the problem of urban poverty by linking its structural causes and implied consequences to the dimension of citizenship. The claim is not to denounce current practices and plea for turning back to a Greek ideal, but to realize access to public space as fundamental to citizenship. What is needed is a consciousness of public space as a strategic tool of integration and using its relative abundance to create crystallization points of diverse - but not universal publics, latter being never a historic reality despite numerous idealizations.

The structure of this paper unfolds as followed. We depart from the discourse on citizenship to draw from its historic meaning to the modern implications of rights and obligations in heterogeneous societies. The importance of space is emphasized by the inherent process of group formation requiring the exclusion of otherness. The otherness is discussed in the second chapter by focusing on the concept of the marginals. Its two dimensional framework of social and spatial marginality casts light to the root of poverty and urban inequality. As our “spatial behaviour, which is defined by and defines the spaces around us, is an integral part of our social existence” (Madanipour 2003b, p.139) public space becomes a pivotal tool to analyze current societal changes but also consequently the backbone of any sustainable strategy. While the third chapter will outline this importance of public space the fourth chapter exemplifies past changes in meaning and structure in the city of São Paulo: from diverse public spaces to spaces of diverse publics. The last chapter uses some workshop investigations to substantiate our theoretical model with more practical proposals to address the initial question of the role of the architect.

Citizenship

Citizenship describes a belonging to a larger group beyond the individual or kinship, which does not necessarily imply the city (although for Max Weber it is its essence), but which through time mostly have been the instance of reference. Isin (2008) connecting to the work of Fustel de Coulanges distinguishes between *civitas* and *urbs* which stand in the line of Henri Lefebvre seeing cities as intersection of society and space. As citizenship will be essential for our discussion on marginality we will elaborate these concepts at large. First we quickly outline the dimensions of citizenship according to Marshall to then draft the historic development of citizenship. The discourse on the modern nation state will then provide the basis for the following chapter.

All discussions on citizenship start with the work of T.H. Marshall (1950). Despite certain flaws, his division into political, social, and civil dimensions is still very practical. Marshall sees citizenship as a substance of community membership to be derived by a sense of loyalty to a common civilization. Marshall's work concentrates mostly on the so called passive citizenship as it emphasis the act of entitlement. These were formally exclusive but have been universalized in the course of the last three centuries. In modern times this point of identification is the nation state, the relation regularized into rights (see Rauböck 2000, p.93).

The western notion of citizenship is based on two although interconnected, nevertheless strongly differing concepts, one of the Latin *civitas* influenced from Greek-Etruscan traditions, the other is the Medieval concept of *burgess*. Rome discovered citizen rights as political tool of integration and control: Rome rewarded faithful new tribes and bound them at the same time to the Empire in a complex system of territorial layered citizenship (Isin 1997, p.123). Looking at society citizenship rights were confined to a few. Despite its idealization in modern times, the *res publica* was based on a system of exclusion of numerically important population groups. Exclusion was even far more systematic in the Greek society as only land owners pertained to it (Isin 2002, p.57). The voiceless (selon Aristotle) were not granted access to the agora (women, slaves, artists). Even at the height of Greek civilization it is estimated only one out of seven had citizen rights (See Mumford 1966). Public life was not

only spatially embodied in the Greek agora, but also mostly contained within it. Rome's forum in exchange, although sharing many similarities with the Greek pendant, diversified its public spaces with the rise to the great empire. Several self contained extensions were built for example in Rome, often specific for some functions – the basilica was a specialized architectural type for commercial activities (See Carmona et.al. 2008, 23ff). What makes the Latin *civitas* relatively unique is its openness to otherness, as it focused on an ideological substance – a Roman was someone you committed to the Roman ideal. This common identity transgressing ethnic difference is closer to the idea of the modern nation state as many theorists would acknowledge. In Medieval times public space remained framed by the trinity of economic, political and religious centers but importance shifted first to religion. The church and its main square were the primary focus of everyday life and only after a town reached a certain threshold a separate market square was erected, not very different to the dynamics in Antiquity. City dwellers and citizens were according to Mumford (1966) synonymous terms and furthermore freedom and citizenship became interchangeable (Marshall 2006, p.32, see one-year-and-a-day-rule). Cities were independent legal bodies – whether by decree or de facto. Within the city's boundary citizenship status were determined by their political status which depended on their religious, ethnics and class membership (See Kymlicka & Norman 1994, p.370). Compared to Antiquity situations of the citizens have improved remarkably in terms of partaking and rights, as the public consisted of almost all town dwellers. But still a few were excluded or granted only conditional welcome like travelers, all disreputable professions (grave digger, guards, etc.), and the Jewish community. Politics continued to be linked to wealth and property and thus the domain of a fraction of society.

In modern times the city as source and reference of citizenship gave way to the political constructs of the 19th century, the nation state which “sought to establish citizenship as that identity which subordinates and coordinates all other identities - of religion, estate, family, gender, ethnicity, region, and the like – to its framework of a uniform body of law” (Holsten & Appadurai 1999, 1). Consequently citizenship “became a bundle of political, civil, and social entitlements and duties within the framework of state law.” (Isin 1997, 127) The justification of the nation state is substantiated in two differing manners. In one way like in the United States citizenship is based on an *ius soli* concept (children born on American soil receive automatically the American citizenship) and secondly the *jus sanguinis* as seen in Germany. While former defines nation as territory that defines the community, Germany is seen as aggregation of commonness by descent. Theoretically the *jus soli* is far more apt to accommodate difference in practice disparities in tolerance, hospitality and opportunity structure are less accentuated. We have seen so far that citizenship through history has been confined to a smaller or bigger share of society. Also in neoliberal practice full citizenship is limited to some citizens corresponding to an ideal, which differs greatly among countries and regimes but may include elements of race (white), gender (male), income (formal employment), sexual orientation (straight), and even political status (party member). “Those who do not fit the characteristics of ‘individuals’ are produced as ‘others’ as inadequate or unsatisfactory ‘citizens.’” (Nash 1999, p.157) The question how to integrate otherness is a very virulent one often resulting in heated discussions. The increased mobility on several levels over the last decades has resulted in greater ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity and seriously eroded any domination claim of a leading class.¹ In perspective of 20-50 percent foreign born population in some urban concentrations of the world, the term of minority has to be revised. Looking into the future, the nation will have to fundamentally redefine the status of their citizens – Herwig Birg (2002) speaks of a future multiminority society and Iris Marion Young (1989) in lieu of “a universal citizenship in the sense of this generality, we need a group differentiated citizenship and a heterogeneous public.” (Young 1989, p.258) In a later work she outlines more practical implications and turns to justice, which ‘in a group-differentiated society demands social equality of groups and mutual recognition and affirmation of group differences.’ (2005, p.101) Conflicts between different groups are systematic but do not arise by “difference per se, but rather the relations of domination and

oppression between groups that produce resentment, hostility, and resistance among oppressed.” (2005, p.91, Isin sees in this the pushing force through history to struggle for citizenship) A nation based on multiple citizenships therefore provides a layered citizenship and diverse opportunities to practice them both symbolically and spatially. Complicating factor are the changing circumstances of post modern times affecting to very relevant instances for citizenship, the ongoing dismantling of the family and the erosion of the nation state.

The nation state, as important reference of identity, is eroding losing its social (and cultural), political, and economic unity. Sassen (2003) speaks of denationalization of different domains leading to hybrid forms which are neither local or global, nor state or private (e.g. denationalized citizenship). At the same time postmodernity blurs the traditional meaning of public and private, which are shaped in Western thoughts by the opposition of the oikos and the polis (Arendt 1958). Richard Sennett outlines three contributing forces at play since Enlightenment: the impact of new capital, the reformulation of secularism and the fact that public life survived its own death (Sennett 1992, p.19). First force brought the pressure of privatization and the material life in public, second changed the way otherness was perceived and the third led to a “decay which has been continuously eroding the body from within.” (Sennett 1992, p.19) The reaction was an overemphasis on the remaining grasp, the private in those days epitomized by the family. This cellule “became refuge from the terrors of society” (Sennett 1992, p.20), and even more, it served as a moral shelter. The public instead turned out to be judged against the background of the private and met with certain hostility.² The consequences of the public life were that “one’s behaviour in public was altered in its fundamental terms. Silence in public became the only way one could experience public life.” (Sennett 1992, p.27) To day the urbanite remains, according to Sennett ‘the actor deprived of his art’ which is the root of the increasing solitude in our society, aggravating conflicts, and intolerance. One valve to compensate for the feeling of loss has come from a very force causing it: the market. Already Jean Baudrillard labelled the ‘Consumer Society’ in 1970, a visionary predicting the most severe consequences of late capitalism on society and nations. Baudrillard (1998) described the power of consumer goods, slowly attaining meaning and replacing other instances of identification. The consumer society is a society in which individuals derive their status and even personality by the consumption of goods (Crawford 1992, Zukin 2005). Consumption has caducity at its foundation consequently in contrast to former references like the state it renews (and reinvents) itself. There are numerous citations to religion, the processor of the nation, as instance of identification (see Crossik & Jaumain Eds. 1999). Both are based on unattainable goals: salvation on one side is replaced by satisfaction on the other. The pursuit for satisfaction has unclenched a larger discourse stretching the hype for frills, excitement and surprise (Sorkin 1999). In the words of Rem Koolhaas a populist of the architectural profession, there is the need for a continuous ‘the next big thing’ (Chung & Koolhaas 2001). This phenomenon is global, despite its country or culture-based facets, its underlying dynamics are the same and transgress all domains. As mentioned earlier class in a traditional way is eroding and with the dismantling of the traditional family nucleus the spots are vacant for a new construct of attachment and identification.

Lifestyles are the predominant way how people of our times identify and delineate themselves from others. Lifestyles are “patterns of action that differentiate people” (Chaney, 1996, 4) and thus started well before industrialization exerted its largest impact on society. The difference to forms prior the 20th century is that lifestyles followed different lines of identification as religion, political status or class. Work is not perceived anymore as the defining characteristic (although still very relevant) but communities defined on a comparable way of life. This is not completely different to the clustering of classes in the 19th century but must be understood as its societal logic consequence. Class according to Max Weber represents a group of similar market situation (See Isin 1997, p.118). With the employment diversification of the service economy not resource accessibility but way of consumption represents a line of similarity (contrary position in Isin 1999).

Public and Publicness

In this above mentioned logic people not willing or able to consume are slowly perceived as standing outside of society. Aggravating this tendency is the invasion of consumption in public space excluding larger shares of society. For Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas the public was not physically but ideological and thus defined by its universal accessibility. The public manifests in moments where people interact with each other, central to Hannah Arendt's argumentation in human condition is *Handeln*, the action of the individuals. Following Aristotle's description of the polis, exchange in form of seeing, been seen and verbally express are pivotal levels of activity. It is the very nature of humanity to act politically (*zoon politikón*, often wrongly referred to as social). Unlike the other dimensions of the *vitae activa* (work, labor) action requires the presence of others and thus is part of the domain of the public.

For Hannah Arendt the public realm contribute to three effects linked to space. First as it spans longer than a human lifetime, it memorizes society (see also Carmona et.al. 2003, p.109), it guarantees encounter for different people, and is accessible for all. Public space describes configurations of power and exchange (see Madanipour 2003b, p.96), for both dimensions access are the key-defining concepts. Access consists of "access to the place as well as to the activities within it." (Madanipour 2003b, p.141) Spatial manifestations are the fundament of most group forming processes and define the difference between real and virtual groups. "The existence of class or group must emerge out of practices of symbolic representation." (Isin 1999, p.272) For Arendt public per definition (*publicus* is deduced from *populus*, the people) require unrestricted access allowing broad interactions. Only in those circumstances actions (*Handeln*) and reflexion (*Denken*) create a political space that is based on a plurality of people.

If looking at the postmodern urban landscape an increasing privatization of spaces can be observed. The traditional public space (squares, streets) is declining all over the world as consequence of the reduced municipal financial powers and has been increasingly invaded by private interests. Public space where anyone is entitled to be physically present" (Madanipour 2003b, p.141) being "the stage which the drama of communal life unfolds." (Carr et.al. 1993, p.3) must be highly questioned. Already Hannah Arendt was pessimistic about the American political realm as capitalism increasingly penetrated politics and living conditions. Rios reminds us we are not primary consumers or clients but citizens (2008, p.215). The effects "of privatization of space and the threat of social fragmentation pose as serious threat for the future of the city" (Madanipour 2003b, p.149). There are fewer and fewer places where actually different social groups meet. The fundamental meaning of public space, where "people can learn to live together"(Carr et.al. 1993, p.20) is under serious threat. What is needed for a sustainable society and thus environment is a democratic public. A democratic public provides "mechanisms for the effective representation and recognition of the distinct voices and perspectives of those of its constituent groups that are oppressed or disadvantaged within it." (Young 1989, p.262) As Isin outlines to right to the city pertains "the right to claim presence in the city, to wrest the use of the city from privileged new masters and democratize its spaces" (Isin, 2000, p.14) The marginals require as much a public sphere for their own as spaces where diverse societal layers meet. Tolerance starts with knowledge of the other which requisite presence and encounter. We have seen historically public space was never accessible to all or neutral. Its access has been restricted to others, and its function used for representation of different powers. So far we have seen that the changing geography of globalization has altered the power structure of different layers of society. The global city as any *urbis* before is the "site of conflicts over resources, representation, and rights." (Isin 1999, p.269) While there is an emerging class of greater heterogeneity in racial, occupational and lifestyle patterns, benefiting from greater connectivity and amenities there are marginal groups that are excluded from such changes in a contingently and structurally manner. The marginalization is both social and spatial at the same time, any approach to better the current situation need to address both dimensions. We will see later by focusing on Brazil's

democratization its focus on social changes have limited its impact, as spatially marginalization persisted. In this perspective public space having been outlined so far as result of neo-liberal transformations of global consumerism bears the potential to promote and stimulate change.

Marginality

The concept of marginality is 'pivotal' to any research, "where multiple causal linkages and relationships need to be investigated and understood to extract meaningful insights for scientific research." (Gurung & Kollmair 2005, p.18). Marginality will help us to link public space to poverty and citizenship. For a larger historic outline of the marginality concept we refer to the work of Billie Davis (1997) as we concentrate on the concept of advanced marginality. Advanced according to Loic Wacquant (1996, 1999, 2008) means that this phenomenon is ahead of us 'etched on the horizon of the becoming of contemporary societies (2008, p.232). Unlike its processing form of the 1960s and -70s advanced marginality became rigid as marginals ceased to be affected by economic fluctuations (Wacquant, 1996, 124). Marginality, initially emphasized a dynamic process, even seen temporal (Gurung and Kollmair, 2005, p.11) has now become a condition, a vicious circle substantiated by global economy and sanctioned by local governments. Marginality can be defined as "the temporary state of having been put aside of living in relative isolation, at the edge of a system (cultural, social, political or economic)" (IGU-link). It is therefore a relational model, positioning a group towards a mainstream. Marginality is the status of exclusion of (global or formal) economy, political participation, access of societal or spatial resources, modernity and sometimes even society. Development per se produces both inequality and inequity in society and space (Sommer et.al. 1999, p.20) as the process of flexible accumulation is inherently unstable and self reinforcing (Harvey 2006, p.95f). The growing discrepancy between rich and poor over the last decades are an appropriate proof of this: In Brazil itself the share of favela dwellers increased from four percent in 1980 to almost 20 percent in 1993 while the wealth discrepancy grew sharply in the last decades. Today Brazil possesses a Gini coefficient of 0,62 meaning that while the poorest 20% possess only 1.5% of total income, the value of the richest 10% is 49%. (D'Ambrosio & Rodrigues 2008, p.1094) According to Janice Perlman, the poor, based on her research on favelados in Rio de Janeiro "are not marginal to Brazilian society but integrated in a manner detrimental to their interests. They are not socially marginal but rejected, not economically marginal but exploited, and not politically marginal but repressed" (Perlman, 1976).

Social Marginality

The first dimension of marginality is its social dimension (de la Rocha et.al., 2004, Gurung & Kollmair 2005, Wacquant 2008) which "is basically a second-class citizenship in which disadvantage derives from the differentiation produced by the institutions of the state." (de la Rocha et.al., 2004, p.196). Marginal populations are outcasts (Wacquant 2008) of mainstream society. It is important to discern marginality from poverty as they are not interchangeably (e.g. dalits, drug dealers, who are marginalized but economical powerful). Social marginality represents a state of absence of modality. Already the sociologist Marcel Mauss³ has defined the realm of the social being the realm of modality. Marginal people do not have other options than living in hazardous locations, using unreliable transportation, receiving reduced and expensive services and being excluded from society and political representation. We see here that marginality is also very spatial in its nature.

Spatial Marginality

Space is essential for the process humans situate themselves into the world and relate to others. As a consequence to the constraints in length of this conference contribution we refer to the work of others (Morris 2004, Harvey 2006). The importance of geography is increasingly identified by social sciences. The spatial turn (Crang & Thrift 2000, Gunn 2001)

prescribes the (re)discovery of space as cultural dimension, away from the concept of 'container' (Lefebvre 1991). Geographies are not only essential to understand the zoning out of otherness but also its underlying dynamics. Groups define themselves in relation to each other, even more they "cannot materialize themselves as real without realizing themselves in space [...]" (see Isin 2002, p.43f). This starts with representation and exchange in the public sphere and ends with buildings creating boundedness. The city is the machine of such formative processes and more is the product of historical layers of social groups (Mumford 1966). Cities are an accumulation of material, human practices and technologies (Read, 2006, p.2). The waterways gave way to roads then railways than highways, aircrafts and high-speed trains. The new technologies were always spatially embedded in former ones, whether following their corridors or concentrating in their spatial accumulation. For the same reason the initial claim globalization would destabilize practices and ultimately lead to dispersed activities have proven wrong. Postmodern space-time compression (Harvey 1990) have intensified concentrations of power and not annihilated them. With such intensification grows the gap between concentration and other areas that are left out. The central business district and slums are both products of global forces, bound into the urban structure by spatial and non spatial infrastructure (see Sassen 1996). Highways, railways and airplanes are new scales of displacements that illustrate the problem of spatial marginality in two ways. A large share of the population in developing countries is excluded from these new modes of transports, while on the same time there infrastructures often represent great barriers. Topographies, politics, society and history have altered the flat surface of the city into a landscape of powers, whereas spatial marginality represents the left-over spaces of such forces. This dimension of marginality is called contingent and inherent to market competitions (See Mehretu et.al 2000). But there is another kind often adding to the outcasting of people. The "systemic marginality is a deliberate social construction by the dominant class to achieve specific desirable outcomes of political control, social exclusion and economic exploitation" (Mehretu et.al. 2000, p.92). This marginality is a consequence of social structure and depends largely on the political system (see Brazil before 1986). The new urban poor or advanced marginals are often systematically excluded and stigmatized in space and society. These stigmatized spaces are increasingly detached from the central parts of urban agglomerations. With globalization the city was ripped of its integrative powers, as functions started to fragment, first by the possibilities of mass transportations then by the power of the automobile, common spatial interfaces are decreasing. The emergence of gated communities and other off worlds is not only a spatial manifestation of life style clustering but symbolic exclusion. We will exemplify such development using São Paulo's historical development of urban structure and public space to later address some ways citizenship and access to public space may be promoted by the architectural profession.

São Paulo's socio-spatial development

To better understand São Paulo's current spatial configuration, mostly a product of an accelerated development in the last century, we first deliver some essential insights to the social and economical currents thriving its growth. We will do this by discussing four different eras (periods derived from: Reis, 2004): the colonial and imperial city (Kingdom, 1554-1889), the European city (Republic, 1889-1930), the American city (1930-1986) and the, democratic city (1986-current). These periods coincide with political changes on federal level, but are furthermore periods marked by social and technical changes/innovations that had an important impact in the way the city of São Paulo spatially developed.

Even though being the capital of the 'capitania'⁴, São Paulo's economy started small-scale and primitive. Its growth had been slow during the imperial period and had experienced an incipient growth during especially the end of the imperial era. In terms of socio-spatial configuration, São Paulo had been dense and heterogeneous until the end of the period (Caldeira, 2000). The colonial city was inhabited by Portuguese rulers, their corollary and merchants while the poor settled outside of the city. Nevertheless, the streets of colonial São

Paulo revealed its social homogeneity through the constant presence of slaves (Reis, 2004). The function of public space had been largely the same during both the colonial and imperial period. During the colonial era, public space had an important function for the colonial 'elite': very similar to European Renaissance and Baroque planning squares, statues, fountains and churches were constructed by public authorities to display the power of those in charge. The slow growth of the city until about 1880 allowed a careful crafting of such public designs. After Brazil's independence in 1822, the political interest in urban design remained intense.⁵ At the end of the imperial era there were not yet exclusively residential neighbourhoods, though some social **segmentation** slowly surfaced. The lower and hillier areas were characterized by popular and industrial neighbourhoods, while the more expensive higher and plainer areas attracted residences of the richer population. The concentration of investments in the latter areas accentuated the emerging socio-spatial fragmentation. From around 1889 two important factors gave accelerated urban growth: firstly the coffee-boom⁶, but more important for the city was the formation of the Republic and the transition from slavery to remunerated labour. The first was influential since it weakened the position of the capital Rio de Janeiro making São Paulo more independent, which led to an increase in the accumulation of coffee related gains. Secondly, the transition to wage labour introduced a new profile in the income distribution, generating a multiplication effect in the internal market. The end of the 19th century became a period of abundant wealth for São Paulo as a whole. With a technical and social modernization Republican leaders practically rebuilt the city after 1889⁷ in reproducing European urban reforms, especially Paris. Various parks, theatres⁸, and hypodromes were opened in the beginning of the 19th century. First (luxury) warehouses emerged, but even plans for (Parisian) galleries were made. As a result of unbridled growth from private allotments of terrains, the urban tissue of São Paulo became fragmented right since the start of its inflated urban growth. Contributing factor is the incapacity of planning authorities to cope with the challenges it posed, lagging always behind: instead of anticipative planning the planning profession became a sort of ad-hoc problem solving. Their activities shifted away from the design of public places to the stitching and weaving of (legal and illegally) constructed urban areas/allotments, (Reis, 2004). The geographical centre of São Paulo continued to concentrate public life, trade, commerce, banks, markets and offices, but at the same time accommodated residential neighbourhoods for the masses of new immigrants which strongly varied in income. Even though the city of 1900 is commonly described as dense and diverse/mixed, concentrations of elites (around Luz) and poor manifested as distinct forms (Reis 2004, p.124), steered by a fear of epidemics – similar to the fear of crime today (Caldeira, 2000).

São Paulo's rapid growth continued under the military regime that came into power after the 1964 coup, paired with a strong faith in progress shared by all citizens (Caldeira & Holsten 2005, p.395). The city became a genuine metropolis and the industrial capital of South America. The production of automobiles became the biggest engine of industrialization. The construction of highways took a flight from the 1950's onwards accompanied by the dismantling of the tram system. The use of the private car opened the possibilities for alternative localizations of functions for those in position to afford one. Combined with the fading of the tramway system, differences in mobility became an important factor in socio-economic fragmentation. São Paulo's mayor business district moved to Avenida Paulista – about 6 kilometres from the historical centre - at the end of the 60's, the city's first shopping mall was realized in 1966 and a decade later the initial stage of Alphaville – São Paulo's first edge city was opened in Baueri, some 25 kilometres from the city centre and outside São Paulo's municipal borders. Until 1970s Modern Planning ideas dominated developments in Brazil (Machado 2008, p.98). "In the Faustian sense, the project of modernist planning is to transform an unwanted present in means of an imagined future." (Holston 1998, p.40). The discourse about the Brazilian city was dominated by ideas that formed the triangle **sanitize**, **circulate** and **beautify**. These ideas directed all proposals in urban space to construct an image of the modern city (Moura Filha 2000, p.65). The city was seen as the symbol of modernity, (Machado 2008, p.98) urbanism and architecture assumed the task to represent the

grandeur of the city, and to inscribe bourgeois order into urban space (Ibd.). Despite the modern image of the city as holistic object/case/machine, already in this period the aesthetic and urbanistic reordering did not apply to the agglomeration as a whole, but only to those scenarios planned for the lifeworlds of the elites, rejecting a mayor part of urban reality incompatible with the ideas of progress of that time.

After the initial economical successes of the military regime, the financial malaise during the 80's virtually froze Brazil's economic growth for a decade giving rise to a diversity of social, economical hardships (and brought some tensions to the fore), especially in its largest metropolitan areas. The mythology of progress started to collapse during the 1980's: the so-called Lost Decade. The Lost Decade was characterized by sharp population growth (millions of Brazilians from the North-East moved to São Paulo), flight of the middle and urban class, erosion of GNP and per capita income linked to the industrial reorganization implied by neoliberal policies of economic globalization. The percentage of slums began to rise from the beginning of the 70's and passed through an enormous increase through the course of the 80's. The aggravated living conditions for the poor masses created social friction and called for other responses to the situation at hand. The circumstances led to Brazil's democratization in the year 1986. Theresa Caldeira, who carefully described this development concludes that the spatial developments after democratization despite major democratizations in the planning process and a closer spatial relation between richer and poorer population was not paralleled by a democratization/egalitarization of urban space. As Caldeira observes brightly, 'São Paulo shows that the polity and the public space of the city can develop in opposite directions' (Caldeira 2000, 322). While the poor received stronger political voices their spatial marginality intensified as consequence of equating democracy with neoliberalism. Most of the urban transformations in the last two decades are broadly not the result of imposed state policies, but rather the product of private enterprises. The segregation of middle and higher income groups into gated enclaves (residential and other functions) catered to the demands of its inhabitants for more security. Ten years after democratization (1996) the rate of murder per hundred thousand population reached 47.3, a value significantly higher than the 1981 rate of 14.62." (Caldeira and Holston 1999, p.696). Yet, the claim – that segregation into enclaves was a direct result of increased crime rates and a consequent increase of fear - is contested by several academic scholars. As for example Caldeira argues; "at least ten years before violent crime increased and became one of the main concerns of São Paulo's residents, the insecurity of the city was already being constructed in real estate images to justify a new type of urban development and investment." (Caldeira, 2000) During the 90's, the city experienced an upsurge in the construction of gated enclaves - especially since 1990 - for which São Paulo later became known as the City of Walls.⁹ The sense of insecurity is favourable factor for market developers, which suggests that they may well have had an important role in constructing a 'culture of fear'. In recent years São Paulo experienced a sharp drop in homicides to 15 per 100.000 in 2006 (Goertzel, T., & Kahn, T, 2007)¹⁰, while the construction of gated enclaves is still increasing. The walls and controls in city space create limits to democratization. "Through the creation of walls, residents re-create hierarchies, privileges, exclusive spaces, and rituals of segregation where they have just been removed from the political sphere." (Caldeira 2000, p.322). A city of walls counters democratic possibilities. Instead of strengthening citizenship, the city of walls contributes to its erosion.

Modern' thinking has been replaced by market or post-modernistic thinking. The utopia of a polis as a place of encounter and agonistic confrontation (Mouffe 2000) is negated by the pragmatism of the city as space, object and subject of trade. (Vainer 2002, p.101). Sameness and otherness is defined along the line of consumption, the fragmentation of the urban fabric substantiated by economic forces re-inscribing its logic. We have seen that polity as a right and activity has been very spatial in the past, its reduction to a detached sphere a threat to sustainable society as differences require encounter and exchange. The dispersion of urban functions and despatialization of some of its activities "have created multiple non-converging networks working against the cohesive nodal role of the urban public sphere." (Madanipour 2003b, p.144) This is the difference between diversity and fragmentation, latter being the

unconnected difference. “Rather than [...] the creation of exclusive enclaves and nodes, the development of truly public spaces is expected to promote a degree of tolerance and social cohesion.” (Madanipour 2003b, p.148) The defined, stratifying character of these post-modern ‘privatized public spaces’ has created a diversity of public spaces that do not correspond to the ideal of publicness. However, produced by globalization and catering to the demand of a changing society. If we have lost the traditional public maybe we experience simply the formulation of a new modern public. A society of multiple lifestyles has already produced the plea for a concept of multiple citizenships. Linking this idea to our discourse a need for spatial diversity is evident. The postmodern public spaces that often handle the dimension of openness, equality and heterogeneity in a very different way are not per definition erosive to society, but only their exclusive character. If such spaces would be embedded in a system of public spaces, fragmentation would dissolve in diversity. By increasing the range of public spaces someone uses in a city and creating interfaces where (some) differences may occur; more sustainable coexistence might be promoted. We will make our point clearer in the final chapter of this paper.

City Space Investigations and beyond

The CSI workshop followed a classic threefold setup, preparation, on-site and postproduction phase (for more information see csi-sp.urbandetectives.com). The Pre.SP started in February and consisted of weekly lecture blocks, in April the on-site workshop took place in São Paulo. In a dialectic setup bright and hidden sides of the city were visited in a half-day rhythm, among the locations were inner city corticos and Alphaville. In the second week participants were asked to elaborate their research proposals. Final results were presented at the FAU-USP and revealed some remarkable sharp observations and interesting approaches. Very dominantly reoccurring, although students were given total freedom, was the topic of public space. Obviously due to the time constraint the different projects miss depth but in their superficial nature they raise some very sparkling ideas. There are undoubtedly some places that seem to embody the ideal of public space as outlined by Arendt. One example is the Ibirapueira Park, which during the weekends is populated by citizens from (almost) all layers of São Paulo’s inhabitants. During week days the region around Paulista Avenue shows the same receptivity to welcome and connect different layers of society. But they are more exception than the rules. There are various examples of well functioning and accessible public spaces also in the more peripheral areas of São Paulo. Yet, these spaces are functional island in the desert of post-modern publicness. It is especially the ‘system’ of public spaces that lacks in São Paulo. The way in which in contemporary São Paulo the public is composed as a system of spaces of agonistic pluralism (Mouffe, 2000) remains weak. What are missing are both the connection between public spaces and their overlap in user groups in form of a nested system. The stratified public spaces of shopping malls and marginal spaces are the dominant form of the cities of walls. Despite unfavorable conditions and the fact that tendencies seem to go in the opposite directions it is particular important to imagine at least possible ways out. Two workshop participants addressed the issues of imagination, representation, and identity on very different scales in the urban environment. One proposed to give former advertisement structures and blank house walls to marginals to represent city images or better said images of the city. This is a refreshing attempt to mingle again the presence of different social layers in everyday experience via the dimension of representation. To change the segregation of São Paulo’s urban space first a mental shift is required. To tear the physical walls of the city someone needs first to break down the mental walls in the heads of Paulistas. The more relevant their idea becomes if linking it with the research of Sharon Zukin. For her a public culture, which emerges of the overlap of polity and media involves ‘both shaping public space for social interaction and constructing a visual representation of the city.’ (Zukin 1996, p.24) Interestingly other participants directly connected with their work on public space to this theme. Public Space, ‘where strangers meet’, is the interface of exchange AND also the structure of the way we perceive our world, therefore it holds the potential to tear down mental AND spatial walls of the São Paulo. The broken networks of the

public web lead to clusters of publicness and activities poorly connected among each other and restricted in their accessibility. A valid strategy for spatial and social inclusion would be a diversification and widening of any publicness. This approach would be based on the expansion of liberties: the concept of ‘unconditional welcome’ is pivotal to the research of one of the author (Guatelli 2008) and represents one extreme of public space rights. An unconditional welcome stretches beyond the right to access public space but enable its use for all. This is already a reality for some spaces, but these are mostly marginal. An interesting exception has been explored by two participants, the Minhocão, an inner-city elevated highway that closes down for traffic over night and in the weekends: an urban void is transformed into running and bicycle tracks.

In practice a strategy would most likely result in conflicts and lead to anarchic situations in most spaces. Public space must be finally perceived as a system. Within São Paulo there exist a diverse range of different spaces with proper qualities and potentials. A strategy could be aiming to unlock these different potentials by classifying the current state of the art. Depending on the category different uses (from privatizing spaces in forms of shelter for homeless to restricted spaces of closed communities) could result in a diverse but more balanced form. There is a fundamental lack of research in this direction, a systematic recording of public space there very starting point of any further investigation. Consequently we are currently carrying out field research in São Paulo, first results – hopefully graphical evidence of the city of wall in forms of maps of a small amount of case study areas – will be presented at the conference. The selection criteria was based on a focus on new forms of public-private space hybrids. Where such new spaces beyond shopping malls and enclaves can be found, has been elaborated by two students who investigated street art and pavements as tools of appropriation. Both activities, operating technically in legal grey zones, result in a privatization of publicness and thus a diversification of their common degree.

The question of how public space can – once again - become (a network of) social interfaces/learning devices has been also addresses by Richard Sennett (2005). The authors see urban Design as a discipline between the architectural scale on the one hand, and the large scale discipline of urban planning on the other as a key in this regard. Politicians and planners undoubtedly have possibilities in their hands to make changes that directly affect the city, its public spaces and its inhabitants. However São Paulo’s past has shown that this theoretical power has seldom been translated in real changes and even more urbanization is an increasing privately driven matter. Who will be the actors of change then? There is an extensive literature on grass roots movement and civic society as alternative to top-down initiatives. In *City of Walls* Theresa Caldeira concludes that the ‘significant improvement on the periphery is to a large extent the result of the political action of its residents who, since the late 1970’s, have organized social movements to claim their rights as city residents’ (Caldeira, 2000, p.236), what James Holston calls ‘insurgent citizenship’¹¹. In other words, it has been the pro-active attitude of the citizen (collectives) that have been the engine of progressive social and spatial change. Building on this, we would like to ask what could be the role of the architect in a process of transformation? In this context the term of architect is not confined to a degree holder but to a person who emphasizes the built environment and whose concern is foremost spatial. The architectural profession has lost any ideological claim. Since modernism, larger visions about a future have been replaced by celebrations of singular creations. Undoubtedly the CIAM plans were blueprints of the future, waiting for society to adopt while giving the power to the state to implement change on this large level and flawed as they failed “to consider the unintended and the unexpected as part of the model” (Holston 1998, p.46). But at least there was a societal concern of the architect for its profession. Questions of what kind of city we would like to live in should be present again on the drawing boards to result in projects that aim to change the erosion of publicness. The planning culture of Brazil is favourable. A considerable amount of architects refuse to work for the market and assist in the commercial architectural production of anti-urban apartment buildings and gated enclaves as they do not want to be related to this neo-liberal, over-commercialized vernacular architecture. This commitment should go beyond denial as

remaining outside the market and production of urban space will not lead to change just eventually slow down its decay. Embedding this claim within our former discussion the concern of the architect should be projects to maximize the unconditional welcome, to stimulate publicness and strengthen citizenship. In context of insurgent citizenships, the architect should assist to translate community needs into innovative spatial solutions. Like the 'assessorias' in mutirão projects, where the architects, sociologists and jurists of the assessoria lend themselves to the popular collective that proposes the mutirão. Yet, the architect could take a pro-active position in this process. We are trying to develop such stimuli by organizing yearly workshops focusing on specific problematic topics. Still in this stage focused on developing visions on long term it is hoped to create enough discussion to translate some ideas in precise interventions. In the next year we hope to use the investigations of the public space structure to reflect on possible strategies to enable multiple publicness.

Conclusion

We have tried to show the importance of public space as primary interfaces of exchange and tool to counter erosive tendencies in post-modern societies. Through time spaces in the city have been matter of control and exclusion on the one side and representation and exchange on the other. In theory a sustainable society in the 21st century should equally allow its citizen to access resources, in practice inequalities were and are inherent to development and inscribed in space and politics. A strategic use of public space to enable encounter of multiple citizens could counter the spatial marginality faced by the weakest income groups. The architect, traditionally envisioning better future, should play a key role in a process of spatial democratization becoming a pro-active agent of change.

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¹ The exact meaning of class will given more space later in this chapter

² It was the time of the Restauration with public surveillance and political repression. Further there existed the common belief that inner emotions translate into readable body signs.

³ Mauss, 1929, *Les civilisations: éléments et formes*, In *Oeuvres*, vol. 2: *Représentations collectives et diversité des civilisations* (1968). Paris: Editions de Minuit.

⁴ Capitania: administrative unit used by the Portuguese colonizers.

⁵ For example, the construction of street lightning, started by the Portuguese, with the objective to transmit an image of order and discipline, was continued by the dominant classes after 1822 to attend their political objectives. For further reading: Reis, *'Vila, Cidade, Metropole'*, 2004.

⁶ In fact the rise in production and export of coffee started halfway the 18th century and had not directly yielded much for São Paulo.

⁷ From 65.000 in 1980 to 240.000 in 1900.

⁸ most parks and theatres were built on private initiative and for commercial use.

⁹ Interestingly, the fragmentation of urban space (favelas, shopping malls, edge cities, CBDs, etc.) was accompanied by the relocation of the rich into the peripheries of the city (instead of sub-urbanization, like the white flight in the USA) while the increasing amount of poor citizens moved to the abandoned city centre. The consequence has been an urban structure in which rich and poor are living more closely than during the former decades.

¹⁰ Despite the fact this number falls short to New York City (7 in 2004) it compares very favourably with the rates reported by Detroit (42), Baltimore (44) and Washington, D.C. (36) in the same year.

¹¹ Insurgent citizenship: practices that work against established conditions of inequality and provide alternatives for including citizens and distributing rights ' (Holston, 1999). For example the active movements among the poor in São Paulo that confront problems of urbanization, land tenure, government regulation, state violence, and misrule of law.