INTERSTITIAL AS A MODE OF PRODUCTION OF SPACE IN SOCIALLY AND POLITICALLY ENGAGED SPATIAL PRACTICES

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I believe dissertations to be a personal journey. And this dissertation is no exception. It stemmed from my search since as a young graduate from architecture, who had doubts thus shied away from becoming a practicing architect. Over the last decade, the more I escaped the architectural drudgery – long office hours spent by the computer without interacting with the users or delving into real accounts, the more I encountered, observed, and had the chance to take part in other means of architectural production. Yet, I realized that sharp edges simply do not exist, that there is no black and white, outside or inside, right or wrong; but a coming to accept the terms at hand by understanding and then acting from within – without refusing the architectural profession, ignoring the capital forces, nor the those in power.

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ABSTRACT

INTERSTITIAL AS A MODE OF PRODUCTION OF SPACE IN SOCIALLY AND POLITICALLY ENGAGED SPATIAL PRACTICES

This dissertation examines socially and politically engaged contemporary spatial practices emerging from the interstices of capitalistic modes of production. Contrary to the prevailing architectural discourse that expounds the subject from architects' vantage point or the discipline's structure, my argument calls for a need of a critical reflection by focusing on the ways in which the ruptures of capitalism impel these tendencies. The main goal is to provide a comprehensive perspective on the causalities, processes and repercussions that contributes to a better understanding of these practices. Drawing concurrently on theory and practice – critical theory and a mapping of twenty worldwide notable spatial practices – the study offers an analytical lens that examines spatial practices through three essential constituents: space, action and position.

This tripartite concern builds a novel and original methodological framework which argues interstitial to emerge as a mode of production of space. Making connections across these constituents enables to register causal and processual determinants of spatial production and helps to assess what repercussions the studied groups bear to contemporary crises of capitalism. Employing the proposed framework, the study scrutinizes these repercussions closely by exploring the spatial practices of three collectives: Architecture for All, Düzce Hope Studio, and 596 Acres. Conflating theory and practice helps to critically assess the interstitial production of space, while situating it beyond a romanticized category within the discipline of architecture and giving it a social and political content from a transdisciplinary perspective.

ÖZET

SOSYAL VE POLİTİK OLARAK ADANMIŞ MEKANSAL PRATİKLERDE BİR MEKÂN ÜRETİM BİÇİMİ OLARAK ARADALIK

Bu tez, günümüz kapitalist üretim biçimlerinin açıklarından ortaya çıkan sosyal ve politik olarak adanmış mekânsal pratikleri incelemektedir. Çalışma, konuyu hâkim mimarlık söylemlerinin ve bakış açılarının aksine, kapitalizmin yarattığı kırılmaların harekete geçirdiği eğilim ve durumlara odaklanarak eleştirel bir okuma ihtiyacına cevap vermektedir. Tezin temel amacı, bu pratiklerin daha iyi anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunmak adına nedensellikler, süreçler ve bunların yankıları üzerine kapsamlı bir bakış açısı sağlamaktır. Eleştirel teori ve dünya genelinde göze çarpan yirmi mekânsal pratiğin haritalanmasıyla teori ve pratik kesişiminde yer alan çalışma, mekân, eylem ve pozisyon olmak üzere üç temel unsur üzerinden mekânsal pratiklerin incelendiği analitik bir mercek sunar.

Bu üçlü unsur, aradalığın mekânsal bir üretim biçimi olarak ortaya çıktığını savunan yeni ve özgün metodolojik bir çerçeve oluşturur. Bu unsurlar arasında bağlantı kurmak, mekânsal üretimin nedensel ve süreçsel belirleyicilerini kaydeder ve incelenen grupların kapitalizmin günümüz krizlerine ilişkin hangi yankıları taşıdığını değerlendirmeye yardımcı olur. Çalışma, önerilen çerçeveyi kullanarak, Herkes İçin Mimarlık, Düzce Umut Atölyesi ve 596 Acres olmak üzere üç kolektifin mekânsal uygulamalarını okuyarak bu tepkileri yakından inceler. Kuram ve pratiği birbirine bağlamak, mekân üretimini mimarlık disiplini içinde romantikleştirilmiş bir kategorinin ötesine yerleştirir ve transdisipliner bir perspektiften toplumsal ve politik bir içerik sağlayarak, aradalığın mekânsal bir üretim biçimi olarak eleştirel bir şekilde değerlendirilmesine yardımcı olur.



Among the oppositions,
There lies another field

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES x
LIST OF TABLES xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS xiv

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: INTERSTITIAL PRODUCTION OF SPACE 1
1.1. Scope of the Study 3
1.2. Aim of the Study 6
1.3. Definition of the Problem 8
1.4. The Argument 11
1.5. Theoretical and Methodological Approach 15
1.6. Overview of the Chapters 19

CHAPTER 2. CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS, INTERLUDE 21
2.1. Architecture's Changing Modes of Production 21
2.2. Resonances in Literature: The Terms at Play 36

CHAPTER 3. MAPPING THE TERRAIN: THE PRODUCTION OF INTERSTITIAL 42
3.1. Conceptualization of Interstitial 44
3.1.1. Interstitial in Literature 45
3.1.2. The Meanings of Interstitial 47
3.1.3. Tool for Criticizing Spatial Production 54
3.2. Building a Framework: Interstitial in Practice 59
3.2.1. Space 60
3.2.1.1. Space as Projective 64
3.2.1.2. Space as Conditional 72
3.2.1.3. Space as Receptive 78
3.2.2. Action 83
3.2.2.1. Acting 88
3.2.2.2. Mediating 92
3.2.2.3. Simulating 96

3.2.3. Position 100
3.2.3.1. Organizational Structures 102
3.2.3.2. Resources 104

CHAPTER 4. INQUIRING TRANSVERSALLY: HERKES İÇİN MİMARLIK, DÜZCE HOPE STUDIO, 596 ACRES 108
4.1. Drawing Connections Across the Map 109
4.2. Emerging Constellations: Recovery, Resilience, and Resistance 114
4.3. Recovery of Abandoned Excess 117
4.3.1 An Amateur Will to Put Failure into Use 120
4.3.2. A History Abandoned: Rural Schools 123
4.3.3. From Abandoned Spaces to Relational Places 125
4.3.4. The Recovery of Excess: Expedition, Interaction and Resource 128
4.3.5. Debriefing the Architect 141
4.4. Resilience in Pleading for The Non-Yet 144
4.4.1. Dimensions of struggle through and for space 147
4.4.2. A Maneuver Within State Mechanisms: Principal Actors and Conjoining Bodies 151
4.4.3. Resilience in Practice 157
4.4.4. Simulating Tools: Design Games and Campaign 161
4.4.5. The Current Status: Between the Desires and the Actualizations 173
4.4.6. Resilience for the Non-yet? 179
4.5. Resistance in Growing Rooms of Hope 181
4.5.1. Looking Through the Interstices 184
4.5.2. Breaking the Narrative 186
4.5.3. Marking Interstices: Online Tools and on Ground Tactics 188
4.5.4. Enduring Interstices 195
4.5.5. Revisiting the Garden of Love and Others 199

CHAPTER 5. CLOSING REMARKS: INTERSTITIAL PRODUCTION OF SPACE REVISITED 202

REFERENCES 215

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. SPATIAL PRACTITIONERS AND THEIR SELECTED WORKS . 235
APPENDIX B. LIST OF SPATIAL PRACTITIONERS INTERVIEWED 236
APPENDIX C. LIST OF SOURCES CONSULTED FOR SPATIAL PRACTITIONERS AND THEIR WORKS 237

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
Figure 2.1.	Raumlabor, Kitchen Monument under flyover, Duisburg 2009	26
Figure 2.2.	Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée, Passage 56, Paris, 2006	27
Figure 2.3.	Global Architecture Political Compass, by Alejandro Zaera-Polo&Guillermo Fernández Abascal, 2016	28
Figure 3.1.	Referring the bright red arrows of Guy Debord's Situationist Map, Cruz and Forman chart the transborder informal urban dynamics between San Diego and Tijuana, presented the 3rd International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam, 2007	66
Figure 3.2.	"The Political Equator", presented at the 3rd International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam, 2007	66
Figure 3.3.	Practice Diagram of Estudio Teddy Cruz depicting (zones of) conflict as an operational tool	68
Figure 3.4.	An image from Dheisheh Refugee Camp in Bethlehem taken in 1952	70
Figure 3.5.	An image from Dheisheh Refugee Camp in Bethlehem from 2010	71
Figure 3.6.	"The Concrete Tent" project realized by DAAR, representing the paradox of permanent temporariness.	71
Figure 3.7.	The "Stoking House" (Stokerij) at Pieter de Raadtstraat	74
Figure 3.8.	Ecobox project, realized by aaa, 2001-2006	75
Figure 3.9.	Floating University, realized by Raumlabor, 2018	76
Figure 3.10.	Kai Fong Pai Dong, 2016	78
Figure 3.11.	The Public Bath, temporary installation, Arthur Verona Street, Bucharest, 2012.	80
Figure 3.12.	The Letter Bench, public furniture, Arthur Verona Street, Bucharest, 2009	80
Figure 3.13.	Mobile Cinema is a temporary public installation produced under ArchFilmSthlm film festival in Stockholm, 2015	81
Figure 3.14.	Cubes being activated by people through different uses, Open-Cube, 2013	82

Figure **Page**

Figure 3.15. Recetas Urbana's strategies for subversive occupation attracting media attention: Skips – Taking the Street (top left); Scaffolding – Building Yourself an Urban Reserve (top right); Institutional Prosthesis 1 – Capsule 1 (bottom left); Insect House – The Tick's Stratagem (bottom right) 90
Figure 3.16. The Cineroleum, realized in 2010, is a self-initiated project by the Assemble studio that transforms an abandoned petrol station on Clerkenwell Road in London into a cinema 91
Figure 3.17. What is Affordable Housing is a comprehensive project developed by CUP in the form of a toolkit that includes an online interactive map, a guide, and a wall chart to inform communities about housing policies . 94
Figure 4.1. Rural schools in Kargı (above) and Çaka (below) villages 119
Figure 4.2. A timeline of HIM projects from 2011 until 2016. Orange color refers to Abandoned Rural Schools project, which is the most continuous and dominant project among the other works of the organization 126
Figure 4.3. The digital interface of Abandoned Rural Schools Project map 128
Figure 4.4. HIM starting to practice in Ordu as the pilot province 130
Figure 4.5. Converting schools in different regions of Turkey, HIM aims to create an awareness in rural geographies 132
Figure 4.6. A selection of newspapers and fanzines produced during the design workshops series taking place in various villages 135
Figure 4.7. Images from Mesudiye Landscape Workshop 138
Figure 4.8. Tenant earthquake victims sharing the legal basis of their struggles with the public 144
Figure 4.9. "Earthquake destroyed their houses; government destroyed their tents!" Police intervention to tenants' make-shift structures during their emplacement at Abdi İpekçi Park 150
Figure 4.10. Cooperative land (marked in black) is located west to the Düzce Glass Factory and east to the MHA housing settlement 163
Figure 4.11. Düzce Hope Studio volunteers devising the rules of the game during the internal meeting on 24 January 2015 165
Figure 4.12. Master plan and interior design games are held on 8 February and 15 March, at Düzce wedding hall 166

Figure **Page**

Figure 4.13. (On the left) Render from Düzce Hope Homes project resembling (on the right) MHA dwelling units located on nearby plot of the project area 169
Figure 4.14. The interface of the campaign calling for support titled under the hashtag #harcımızaumutkat (translated as #addhopetoourmortar) 171
Figure 4.15. Düzce Hope Homes project, view from drone in 2017 176
Figure 4.16. View from Düzce Hope Homes Project, July 2019 176
Figure 4.17. Lot #329 which is reserved for community facilities, July 2019 178
Figure 4.18. Community gardens as vacant public spaces, Halsey Community Farm & Myrtle Village Green, Brooklyn Borough, New York City, March 2018 183
Figure 4.19. Garden of Love, Harlem, Manhattan, New York City, May 2018 185
Figure 4.20. The digital interface of Living Lots NYC map 190
Figure 4.21. NYCommons map can be reached from <https://nycommons.org/> accessed 20/10/18 191
Figure 4.22. The Urban Reviewer is an online archive researchable by specific plan, year and the supposed use of an area in New York City. It provides a map overlaying public vacant lots with places that were planned for use as open space 192
Figure 4.23. A prototype sign on a fence showing how the digital tools of 596 Acres match with physical interventions on site 194
Figure 4.24. Events taking place at the Electric Ladybug Garden located in Harlem 199

LIST OF TABLES

Table **Page**

Table 1.1. Conceptual Map of the Research 14

Table 3.1. Conceptual Framework of the Research 107

Table 4.1. The Constellations of Recovery, Resilience, and Resistance in the practices of Herkes İçin Mimarlık, Düzce Hope Studio, and 596 Acres ... 113

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

aaa	Atelier d'architecture autogérée (Studio for Self-managed Architecture)
CohStra	Cohabitation Strategies
CUP	Center for Urban Pedagogy
DAAR	Decolonizing Architecture and Art Residency
HIM	Herkes İçin Mimarlık (Architecture for All)
KFPD	Kai Fong Pai Dong
PDNE	Provincial Directorate of National Education

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION:
INTERSTITIAL PRODUCTION OF SPACE

It is year 2084 in the film *The Fall of Artists' Republic*[1], and we learn from a barefoot art historian character that a new regime was established by a group of citizens, which has emerged as a result of a social movement fired by a Facebook status. States have become ungovernable and no longer exist the way as we know. Political boundaries have been wiped out, and money has been abolished, yet replaced by products as tokens for exchange. There is a complete freedom from the existing power structures, and in trying to mend pieces of the failed capitalist state, people discuss the possibilities for independent cultural and spatial production. The scene depicted takes place in one of the structures of 'International Fair Complex' in Tripoli, Lebanon; an unfinished building designed by Oscar Niemeyer, one of the key figures in the development of modern architecture. The selection of this built environment seems to be an intentional choice, as it represents a rupture of power reflected in the space, with the abandonment of the modernist plans due to the country's civil war in 1975. As they try to reconcile their new condition with the everyday practices that contribute to the appropriation of this incomplete monumental concrete dome, people reflect on labor, economics, and cultural issues – the ingrained structuring principles of capitalist production mechanisms engraved in space.

Albeit the perpetual self-design, diminishing professional positions, dissolution of class struggles and enforced labor, in short, emancipating from all the pressures of the capitalist system, this emerging Artist's Republic falls into another state of crisis that is eventually condemned to corruption and failure, because it replicates the same situation that has brought about the collapse of the capitalism in the first place. I point to this scene

[1] *The Fall of Artists' Republic* is the second episode of *2084: A Science Fiction Show,* a video installation written and directed by Anton Vidokle and Pelin Tan in 2014. The film was screened at the Monitor Exhibition in Izmir, Turkey, on September 28, 2019. My following comments on this film are based on the interpretations by Pelin Tan's ideas on architecture and space production during the conversation session held at the exhibition opening on the same day.

in order to introduce this dissertation because of its contention that power structures are ubiquitous – circumscribed in space and injected into everyday life practices – even outside the circuits of capital accumulation as the story emphasizes. Between the dismay of the capitalist state and the struggles emanating from this new condition, the story may reflect a dystopian future, but essentially tries to underline that complete liberation from the system – whether capitalism or the Artist's Republic – would be futile.

What this fictional film captures resonates with the arguments of thinkers on the Left. From the perspective of capitalism, the French Marxist philosopher Guy Debord argues that "in a unified world there is no exile" ([1989] 1991, p. 40). Or as the Marxist urbanist scholar Andy Merrifield points it out further:

> "There is no real exile for the amateur, no geographical safe haven to flee to, no without the spectacle—only a refusal to perform within it, or to perform in a different subversive way; to be restless and questioning, skeptical and adversarial, caring for ideas that are ambiguous and contradictory, ironic and even comic" (2015, p. 760).

Both the film and the scholars critically assert that the speculation for a Left urban future, with the participatory democracy, collective organizational forms or bottom-up solutions entirely detached from the status quo is not an ideal scenario. Whereas the film threads this scheme from a future end that has not yet been materialized, Debord and Merrifield position their arguments within the real – based on the 1960s and the contemporary social movements.

From the vantage point of a social movement, *The Fall of Artist's Republic* renders social and political organizations animating in space in opposition to the logic of capitalism. It consequently appears as a prescient questioning of rising tendencies towards space production as a response to unfolding systematic crisis, which poises the primary concern in this dissertation. The beginning assertion in this research is that we cannot capture a complete account of collective and bottom-up mobilizations in isolation from structures and institutions; not either merely from the viewpoint of spatial practices they bring about. Focusing on the ways in which the ruptures of capitalism impel these tendencies, this dissertation explores spatial practices emerging from the interstices of capitalistic modes of production – which I suggest calling 'interstitial production of space'. The study fundamentally engages with the concept 'interstitial' to broach a mode of production that is beyond neoliberal provisions despite the prevailing capitalist trajectory, and also points it out as a critical and analytical vehicle to introduce a

comprehensive direction for expressing spatial practices operating within existing structures and institutions. From this perspective, and locating the research in the contemporary landscape poises a series of questions: What is the relationship between the crisis of capitalism and social and political organizations in space? In particular, in the face of capitalism's turmoil, how are the rising socio-political trends towards space production related to the multifaceted crisis of capitalism? Is it possible to challenge the fractures of capitalism by completely escaping from its power structures while performing critical engagements in space? A research approach building on these preliminary questions is the subject of this dissertation.

1.1. Scope of the Study

Despite its fictional plot, The Fall of Artist's Republic makes an analogy with what is at stake in the contemporary trends of capitalism. Contrary to its reflections on the distant future, this study explores spatial practices[2] concerning the field of architecture that have emerged in response to a globalized, financialized and neoliberalized context since the late 1990s.[3]

While the driving forces of rampant consumerism, profit-driven industries, finance sector, and the mechanization of labor contribute to the acceleration of global economy on one side, the abolition of welfare states by introducing a free-market economy sparks neoliberal capitalism as ever. The resulting tension and the consecutive state of ambiguity appearing with the varying pressing issues – financial meltdowns, social injustices, resource exploitation and ecological disruptions for the sake of a growth

[2] Encompassing various forms of interventionist strategies, with a desire for a socially and politically committed approach to the design of spaces, the term spatial practice is used to "describe new forms of interdisciplinary practices responding to the contemporary city and the politics of territorial relations" (Dodd, 2019, p. 11). Historically, this particular term was early verbalized and utilized to construct a trialectic formation of spatial moments by Henri Lefebvre, in his seminal book The Production of Space. In this regard, I prefer to engage with the term spatial practice rather than architectural practice, and to call spatial practitioner rather than architect. First, not all the works correspond to a traditional understanding of architecture as the design of buildings. Second, as the following pages will demonstrate, the field includes not only architects but also the works of non-architects. See the footnote 6 for further details.

[3] The 1990's correspond to a period of 'roll-out neoliberalization', which expressed a trend toward urbanization, envisioning city space as an arena for economic growth. By the early 2000's – marking "the first climax of neoliberalization", urbanization has gone global through the integration of financial markets contributing to its development. For further information on the interplay between political, economic, and spatial consequences of these macro trends transforming urban and the milieus in which social mobilizations operate see, Mayer, M. (2013). First world urban activism, City, 17:1, pp. 5-19.

agenda, reflect back on the physical and social spheres of life, affecting the direction and the quality of built environment, governance, democratic rights, eventually having impacts on the relations between the social and the spatial.

In regard to the social-spatial dialectic[4], and the fact that the agenda of capitalism is more evident in the field of neoliberal urbanization, it is possible to observe a display of citizens' dissatisfaction against these omnidirectional complications with the rallying cries across the globe. Under the claim of "the right to the city"[5], large-scale demonstrations taking the streets of Athens, Cairo, São Paulo, or the public space occupations such as the Gezi Park in Istanbul and the Zuccotti Park in New York City represent only a few of the most remarkable instances of urban social movements that have been witnessed more intensely in the last decade. Despite the varying contextual issues behind these urban upheavals – such as due to profound monetary crisis, social and economic inequality, private developments threatening the future of public spaces, gentrification and displacement – from the perspective of capitalism's ramifications, these events prove a strong correlation between social organizations and space. Thus, according to critical urban theorists (Brenner, 2017; Mayer 2013; Brenner, Marcuse & Mayer, 2012), forms of protest, activism and occupation are interpreted both as a consequence of and response to the versatile crisis of capitalism, which are immanent in or reflected through space, and therefore critically call to question the efficacy of existing mechanisms of spatial production.

The interaction between the resulting social forms and spatial possibilities is not only discernible from a discontented citizen's point of view but has also implications in the neighboring fields of spatial production – concerning in particular the design disciplines of architecture, planning, and public art practices. Neoliberal resonances are

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[4] In "The Social-Spatial Dialectic" (1980), Edward W. Soja conceptualizes the entangled relationship between social and spatial structures. Soja claims that spatial structures produced by societal processes have effects over those processes, which he asserts as:
"The structure of organized space is not a separate structure with its own autonomous laws of construction and transformation, or is it simply an expression of the class structure merging from the social (i.e. aspatial) relations of production. It represents, instead, a dialectically defined component of the general relations of production, relations which are simultaneously social and spatial" (1980, p. 208).

[5] Coined by Henri Lefebvre – in his book "*Le droit à la ville"* (1967), the 'right to the city' originally appeared as a radical demand for urban politics, raising questions about the conceptualization of the city and the rights of its citizens. Rearticulating Lefebvre's central arguments, in his 2008 essay *"Right to the City"*, David Harvey argued that "the right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city" (Harvey, 2008, p. 23). Today, right to the city has passed into general usage and has become a slogan for worldwide social movements.

nevertheless immanent in spatial practices, with politics and economy being major driving forces in producing and shaping built environments. Despite operating under such forces, the inevitable turmoil brought about by the environmental, democratic and financial predicaments has led to the questioning of the conventional modes these fields engage with both society and space (Dodd, 2019; Bryant, Rodgers, Wigfall, 2018; Architecture for Humanity 2012; Lepik & Bergdoll, 2010; Bell & Wakeford, 2008). Although the social and spatial consequences of crisis recur differently in each and every context, attempts to counteract the rolling ruptures of capitalism have opened up many doors for practitioners coming from these fields. It also encouraged the actions and engagement of actors who do not fit into these professional categories but still nurture and contribute to disciplinary vision through spatial practice. Thus, to respond to "crises-riddled times" – a term coined by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (2017, p. 1-15) to address the ongoing economic and social forces, the work of increasing number of spatial practitioners is concerned with the social and political organization that is in favor of people other than completely subscribing to the agendas of bureaucrats, authorities and market players (Gandolfi, 2008, p. 125). Presenting an alternative to the conventional and dominant professional model of capital-intensive and client-dependent modes of operation, this interest offers distinct premises in the production of space.

As the recent architecture literature discloses (Dodd, 2019; Džokić & Neelen, 2018; Petrescu & Trogal, 2017; Mitrasinovic, 2016; Awan, Schneider & Till, 2011; Cuff & Sherman, 2011) this wave of experimentation has propelled alternative ways of spatial organization, regarding both the context and content of spatial interventions, and prompted diverse organizational structures. Responding to rapid and disruptive urban developments, the building interest stands in opposition to the conventional emphasis on formal and technocratic innovations, while its practitioners take a critical stance against the limited nature of spatial production trapped by market dynamics. Whereas noticeable number of contemporary works encourage the processual dimension of spatial operations over the corporeal reality of space, they enroll more in the practices of social engineering to translate and respond to the complexities that has come with capitalism. Not only do they anticipate diverse visions in the making of space, they also seek to establish and experiment with practices beyond physical structuring while positioning their efforts, strategies and tactics for the improvement of society at the level of urban politics, governance or everyday life. Hence, these distinct premises in the production of space are tied to practices enhancing responsibilities towards a wider public and ethical

consequences of such actions. Yet, given the fact that production of space historically operates from a position of instrumentalization serving the needs of the capital, what does it mean for these practices to perform in a noncompliant, non-profit driven manner, and favoring public interest? What are spatial practitioners doing amid the contemporary neoliberal turbulences? How are they facilitating ideas and making the issues visible, and how on the other hand these broader challenges influence their practices?

Accompanying these trends, the scope of this study covers contemporary spatial practices that act beyond neoliberal provisions within the dominant capitalist trajectory, with the purpose to decipher their distinct approaches to spatial production in the face of multifaceted contemporary crisis.

1.2. Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is fundamentally twofold: First, to create a framework based on the analysis of selected spatial works; and second, to apply this framework to evaluate the responses of these works to the crisis of capitalism. Regarding the former, the critical framework presented by the study intends to provide a direction for rethinking practices emerging from the interstices of capitalistic modes of production. To reach this aim, the study draws a connection between the impacts of global political, economic, and social forces, and emerging local strategies as an alternative response to neoliberal paradigms of spatial interventions.

The critical framework offers an analytical approach to create a method of analysis to be used for deciphering impulses, motivations, and reactions underlying this contemporary wave of thought. Hence, through this suggested approach, the study seeks for a comprehensive trajectory to examine and reflect on this orientation drawing concurrently from theory and practice – critical (urban) theories, and a mapping of contemporary spatial practices.

Bridging a connection between (critical) theory and practice (through studying worldwide located notable works) (in Chapter 3), the framework follows the review of argumentations appearing in architecture platforms (in Chapter 2). Thus, it traces the causal and processual determinants of spatial production to evaluate what kind of repercussions spatial practitioners might achieve in the world of form and aesthetics while being sensitive to social and political issues connected to place. As a result, the study,

visiting varying contexts, means, forms and operational scales, tries to unfold the blurred boundaries between communication, the design process and the product. In doing so, it also reveals practices that are not confined to the conventional description of architecture as the making of buildings.

To reach the first aim, this study draws and elaborates the framework that emerges from the review of the work of twenty contemporary platforms, collectives, firms, non-profit organizations operating at the boundaries[6] of architecture. With the intention to unravel the contours of their projects in order to explore casual and processual motives in producing space, the framework is constituted by mapping the works of 596 Acres, Jeanne Van Heeswijk, Center for Urban Pedagogy, Cohabitation Strategies, and Estudio Teddy Cruz based in the United States; Raumlabor, Dis/Order, Atelier d'architecture Autogérée, Assemble, Muf Architecture/Art, Recetas Urbanas, Stalker, StudioBASAR, and Stealth Unlimited located in different parts of Europe; Herkes İçin Mimarlık, Düzce Umut Atölyesi, About Blank, and Plankton Project from Turkey; Kai Fong Pai Dong from Hong Kong; and finally, Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency from Palestine. Whilst I am aware that it is not possible to capture a complete record of the entire field of spatial practices emerging from the breaks of capitalism, the practices of these particular groups from the Global North are considerably established rather than being fleeting in the contexts they are situated. Thus, they offer a promising start to reveal how the different dimensions of the crisis accentuated in a complementary manner despite the disparate geographies, and in particular, to illustrate how the tendencies of these different groups coincide despite changing contexts, scales, operations, and organizational structures.

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[6] Not all the groups included in the study – due to having interdisciplinary structures or because they adapt architectural tools despite having no architects in their organizational body – can be considered to be practicing architecture in a traditional sense. Yet these groups occupy the contemporary architecture discourse, calling into question the changing roles of the architect and the boundaries of architectural practice. Thus, regarding the notion of boundary, the study joins Neil Leach's point of view, who in the introduction of the book "Rethinking Architecture" argues for a new understanding of boundary to redefine architecture. Leach mentions his thoughts on boundary as follows:
"[F]or architecture to rethink itself it must not be constrained by the limitations of tradition… This refusal to be limited by tradition—this insistence that the identity of architecture must be called into question—necessarily implies that the very notion of definition must be interrogated. In other words, the nature of the boundary that defines architecture needs to be reconsidered, and the relationship between what is 'inside' and 'outside' needs to be readdressed…Traditionally, architecture's relationship to other disciplines has been premised on a marked sense of alterity and exclusivity. Architecture has been given clearly defined boundaries. Architecture, for example, is architecture because it is not painting or sculpture. The nature of these boundaries therefore needs to be interrogated in a way that does not deny the specificity of the discipline of architecture, but rather in a way that attempts to redefine its relationship to other disciplines." (Leach, 1997, p. xvii)

As it will be initially introduced and then discussed in detail in Chapter 2 and 3 respectively, these spatial works often embrace manifestos, interventions, and collective design claims that have concerns around inclusivity, social rights, justice and equity. They come along with their crude aesthetics, but most importantly, they offer new organizational forms, processes and social dynamics beyond the dominant mechanisms of power. Although they already incorporate a critical direction into contemporary architectural thinking, they are developing and mutating in line with the ruptures and enclosures of capitalism. This raises the second aim, which is to assess their impacts, challenges, failures, and potentials using the framework.

For the purposes of this second aim, the study applies the framework to read the works of three groups out of the twenty mentioned above: Herkes İçin Mimarlık (Architecture for All), Düzce Umut Atölyesi (Düzce Hope Studio), and 596 Acres. One reason for selecting these particular works is that each demonstrates a different trajectory when moving across the constituents of the framework, which will be introduced in detail in section 1.4. These diverse trajectories are another reason, which allows to identify different responses to the crisis of capitalism.[7]

1.3. Definition of the Problem

Building on the above-mentioned capitalist state in fluctuation, and especially in parallel with the increasing number of spatial practices that have been corresponding to this condition in the last two decades, there is a growing body of literature questioning the current state of architecture. Whereas most publications advocate a critical program to express the opposition of spatial works in the context of social and political significance (Petrescu & Trogal, 2017; Oswalt, Overmeyer, Misselwitz, 2013; Rosa, & Weiland, 2013; Thompson 2012; Hyde, 2012), others rarely pose a critical point to view of the contingencies (Till, 2013, Karim 2018; Sadler 2018), efficacies (Kaminer, 2017; Cupers, 2014; Schneider 2013), and complicities (Spencer, 2016; Dovey, 2005) of these tendencies against the capitalism's cause of growth.

As in the former case, perspectives to articulate the critical inclinations are garnered under several designations, including but not limited to themes as participatory,

[7] For further reasons for the selection of these groups, see, Section 4.1. 'Drawing Connections Across the Map', p. 111.

tactical, self-build, community-based, public interest, design activism, socially engaged, and spatial agency (Bieling, 2019; Lydon & Garcia, 2015; Awan, Schneider & Till, 2011; Bell & Wakeford, 2008; Fisher, 2008; Blundell, Petrescu, Till, 2005). These themes, refined in the light of critical theories and practices of the late 1960s, provide detailed and resourceful insights into the processes of contemporary spatial operations responding to continuing ruptures. However, one problem inherent in this type of categorization is that they deliver fragments of what is at stake by circumventing the broader forces at play. Given the common characteristics of these studies, in accessing spatial situations, the focus usually leans on the design processes along with the output. Yet, building on my initial observations based on the practices in this research, I believe that the process does not only point to operational features in or for space but also implies a casual understanding. It calls for an inclusive picture capturing historical, political, cultural, economic and everyday dynamics that challenge and enforce the spatial production. Outcome, on the other hand, might not necessarily be assessed with a physical or a non-physical output, nor the output should be tied as the only outcome. Since the making of space does not only register for concrete accounts, and the fact that the act of producing space is continuous, yielding no material outputs nor having precise outcomes can also lead to a culmination. Hence, my contention is that encapsulating spatial practices in these categories in order to address a position taken outside the normative or mainstream modes of production remain bounded to capture a thorough picture of spatial interventions. Throughout this dissertation, for convenience's sake, I will refer these expansions under social and political engagement[8]; not to omit the articulations of these fragmented modalities nor to enhance a further category, but to embrace an inclusive attitude other than only addressing the processual dimensions of design interventions as indicated in this scholarship. In Chapter 2, I elaborate these entire range of themes that are encompassed by the term.

In the latter case, recent critical perspectives established around the issues whether architecture can either retreat into an autonomous realm or remain as an institutional apparatus within the ruptures of contemporary capitalism offer binary assertions that rely

[8] Social and political engagement (commitment is also used interchangeably) has recently been addressed in architectural scholarship to refer practices of architects and artists against neoliberal urbanization. See, for instance, in Dodd, M. (Ed.). (2019). *Spatial Practices: Modes of Action and Engagement with the City*. Routledge; Kaminer, T. (2017). *The Efficacy of Architecture: Political Contestation and Agency*. New York: Routledge; Ericson, M & Mazé, R. (Eds.) (2011). *Design Act – Socially and Politically Engaged Design Today – Critical Roles and Emerging Tactics.* Iapsis and Sternberg Press.

largely on theoretical argumentations evolving independently of practice (Choi & Trotter 2017, 2010; Till, 2013). Although questions around architecture's emancipation from or compliance with the forces of capitalism provide substantial reflections on spatial production and its relation to economics, social and cultural relations, they fall in the risk to remain distant and abstract criticisms[9], as they are constructed around sweeping assumptions that can hardly be matched with and settled in each and every spatial practice.

Nevertheless, both commentaries in the architectural scholarship suggest two things: in the first instance, publications position architecture beyond a practice of 'form-making'; and in the second case, they underline the 'meaning-making' of spatial production that operates at the intersection of power and wider relations of social production. Behind these orientations approaching the issue at stake either in a very specific or rather very broad manner, what remains commonplace in both scholarships is a discipline-bound or discipline-oriented epistemology which is partial in dealing with the complexities of capitalism (Doucet & Janssens, 2011). Thus, while the former path faces the risks of being absorbed by institutions as a result of the popularization of alternative spatial modes of production (Schneider, 2018, 2013; Doucet, 2018; Cupers 2014), the latter leaves arguments unchallenged by tapping into the narrow channels of a biased disciplinary superiority or subservience (Rendell, 2007).

In this respect, embracing an architectural lens over the debates of social and political engagement by putting forward looming questions such as 'what architecture does' or 'how architect resolves' issues that emerge due to the fractures of capitalism might fall short for a critical assessment. What is, furthermore, limiting the scope within the confines of architectural practices – that are recognized by disciplinary scholarship – often form a bounded source and an assertive perspective to understand spatial situations. At this point, I believe that placing this study in a broader scheme, which provides access to further spatial practices, including also the works of non-architects, enables a more comprehensive reading of spatial situations, while also allowing for an amplified argument that is reflected back into architecture spheres.

In order to unfold architecture's social and political entanglements, scholarship needs to delve below the surface of various spatial interventions to understand their

[9] For a detailed overview on the recent history of criticism and architecture, see, Rendell, J. (2007). Introduction: Critical Architecture: Between Criticism and Design, in Rendell, J., Hill, J., Fraser, M. & Dorrian, M. (Eds.). Critical Architecture, (pp. 1-8). New York: Routledge.

contextual dynamics along with how they work within and upon existing structures and institutions. Therefore, for the purposes of this dissertation, the critical lens I present endeavors to bridge the gap between the two perspectives mentioned above. It will feed from trans-disciplinary (theory and practice) and interdisciplinary (social, political, and cultural theory) forms of inquiry to advance debates around spatial works responsive to the adverse effects of capitalism.

1.4. The Argument

To contribute this gap in the architectural literature, the study turns to a set of contemporary works to reveal an interplay between the crisis of modern capitalist conditions and the corresponding rising tendencies towards spatial production. To expound this correlation, my initial argument stems from an analytical perspective to trace spatial practices from a series of distinct directions, which at the same time helps to capture the manifold implications of the crisis on these works. This analytical lens is presented to suggest a method of analysis to figure out distinctive approaches to spatial production, which relies on the three crucial constituents of space, action, and position. Each constituent is explored to take a closer look at the ways in which spatial works have been provoked by, and that have shaped neoliberal visions. While space elaborates the sites of the works in which the crisis intervenes, action analyzes the modes that these spaces come into contact with, and position opens up the stances of subjects related to the disciplinary capacity of architecture.

Drawing on these tripartite concerns, which lays out the structure of the research framework, interstitial is not only claimed to urge as a mode of production that is inherent to each constituent, but also becomes a useful critical tool that strives to think beyond the oppositional readings in architecture. This research stance, along with the constituents, will be articulated in depth (in Chapter 3); however, it should be noted that the discussion in this study is not essentially to create a priori categories shaped and fixed by theoretical argumentations, but to primarily cultivate these constituents emanating from a mapping of a cluster of spatial practices associated with theoretical sensitivities (Table 1.1). Therefore, the amplification of the constituents presented in this study should not be interpreted as absolute, rather, they might be loosed or lessened depending on the specificities of each spatial work. In general, the study seeks to open up a ground and

argument for a practical understanding rather than to systematize socially and politically engaged spatial works, as what remains fundamental is to read through these constituents to explore and unravel the social dynamics and political entanglements when accessing particular spatial positions. Thus, moving across these constituents not only enables to register causal and processual determinants of spatial production, but also helps to assess what repercussions the studied cases bear in response to the contemporary crisis of capitalism. Applying the proposed framework, I will elaborate and criticize three particular reactions: Recovery, resilience, and resistance, each of which are integral to the constituent space, action, and position. These reactions to the contemporary crisis of capitalism will be closely observed in Chapter 4, exploring in detail the spatial practices of three groups.

The three case studies allow a deeper look into different contexts, modes of working, disciplinary orientations, and organizational structures. The first points to Herkes İçin Mimarlık, which takes on the approach of recovery. The group's interest is inclined toward activating abandoned spaces, through which they heal the physical conditions of spaces and encourage citizen empowerment. The design and construction-oriented actions of the group come from their architectural backgrounds, which are put in favor of connecting communities than fostering the formal and tectonic gestures of space. Both the design and construction are self-initiated and self-made, thanks to the volunteers and sponsorships. The second approach, resilience, marks the practices of Düzce Hope Studio, a group coming from different disciplinary backgrounds of architecture, sociology, civil engineer, law, and planning. It is a network that builds as a result of citizens' continual state of struggle for their rights to dwelling. The group has a fleeting status, on the condition of undertaking the task of a single project without a confirmed place. Their actions are at the intersection of testing design protocols and organizing campaigns to pull in financial resources. The third and the final, highlights 596 Acres, whose approach to resistance is not through designing spaces but through designing ways to organize communities. Although there is no architect, there are the tools of the architect to make vacant spaces visible and put into use. Access to public spaces is endeavored through seeking for legal rights and public funds.

In relation to this proposed framework, and acknowledging the acute issues of global capitalism, my second argument to unravel how this disposition is practiced builds on an articulation that requires a perpetual shift between macro and micro scales: the context of global political economy that produces space through capitalist relations and

economies, and the local context in which spatial practices take place. Whereas the former is the wider structure having effects on the latter, local context comes with its own social, political, and historical entanglements connected to a place. This is why, despite acknowledging the local dynamics of works focused on this study, the research does not encompass practices emanating only from a specific geographical, urban or a national context, but includes practices located across the different parts of the world. Departing from contemporary argumentations in architecture shaped within the context of global political economy, research in this sense treats context beyond a fixed location by recognizing its interchanging scale and builds on an analysis of works at multiple scales.

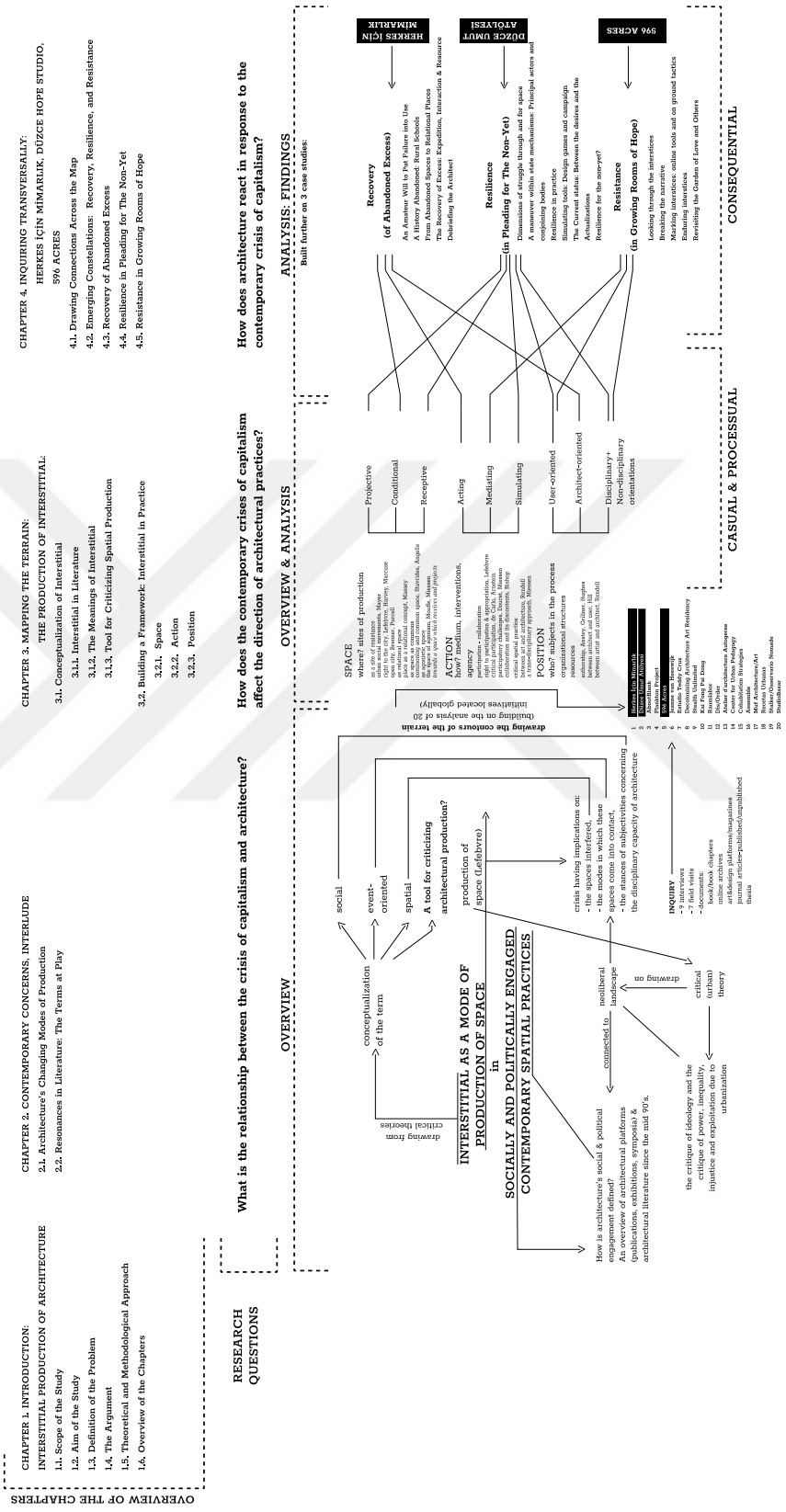
The spatial practices visited in this study not only support these arguments by providing deeper insights, but also contribute to shaping of the content of the conceptual framework and strengthen the structure of the analysis method I develop in my research. Eventually, the study functions in three main levels:

1. To unfold the acute problems of capitalism which animates and manipulates social and political organizations in space – with a particular focus on the rising alternative tendencies towards space production.

2. To consult 'interstitial' as a critical tool to seek beyond the prevalent hierarchical discussions in architecture around the normative / alternative, structure / agency, institutional / radical, top-down / bottom-up, architect / user, within / outside state mechanisms, or the autonomy / heteronomy oppositions; and also, to introduce the concept as an analytical lens in accordance with the aforementioned framework. Space, action and position are the constituents meeting the different associations with the concept, hence form an analysis model for this particular research.

3. Moving across the constituents of the framework, to draw out the implications of spatial practices, thereby revealing the agency of spatial practitioners within the dominant social order of global capitalism.

Table 1.1. Conceptual Map of the Research.
(Source: Author)



1.5. Theoretical and Methodological Approach

As this introduction has emphasized so far, I am interested in looking into the design processes of spatial interventions. Referring the crisis circumstances here, I should point out that the study is particularly concerned with the manifestations of neoliberal urbanization associated with unjust, militarized, exclusionary, undemocratic, or environmentally destructive agendas. Consequently, as Neil Brenner asserts, spatial practices animated in the pursuit of this multifaceted critique of crisis "emerge from within, and conflictually co-evolve with" a "wide-ranging problematique" (2017, p. 16). Therefore, the emergent spatial works brought together in this study lead my interest in developing a perspective to understanding their impulses towards this far-reaching "problematique". In this context, the analysis collected in accordance with the framework tries to provide a series of reflections arising from the fundamental questions about where, how, who, and in what ways such practices might be expressed.

The major inspiration for this analytical approach comes from critical theory, which not only points to a "criticism by theory" (Dant, 2003, pp. 1-16), but also offers methodological insights. In general terms, theory, in the words of Jane Rendell, is used to describe "modes of inquiry in science through either induction, the inference of scientific laws and theories from observational evidence, or deduction, a process of reasoning from the general overarching theory to the particular" (Rendell, 2006, p. 7). Critical theory is also a mode of inquiry as well as a form of knowledge; however, it differs epistemologically from the theories in natural sciences. In his book, "Critical Social Theory: Culture, Society and Critique", Tim Dant expresses critical theory as a reflective form of knowledge, unlike objectifying theories in natural sciences:

> "Rather than replace it with a 'pure' form of knowledge, one that is separate from the world of experience and action, critical theory proposes an engaged form of knowledge that is reflective and addresses the consequences for ordinary lives, for individuals and for their freedom. Critical thought always questions the basis of any form of knowledge and is unwilling to accept a system, or method, as sufficient to legitimate knowledge." (Dant, 2003, p. 131).

First introduced by Max Horkheimer in his 1937 essay "Traditional and Critical Theory", the term "critical theory" is associated with the works of Frankfurt School – whose attendants, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Jürgen Habermas, and Walter Benjamin, have developed the notion from the late 1930s up through the 1980s. Translating Karl Marx's critique of political economy into critical social analysis, and

within the era of postwar capitalism – building on the themes such as mass consumerism, technology, culture industry, commodification – critical theory has been developed as an "epistemological concept" directed against "the positivistic and technocratic approaches to social science" (Brenner, 2017, p. 28). Several sources claim that somewhat later French tradition coincides with critical theory, including the writings of Henri Lefebvre, Jean Baudrillard, and Roland Barthes, among others (Dews 1989; Jay 1996; Dant, 2003). Despite the different epistemological, methodological and political orientations within and among these traditions, what overlaps in their work is the critique of culture and society, and their approaches in modifying Marx's critique of political economy, which perceives society as totality. Thus, adopting a dialectical critique of capitalism, Neil Brenner argues that the mission of critical theory not only stands for an investigation of forms of domination, oppression, systemic exclusion, but equally to seek for the emancipatory possibilities that are embedded within, suppressed by, yet unfolded by this very system (2017, p. 32).

Applying this dialectical understanding into the research framework, the study particularly feeds from critical urban theory – a strand of critical theory concentrating on the patterns of capitalist urbanization and its social, environmental, economic, and politic consequences (Brenner 2017, 2009; Marcuse 2009). Critical urban theory, stretching between the German and French tradition, is appealed to the work of Leftist and radical urban scholars (i.e., Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord, Michel de Certeau, David Harvey) following the 1968 – a period of civil unrest occurred throughout France and comprised a worldwide escalation of social conflicts. Although the reasons behind the struggles for social change and the demand for emancipatory possibilities might have been transformed in the early twenty-first century – with the intensified globalization of capital, neoliberalized state forms, exacerbating planetary ecological crisis and so forth, critical urban theories developed in the aftermath of the late 1960s are still relevant to understanding today's contemporary context. Given that critical theory is not only a critique of social relations under intense urbanization, but also an approach to figure out for alternative visions to capitalism, adopting critical urban theory fits with this study's focus on spatial practices seeking alternative imaginations.

As proclaimed in this thesis title, Henri Lefebvre's seminal book "The Production of Space"[10] is the central reference that inspired the basis of this research. Lefebvre argues that under capitalism "we have passed from the production of things in space to the production of space itself" (2009 [1979], p. 186). In other words, under capitalist development, we cannot talk anymore about production that happens only in space, but also need to consider how space itself is being produced within the process of capitalist development. Recognizing this argument requires not only looking at how socially and politically engaged practices permeate space, but also understanding how space organizes those practices. Thus, departing from the production of space and elaborating its main theoretical arguments (in Chapter 3) provides a useful starting point for embracing a dialectical critique into spatial practices that try to challenge capitalism while being constantly challenged by it.

Whilst this conception contributes to developing the constituents of the framework, the study also feeds on the works of later critical theorists whose ideas offer further productive perspectives on space and society within capitalist reproduction processes. Consequently, when articulating the framework, I simultaneously explore various kinds of critical theory to build a connection with spatial practices. In this regard, acting within the framework, the thesis tries to conflate the theory/practice split[11], as it does not apply theory for reasoning spatial practices but to critically reflect on them. These explorations range from debates about 'space' in cultural geography and political theories, to collaborative and processual dimensions of 'actions' to space in the theories

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[10] First expressed in 1974, "The Production of Space" is a consummation of a sequence of books written by Lefebvre in the 1960s and early 1970s on the nature of urbanization. For its influence on contemporary discourse in architecture and urbanism, see *Everyday Urbanism*, eds. John Chase, Margareth Crawford, and John Chalks (New York: Monacelli Press, 1999); *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space*, eds. Iain Borden, Joe Kerr, Jane Rendell and Alicia Pivaro (Cambridge, London: MIT Press, 2000); *The Social (Re)Production of Architecture*, eds. Doina Petrescu, Kim Trogal (London, New York: Routledge, 2017). For its influence on earlier publications, see *Reconstructing Architecture: Critical Discourses and Social Practices*, eds. Thomas A. Dutton, Lian Hurst Mann (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); *The Social Production of Urban Space*, Mark Gottdiener (The University of Texas Press, 1985).

[11] It is worth mentioning the thoughts of Peter Marcuse, who is one of the important contributors of critical urban theory, on theory and practice. Marcuse (2009, pp. 185-6) highlights the relation between theory and practice as follows:
"'*Theory*' I take to be the attempt to understand, to explain and to illuminate the meaning and possibilities of the world in which practice takes place. It is, in a sense, the conscious and articulated aspect of practice, of action. It is developed through action, and in turn informs understanding and undergirds practice. '*Practice*' is often spoken of as if it were the Siamese twin of theory, because it is needed for theory and because theory should lead to practice if it is taken seriously. The image is of a theory and a practice that are linked organically, that a critical theory depends on a critical practice and a critical practice depends on a critical theory".

of participation, to the examination of subjectivities – the 'positions' – within the discussions around authorship. Presenting these critical perspectives outside of architecture – without losing the sight of architectural arguments in practices, the study attempts to discuss social and political engagement beyond the disciplinary perspective of architecture. In this manner, the study seeks to assemble and apply a comprehensive and coherent body of critical theories to explore socially and politically engaged spatial practices, as opposed to critical theories that are partially invoked when examining concerned practices in the architectural discourse.

Just as critical theory tries to unite the theory/practice distinction, its methodological orientations extend beyond subjectivism and objectivism. The ideographic explanation in subjectivist inquiry is based on interpretive procedures that is connected to qualitative methods. However, in critical social science, interpretive procedure is argued for importing a methodological approach from natural sciences to analyze social practices, thereby, found to be lacking causal explanations of social forces playing at the back of practices. Likewise, objectivism is criticized for its positivist approach, reducing the context of meaning and actions into causal variables (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 59). Recognizing these criticisms, the approach I integrate in the study is not purely interpretive, since I do not only present a reading of the practices in their context but try to concurrently examine what processes and mechanisms rise in relation to the contemporary global socio-political climate. I also consider the universal scientific values that were accumulated historically by the human kind. Thus, gathering spatial practices from different geographies in this study, in a way, helps me to reflect on the causal dimensions that are inevitably global in their scope – which I believe to respond the mentioned criticisms on interpretive procedures. In short, it can be mentioned that the study analyzes multiple case studies through the lens of critical theory and relates analytical and interpretive methodologies that are advised to be the key to critical social sciences (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 143).

Following this methodological approach, the study is based on a research structure that is composed of theory and practice. As for the tactics of an interpretive lens, identification of database, organization, evaluation, and narration are incorporated: First, determinative and contextual evidences have been gathered during site visits. Then, recollective evidences from the semi-structured interviews have been included to the reasoned interpretations as inferential evidences. More databases available on Appendix C include collected documents consisting of books, book chapters, journals, exhibitions

and symposiums. Identifying the key notions and critical assessment of the discourse obtained from the related literature, this research remarks on three spatial production alternatives in a textual narrative.

1.6. Overview of the Chapters

Following this introduction, the dissertation is split into four additional chapters. The chapters are structured around scenes from contemporary spatial practices located across the different parts around the world, to give a tangible feel for the distinct aspects of interstitial as a mode of production of space, which builds the central argument in the study. The practices also act as springboards from which to delve into an analysis of underlying patterns that the study seeks to establish. Each chapter opens up a different angle of interstitial spatial production. Chapter 2 broaches a comprehensive tone on the subject and glances through the crisis in the neoliberal landscape to raise how ruptures stimulated ideas, stances, and oppositions in the architectural culture. A portrayal of such a scene draws from an overview of discussions and representations in the shared architectural platforms (publications, exhibitions, symposia), which in the meantime delivers appearing terminologies that are further opened up and rendered under a glossary epitomizing theoretical discussions and past legacies.

Chapter 3 on the other hand, brings a close-up reading and frames the built argumentations. Drawing on the theoretical grounds extracted in the glossary, along with the multitude of different projects, it touches on the experiments of a range of spatial practitioners that maneuver across the neoliberal landscape. Following a reciprocal approach by moving between theory and practice, Chapter 3 asks: *how* do these practices perform - *what* actions and reactions appear, under *what* specific conditions and at *where*, *who* are behind these actions? Through the lens of interstice, the exploration of spaces, actions, and positions embedded in the studied practices bring an analytical perspective, thus build the conceptual framework of this dissertation. The guidance of this proposed framework also provides a route to examine what production mechanisms and means are reproduced from within a crisis, hence help to elaborate on the interstitial production of space.

Chapter 4 moves across the descriptive foundation that Chapter 3 builds in order to decipher the ways to think of and reflect on the consequences of spatial practices within

the dominant order of global capitalism. As a way of throwing space, action, and position into focus, the chapter offers a mapping of constellations by seeking how these constituents fuse and form a reciprocal relationship with one's spatial practice. Recovery, resilience, and resistance are discussed to be three emerging repercussions emanating from a transversal reading; examined in the light of three case studies. Whereas recovery is traced through the works of the architecture collective Herkes İçin Mimarlık (Architecture for All) across abandoned rural schools in Turkey, resilience highlights the multidisciplinary collective Düzce Hope Studio's provisional engagement in the long-term struggle of a marginalized community of tenant victims striving for their rights to housing in Düzce, Turkey. And finally, resistance visits New York-based 596 Acres' endeavors in revealing vacant land patterns in the city to be accessed by communities through the practices of gardening.

The concluding Chapter 5, reviews research objectives, summarizes the framework and the findings the case studies disclose. Noting their inputs, it discusses the limitations and shortcomings of the case studies. By doing so, the chapter raises the critical points and problematic areas of interstitial production of space, by posing further questions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS, INTERLUDE

This chapter provides an overview of critical acts and voices from the perspective of architecture discipline, which relates to resurfacing global crises since the mid-1990s. Consisted of two interwoven sections, the chapter initially explores how the crisis in the neoliberal landscape reflects on and relates to the emerging interest in the discipline of architecture. Located under this current social, economic, and political climate, this chapter delivers a contextual backdrop on contemporary concerns in architecture, glances through the displayed ideologies, and examines how in return these interests are appeared in the practices of architects, events in architecture, and eventually translated in the discipline's literature. While doing so, this chapter unfolds the common tendency in the architectural discourse on social constructionist approaches in the practice of architecture, which centers the attention over the societal figure of the architect and that of its discipline. With the critical survey over this emphasis, this chapter also becomes an extended interpretation of the problem statement of the study, which in the meantime opens up a channel in providing inputs for structuring the dissertation framework. The chapter discloses the resonances in architecture literature, which uncloaks frequently referred vocabulary in recent debates. In the form of an interlude, this brief glossary is repurposed further in Chapter 3, while offering a framework to explore and critically assess practices of concern.

2.1. Architecture's Changing Modes of Production

> "Practices that made brief appearances in the cities of the 1960s and 1970s are now resurfacing, after having fallen into a temporary obsolescence. Like an underground river, they continued to flow and re-emerged in new forms in unexpected places".
> —Mirko Zardini, *A New Urban Takeover* (2008, p. 15)

In the beginning of the chapter "Can Architects Be Socially Responsible?", Margaret Crawford underlines the growing gap between architecture as an individual concern and a professional indifference. Crawford accounts the nature of modern professions as the main reason for this rift; and states that architectural professionals

structure their autonomous identities in accordance with the economy and society in which they operate, rather than serving for the interests of their individual members (1991, p. 27). Drawing upon the facts of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century debates in American contexts – though accentuated in a similar fashion in Europe – Crawford considers these facts as a series of contradictions complicating the nature of profession, which in turn results in a withdrawal of operations carrying both economic justice and social responsibilities.

Crawford's assumption might sound a gloomy one, stating the profession of architecture steadily moving away from engagement with social issues since the 1970s. Yet, although the author does not completely give a prescription for a possibility of change towards a renewed interest in social responsibility, she warns about the repeating mistakes of earlier forms of engagement and urges architects to head towards new directions: "a growing demand from individual practitioners and students to reconnect architecture to social and economic questions demands a thorough reformulation of both theory and practice in order to avoid repeating the well-intentioned but mistaken strategies used by modernist reformers and sixties radicals" (Crawford, 1991, p. 43). Encouraging to envision new rooms for expanding the limits of profession, Crawford suggests refashioning profession's ideological premises that could "serve as a positive fiction, telling a story about a larger vision of professional aspirations" (Crawford, 1991, p. 44). Crawford's advice to the future – the current now – generations is to look for new subjects of engagement that compel stories about social needs, which might be relevant with the accentuating changing responsibilities in contemporary architectural practices. Thus, by looking at the recent history and today, this part of the study addresses various global approaches and debates around practices, events and the generated arguments in literature to unravel architecture's changing modes of production.

Almost a decade after Crawford's article, noticeable number of scholars propelled a social and political interest in architecture; referring to a growing number of practices seeking about changes that challenge the conventional architectural profession which is caught up in between serving clients and abstract end-users (Awan, Schneider, & Till, 2011; Kossak, Petrescu, Schneider, Tyszczuk, & Walker, 2009; Bell et al., 2008; Miessen, Basar, & Obrist, 2006). Following the words of Kenneth Frampton (1991, p.17) that, "there is a world of difference between architecture as a critical act and building as a banal, almost metabolic activity", recent critical acts addressing other ways of spatial production often result due to challenges such as urban regeneration, climate change,

pollution, resource depletion or socio-economic inequity that fast-forward urbanism came to put a pressure upon. These quiet various reasons for counter approaching the issue of metabolic activity and the challenges they present are not only handled with a technocratic way of building responses but also through creative social ones seen as new assets.

In addition to these challenges taken up as subjects opening new rooms in the architectural profession, ways of which the design accommodates use in people's everyday experiences becomes a fundamental driving force in bringing new promises for the role of design (Cupers 2013). This utility aspect of architectural profession ultimately connects to the importance of user as an essential part of architecture. In "The Paradox of Social Architectures", Tatjana Schneider (2013) renders the meaning of user in the collective making of spaces. Building on the Lefebvrian notion of social space which extends beyond the disciple of architecture, Schneider reminds that space belongs to a multitude of those who pass through, write about, produce, live, work and play in it. Thereby, architecture becomes a continuous socio-spatial production, and user extends beyond its primary meaning of someone who simply is an occupant of a product of architecture. Conceived within this multitude realm, user (consumer) becomes someone that "cannot be separated from those who produce (as those who produce also use), and use (or to use the Marxist term: consumption) cannot be separated from production" (2013, p. 255). Taking these entangled dynamics of space into account, the understanding of architecture inevitably escapes the dominance of certain power(s) and becomes under the control of a horizontal network of players who are temporarily and/or permanently visible. This interdependent way of reading the act of producing and that of using recalls architectural practice as a form of continuous collective or social action (Schneider, 2013, p. 255).

Collective or social action appears when "two or more subjects combine in such a way as to make one subject" (Vellman, 1997). In reality, this definition could apply to any building and construction processes of architecture; however, in spatial production singular personal commitments are replaced by joint commitments which come into play in the making of space. They are often situated outside the established practices, of capitalistic constraints and hierarchical power relations in where architectural profession largely depends upon the services being paid by for someone (Schneider, 2013, p. 256). Breaking this chain at best, and/or becoming a hopeful intent at least, there is a growing number of practices in search for new rooms in the profession.

According to Barry Bergdoll (2010, p. 9), widely discussed paradigms of the 1960s and the 1970s have been largely forgotten in the 1980s, due to the rising "persona of the 'starchitect' – a single designing genius more related to the economics of haute couture". In the early 1990s, this rift in architecture climbed up with the globalized world of design by a simultaneous crisis in the theoretical thought and a growing interest towards the formal with a reflection upon the tectonic, aesthetic focus, material authenticity and sensorial experience (Costanzo, 2009, p. 25). However, by the second half of the 1990s, numerous vanguard young initiatives appeared, resurging an interest in the political and ***social engagement***[1] in newer ways.

For Tahl Kaminer, this resurgence is due to the never concluded, never resolved discussions of architectural efficacy of the 1970s. Setting the stage for contemporary debates and ***critical spatial practices***[2], "the ideals, ideologies and practices, and of many of the positions, theories and interests of that era animated the parallel contemporary movement: antistatism, citizen participation, everyday life, temporality and ephemerality, play and much more" (2017, p. 2). Questioning the autonomy of architecture as a single autonomous disciple and the architectural professional as an autonomous identity, these spatial practitioners compose material and immaterial urban elements, fostering a fusion between different disciplines and cultures.

In 1994, Stalker launched its interactive field studies situated in the ***indeterminate***[3], void spaces of Rome, which has been their laboratory for ***tactical***[4], playful ***urban interventions***[5]. Walking for days in Rome's outskirts falling outside the capital, the young collective of architects and researchers "instigate a kind of practice for marginalized territories" (Lang, 2006, p. 198). In the same year, architect and activist Teddy Cruz started to investigate the border of San Diego (U.S.)/Tijuana (Mexico), observing the social structures and urban transformations of border neighborhoods as sites of cultural production. Currently, Cruz's studio "Estudio Teddy Cruz" proposes bottom-up solutions, by highlighting the way in which economic policies have failed; covering the issues of cross-border urbanism and informal architecture which are actualized in the forms of physical structures as well as workshops, lectures and exhibitions. Muf Art| Architecture, a ***collaborative***[6] practice of art and architecture, also emerged in 1994, by a group of women who came together in London. Covering places that would not fit the discourse of celebratory design and the practices overlooked in grand architecture, Muf deals with the ordinary, the minor and the local; suggests frameworks of action rather than determining specific outcomes (Muf, 2007, pp. 60–65).

In 1996, Santiago Cirugeda initiated his practice "Recetas Urbanas" (Urban Prescriptions). Cirugeda was concerned from a citizen's point of view, which makes them almost impossible to take actions to improve their own environments. Questioning then what it is to be an architect, Cirugeda's practices ***empower***[7] citizens in their own localities by demonstrating the possible ways to subvert laws, regulations and conventions. Proposing tool kits or user guides, Seville-based architect's ***open-source***[8] understanding is disseminated through his website "Recetas Urbanas". The following year 1997, Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) was initiated to seek for the means to foster democracy and ***participation***[9] to function the needs and desires of urban inhabitants of New York. Formed by artists and architects, CUP conducts pedagogical projects about places and how they change, bringing together art and design professionals, community advocates and researchers to realize visions of citizens that respond to local and specific problems (Gandolfi, 2009, p.81).

In later years, experimental architectural practices gained pace and became more visible in terms of encompassing material dimensions. In 1999, Raumlabor – which stands for "space laboratory", started its practice by a collective of 8 trained architects, in order to critique the dominant mode of architectural production in Berlin upon the fall of the Berlin Wall. In the hope for "rediscovering repressed 1960's experimental thinking" (Maak, 2008, p.3), the collective borrows from architectural utopias such as Buckminster Fuller and Yona Friedman for their projects which are ***temporary***[10] in nature; often coming in the forms of urban prototypes, public events and performances (Figure 2.1). The temporary nature is also unveiled in the works of Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée (AAA), a Paris based collective having ecological concerns addressed in their ***self-managed***[11] projects over leftover urban spaces (Figure 2.2). Proposing temporary activities in those spaces, AAA positions itself as curators and enablers rather than architects. The success of the collective lies in leaving room for occupants to take over responsibility.



Figure 2.1. Raumlabor, *Kitchen Monument* under flyover, Duisburg 2009.
(Source: http://www.raumlabor.net/)

These remarkable instances from the 1990s and the early 2000s underlined contexts, users and concerns which are not commonly assigned by architectural commissions yet set by the individual attempts of each initiative. For Emiliano Gandolfi (2009, p.81), these attempts are "shifting architecture from the image, the object, the building, towards the definition of ***relational***[12] strategies in projects where the process is more relevant than the result, and whose success lies in the emancipation of the people involved, in the emergence of a new awareness and the possibility of change". There are no large-scale interventions, master plans or blueprints, but rather community events, workshops or (dismantled) small-scale temporary structures underlining an ambition to connect inhabitants with each other and/or to urban space. Whether they are temporary interventions in the public realm, focus on design processes over designing spaces, a reformation in understanding urban collective ecologies or questioning local contexts and the people who inhabit by interfering everyday politics, each contribution defines a different enthusiasm for practicing architecture.



Figure 2.2. Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée, *Passage 56*, Paris, 2006.
(Source: http://www.urbantactics.org/)

With an attempt to define and categorize various new forms of ascendant architectural practices, in 2016, Alejandro Zaera-Polo (in collaboration with Guillermo Fernández Abascal) outlined a twenty-first century taxonomy of global trends in architecture by pre-selecting 181 world-wide practices (Zaera, 2016). Inspired by Charles Jencks's (2000, p. 76) well-known 'Theory of Evolution' diagram, the political compass set seven broad positions which included the "Activists", "Populists", "New Historicists" (containing Revisionists and Constitutionists), "Skeptics", "Material Fundamentalists", "Austerity Chic" (encompassing technocratic and cosmopolitical), and "Techno-Critical".[12] Although the research is limited as it solely comprises architecture firms, and

[12] The definition of the categories by Alejandro Zaera-Polo (2016) are as follows:
"The "Activists," who reject architecture's dependence on market forces by operating largely outside the market, with a focus on community building projects, direct engagement with construction, and non-conventional funding strategies; the "Populists," whose work is calibrated to reconnect with the populace thanks to a media-friendly, diagrammatic approach to architectural form; the "New Historicists," whose riposte to the "end of history" hailed by neoliberalism is an embrace of historically-informed design; the "Skeptics," whose existential response to the collapse of the system is in part a return to postmodern critical discourse and in part an exploration of contingency and playfulness

that the methodology and category works are disputable, it is still worth mentioning in terms of underlining the growing number of social and political agents and their tendencies which are attentive to neoliberal issues by seeking alternatives to capitalist operands (Figure 2.3).

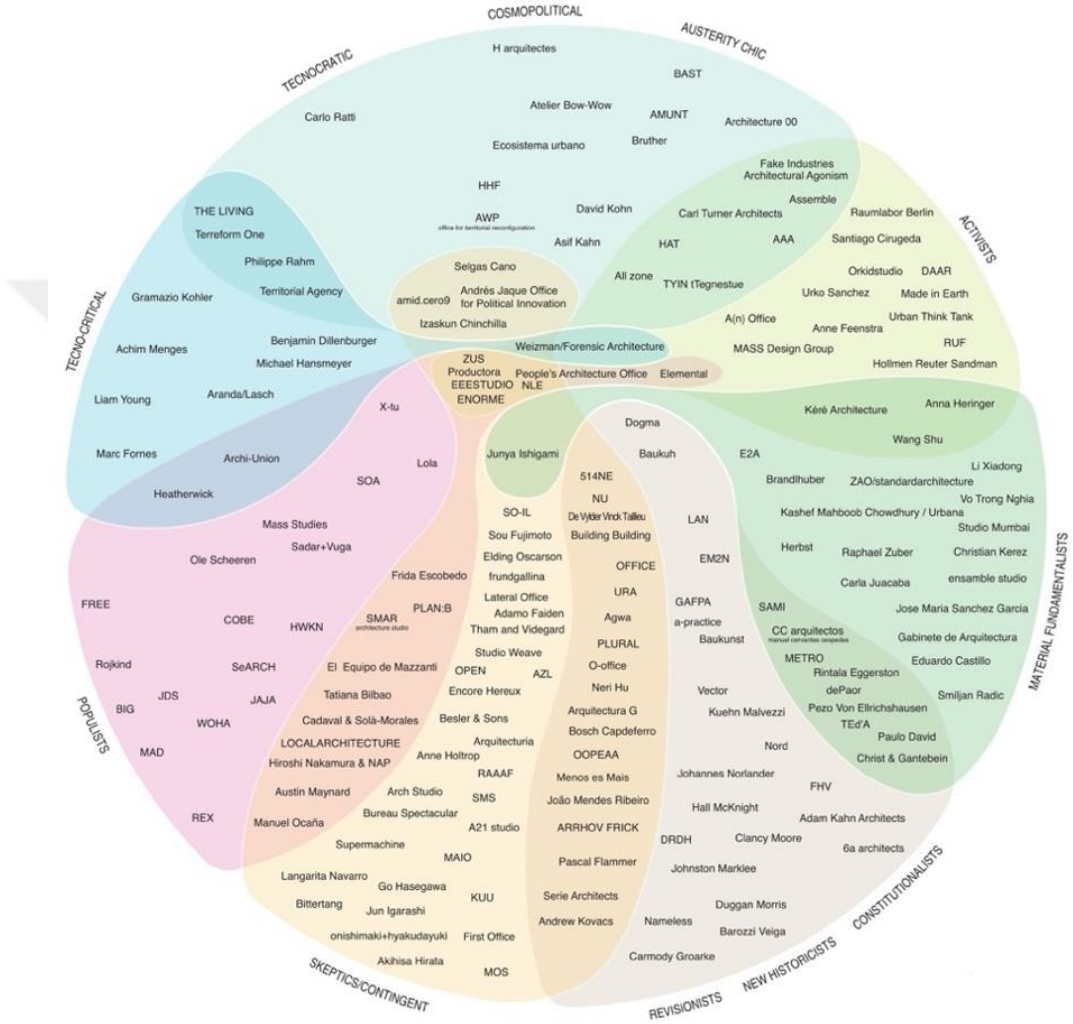


Figure 2.3. Global Architecture Political Compass, by Alejandro Zaera-Polo&Guillermo Fernández Abascal, 2016 (Source: <http://www.architecturecompass.com/> accessed 15 March 2017).

through an architecture of artificial materials and bright colors; the "Material Fundamentalists," who returned to a tactile and virtuoso use of materials in response to the visual spectacle of pre-crash architecture; practitioners of "Austerity Chic," a kind of architectural "normcore" (to borrow a term from fashion) which focuses primarily on the production process, and resulting performance, of architecture; and finally the "Techno-Critical," a group of practices largely producing speculative architecture, whose work builds upon but also remains critical of the data-driven parametricism of their predecessors."

As the political compass suggests, in the twenty-first century, many more practices emerged. Propagating engagement with local concerns, politics and culture, these practices eventually gave ways to publications, events and exhibitions. According to Kaminer, 1999 protests against the anti-globalization in Seattle, and the 2007-8 economic meltdown further emboldened those involved, and expanded the "loose" movement's reach with the increasing domination of the discipline (2017, p. 77). Kaminer adopts the term "loose" to imply the growing and maturing social and political tendency in producing space, and to free from a particular labelling.

In the hope for "searching for possibilities of resistance within the field of architecture and planning", in 2004, editorial group of *An Architektur* journal organized the first series of "Camp for Oppositional Architecture" in Berlin. The international congress opened its doors with the provocative call of its organizers: "How could politically relevant and emancipative work on the basis of planning and architecture or with the means of their critique look like today? Are there any possibilities to challenge and oppose the social order from within the field of planning in a productive way? What are the relevant oppositional stances, practices, strategies or coalitions that might be imagined and realized today?" (An Architektur, 2004). Seeking to find answers, the Camp hosted key speakers Bryan Bell, Peter Marcuse and Roomer van Toorn. Meanwhile Bell's talk addressed the possibilities of opening up new horizons for the underserved populations, Marcuse questioned the ethics of the profession, and van Toorn criticized the issue of holding a critical approach in architecture which inevitably falls into the dominance of the cliché – that of the market-oriented system (An Architektur, 2004, pp. 6-9). These debates were further highlighted by showcasing the practices of Raumlabor, Mathias Heyden, GLAS, Exyzt, and many more.

In the meantime, mainstream disciplinary journals and magazines have not elaborated on the issue openly, yet featured realized projects concerned with the social matters by only putting their formal and aesthetic values forward (Kaminer 2017, p.77). Works such as Lacaton and Vassal's Nantes School of Architecture or Palais de Tokyo were given place at Architectural Review, yet concerns were underestimated by celebrating flexible uses and revitalization intentions of both projects (Slessor 2009, Ayers 2011). Architectural Design (AD) was more open to the emerging movement, but the journal's early intentions, such as the 2005 March issue titled "The 1970s is Here and Now" remained as a nostalgic approximation of 1970s culture (2005 Hardingham, p. 5). Apart from occasionally giving place to critical projects and practices in its several issues,

AD openly discussed the social and political concerns for the first time in its January 2009 issue "Theoretical Meltdown" by including the practices CUP (pp. 76-77), Stalker (pp. 68-69) and MUF (pp. 22-23). The same issue published an article titled 'Spaces of Freedom' by Emiliano Gandolfi, one of the curators of the Experimental Architecture section of the 2008 Venice Biennale (Gandolfi, 2009).

On the other hand, social and political engagement was given a particular place in Volume magazine. Founded in 2005 by the former Archis Magazine, Volume was established as a project in collaboration with Archis Foundation, AMO (Rem Koolhaas' research and design studio) and Columbia University's C-Lab. Until today, the independent magazine published over 50 issues, each devoted to specific issues which go beyond architecture's definition of 'making buildings', reach out for global views on designing environments, advocate broader attitudes to social structures, and reclaim the cultural and political significance of architecture.[13] Another independent biannual magazine MONU (Magazine on Urbanism)[14] started its continuous publication in 2004. The magazine features the notion of the city in a broader sense, including its politics, economy and social aspects. Many of the following issues entitled such as "Political Urbanism" (issue 3), "Denied Urbanism" (issue 4), "Border Urbanism" (issue 8), "Communal Urbanism" (issue 18), "Participatory Urbanism" (issue 23), "Independent Urbanism" (issue 25) and "Decentralized Urbanism" (issue 26) are brought together under the all-catch term urbanism.

Further modes of engagement related to social and political concerns were consolidated through meetings and conferences. In 2006, "Camp for Oppositional Architecture" announced its second series "Theorizing Architectural Resistance" which took place in Utrecht. Manifesting that "the small part of the built environment is subject to planning at all is controlled by the claims of capitalist utilization", the Camp was gathered to further investigate objectives, stances, strategies and design approaches in order to conceptualize the idea of opposition within the field of architecture and planning. The Camp hosted Markus Miessen, BAVO, public works, Jeremy Till and included provocative articles such as 'Plausible Forms of Sociality', 'Do It Yourself (Together)', 'A Communism of Ideas' (An Architektur, 2006). A year later, 'Alternate Currents'

[13] About Volume Magazine, <http://volumeproject.org>, accessed 03/05/17.

[14] More about MONU Magazine, <http://www.monu-magazine.com/>, accessed 03/05/17.

symposium was held as part of the Theory Forum series at the University of Sheffield.[15] With the given title, the organizers actually intended to move away from the binary of alternative and mainstream, in order to liberate the definition of alternative from mainstream practices. The presentations were majorly following a process-oriented approach rather than focusing on tangible project outputs, which came to be reflected by the organizers as "a fundamental ideological and political shift [in architecture], namely the move from product to process" in the afterwards published editorial (Till and Schneider, 2008, p. 3).

The growing number of practical debates were made apparent via major disciplinary institutions in the forms of exhibitions, forums, festivals and even with the recent international prices such as the Turner and the Pritzker assigned to collectives and offices engaging their practices with specific issues.[16] In 2008, the former director of Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAI), Aaron Betsky curated the 11th Venice Architecture Biennale called "Out There: Architecture Beyond Building". As for the theme, Betsky intended "to address the issue of an Architecture that freed from the boundaries of buildings [which] will finally be able to address the central problems of our society" (2008). Although the main exhibition space Arsenale included the works of "starchitects" such as MVRDV, Zaha Hadid, UN Studio – which were criticized heavily not being in line with the objectives of the Biennale[17] –, 'Experimental Architecture' section curated by Emiliano Gandolfi at the Italian Pavilion came out to be a stark contrast to the main section by assembling practices exploring new or refined ways of working. In 2010, 'Small Scale Big Change: New Architectures of Social Engagement' was in the exhibition program of Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. Directed by Andres Lepik, the exhibition displayed eleven projects on five continents in detail by including the works of U-TT, Rural Studio, Lacaton & Vassal, Teddy Cruz and

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15 The symposium was a part of a funded research project 'Alternative Architectural Practices' which in later years gave way to the book 'Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture', in 2011.

16 In 2015, Assemble, a London collective team of 18 young architects received the Turner Price for its work on the Granby Four Streets Project in Liverpool. The price was given for spatial interventions designed and constructed collectively with the residents to ameliorate the living conditions of the neighborhood. In 2016, Alejandro Aravena won the Pritzker Price for his socially responsible and participatory housing projects.

17 For instance, in addressing global architecture elite, Justin Mcguirk argued that "Here, I thought, was a chance to showcase an emerging generation of activist architects tackling urban issues in ways that are nimbler and more tactical than buildings". <https://www.iconeye.com/404/item/3849-venice-biennale-2008>, accessed 05/05/17.

Elemental. The exhibition under the same title was published in the form of a book later in the same year (Lepik, 2010).

Activist or political tones implying societal values in architecture was also made visible in fall 2012, with the US pavilion at the Venice Biennale architecture exposition titled as "Spontaneous Interventions: Design Actions for the Common Good". Compiling 124 examples which curator Cathy Lang Ho mentioned as "provisional, informal, ***guerrilla***[13], insurgent, ***DIY***[14], hand-on, informal, unsolicited, unplanned, participatory, tactical, micro, open-source" were set under the themes of information, accessibility, commodity, economy, sustainability, and pleasure (Lang Ho, 2012). It was presented to be "a useful archive of actionable strategies that could be replicated" (ibid.). In 2014, MoMA covered the issue of urban growth and relevant challenges this growth represents by displaying emergent forms of tactical urbanism in six global metropolises: Hong Kong, Istanbul, Lagos, Mumbai, New York, and Rio de Janeiro. Focusing on the tensions between formal and informal, bottom-up and top-down urban developments, the exhibition "Uneven Growth: Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities" addressed potential challenges in the roles architects and urban designers might assume vis-à-vis the increasing inequality of current urban development.

In the following years, similar issues extended beyond a single pavilion and occupied the whole theme of Venice Architecture Biennale of 2016 "Reporting from the Front". Constituting the front lines of architecture which the curator Alejandro Aravena mentions as "horizon looking for new fields of action" relying on various material cultures, displayed approaches and experiments tackle the societal tensions or desperation in physical and natural environments. Addressing new organization processes confronting cities, in other words architectural practices amid today's social and political changes, the wide range of subjects nonetheless aim at targeting a better quality of life for people by claiming an opposition to neo-liberal propositions.

Institutional recognition and the display of emerging organizational modes and experiments are not only restricted to Venice Architecture Biennale or Museum of Modern Art but also extended through other international Biennales, exhibitions and forums. The theme "Self-Driven City" of 2015 Tallin Architecture Biennale, or "ACTION! Towards a neighborhood practice" of 2016 One Architecture Week in Bulgaria nevertheless seek mechanisms of citizen participation, in short, collective urban practitioners providing productive perspectives for actualizing alternative urban futures.

As it is also beyond the scope of this section, aforementioned practices and the events circulating the globe can by no means set a complete record. Still, these fragments can bring an idea of a multitude of concerns in the profession of architecture, which came to be reverberated in the literature of architecture. Whilst majority of the publications – jammed within the corpus of the discipline – argued crisis in capitalism to be opening up new ways of practicing architecture and roles for architects (Borasi & Zardini, 2008; Awan et al., 2011; Oswalt et al., 2013; Borasi 2015; Dodd 2019), they rarely marked a conversation about architecture and its surrounding vectors – a treatment within an expanded field that breaks out institutional molds and the disciplinary boundaries (Karim, 2018; Choi & Trotter, 2017; 2010; Petrescu & Trogal, 2017; Till, 2013; Kossak et al., 2009). Whereas others suggested that the renewed interest in building critique in architecture has also fallen into a crisis with the crisis in the neoliberal landscape (Heindl et al., 2019; Kaminer 2017). Nonetheless, it should be underlined that the common inclination that links these different ways of reading fundamentally emerge from the contemporary neoliberal crisis, which is not a result of monolithic ideological forces, but its widespread political, social, economic, or ecological extensions.

Thereby, this brief glance at the recent history draws us back to the question "can architects be socially responsible?", which was raised by Margaret Crawford in the beginning of this chapter. As Crawford underlines, current political, economic, and social climate might have climbed and continues to climb the rift between individual concern and professional indifference within the architectural profession. Based on the articulated ongoing debates on the role of architects and architecture's current state, even though professionals who structure their autonomous identities in accordance with the economy and society in which they operate tend to lose power. This leads to the loss of value in the profession; as it becomes "an essential mechanism for a certain mode of economic and political operation" (Choi & Trotter, 2010, p. xiv). As their practices contributing to spin the wheels of crisis of capitalism, in other words remain ineffectual to bring about a socio-political change, it raises the necessity of reviving individual concerns in the profession.

Current interests in individual concerns are nevertheless connected to spatial practices enhancing social responsibilities towards a wider public and ethical consequences of such actions. With social, political and economic motives behind, practitioners position their practices against starchitecture, signature architecture, and the emphasis on formal and technocratic innovations. Such commitments in practice thus seek for architecture's role in the improvement of the society, whether on the level of

everyday life, or of urban politics and governance. This section therefore attempted to gain an insight on socio-political concerns in contemporary architecture and captured a general view of displayed ideologies and their possible reflections by giving place to most apparent events and practices besetting the globe.

It might not be wrong to mention that space becomes a commodity, an object of consumption under neoliberal forces. What became clear in the mentioned appearing events and practices is that how the act of designing architectural objects and spaces constituted only a part of the work done by these practices, and how capitalist modes of production trigger and manipulate these objective conditions. These practices in architecture might then be attempting to put forward the virtues of context against putting an emphasis over placeless spatial attempts. Although disappointments in global economic and political trends might have generated discussions around other responsibilities in architecture, these responsibilities vary widely due to socio-political dynamics of each geography. Therefore, it is hard to reduce these attempts to a common platform, as each context has its own features, offering particular potentials and challenges.

Nonetheless, such practices come along with their collective design strategies, everyday life interventions that have concerns around social injustice and uneven growth. This also brings in mind some counter-cultural activities and thoughts of previous eras. As a consequence, for over a decade now, the legacy of sixties has also been a topic of affluent debate in the architectural discourse. Much of the alternative tones in practice and the terminologies consumed today – sometimes intentionally, other times not – are grounded in the counterculture and political theories of the late 1960s and the early 1970s,[18] particularly in the Henri Lefebvre's critique of capitalist urbanization. These practices also refer to past architectural discussions which have had their share from these theories, by concurrently putting forward parallel manifestos, architectural programs and procedures.

Despite social and political commitments being prominent in contemporary architectural praxis, historical acknowledgments and a theoretical conceptualization is

[18] It should be noted that several earlier sources refuse a clear relation to 60s and 70s, by stating that *new form of commitment* to social problems is barely linked to political debates yielding a dominant ideology. However, a detailed analysis reveals two points. Firstly, there are contradictions behind this statement within the sources themselves. Secondly, these sources are published prior to recent financial crisis and urban uprisings. For further information, see the foreword by Simon Franke in *reflect #01: New commitment in architecture, art and design*, 2003, p. 5.

relatively lacking. This applies both to architects' own reflections on their projects as to the publications written about them (Lepik, 2013, p. 9). Noticing this gap, the growing number of publications present critical engagements with the understanding and the analysis by formulating and referring varying themes in architecture – which is tacitly referred here, and which will be extracted in the next section. Whilst some of these diverse interests refer back to old modalities such as 'Participatory' or 'Community-based', others correspond to newly categorizations such as 'Tactical', 'Everyday', 'Guerilla', 'DIY', 'Concurrent' and many more. However, these categories have limited purchase, as each highlight one aspect and interest at the expense of others (Kaminer 2017). I believe they also lack to capture a thorough picture of spatial interventions or are sealed within the confines of architecture academia. Whilst the former confronts the risks of a popularization from another end, the latter leaves discourses unchallenged by often tapping into the narrow channels of this inclining predomination. Acknowledging their presence yet seeking beyond these modalities in relation to the manifold indications of the neoliberal crisis, the next chapter will instead try to bring in a broader approach to tackle the autonomous treatment of architecture and its subjects, which I believe to be raising an impasse within the context it explores.

Recent popularization of such category works addresses whether the interests and diverse practices of these spatial practitioners should be seen as a part of the neoliberal order or as its antagonist (Kaminer, 2017). Curated by Aravena, "Reporting from the Front" Biennale has been often mentioned in disciplinary magazines as an end of a star architecture period and the beginning of a new age in architecture. Yet there are critics about whether this celebration culminates another kind of star-architecture generation born out of a crisis in the current neoliberal order that continues to situate itself within the same order. While the study acknowledges such critics regarding their "absorption by the marketing and branding mechanisms", or their integration by "city elites into event management structures that churn out one biennial and triennial after another", it avoids a strong affirmation or rejection, and believes that the case studies in this dissertation will reveal the trajectory of this emergence themselves (Schneider, 2018, p. 3-4).

Even so, pointing out to various political and social theories, these perspectives are discussed in studies as a means for critical inquiry in architectural debates, its mobilization in architectural praxis, and political emphasis on the intentions of architecture (Tonkiss 2017; Richter, Katharina and Grubbauer 2017; Anderson 2014). Nonetheless, current architectural culture is seemingly fragmented by two disparate

perspectives: architecture as *a social process (= meaning-making)* and architecture as *a formal object (= form-making)*[19] (Cupers 2014; Dutton and Mann 2000, 1997, 1996).

Rather than a focus either on politics or radical aesthetics and determining on which side of this fault line it is inclined, the next chapter invites to embody a more inclusive approach towards framing contemporary concerns in architecture. Recognizing Henri Lefebvre, production of space is as much about the production process as it is about the spatial product, which is of primary concern in this study. Acknowledging the theories recent studies cling onto, yet adhering to the main objectives of the dissertation, the next chapter lays out a framework through which this commitment could be reflected outwardly. Transposing theory into concrete spatial situations, the study thus will lead to an inquiry into critical theories in line with a group of spatial practices. This framework brings an analytical lens to offer a route to think of, hence, to evaluate the effects of contemporary spatial projects. But before then, the next section closely visits the themes that have appeared in discussing architecture's changing modes of production – which will be helpful in guiding and elaborating the constituents of the proposed framework.

2.2. Resonances in Literature: The Terms at Play

Based on the concepts mentioned in the previous section, this section covers resonances when referring to socially and politically engaged spatial practices. One of the inspiring models for this section, located between the index form and the glossary, is Adrian Forty's (2000) Words and Buildings. The primary purpose of establishing this section is to provide guidance, recognizing the different significance of the concepts and how they are interpreted in the context of this study. In the form of an interlude, the section can be scanned extensively before moving onto succeeding chapters or can be consulted backwards when encountered in the rest of the dissertation. However, as the following concepts will be consulted frequently in the rest of the work, the former is recommended.

1 ***Social Engagement***: 'Socially engaged art' or 'socially engaged architecture' is an emerging genre that is dedicated to spatial practices that are collaborative (with

[19] In these sources, authors support the inescapable link between the social process and architectural form; hence, underscore content and form constituting a dialectical relationship. Supporting the idea that form is always political and that it has political effects and consequences, authors yet remind that a concern for form does not necessarily entail a concern for social issues.

individuals, communities, institutions) in nature and that value the interaction and inclusion of communities within design processes (Karim, 2018; Thompson, 2012). Although it cannot be applied to each and every socially engaged practice, the term is also used to describe practices that are responsive to social, political, economic problems, and that aim to create a social and political change in the contexts in which they work.

[2] ***Critical Spatial Practice*** (referred to in page 57): Spatial practice can be understood as generating space by taking cultural, social and everyday dynamics into account. Discussions include both theoretical and practical contributions fed by the early book of Henri Lefebvre, "Production of Space".

The term has been studied and broadened in the works of Dana Cuff, Jane Rendell and Markus Miessen (Cuff, 1991; Rendell, 2006; Miessen 2016; Hirsch & Miessen 2012). In "Architecture: The Story of Practice", Dana Cuff renders the meaning of practice "as an action or performance" with its possible implications of "a method of action, in the sense of habitual, customary or routine" (1991, p. 4). Jane Rendell coins the term "Critical Spatial Practice" in the book "Art and Architecture: A Place Between" by exploring Henri Lefebvre's work in relation to Michel de Certeau. Rendell's suggestion of the term critical spatial practice is "to describe work that transgresses the limits of art and architecture and engages with both the social and the aesthetic, the public and the private. This term draws attention not only to the importance of the critical, but also to the spatial, indicating the interest in exploring specifically spatial aspects of interdisciplinary processes or practices that operate between art and architecture".

In "Did Someone Say Participate: An Atlas of Spatial Practice", Markus Miessen, together with Shumon Basar, includes a compilation of essays belonging to authors from different disciplines – artists, activists, policy makers, curators, editors, and of course architects – to whom Miessen refers as spatial practitioners (Miessen & Basar, 2006). For Miessen, particularly in participatory spatial practices, the notion of practice is extended beyond architecture and relates to urban everyday politics, contemporary political and social conditions. Thus, critical spatial practices become attempts to determine again the relationship between the object and subject, staging this reorganized relationship (Miessen, 2016, p.45). Unlike Rendell, for Miessen critical spatial practices are not only concerning the professions of art and architecture, but a transcendence of disciplines in which the author names as an 'a-disciplinary' approach.

[3] ***Indeterminate*** (referred to in pages 47, 123): Entitled "Architecture and Indeterminacy", in the issue of Field Journal, editors Renata Tyszczuk and Doina

Petrescu defines the notion “as a suspension of the precise meaning of an architectural object or idea” (2007, p. 1). In architecture, indeterminacy relates with the physical, material, social and political dimensions of space, open to experiential, theoretical and pragmatic knowledge (Hughes, 2000).

[4] ***Tactical*** (referred to in pages 66, 86, 88, 102, 133, 175, 178, 182, 184): The concept tactical has come to appear by Michel de Certeau who suggests tactics as practices which unfold time and spatial limits imposed by the powerful. In “The Practice of Everday Life”, de Certeau describes tactical in a poetic way: “in which the weak are seeking to turn the tables on the strong. Tactics must depend on clever tricks, knowing how to get away with things, the hunter’s cunning, maneuvers, polymorphic simulations, joyful discoveries poetic as well as warlike they go back to the immemorial… intelligence displayed in the tricks and imitations of plants and fishes. From the depths of the ocean to the streets of the modern megalopolises, there is a continuity and permanence of these tactics” (1984, p.xii).

Today, translated to cities, the term Tactical Urbanism has become an underlying conception in socially responsive spatial attempts. Often, tactical at urban scale is seen as an approach to neighborhood building and activating using short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions and policies. Prominent within this is the book “Tactical Urbanism: Short-term Action for Long-term Change”, in which its authors Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia interprets tactical understanding different than how de Certeau treats (Lydon and Garcia, 2015). For Lydon and Garcia, there is no power relations, and indeed tactical urbanism can be adopted by a range of actors, including governments, business and nonprofits, citizen groups, and individuals. It makes use of open and iterative development processes, the efficient use of resources, and the creative potential unleashed by social interaction.

In the article “Is Tactical Urbanism an Alternative to Neoliberal Urbanism?”, Neil Brenner (2017) urges a critical scrutiny of tactical urbanism under the search for new approaches to organizing our collective planetary urban future. Even within an optimistic framing of tactical urbanism, Brenner mentions that big questions are still completely unresolved; “regarding how to (re)design the city of the future—its economy; its property and labor relations; its spaces of circulation, social reproduction, and everyday life; its modes of governance; its articulations to worldwide capital flows; its interfaces with environmental/biophysical processes; and so forth” (Brenner, 2017).

[5] ***Urban intervention*** (referred to in pages 44, 49, 55, 64, 79, 86, 102, 145, 175, 184, 193): Resulting from dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs, urban intervention is a usually a temporary form of action concerning spatial practices that aim to change this condition physically or socially.

[6] ***Collaborative*** (referred to in pages 146, 193, 201): Collaboration, participation is also used interchangeably, is an iterative process implying the coming together of two or more people, or collectives working toward the common goal (Bishop, 2006). See also participation, in the following page.

[7] ***Open-source*** (referred to in pages 88, 119, 184): The idea of open-sourcing in architecture or urbanism stands for collective authoring that emerges from the 21st century trends such as crowd-sourcing and open access (Bradley 2015; Ratti and Claudel 2015; Sassen 2011). The concept refers to a collective mode of working in which the design and implementation processes are made transparent to public through online and offline sharing, promoting horizontal ways of making the city open for user-driven change.

[8] ***Participation*** (referred to in pages 84, 88, 113, 118, 122, 126, 141, 148, 157, 163, 199): In architecture, urban design, and art, participation aims at user involvement in design processes as a way to empower the disenfranchised (Bishop 2006; Blundell Jones, Petrescu, Till, 2005). In this respect, participation is a more than a social project that aims for a collective decision-making to determine the program, function, or plan of a structure, but is a political project that has existed since the 1960s. Participation operates in the tension between "control and freedom" (Cupers, 2013, p. 10), and is clearly articulated in the seminal essay "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" (Arnstein, 1969). Participation raises the questions of ethical action, authenticity, designer's role in practice.

[9] ***Temporary*** (referred to in pages 74, 75, 124, 132, 182, 187): As an alternative approach to long-term strategies and solutions to urban problems, temporary use (or temporary urbanism is used interchangeably) refers to interim, meanwhile, or short-term activities in urban areas (Hou, 2016; Oswalt, Overmeyer, Misselwitz, 2013; Bishop, Williams, 2012; Overmeyer 2007; Haydn, Temel, 2006). These activities, ranging from hosting cultural programs to urban gardening practices, are often seen in spaces that are in transformation – buildings and urban lands that are undesirable or unsuitable due to economic and political uncertainties.

[10] ***Self-management*** (referred to in pages 75, 84, 159): Self-management, also referred to as self-run or self-organization, refers to an alternative way of producing

space, in which space is acquired and maintained by community initiatives (Mooshammer, Mörtenböck, 2008; Heyden 2008; Hughes, Sadler, 2000). For Henri Lefebvre, self-management is a genuine form of participation, which allows room for communities to appropriate, take responsibility, and run spaces. In spatial practices that consider self-management as a tactic, practitioner becomes a facilitator, curator, who designs the processes rather than the design itself.

[11] ***Relational*** (referred to in pages 63, 73, 99, 113, 118, 149): The notion relational is based on the emphasis of space and time. In contrast to static, absolute, fixed and asocial notion of space, relationality in space refers to "the contemporary condition in which the horizon of social relationships has become radically open" (McQuire 2008, p. 22). For Doreen Massey, relational space is unfixed, in flux, and that it can be made and remade over time with social beings (Massey 2005). In art, relationality is interpreted as artistic practices that are dependent on the conditions of the social context, both producing and produced by the encounters between artist and audience (Bourriaud 2002). Similarly, relational practice in architecture becomes an open-ended and interactive process in which the architect designs collaborative processes rather than anticipating the use of space (Petrescu 2012).

[12] ***Emancipation*** (referred to in pages 56, 62, 65, 86, 119, 193): The conception of emancipation, in other words, liberation or independence concerns architecture's autonomy as a social and political praxis. Politically, architecture's emancipation corresponds to its relationship with the closure of capitalism and its dominant ideologies, and socially, it questions architecture's capacity to fulfill social needs. Emancipation is a historically contingent concept which is linked to the forms of development and changes in society and has been addressed from different standpoints in the writings of Manfredo Tafuri (1999), Frederic Jameson (1998), Neil Leach (1999), and Pier Vittorio Aureli (2008).

[13] ***Guerrilla*** (referred to in pages 90, 177, 178, 184, 186): Guerilla actions refer to "unsanctioned, unscripted, and seemingly "undesirable" activities" in urban spaces (Hou, 2020, p. 117). Including, but not limited to, guerilla gardening, graffiti, squatting, and political protests are forms of guerilla urbanism that often emerge in response to a lack of investment and the decline of urban spaces (Hou, 2010). Bringing attention to particular social, economic and political issues, what makes these actions common is their unintended ways of using spaces that open up unpredictable functions through

appropriation and occupation. Guerrilla urbanism is generally mentioned under the banner of DIY and tactical urbanisms.

[14] ***DIY*:** The term DIY (Do-it-yourself) has come into common usage in the 1950's to address a self-made-culture that is involved in the design, construction and repair of creative projects. In spatial practices, DIY refers to small-scale and often not officially recognized temporary urban interventions, such as blocking parking lots for recreation, appropriating roof tops for gardening and play (Douglas 2018; Iveson 2013; Borasi & Zardini, 2008; Talen 2015). In DIY practices, incentives are taken by participants (inhabitants, artists, architects, cultural activists) rather than lobbying and waiting for permission to better the conditions of urban spaces.

CHAPTER 3

MAPPING THE TERRAIN: THE PRODUCTION OF INTERSTITIAL

While Chapter 2 brought up contemporary concerns in architecture forged at the nexus of multifaceted crisis of capitalism, Chapter 3 lays out a framework to contemplate how these concerns emerging from the ruptures of capitalistic modes of production are mobilized in practice. In this context, this chapter shifts the focus from the professional and disciplinary portrayal of architecture to understanding its social and political engagement in the neoliberal climate. To trace this engagement, the chapter questions the conditions that impel the motivations of spatial practitioners, how these motivations are surfaced in their practices, and what potential openings they could produce as a response to the adverse effects of capitalism. In order to articulate these questions, the chapter attempts to set forth a framework that emerges from a mapping of an extensive body of practices. While expanding this framework, theoretical knowledge extracted in the previous section is consulted in parallel with the examination of spatial practices.

Two directions gradually guide the structure of the framework in this chapter: the *interstitial* to interpret spatial practices manifested by the unfolding systematic crisis, and *production of space* to examine what mechanisms and means are emerged in return to these conditions. It is the merging of these two directions – interstitial production of space – that in turn generates its own set of questions.

In this chapter, the concept of *interstitial* is introduced as a critical and analytical vehicle to unfold the different dimensions of ranging spatial practices operating at many scales and levels of intervention. As a critical research stance, the term is adopted to endeavor a thinking beyond oppositional, and dichotomist readings in architecture – in which criticality operates through positioning architecture as an autonomous entity; and as an analytical lens, the different meanings of the term are amplified and exemplified within the framework through which spatial practices can be evaluated. It should be noted that the inclusion of the concept in the framework has emerged through an interrogation of spatial practitioners and their practices. In this regard, the term is not an attached label but is found to be immanent in the works studied. Therefore, recognizing and unfolding

different meanings of the term becomes a useful guidance that is not only congruent with the constituents of the framework, but also supports the analytical lens that the framework tries to establish.

Despite not limited to, the overall structure of the framework developed in this chapter stems from the work of Henri Lefebvre, and in particular, his ideas on the *production of space*, which is a commonplace reference in architectural debates when addressing current crises-riddled times. Departing from the production of space and elaborating its main theoretical arguments in the framework provides a useful starting point to draw the contours of versatile crises of capitalism, hence, to view its wide range of implications on (1) the spaces interfered; (2) the modes in which these spaces come into contact; and (3) the stances of subjectivities concerning the disciplinary capacity of architecture. Thus, the framework grants to access the terrain of spatial practices operating under the neoliberal crisis and offers a robust theoretical base for thinking about who produces space, what kinds of mechanisms of production are performed in the process, without losing an insight on the spaces of production.

In Chapter 3.1, I initially introduce how the conception of interstitial has been articulated across diverse disciplines and how it can be adopted as a critical vehicle for rethinking about socially and politically engagement. Drawing on different meanings of the term and along with the critical perspective it brings, I continue on arguing in the framework that interstitial appears as a mode of producing space within practices of concern in this study. Elaborating this argument further in line with the constituents of the framework visited in Chapter 3.2, I unpack the term interstitial from three overarching and dialectical directions: ***space***, to inform relevant critical theories in relation to spatial practices by visiting their contexts and sites; ***action***, to associate how practices are mobilized by taking relations of production (and consumption) and material conditions into account; and lastly, ***position***, to underline subjects who are involved in spatial production. Whilst the chapter 3.2 opens up each key constituent separately for analytical purposes, it does not intend to demarcate these facets as each is intertwined with the others. These interconnected constituents to be broached, in a way, allows to address the question of method that this study seeks to assemble and interpret within a model framework – to trace the causes, and processes behind social and political intentions, and to understand their trajectories, distinct challenges, and opportunities.

Through the suggested framework, the study intends to surpass an inward-looking expounded from architects' vantage points or the discipline's structure, hence, offers

internal, situated and embodied accounts of criticality not only based on theoretical grounds but also simultaneously making connections with practices. Along with a discussion of a group of contemporary spatial practices across the globe, the chapter is located within a transdisciplinary trajectory and works across disciplinary backgrounds, including architecture, urbanism, sociology, and geography. Following these disciplinary perspectives, this chapter represents a sampling of relevant critical and influential strands of socio-spatial inquiries and their influences on contemporary architectural discourse and practice.

3.1. Conceptualization of Interstitial

Following the social movements in the late 60's – a period of civil unrest occurred throughout France and comprised a worldwide escalation of social conflicts – collaborative, participatory architectural practices, which dealt with the socio-political issues, addressed unequal distributions of power, opposed hierarchical organizational forms and capitalistic forms of production. The return to the similar concerns in the architectural domain with the gaining prominence in the last two decades introduced a contemporary wave of socio-political thought – with the outgrowing range and number of practices as "self-proclaimed inheritors of architecture" (Cupers, 2014, p. 6); who featured architecture "as distinct from building", and as an "interpretative, critical act" (Colomina, 2002, p. 207). Although today's crisis trajectory is underlined to be different than the circumstances that defined the crisis environment in the 60's (Marcuse 2009; Mayer 2009; Harvey 2008), both nonetheless connected to capitalism as "a system with deep internal contradictions" girding the globe (Marcuse 2009; p. 187). The term "interstitial" and changing modes of production at spatial interstices, which occurred as a result of capitalism's contemporary crisis, attracted spatial practitioners as a fresh field to intervene, and captivated contemporary scholars who built their views on interventions in accordance with the critical socio-political theories of participation, of everyday life, or of the right to the city that had been central in 60's (Petrescu & Trogal, 2017; Ferguson, 2014; Kaminer, 2014, 2011; Blundell, Petrescu, & Till, 2005; Borden, Kerr, Rendell & Pivaro, 2000; Crawford, Chase & Kaliski, 1999). Whereas the previous chapter highlighted the discussions around the reactions to crisis circulating at the contemporary architectural platforms – in the form of biennales, exhibitions, symposiums and

publications, diverse forms of practices continued to propagate at the interstitial spaces of the neoliberal project – at ill-defined, loose spaces, by-product sites of urbanization. In critical engagements with the neoliberal project, both social sciences which focus on issues of capitalist urbanization and the field of architecture itself are addressing the nature of contexts and ways of interaction within the frame of specific practices.

Under ruptures of neoliberal impetus, the concept of 'interstice' or 'interstitial' no longer refers only to a specific place, or a type of space disregarded or excluded by the capitalist operands. In this thesis, I argue that 'interstitial' marks both a condition and action in itself, which can be contextualized within the production of space, interlaced with the economic, political and humanitarian dimensions of the crisis. Consequently, drawn from the works of various scholars, in this section, the concept of 'interstice' will be overviewed at three levels prior to its exemplification in the research framework: firstly, it explores the multidisciplinary extensions of the term in literature; secondly, it discusses the identification of its multi-faceted interpretations in philosophy, sociology, architecture, urbanism and cultural studies; and finally, it discloses how the term delineates the field of this study and how it organizes my research approach.

3.1.1. Interstitial in Literature

The use of the term interstitial is not only adopted by several fields – art, architecture, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and geography, but also predominantly contextualized by critical and Marxist scholars who embed their discourses on the term in architectural, feminist, political and cultural theories. Since the lexical definition of the term is polysemous, what it refers to oscillates between a convergence and disjunction (Lévesque, 2013; Grosz, 2001); bringing about different viewpoints that raise the term positively or adversely. Whereas the affirmative outlook implies gap, split, interval (Lefebvre, 1991; Foucault, 1966 [2002]) in a substance or space that is porous (Marx, 1886 [1863]), such quality enables movement, transition, passage, connection (Brighenti, 2013; Bhabha, 2004; de Certeau, 2011 [1980]), bridging possibilities for encounters, relations (Bourriaud, 2002), spacing (Tschumi, 1976), and the meeting of differences (Bhabha, 2004). From a negative standpoint, the term is adopted to emphasize more of a disconnection as an oversight, or to speak of defects, excesses, cracks, borders, frontiers, and thresholds (Stavrides 2014; Grosz 2001; de

Certeau, 2011 [1980]; Lefebvre, 1991), ruptures, faults, fissures (Pignarre & Stengers, 2011; Frampton 1980), and margins (hooks, 2000).

Besides these contradictory uses of the term, the interstice is also commonly accepted to be a fragment or a segment within a larger entity, in other words, a minority stance having no predetermined scale (Lévesque, 2013, p. 24; Grosz, 2001, p. 93). It is evaluated in relation to surrounding vectors or measured according to what encapsulates it. Thus, as the definition suggests an interstice to stand or to be between things, it cannot be thought of in isolation to an exterior or outside, but in-between (de Certeau, 2011 [1980]; Lefebvre, 1991), by the middle (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983), or within (Hardt and Negri, 2000). This suggests that, to identify and speak of the conditions of an interstice – be it spatial or temporal – one needs to start exploring the immediate (physical and social) context and ascendant circumstances (capitalist forces) within which it is embedded. By addressing the broader socio-political issues that are inevitably global in their scope and reading the local from the vantage of everyday experience, this type of observation calls for a switching of scales that is crucial to describe the interstitial condition.

As these diverse significations link the term to "the phenomena of the undecidable, the uncertain, the vague and the blurred" (Lévesque, 2013, p. 24), allocation of space, the dynamics of its context in relation to temporal deviations – including the perception of space, its formal characteristics along with the subsumed events – remains crucial to be associated with the interstitial condition. This designates interstitial to be an "open and relative" concept (Lévesque, 2013, p. 24), acknowledging different layers of articulation of the notion interstice; and as an in-between, it does not only give reference to spatiality or to access specific cases that are embedded in spatial-temporal conditions, but also enables one to observe the kind of events that take place, what is activated within a body, or in-between bodies[20].

Based on this general review in literature, it is clear that the concept does not attribute a single meaning but corresponds to multiple significances. Nonetheless, as it is also noted, the term is approached and evaluated mainly from three directions: the spatial,

[20] Referring to Luc Lévesque's (2013) article "Trajectories of Interstitial Landscapeness: A Conceptual Framework for Territorial Imagination and Action", open emphasizes indeterminacy to speak of changing scale and the context/content of an action of opening, whereas relative indicates the contextual dimensions and the constituting factors of an environment having effects over interstices. Finally, body corresponds not only to a corporeal or a physical entity but taken as a principal part of something that has no predetermined scale or state.

to speak of places that are othered in the order of things yet continue to accommodate potential possibilities; the event-oriented, to inform the temporal dimensions contributing the creation of an interstice as well as possible interactions it allows among a multiplicity of actors; and finally, the social, to translate encounters in the nexus of space and time, and the becoming of new subjects or coming together of minority communities.

Continuing with examining the studies on the term in literature, I would like to underline these particular openings prior to translating this conceptual field to the production of space. Drawing from the arguments of emerging scholars closer to my contentions in this thesis in general, these potential angles from the interstitial perspective will be examined in the following to qualify the production of space subsequently.

3.1.2. The Meanings of Interstitial

Since the conceptions of interstitial spans across various fields, its use and expression also vary depending on these fields, which accordingly indicate manifold interpretations of the term. Whilst this study acknowledges and feeds on such diverse disciplines, it particularly builds on the preceding expansions of the concept in relation to the objectives of the research. It should be noted that these meanings are not clearly associated with certain fields nor different disciplines address the term in a unilateral manner. Therefore, instead of examining how different disciplines study and interpret the interstitial separately, I will explore how different disciplines relate to the concept under the three openings of the term. So, the question follows: What are the spatial, event-oriented and social significances of this concept?

Dealing with the spatial significances of the term, in both the literature of social sciences and of contemporary architectural studies, the interest that pivots around the notion tentatively attributes to in-between spaces, particularly urban spatial forms which are expressed as "grooves, cracks, breaches, loop-holes" escaping a smoothed over by capitalism (Petcou & Petrescu, 2007, p. 322). In the context of urban, Pascal Nicolas-le Strat asserts interstices to be forming up "the ground level" of the city, representing a "threshold"[21] which is meant to be crossed over, turning into "a common area" that is neither private nor public (2007, p. 318). Interstices are often associated with abandoned

[21] In a similar manner, Stavros Stavrides (2014, p. 49) designates threshold spaces as empty spaces, which are calling for forms of *threshold spatiality* through the acts of space appropriation.

sites or “terrains vagues” (Strat, 2007; Lévesque, 2013; Brighenti, 2013; Barron and Mariani, 2014) – a term borrowed by Ignasi de Solà-Morales (1995), which is conceptualized as a contemporary space containing the marginal wastelands and vacant lots located at the outskirts of the productive urban spaces. As terrains vagues, interstices are “undesignated spaces” (Lévesque, 2013, p. 28), holding potentials for a creative escape against the pervasive normality. Having no predetermined scale nor embodying a predicted agenda, interstitial space thus becomes a “secondary space”; and as the editor Andrea Mubi Brighenti (2013) underlines in the book Urban Interstices: The Aesthetics and the Politics of the In-Between, it is a minoritarian position in regard to the spaces enclosing it. The state of in-between-ness is therefore clearly demarcated as they are considered to be “surrounded by other spaces either more institutionalized, and therefore economically and legally powerful, or endowed with a stronger identity, and therefore more recognizable and typical” (Brighenti, 2013, p. xvi). Based on Brighenti’s claim, defining the physical and formal characteristics of such specific sites for this reason becomes relative as they are characterized by the surrounding environment. In other words, it is the identification of primary factors and forces that determine why and how interstices become enclosures or remain secondary.

In a similar manner, building on bell hooks’ conceptualization of the margin as a “space of resistance and radical openness” (2000), architecture scholar Isabelle Doucet observes interstices as “peripheries, the informal and the excluded” (2016, p. 84). However, for Doucet, the spatial metaphors such as edge, peripheries, no man’s land, urban fringe or non-place to describe the margin – which the author associates with interstice – is depicted as “something negative of something else rather than an entity in its own right” (2016, p. 85). When rendered from such angle, interventions at margins – no matter how much they are modest, small in scale, more or less impactful, dismiss their potentials of addressing or resolving the wider structural issues. On the contrary, pointing out the potentials of such spaces, Doucet asserts that interstice, by contrast, “locates otherness in cracks within the center as much as in peripheral locations” (2016, p.85). The interstice as an in-between thus goes beyond the center/periphery dichotomy, the core/margin dichotomy or even the city/suburb pseudo-dichotomy” (Brighenti, 2013, p. xvi). In reference to these spatial meanings of the term, it can be understood that its physical features are generally portrayed as leftover, vacant, unplanned, derelict, or residual, located both at the edges and at urban centers; turning into potential sites to

invest in (as well as to harvest from) to intervene against the uneven development and social injustices that the neoliberal landscape bears.

Indeed, the physical features or the morphological characteristics of interstices only correspond to a single dimension out of the manifold interpretations the term spatially represents. Whereas this dimension will be elaborated (in section 3.2.1.) in detail as a part of the dynamic constitution of (or under) broader capital forces, processes and imaginaries under 'interstitial space'; extending the utility of the term at different levels – particularly when put in proximity with the crisis of capitalism – proves to be crucial within a broad array of spatial practices of concern.

Approaching from the perspective of spatial experiments challenging the neoliberal project, critical urban theorist Neil Brenner (2017) asserts these practices to be emerging in interstitial spaces. However, for Brenner, spaces within which practices are located have a "neutral" quality; stating that they are "neither functional to, nor disruptive of" broader forces, yet co-existing "with neoliberal urbanism in a relationship that is neither symbiotic, parasitic nor destructive" (p. 114). Akin to Brenner's approach, Margit Mayer's reading of "first world urban activism" in the context of contemporary urban social movements takes place at spatial intervals – precarious spaces such as privatized public zones, blighted neighborhoods, banlieues, ghettos, etc. (2013, p. 13). According to Mayer, this activism – which can also be interpreted as a social and political commitment – ultimately corresponds to operations established under a neoliberal order that operate through enclosures, thereby inevitably absorbing spatial interstices in its cause of growth (2013, p. 5). A further likewise argument is present at Isabelle Stengers and Philippe Pignarre's (2011) formulation of interstice in the domain of political philosophy. The authors urge to be cautious about the risks of interstices turning into an "organ, giving the state new possibilities for perception and action" (2011, p. 113). Based on these various views, it can be mentioned that the fabrication of each interstice creates its spatial-temporal milieu at the expense of a potential institutionalization. Therefore, in-between the risk of healing (being recuperated by the state) or remaining toxic (true interstice), the politics of spatial interstices is not likely to be associated with a grey zone, as "its 'interior' and its 'exterior' are distinguished" at one's own risk (Stengers & Pignarre, 2011, p. 113.). Consequently, instead of focusing solely on the physical aspects of spatial intervals or evaluating them as fixed assets – such as in terms of their scale, context and physical features, it should be simultaneously examined over a timespan along with the actions it

contains and the actors it enrolls, as it is hard to estimate what a spatial interstice can do or how it can be handled in advance.

To sum up the spatial meaning of the term, Marxist sociologist and political philosopher Antonio Negri (in Querrien, Petcou, & Petrescu, 2007) asserts the interstitial space to be representing an essential dimension, regardless of whether it has a neutral quality or that it is subject to absorption or recuperation under the neoliberal order. This dimension, which Negri associates with the spatial quality of an in-between-ness, demands one to "confront the problem of different languages, and the link between them, or that of a power relation (the biopolitical exploitation of life) and force (the resistance that is expressed in the experimental practice of an interstitial space)" (in Querrien, Petcou, & Petrescu, 2007, p. 292). What we can understand from Negri's take on space interstice is that it is not merely a gap in the urban fabric, but an active constituent in the making of the urban, containing the dynamics of resistance and power, of minoritarian group struggles against the contestations of larger capitalist entities. Thinking from this perspective opens up another field of thought around the subject, rather than reducing it to a spatial symptom of urban morphology that is excluded or devoid of content.

This raises the second point of view on interstice. Submerged in temporal thickness, it relates to the "event-oriented" dimensions on the subject. In the field of public art[22], art critic Nicholas Bourriaud conceptualizes interstice beyond a physical realm, rather "a space in human relations" that provides an opportunity for non-normative forms of social engagement (2002, p. 6). Drawing from Karl Marx's reference[23] to interstice as a pocket of trading activity that stands outside the capitalist framework, Bourriaud's interpretation of the term stands for 'other' occasions of interaction. Thus, unlike the art practices taking place in private spaces, practices in public sites instigate further human relations based in the social contexts within which they are embedded. Consequently, introducing public art as a "social interstice", Bourriaud states that spatial experiments through art and architecture allow the emergence of "new life possibilities" bridging further relations (2002, p. 20). Here, we understand that the event-oriented

[22] Here I should emphasize that considerable number of architecture scholars studying socially and politically committed architectural practices build their discourses drawing from public art studies and practices. Because the practices in the frame of this study are interpreted as artistic injections in urban space by architectural scholars, studies on socially engaged public art – particularly the works of Nicholas Bourriaud (2002) on relational art and Claire Bishop (2006) on participatory art – are frequently recognized in the architecture literature.

[23] The original quotation by Karl Marx is as follows: "Trading nations, properly so called, exist in the ancient world only in its interstices, like the gods of Epicurius in the Intermundia, or like Jews in the pores of Polish society" (1886 [1863], book I, tome I).

meaning of the term is located at the intersection of time and space, flourishing potential ways to experiment with activities in space as much as the human relations it activates. Beyond the understanding of claiming a place or a location, it becomes a relationship (Doucet, 2016, p. 95). In this sense, interstice emerges as a spatial imagination which is exercised in place to make it come true, and most prominently, it indicates encounters, negotiations, and possible frictions in the act of healing both space and social relations.

Although being put slightly differently, such possibilities of social engagement in understanding and forming an approach towards interstitial is also present in the architectural domain. For Brighenti, the event-oriented meaning of the concept includes "movement", which the author familiarizes with the urban explorations from 70's and today. Introducing the earlier works of Walter Benjamin, Situationists, and their contemporary counterpart Stalker/Osservario Nomade, Brighenti outlines movement not as a series of activities working toward an objective in or through interstices, but as "the outcome of a composition of interactions and affections among a multiplicity of actors that coexist within a given spatial situation" (2013, p. xviii). Thus, for the author, adding movement to the term brings in a further experience to explore "uncertain, ill-defined, crepuscular, and metamorphic states of urban territories" (Brighenti, 2013, p. xviii). Although the movement enacts a future potential social relationship or a discovery in space, it as well suggests a movement backwards in time, to determine the flow of historical events and the territorial conditions that signal or contribute to the creation of an interstice. Therefore, movement also implies a retrospective approach to read the event-oriented meaning of an interstitial condition in terms of why and how it has developed over time.

This meaning of the term inevitably links to a mode of social resistance concerning power dynamics, as much as it is about the negotiations, building social relations, encounters or movements under the dominant hegemony of the capital. For Frederic Jameson, such relations assemble a "counterhegemony", an accumulation of oppositional forces raising a critical position in the context of global capitalism. Oppositional forces, as Jameson argues, suggest an "enclave theory" of social transition; announcing another mode of production with the birth of new social relations. The author theorizes enclaves as "small yet strategic pockets or beachheads" within capitalism (Jameson, 1985, p. 69-70), therefore underlines the interstitial condition to express experiments in which social relations of the future are worked out. In this respect, through

altering the dynamics of hegemonic power, interstitial is connected to collective actions attempting to inhabit and practice space differently.

As a projection of built social relations, the final meaning of the term highlights the formation of new subjectivities. In the introductory pages of the seminal book "The Location of Culture", critical theorist Homi K. Bhabha discusses interstice to draw the connection between cultural production and its unlikely prevalence in ambivalent spatial intervals: "It is in the emergence of interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest or cultural value are negotiated" (2004, p. 2). Studying how subjects are formed in-between the domains of difference – of class, gender, race, etc. – Bhabha interprets interstitial as an output at the intersection of time and space, merging "complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion" (2004, p. 1). Interstitial figure is then also hosted in spatial intervals, associated with the uniting of different identities, a calibration of pre-established professional roles, or the emergence of repressed social groups whose presence become clear and visible. This figure also relates to a redefinition at an individual level and perhaps to reconstruct the position of a subject without confining it to a particular profession or identifying it with a particular social class. Isabelle Stengers describes this condition as a "culture of interstices", emerging from the resistance dynamics and as a resilience to dominant orders. Stengers makes this expression explicit building her work on philosopher Alfred North Whitehead:

> "If life lurks in the interstices of each living cell, one may say just as well that the singularity of living societies, what justifies them as such, should be called a "culture of interstices" (2011, p. 328).

To articulate this expression and also to elaborate further on the social connotations of the term, it remains crucial to contextualize the reception of the interstitial within the domain of philosophy. In the domain of philosophy, the notion attributes to something empty, something in-between that has no importance in the constitution of things. However, Alfred North Whitehead's approach in earlier last century breaks this understanding with an enigmatic statement: 'Life lurks in the interstices of each living cell, and in the interstices of the brain' (Whitehead, 1929, pp. 105–106). Focusing on the issue of 'life' and its relation to interstices, Whitehead's speculative philosophy were of interest among its successors (including Isabelle Stengers), who voiced and

contextualized his proposition from spatial-temporal dimensions in the twenty-first century. Building further on Stengers' analysis, for Didier Debaise, this statement represents a potential "point of departure of a new coherence, yet to be constructed" (2013, p. 102). Building on the observation of interstice as "empty, intermediary spaces, fissures inside a body, all those in-between zones that contrast with the apparently 'full' body parts", Debaise continues to state that life indeed flourishes in "the non-occupied space between bodies or body parts (whatever their dimension)" (2013, p. 102). Interstice is then associated with fullness instead of nothingness, happening at the intersection of livings and their environment, of bodies and their milieu. Such intervals are spaces from which new entities, and becomings arise, whereas its temporal connotation determine the flow of succeeding events whilst carrying the weight of the past:

> "For living societies, everything happens on the level of the interstices: space-interstices, such as parts of societies, zones that separate several series engaged in one and the same persistence and times-interstices such as the intervals of blocks of becomings that determine the form of endurance." (2013, p. 110).

What we can understand from Debaise's take on space-interstice is that its identification is not only limited to a place, or a physical location that is pointed out as a margin, crack or an edge, but it also corresponds to a bodily space that breeds new subjectivities. Hence, interstices are immanent in human subjects and societies. It becomes a living common ground, and as Stengers suggests, it is a culture that sets up societies. Thinking subjects and societies from the perspective of interstice enables to read orders and implication of wider environmental forces upon the social, as well emerging acts against the forces of transformation in which they take part. When merged with time-interstices, and finding their way through a temporal thickness[24], they become characterized against the established orders.

This section introduced the different meanings of the term in critical theories encompassing different disciplines. Studying the spatial, event-oriented, and social significances of the term unravel two things in the context of this study.

Firstly, from a broader perspective, the term refers to an attitude against capitalism emerging from its ruptures. This attitude, as reviewed in this section, is primarily space oriented. However, it also has a spatial-temporal orientation, especially with collective

[24] For Whitehead, anything (even a physical object) that has a temporal endurance or a 'temporal thickness' is a society. See Debaise, "The Living and Its Environments" (2008; p. 5).

actions taking place in space intervals and with converging human figures. This, secondly, shows that these meanings are not entirely isolated from one another, but complement each other instead. As space embodies social relations, such relations are built either due to or as a consequence of actions. Thus, it is the flow of events over temporal variation which establish subjects' positions. Therefore, it is the linking between these different nuances that becomes crucial to understand and contextualize interstitial within the frame of this study.

In this study, the inclination toward applying the term "interstitial" over "interstice" has a meticulous reason: "interstitial" implies an occurrence, a formation, a becoming of an interval or intervening it; on the other hand, the term "interstice" has a direct correspondence (which is also covered by its adjective function) to the dimensions of space and time, attributing to a limited meaning. Deciphering the slight differences between these terms at play suggests "interstitial" as a specific spatial practice. Therefore, in this study, the term "interstitial" refers directly to the production of space itself.

3.1.3. Tool for Criticizing Spatial Production

Interstitial is adopted as a conception, but it is also a useful tool to enact a critical reading. This section deals with the term in two ways, by asking the following questions: How does interstitial relate to socially and politically engaged spatial practices? How could a thinking through the lens of interstice delineate the field of this study and organize the research stance?

In the domain of political philosophy, formulation of interstice possibly remains to be the most relevant and expansive aspect within the ensuing crisis of capitalism, hence with respect to other specific interpretations the term carries. In the book, "Capitalist Sorcery: Breaking the Spell" (2011), authors Isabelle Stengers and Philippe Pignarre describe interstice as a pragmatic critique shaped around the discussions of capitalism. Reassessing capitalism as a "system of sorcery without sorcerers" (p. 40) and concerning the ways in which suffering communities might defend themselves against the paralyses of such a system, they raise the image of the interstice. Referring to the current times as "the unhealthy milieu" within which oppositions and setbacks arise, the authors remind that the path for salvation is neither through escaping or trusting the state, in other words, locating oneself in either completely inside or the outside of it:

> "An interstice is defined neither against nor in relation to the bloc [the state] to which it nevertheless belongs. It creates its own dimensions starting from concrete processes that confer on it its consistency and scope, what it concerns and who it concerns." (p. 110).

Portraying how capitalism operates, the book explores further practical pathways to break capitalism whilst moving through its ruptures, which in other words interprets Marxist reading to "produce consequences that orientate action" (p. 17). Whereas the authors do not give a full prescription on how to act against the surrounding crisis, devoting a particular section on interstices, they emphasize the pragmatic success of collective interventions that think and act interstitially – in other words, *by the middle*. Likewise, an implicit argument of acting interstitially is also present in the works of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt. Putting it slightly differently yet underlining a similar political thought, they argue that a radical alternative can only emerge from within the structure of global capitalism rather than against it, stating that "the only strategy available to the struggles is of a constituent counterpower that emerges from within Empire" (2000, p. 59). In this vein, it can be understood that interstitial becomes an emerging action from *in-between* – or as Negri and Hardt suggests to be from *within*: such as, recognizing institutional settings whilst carrying emancipatory ambitions, blending in power structures whilst developing disruptive strategies, and embracing existing policies whilst cultivating new constitutions.

I argue that such a level of thinking does not only set forth an interpretation of the term within the context of this study but is also already immanent in the examined works of spatial practitioners in this research.[25] Whereas this aspect will be rendered moving through their practices in the next section, it should be underlined that delineating the field of study through such a perspective also opens up a new direction for disentangling spatial practices operating under the breaks of capitalism. In other words, embracing this dimension of interstitial when addressing the production of space allows for posing questions that are not solely from 'within' – as a containment within the confines of architecture's disciplinary focus to unfold its crisis – but from the 'outside'[26] – to figure

[25] According to Thomas A. Dutton and Lian Hurst Mann, architecture is located at the political center of a global capitalism, as it mediates "the relationship between economic development and ideological order" (Dutton, Mann, 2009, p. 117). The structures of "institutions, the distribution of power, social relations, cultural values and, everyday life", are in turn mediated by the built environment in which architecture takes part shaping (Dutton, Mann, 2000, p. 117). Interstitial actions then become an integral part of architecture as a discourse, practice and form.

[26] In the book "Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space", Elizabeth Grosz explores the ways in which architecture and philosophy are outside to each other, which calls for a fresh

out a comprehensive crisis trajectory within which the field of architecture is accommodated. Therefore, Stengers' and Pignarre's particular view of interstice/interstitial in this study is mostly related to socially and politically committed spatial practices.

It is in this broader respect, interstitial sets up an oscillation between reflection and action, as it suggests a critical and theoretical direction to unravel how socially and politically committed works produce space. On the one hand, I contend that this thinking brings a double criticism into this study's focus, which opens a room for a critical evaluation of works – that are at present considered to be critical spatial practices[27] in architecture – when put in relation within the wider structure of global capitalism. Thinking through the lens of interstice also entails a transdisciplinary[28] perspective to observe the whole mechanism at work (architecture's relevance with the broader structural concerns) and the intricacies it involves, rather than a mere focus on the fragments (such as architectural forms and processes) of what is at stake. It thus surpasses a reductive approach, that is, labels, banners, and all sort of other taxonomical orders[29] to understand architecture's engagement with the broader forces. Whilst these approaches become a useful tool to refine the research argument, that is, to narrow down the scale of the problem and scope of the research, the discipline-bound focus brings further research limitations by avoiding or partially translating wider structural issues. Therefore, reading through interstices invites to rethink the terms at play – elaborated in detail in Chapter 2.2 – as it brings another direction to view architecture's complex engagement with the world by dealing with "a broad range of disciplinary and practical forms of knowledge" (Doucet and Janssens, 2011, p.2). This is why the previous section touched on the

perspective on the inside of architecture by observing its discipline from the outside. Following a different research route yet acknowledging Grosz's statement "outside is active in the production of an inside" (2001, p. 68); in this particular study, thinking architecture from the outside submits to a transdisciplinary approach (Doucet and Janssens, 2011; Rendell, 2004) by moving across critical theories to observe broader complex social and political issues that are deeply implicated in architectural practice.

27 The term is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.3. See page 35 for the theorization and the designation of the term.

28 Transdisciplinary approach, or trans-milieu as Markus Miessen calls (2016, p. 32), refers to a relational knowledge production in architecture that feeds on practical forms and the neighboring fields of knowledge. Unlike the interdisciplinary knowledge located in scholarly environments, transdisciplinary knowledge brings a fusion of theory and practice, discipline and profession in architecture. Three points are considered to be integral in this approach: "the integration of discipline and profession (theory and practice) in knowledge production, the ethical dimension, and the importance of experimental, designerly modes of inquiry" (Doucet and Janssens, 2011, p.2).

29 This argument is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.1. Category works can be further reached in Chapter 2.2. Resonances in Literature: The Terms at Play.

different meanings of interstitial across diverse disciplines, rather than only building on its signification in architecture.

On the other hand, building further on criticality, embracing an interstitial research perspective escapes the pitfalls of structures of binarization, becoming a "site for the contestation of the many binaries and dualisms" (Grosz, 2001, p. 92). According to Slavoj Zizek (2006), interstitial thus becomes a "parallax view" of the opposite perspectives. Building on Kojin Karatani's work, Zizek writes:

> "We should renounce all attempts to reduce one aspect of it to the other (or, even more, to enact a kind of "dialectical synthesis" of the opposites). One should, on the contrary, assert antinomy as irreducible, and conceive the point of radical critique not as a determinate position as opposed to another position, but as the irreducible gap between the positions – the purely structural interstice between them" (2006, p. 121).

In this sense, the "purely structural interstice" becomes an underlying critical stance that requires an evenly observation from all directions to explore what is at stake, without having to divert the focus on one side by othering the counter side.[30] It suggests an alternative lane to the prevalent hierarchical discussions in architecture around the normative / alternative, structure / agency, institutional / radical, top-down / bottom-up, architect / user, within / outside state mechanisms, or the autonomy / heteronomy oppositions; which are commonly referred binary assumptions when pointing out architecture's supremacy against the contemporary crisis. Therefore, thinking in terms of 'both/and' rather than 'either/or' suggests a model that is inclusive of the two yet at the same time allows to observe what lies in-between. As Jane Rendell (2006) acknowledges building on Diane Elam's observation, refusing binaries does not necessarily put one in an undecidable position. Such an undecidability indeed becomes a "determinate oscillation between possibilities" which itself offers a critical potential (Rendell, 2009, p.9). I believe, taking a stance from 'within' and reading through the 'structural interstice' – by not restricting to oppositional categories or a particular position, is a promising start

[30] For Elizabeth Grozs (2001), the binary structure "defines the privileged term as the only term of the pair" whilst it "infinitizes the negative term" and expels from "the circuit of the privileged term" (p. 95). Thus, escaping rigid polarization within the context of this study allows for a negotiation between binary terms, as it gives a room to move through and disentangle spatial practices in relation to institutional structures – rather than embracing a priori claims assigning architecture with the terms such as counter, radical, or activist. A slightly different interpretation by Isabelle Doucet (2015) in this state suggests that interstices help us to "radicalize our reading not only of peripheries but centers [the urban] too" (p. 85). Such a reading argues against the treatment of the city or the state as a stabilized and normalized entity.

deliver a critical rethinking of social and political engagement, and to define its values, politics, and actions.

If the interstitial condition suggests creating its own dimensions (Pignarre & Stengers, 2011; Negri, 2007), then what potential openings could it introduce to architecture's production of space? How do the spatial, event-oriented and social interpretations of the term translate to practices settled in the crisis? In other words, building on the fact that the term verifies a crisis environment, how does it contribute to unfold the multiple dimensions of it?

Prior to an articulation of the preceding questions in the following framework, it is essential to point out a final remark. This study does not engage with the conception interstitial as a priori condition to test the specifics of spatial practices emerging as a response to neoliberal crisis, nor does it engage with the practices to illustrate the different meanings of the term. Whilst I am aware that the critical theoretical arguments in architecture and neighboring disciplines is essential to endeavor social and political imaginations of an interstitial condition, it would be wrong to restrict the setting of such an imagination to a particular conception that offers a recipe on how to run concerned design works. What is furthermore, rather than allocating theory to explain practice or practice to justify theory, the point of consulting critical theories in this research is to articulate practices and their relations to contemporary crisis of capitalism. By introducing the following constituents of the framework in theoretical writings, this study operates reciprocally between theory and practice to open up an interval through which socially and politically engaged practices could be observed and evaluated.

In order to give summarizing remarks of this section, it can be said that the study, so far, indicated interstitial to be a multi-layered concept, through covering a few of the many meanings accumulated around the term. The section engaged with the notion from diverse disciplinary positions, as well as captured various perceptions, representations and methods of inquiry. Acknowledging these various potentials of the term not only becomes a favorable guidance that is congruent with the constituents of the following framework, but also strengthens the analytical lens that the framework tries to establish. Therefore, in the following section, getting to know the spatial, event-oriented, and social meanings of the term will become a useful correlation when mapping spatial practices based on the tripartite concerns of space, action and position. In this way, the following section will examine the constituents emerging from the practice to qualify the condition of interstitial as a mode of production of space.

3.2. Building a Framework: Interstitial in Practice

This section discusses a range of spatial practitioners and their works drawing on critical theoretical grounds. Following a reciprocal approach by moving between theory and practice, the section asks: *how* do these practices perform - *what* actions appear, under *what* specific conditions and at *where*, *who* are behind these actions? Addressing these main questions, the concern is to outline the terrain of spatial works from a series of distinct directions, which also helps to trace the manifold implications of the crisis on these works. Drawing the contours of this terrain – where a mapping can be further projected to read the responses of spatial practices to the crisis of capitalism (in Chapter 4), this section provides an analytical lens to understand distinctive approaches of practices from which interstitial urges as a mode of spatial production.

Encompassing the framework of this dissertation, each set of questions above are opened up distinctively in the following subsections. In each subsection, I capture the different constituents of spatial production which are expressed further under multiple scenes related to spatial works.

The focus in 3.2.1 is on the spatial. In it, I explore how the interstitial conditions of spaces embodying practices have occurred, compelled, contributed or inspired their operations. Visiting different contexts and scales, I identify three specific issues through the scenes in this subsection: first, urban conflict and informality becoming sites of intervention laden with tension and dissensus; second, discarded spatial structures and vacant lots cherishing spaces for further encounters and events; and third, how running experimental approaches culminate fabricated cracks that are not directly internalized by crisis but a reflection of it due to actors and their modes of engagement.

In 3.2.2, I divert the focus to the actions of spatial practitioners, where I take onto examine the extents of spatial processes taking place both on and off site, tailored with different tools and methods. By visiting a range of operations spanning material and intangible interventions, I highlight the degrees of actions related to physical and ideal responses, and their temporal or lasting spatial imaginations exercised in or for place.

Finally, in 3.2.3, I turn the focus to position, to explore relationships the studied groups create in the production and occupation of spaces, and exchanges between laypeople and professionals from diverse disciplines. Examining the different organizational structures, I frame position as an expansive field of knowledge

simultaneously coalescing both architects' and non-architects' skills or their presence, broaching the formation of interstitial subjectivities.

3.2.1. Space

To understand how social and political engagement is exercised, it is important to identify the spaces intervened together with the actions they cover. As the meaning of spatial interstices has shown previously, to think about space is not only to take into account the physical features it contains or mediates – as it is commonly rendered in architecture, but also to consider the social-political factors that determine its context. In this respect, elaborating the constituent space in this section, I explore the contextual conditions in which practices are embodied. In doing so, I will try to simultaneously carve into the casual dimensions of social and political engagement in relation to critical theories on space, thereby exploring the state of spatial interstices in practice through revealing their different qualities.

Thinking and reflecting on space has been a subject of scholarly work. An increasing number of scholars in humanities and social sciences have turned to questions around spatiality and the emphasis on space in theory, while on the other hand, the discipline of architecture has turned to social sciences to question its spatial contribution for achieving social impact.[31] In this line, space urges to be reviewed across various disciplines that results in a growing field of shared knowledge and ideas.

Space figures centrally in the works of Henri Lefebvre; his expansive view on theorizing space deals profoundly with the organizational space as a material product (physical), with the relationship between social and spatial structures of urbanism (social), and with the ideological content of socially created space (mental). In his seminal work 'The Production of Space' (1991, p. 14), Lefebvre overcomes the fact that these three areas are inert, disconnected or opposed to each other. On the contrary, Lefebvre

[31] Concerned with theorizing space and the politically charged spatiality of social life, in his book Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory, Edward Soja (1989) contended the increasing attention to the critical role of space in reading society. Two decades after, Soja (2008) underlined the term "spatial turn" as a "response to a long standing ontological and epistemological bias that privileges time over space in all the human sciences, including spatial disciplines like geography and architecture". Likewise, with the crises in the last two decades, politicized urban and architecture debates in the late 60s re-entered the field. With the article of Claire Bishop (2006), "social turn" has been popularized in contemporary art and architectural field, and further adopted to call attention to socially and politically engaged practices.

proposes an analytical triad that melds the physical, social, and mental. The triad consists of an interrelated spatial model – spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space – in which each component is in tension with one another.

Spatial practice is the material constitution of space performed through everyday human experiences; it is where power is exercised by its users. Under capitalism, it encompasses both everyday life and urban activities that result from the physical and experiential deciphering of space. This space, which is deeply rooted in economic, political and cultural processes, is a "perceived" one, dependent on material and economic base (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38). Representations of space, on the other hand, is rationally organized and connected to Cartesian order. Its structure combines ideologies, knowledge and conceptions of space such as through regulations, codes, laws, maps and statistics. It is a "conceived space", intervened by planners, urbanists, architects, social engineers, and scientists. This abstract form of knowledge on space, as well as a dominant mode of production, precedes the realization of spatial practices (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33, 38). And lastly, "representational space" is the overlap of practice and ideology. Although it is conditioned by the representations of space, in other words, dominated by and passively experienced by inhabitants and users, it is yet open to possibilities of emancipation and resistance. It emerges as a "lived space" where the ideal forms and social movements perform (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39).

This intertwined triad points to a space that is socially produced (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 26), and rather than a neutral means of spatial production, its character can be modified with the changing attributes and qualities between perceived, conceived and lived spaces. As a result, the relationships between the three moments are never stable, and that their contributions vary according to the "society", the "mode of production", as well as the "historical period" in question (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 46). For Lefebvre, space then is not a passive container devoid of relations but an active formation, a medium and an outcome of social beings. This means that as much as space attributes to a social sphere, it comes into effect politically.[32] Consequently, Lefebvre's trialectics of spatiality provides us with an orientation to the question of space, how it is animated by the presence of multitudes and discords, and how on the other hand space becomes an instrument for social endeavors through cooperation and collective efforts.

[32] Regarding this sphere, political can be defined as "the process by which people negotiate and compete in the process of making and executing shared or collective decisions" (Hague and Harrop 2013, p. 6).

In conjunction with the trialectic scheme for understanding how space is produced, Lefebvre's insights contend that space is not only the result of social relations but has become a productive force in capitalism. In his essay "The Social-Spatial Dialectic", Edward Soja (1980) claimed that Lefebvre clarifies how the social organization of space and social relations of production are inextricably linked, and how they become forces to thrive capitalist modes of production. Space thus emerges as a field in which capitalism prospers greatly, despite rarely dwindling due to its internal contradictions. At this point, Lefebvre introduces the spatial concepts of "absolute" space – referring nature in its raw form, "abstract" space – to talk about how capitalism regulates societies and suppresses heterogeneity, and "differential" space – to argue how differences may emerge from this suppression (Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 49-53). Tracing the history of space, which unfolds from absolute space of nature, to abstract space of capitalism, Lefebvre reaches to utopic understanding of differential space. Differential space is unlikely to materialize because of the dominant capitalist modes of production, but it is also partly possible, as this domination comes with its own crisis arising from abstract space. In the context of this study, I argue that spatial interstices visited in the following scenes are closely related to Lefebvre's conception of differential space, which arises due to varying degrees of compression between perceived and conceived, triggering the emergence of lived space where social happenings thus practices unfold.

Later theorists, who took up similar implications of Lefebvre's ideas on space as a social realm, continued to contribute the field of spatial studies. Geographers, such as David Harvey have long been concerned how space is socially produced within the context of global capitalism, while Doreen Massey (2005) focused on space as a sphere of multiplicity, of coexisting heterogeneity that is produced through interrelations. Considering space as the dimension of the social and that it is constituted through relations, Massey argues that outside of these relations a space has no existence. Unlike spatial disciplines that tend to fix space, conceiving it through representations, thereby limiting its potentials, Massey's critical claims encompassing a relational idea of space suggest that space is always "under construction", "in the process of being made", so is never closed or finished (2005, p. 9). Massey's relational thoughts, which calls for a space that is socially made and reformed over time, can be found in relational art and also architectural practices that take their inspiration from human relations and social contexts, rather than private or independent spaces that remain isolated from social relations.

(Bourriaud 2002, p. 5). This is also relevant for the practices articulated in the following scenes.

Conceptualizing space as an unfixed, ever-evolving social arena hosting multiplicities also means that it is inherently political. Space is a platform that brings shared endeavors together and makes them visible, while also separating people under strict control and order. Regarding this political dimension, political theorist Chantal Mouffe defines space as a battleground on which "different hegemonic projects are confronted without any possibility of final reconciliation" (2008, p. 6). In the context of critical public art practices – which we can also construe practices in the frame of this study, Mouffe brings an "agonistic model of space", which deals with the "subversion of dominant hegemony" (2008, p. 6). Agonism thus appears as a struggle for re-configuring power relations in space, where multiplicity of perspectives confronts to unveil the tension repressed by the dominant consensus. The politics of space, then, relates not only to achieving consensus among social relations, but also implies dissensus among different adversaries. This "dissensus", or disagreement, as it is articulated in Jacques Rancière's (2010) work, is vital to constitute the politics of space. Consequently, as much as space is social, it is also political. And political space becomes a contested ground that arises due to confrontations among different adversaries presenting new possibilities of space, thus, become a rupture in the established order. This political ground can exist through events occurring in the historical trajectory of space, as it does not have to be realized only by spatial interventions in the context of this study.

As summarized briefly so far, Lefebvre's and later scholars' extensive reflections on space not only encourages thinking about space beyond subjective-objective or mental-physical dichotomies, but also provides a basis for understanding how the different attributes of spatial interstices described in the previous section are formed. Based on these critical considerations, spanning the mental, physical and social areas in relation to the triad of the perceived, conceived and lived space brings a point of departure for exploring the extent to which interstices occur, compel, contribute or inspire practices – which is the focus of this section. In this context, while posing the question of where socially and politically engaged practices take place, I also recognize that space is an active constituent that plays a decisive role in practices rather than the intention of describing it as a passive background on which practices are carried out. From this point of view, spaces encompassing the practices within the scope of this study, then, not only refer to dormant contexts in which social and political engagement is carried out, but also

invite to explore how spaces that trigger this engagement are already socially and politically charged.

Under capitalist modes of production, "social relations of production are both space-forming and space-contingent" (Soja, 1980, p. 211) Soja wrote, quoting Lefebvre: "Space and the political organization of space express social relationships but also react back upon them" (quoted in Soja, 1980, p. 210). What we can understand from Lefebvre's arguments and later interpretations of Soja is that space expresses a *causal* significance for social relations of production, and at the same time becomes a *conditional* and *consequential* ground for expressing those relations. Building on these considerations, how does space organize practices within the context of this study? What is the role of space in practice once its significance is not only the abstraction of ideas (conceived) that are laid over, but also empirically observed (perceived) in everyday life, conditioning possibilities for emancipation and resistance (lived)?

Visiting different contexts and scales, the following three scenes attempt to offer a discussion on the role of spatial interstices once they find a ground where they could be observed through practice: first, space as projective, giving rise to spatial practitioners thus prompting their actions under compulsions the space embodies due to socio-political and economic factors; second, space as conditional, inoperable due to accommodating financial or policy issues, and is invisible or disregarded until intervened; and finally, space as receptive, temporarily or permanently culminated cracks that are not directly internalized by crisis but a reflection of it due to actors and their modes of engagement.

3.2.1.1. Space as Projective

Spaces such as border zones, informal settlements or refugee camps might be distinctive from each other in terms of scale, context and physical characteristics. What brings them together though is that they are not typical sites in which architecture finds practice. While they are recognized for their noticeable architectural features, such as concrete border-walls dividing political territories, self-help dwellings made of discarded materials found on lands without proper infrastructure, or tent structures as a material manifestation of temporary occupation, there is more to it than these representations of space.

These are the spaces of uneven urbanization exacerbated by the production of global developments under neoliberalism, consequences of divisive political economies reinforcing socio-economic inequality, global and local policies producing zones of conflict and contradiction, and politics of fragmentation and exclusion. Located at the center of today's crisis, these are also the spaces inhabited by segregated communities as a result of economic disparities, sites of marginalization where alienation and vulnerability are made visible.

Contrary to the perceived and conceived conceptions of these spaces, they are also known for human resilience, tactics for survival in everyday life, and continually having to think of new cultural, political, and economic models. Becoming catalysts for understanding how alternative social and spatial patterns emerge from this suppression, they inspire and inform practices of spatial practitioners. As an architectural practice/urban think tank working with marginal communities effected by border conditions, Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman invites to rethink of socio-political and economic structures inscribed in space, which they find to be peripheral to the specializations of art and architecture:

> "We need to challenge our reductive and limited ways of working, by which we continue seeing the world as a tabula rasa on which to install the autonomy of architecture. We need to reorient our gaze toward the drama embedded in the reality of everyday and in doing so engage the shifting sociopolitical and economic domains that have been ungraspable by design." (Interview with Cruz, in Gandolfi, 2010, p. 124).

Setting the entire agenda of their practice, zones of conflict become an urban laboratory for architect Teddy Cruz and political scientist Fonna Forman. Focusing on San Diego-Tijuana border region as a point of departure, where one of the richest districts in the US is situated right across the real poverty in Mexico, Cruz and Forman's practice unveils the interdependence between the two cities in terms of goods, services and human flows. While the 'South to North' migratory movement enriches San Diego in terms of precarious labor, it also produces informal economies and informal land use patterns transforming the fabric of its suburbs nearby the border. Whereas on the other hand, the material flow from 'North to South' accumulates "infrastructural waste" (car tires, entire prefabricated houses, building materials such as plywood, aluminum windows, garage doors) for constructing insurgent and informal urbanism in Tijuana (Cruz 2008) (Figure 3.1).

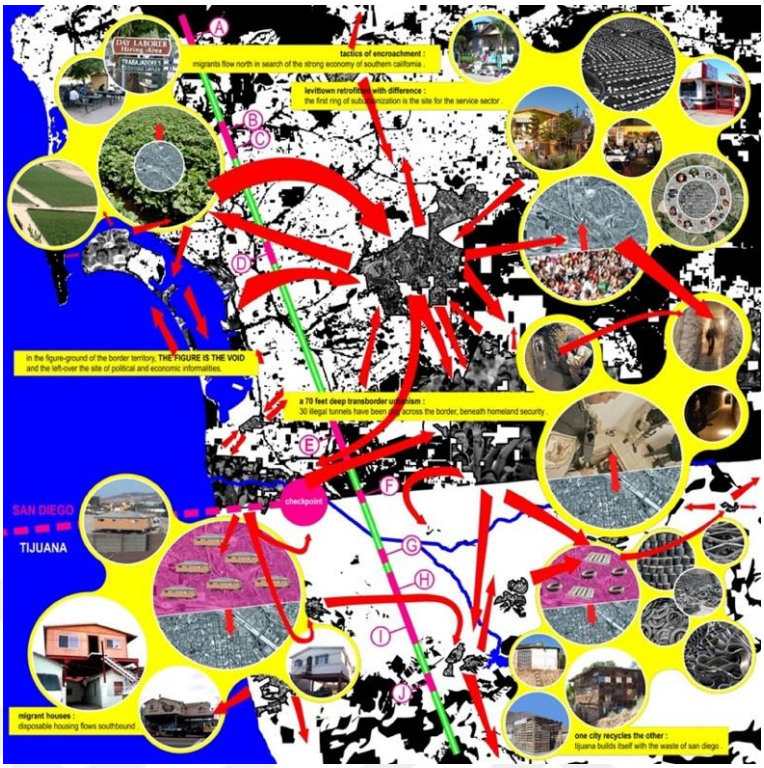


Figure 3.1. Referring the bright red arrows of Guy Debord's Situationist Map, Cruz and Forman chart the transborder informal urban dynamics between San Diego and Tijuana, presented the 3rd International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam, 2007 (Source: http://a-d-hd.com/)

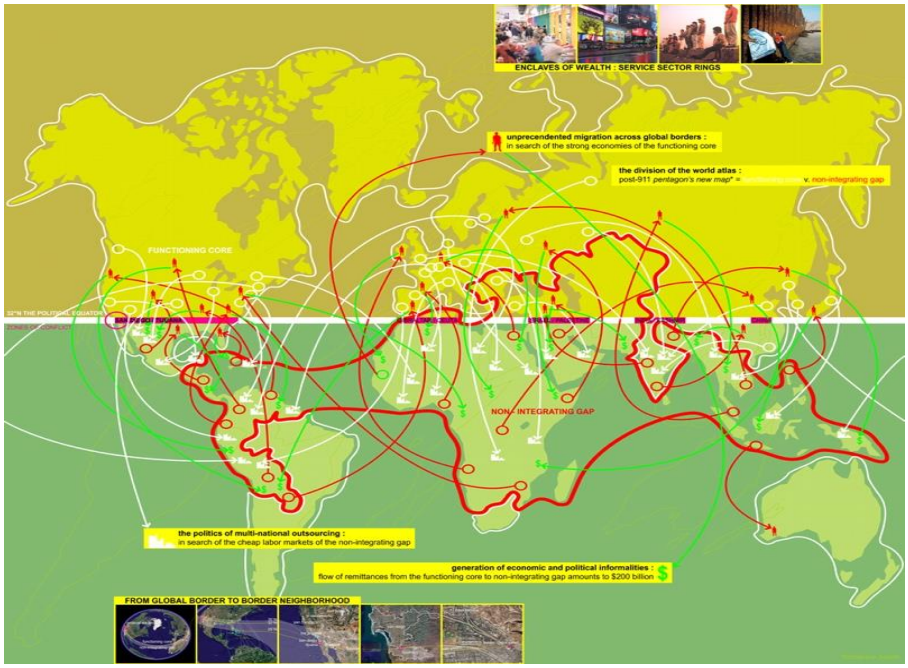


Figure 3.2. "The Political Equator", presented at the 3rd International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam, 2007. (Source: http://a-d-hd.com/)

For Cruz (2017), such two-way border crossings create “critical thresholds”, opening an entry point to observe many other conflict zones that exist in different parts of the world. According to his claim, these critical thresholds follow an imaginary axis that crosses the global map through other zones of conflict, stretching from US-Mexico, one the most intensified entryway of immigration from Latin America to the United States, into The Strait of Gibraltar, where waves of immigration flow from Africa into Europe, and the Israeli-Palestinian border diving the Middle East. Thus, questioning how geographic conflict can engage as “an operational artistic tool” and as “a practice diagram”, Cruz and Forman produced “The Political Equator” to reveal the growing divide between the southern and northern territories where “invisible transhemispheric sociopolitical, economic and environmental crises are manifested at regional and local scales” (Cruz, 2017, p. x) (Figure 3.2).

The initial approach framing Cruz and Forman's practice, as can be seen from the Political Equator or the San Diego-Tijuana map, which reveals the different dynamics along borders studied at different scales, is to investigate the conditions in which conflict zones arise. Cruz argues that establishing an understanding of what conditions produced these spaces in the first place is crucial to reorganizing architectural thinking (Cruz, 2016, p. 9). Such a thinking, albeit questioning the helplessness of the architectural profession in the current context of pressing crisis, paves the way for the ways in which architecture can interact socially and politically:

> “…[S]ome of the most relevant projects forwarding socioeconomic inclusion and artistic experimentation will not emerge from sites of economic abundance but from sites of scarcity, in the midst of the conflicts between geopolitical borders, natural resources and marginal communities” (Cruz, 2017, p. x).

In this regard, although border zones pose obstacles due to politics of fragmentation, their porous nature allow for human flows and material circulation leading to different forms of governance and urbanization, which inform Cruz and Forman's practice. As such, seeking new civic imaginations in space, Cruz and Forman address how localities of conflict can transform into practicable public spaces (Figure 3.3).

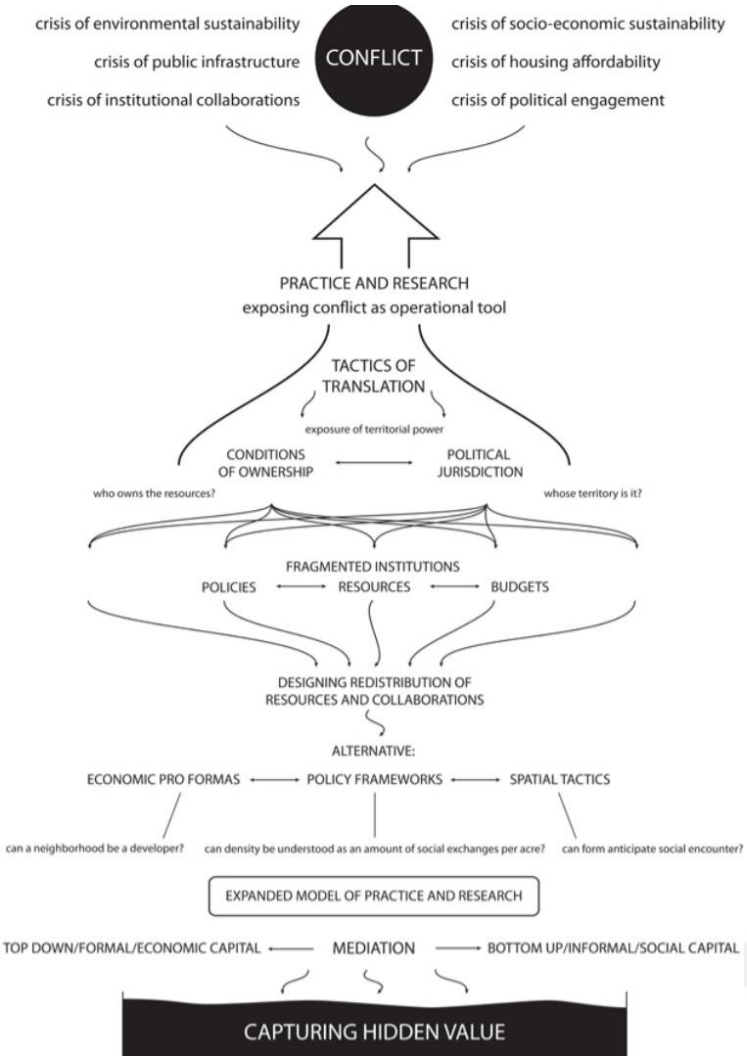


Figure 3.3.Practice Diagram of Estudio Teddy Cruz depicting (zones of) conflict as an operational tool. (Source: www.hemisphericinstitute.org)

They achieve this transformation not only by visualizing processes to understand the conditions of conflicts and contradictions that their spatial projects would surmount, but also by working on physical interventions (projects such as Cross-Border Community Stations and affordable housing units like Casa Familiar) and proposing new programmatic frameworks to reorganize institutional protocols together with the knowledge driven from communities. Therefore, as Cruz mentions, their practice of architecture working with marginal neighborhoods, particularly in the border zone between San Diego and Tijuana, recognize informal patterns of urbanization not as an "aesthetic category", but as "praxis" to convey alternative interpretations of community and citizenship (Cruz & Forman, 2020, p. 197). In this line, located at the nexus of spatialized exclusion and marginalization, their practice seeks to disrupt local and global

social and economic policies for establishing new spatial interfaces between top-down institutions and bottom-up communities, thus, to produce new architectural thinking and intervention strategies by bringing together knowledge and resources from both sides.

Shifting the focus toward the Middle East part of "The Political Equator", to the West Bank territory, we encounter another controversial border region, from which the practices of the architecture collective Decolonizing Architecture and Art Residency (DAAR) originate. Unlike the San Diego-Tijuana border that marks the edges of two settlements, here, the border expands from a physical line of division turning into a pocket of colonial territory, marking a space in depth surrounding the State of Palestine. Representing a contested border territory due to being under the military occupation of Israel, West Bank is actually an accumulation of multiple borders outlining the 19 refugee camps that host Palestinians who were exiled from their homeland as a result of the expropriation of their lands on which Israel is built today.

According to DAAR, this border region is "a nation without a state", and together with the encircled refugee camps existing since the early years of 1948, is also home to the condition of "permanent temporariness" (Hilal & Petti, 2018). These two ends of the pendulum, decades-long occupation and oppression leading to deteriorating humanitarian rights on the one hand, and on the other hand, the constant struggle of Palestinian refugees for decolonization and rights of return for their homeland, becomes a crucial laboratory for DAAR. Founding members of the collective, architects Sandi Hilal, Alessandro Petti, and former member Eyal Weizman, view their spatial practices as a form of political intervention into Israel's colonial architecture that aims to establish long-term transformative visions:

> "Architectural proposals are a form of fiction. Their effects could be the opening of the imagination. We want to find a place for architecture to act in the world and not in the service of a pre-existing agenda. Our architecture has materialized in both built and political space, and in the cultural collective imagination of actors—in meetings and presentations, in legal challenges, in negotiations..." (Petti, Hilal & Weizman, 2013, p. 27).

Engaging in spatial research along with various forms of implementations particularly in refugee camps, and having produced over seventeen projects since 2007, DAAR's practices are informed and shaped by the conflict over Palestine, treating the territory of West Bank as a "condition rather than an object" (Hilal & Petti, 2018, p. 40). Their ways of dealing with politics through architecture in this territory of exile open up another perspective for approaching the humanitarian crisis at stake:

> "Our architecture is not about determining a utopia of ultimate satisfaction, but simply starting from what exists—the present state of affairs and its material manifestation, from the rubble 'unceasingly piled before our feet.' Our way of work seeks to find and utilize cracks and loopholes within existing colonial systems of separation and control" (Petti, Hilal & Weizman, 2013, p. 31).

While the spatial organization of refugee camps reflects the ultimate counterpart of colonial separation and control, when it comes to West Bank's refugee camps, they resemble neighborhoods that make up the parts of the territory. Unlike informal settlements that spring up in urban fringes or border vicinities as we have seen in Estudio Teddy Cruz's practice, refugee camps are scattered all across West Bank, having gradually turned into 'refugee-hoods' with their inhabitants integrating into the social and economic life of the region. Growing in population without their areas ever changing, for DAAR, refugee camps are "living camps" that are in a "legal and political state of endless suspense" (Petti, Hilal & Weizman, 2013, p. 186). While this state of suspension, which has been ongoing for the last 70 years, initially manifested with tents, over the years it has evolved into densely arranged districts, blocks and concrete monotonous shelters (Figure 3.4-3.5). This condition of "permanent temporariness" presents a new form of urbanism that emerges not as a refugee-hood problem but as an opportunity for DAAR in the hope for transforming structures of domination, while establishing a balance between political isolation and social integration (Figure 3.6).

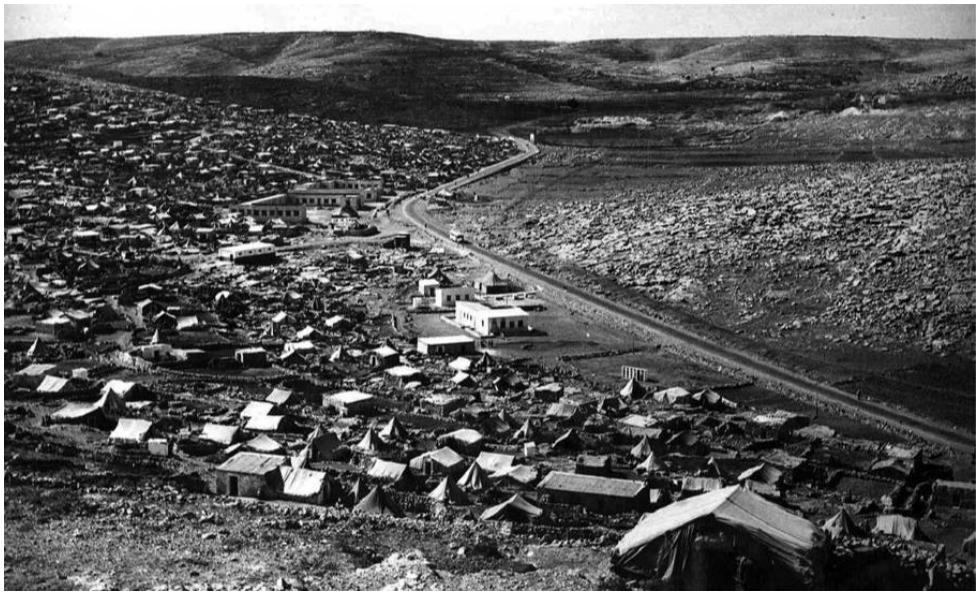


Figure 3.4. An image from Dheisheh Refugee Camp in Bethlehem taken in 1952. From *Architecture After Revolution* (p. 41), by Petti, A., Hilal, S., Weizman, E. (Eds.), 2013, Berlin: Sternberg Press. (Copyright [1952] The al-Feniq Photography Archive)



Figure 3.5. An image from Dheisheh Refugee Camp in Bethlehem from 2010. From *Architecture After Revolution* (p. 41), by Petti, A., Hilal, S., Weizman, E. (Eds.), 2013, Berlin: Sternberg Press. (Copyright Vincenzo Castella)



Figure 3.6. "The Concrete Tent" project realized by DAAR, representing the paradox of permanent temporariness. Constructed in Dheisheh Refugee Camp, in connection with their project "Campus in Camps", The Concrete Tent is a space for communal learning, exchange and debates. (Source: http://www.decolonizing.ps/site/concrete-tent/)

Based on this brief visit to these different geographies, what remains clear about Estudio Teddy Cruz and DAAR's practice is the relationship to an extensive spatial field laden with tension and dissensus. Whilst this spatial field might bear conflicts for different reasons, such as politics of exclusion in the case of Palestinians in exile, or divisive political economies reinforcing inequality in the San Diego-Tijuana border zone, it also brings the emergence of insurgent architectures and new social models challenging the dominant order. Thus, understanding spaces of conflict as a relational system grounded in social organization, in other words as lived spaces actively experienced in everyday life, opens a juncture for spatial practitioners to translate this knowledge and encourage empowerment. Considering the fact that their practices are context-dependent and context-driven, it would be fair to say that space becomes projective, a driving force behind spatial practices.

3.2.1.2. Space as Conditional

Unlike the space-contingent practices that arise from socially marginalized and politically fragmented thresholds visited in the previous scene, majority of the practices examined within the scope of this study are situated in urban intervals devoid of programmatic functions and social life. Although the motivations of the spatial practitioners realizing their works in such spaces are multifaceted, in practice, they are in one way or another related to the reasons why these spaces remain discarded and derelict. As a result, in this scene, examples of practices will be discussed in a way to draw a correlation between the reasons behind this spatial negligence and the motivations to intervene. Thus, moving through the practices, I will argue these spaces to be unfolding as a test bed for re-organizing power relations and establishing social life, thereby, becoming an instrument – a 'temporal' condition – for achieving specific goals.

Considering the ruptures of capitalism, there might be numerous economic and political reasons for a space to become abandoned or remain vacant. However, this scene particularly unravels two reasons in the light of examined spatial practices. First, it will highlight how the conceived visions producing abstract spaces are perceived 'temporally inoperable' due to financial turmoil, and secondly, it will reveal how architectural artefacts and vacant lots emerge over time by concluding their originally intended functions with the changing representations of the urban.

As for the former case, the context of empty real estate properties in Rotterdam can be a useful instance to capture disconnect between how space is conceived and how it is unexpectedly practiced down. In the aftermath of 2008 crisis, the plans for demolishing or refurbishing many centrally located old buildings were put on a hold due to losing their economic relevance. Thus, being expensive to fix and bad to rent out, they have become "toxic assets" stranded in Dutch welfare (Džokić & Neelen, 2017, p. 17). In 2013, discovering their potentials, STEALTH.unlimited, a practice-based architecture collective set up in 2000 by architects Ana Džokić and Marc Neelen, co-initiated the association City in the Making (Stad in de Maak) to make these buildings available to the community. Signing a contract with one of the former public housing developers and taking the right of use for free over the two of the buildings for ten years, the project was set to tackle the needs for affordable living and working spaces in the city. Although the City in the Making project has started off as an experiment to observe the potentials of empty real estates and how they can turn into public assets, today, it has grown from two into seven buildings where each provide ground-level communal facilities (Figure 3.7). For STEALTH.unlimited (2016), these buildings are a "collateral favor of crisis", so to put these failure structures into use, in a sense, is to take real estate out of the market and turn it into a "common resource pool" that is driven by communities. In the context of urban which has become a site for financial investment, the project points out that financial breakdowns could emerge as opportunities to discover "potentials latent in the space", thus provide a "temporary 'training ground'" for collective governance and ownership (Džokić & Neelen, 2017, p. 19; Sanin, 2014 p. 11). Therefore, defunct buildings which are temporarily managed via the City in the Making initiative, at large address how financial matters turn into spatial and societal issues with the disappearance of the welfare state, and how in turn, bottom-up strategies can be executed with the physical unfolding of space that escapes the institutional control. In this regard, not only with this particular project but in the rest of their projects, STEALTH.unlimited provokes spatial issues, particularly in the context of housing, and approaches vacant spaces as a tool to endeavor self-reliant communities.



Figure 3.7. The "Stoking House" (Stokerij) at Pieter de Raadtstraat.
(Source: https://stealth.ultd.net/)

Another example of architectural collective whose works stem from leftover spaces is aaa (atelier d'architecture autogérée / studio of self-managed architecture), founded in Paris in 2001 by Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou. At the center of aaa's projects is launching productive urban gardens that are collectively self-managed, and these projects are based on the strategy of temporary appropriation and use of vacant urban lands (Figure 3.8). These spaces in aaa's earlier projects have been derelict sites belonging to the French Railway company as in the ECObox project (2001-2006), or a segment of waste land that had been declared unfit for proper development in the case of project Passage 56 (2006-2010). However, for aaa, the common point in these projects is to work in suburban contexts that point to "the collapse of the modern urban ideals (monotonous urban fabric, obsolete tower blocks, real estate bankruptcy, segregation, social and economic exclusion, land pollution...) and their transformations" (Petrescu, Petcou, Awan, 2011, p. 146). Therefore, implementation of urban farming strategies, including the management of resources that lead to democratic decision making and governance, is in a sense to intertwine both urban and rural potentials that suburban interstices provide.



Figure 3.8. Ecobox project, realized by aaa, 2001-2006.
(Source: www.urbantactics.org)

Whereas large number of wastelands available in these cosmopolite and poor suburban contexts in which aaa works are perceived negatively from the perspective of inhabitants or local authorities, from aaa's point of view, they are "spaces of relative freedom", "a chance" to redefine rules and codes against homogenous appropriation (Petcou & Petrescu, 2007, p. 144; Petrescu, 2005, p. 43). As of 2011, the experiences from earlier community-run projects developed by aaa, have scaled up in their project R-URBAN, turning into a network of practices about cooperative housing, urban agriculture, locally-based ecology and social economy. These strategies collected under R-URBAN[33] are expanded to various other suburban contexts, from the Paris district of Colombes to Hackney in London, undertaking place in waste lands that are temporarily neglected due to financial stringencies having effects on urban planning policies.

As mentioned in the latter case, urban gaps can also be left open with the policies and strategies that trigger the development of the urban. Concluding its function as one of the oldest airports in Germany, Tempelhoft's[34] inner-city airfield's rainwater basin that has once served to the airport could be one such instance. Having operated as rainwater drainage of the airport's defunct runways, the retention pool is situated close to the center

[33] The project R-URBAN can be visited at <www.r-urban.net>

[34] Located in the inner city, Berlin Tempelhof, one of Europe's most iconic pre-World War II airports, remained abandoned for two years after its closure in 2008. Since its turning to the public in 2010, Tempelhofer Feld has become Berlin's largest park.

of Berlin, concealing the habitat with its rich vegetation. As a part of the Bauhaus centenary celebrations, from April to September 2018[35], Raumlabor launched the Floating University, an offshore laboratory, and opened this vacant infrastructure to the public for transdisciplinary exchange to discuss and realize new forms of urban practice (Figure 3.9).

For Markus Bader, one of the nine founding architects of Raumlabor, The Floating University can be read as an 'in-between'; the opening of collectively inhabited moment to ask questions about the city and a counter-experience to the parallel process of how the city works (Lang, 2020, p. 148-9). Whilst the occupation of this empty public infrastructure has been temporary, it becomes a political act to expose it public by unveiling the space to its neighbors and making it architecturally visible (Karjevsky, 2018, p. 169).



Figure 3.9. Floating University, realized by Raumlabor, 2018.
(Source: www.raumlabor.net. Copyright: Alexander Stumm)

[35] I visited this site in May 2019, six months after the project was completed. Although most of the buildings have been dismantled, I have noticed that a few buildings were still open to the public to hold community meetings and workshops.

Similar to the Floating University project, numerous other Raumlabor projects like Haus der Statik and Allmänna Badet are carried in abandoned buildings and vacant sites such as former federal buildings or industrial harbors that are neutral to the forces of capitalism[36]. Choosing to work in these sites is a deliberate decision of the collective; not to bring back vacant space to its former state nor to solve the socio-spatial problems, but to explore the potentials it may open:

> "We are attracted to difficult urban locations. Places torn between different systems, time periods or planning ideologies, that cannot adapt. Places that are abandoned, left over or in transition that contains some relevance for the processes of urban transformations. These places are our experimentation sites. They offer untapped potential which we try to activate. This opens new perspectives for alternative usage patterns, collective ideals, urban diversity and difference" (Raumlabor, n.d.).

Not only vacant lots or defunct buildings, but also abandoned small-scale architectural structures can become the center of attraction for spatial practitioners. Since the 1940's, licensed market stalls are a part of the cultural history in Hong Kong, thus, beyond providing affordable commercial facilities, they are unique spots for community interaction. However, with the changing urban policies and undergoing urban renewal, market stalls are threatened to be vanished as they are being removed slowly from the city. Located at the junction of Yau Ma Tei, an old neighborhood in Hong Kong, Kai Fong Pai Dong – translated as neighbor's stall, ceases to survive despite all the forces of urbanization. This abandoned stall, since its appropriation by a group of designers and artists in 2015, has transformed into a place for local handicrafts, containing a tiny urban farm, a library, an outdoor screening area, and seats for neighbors to stop and chat (Figure 3.10). Turning into a communal outlet that is open to neighbors' access, it holds various community gatherings such as storytelling sessions, film screenings and various workshops. According to Michael Leung, one of the designers behind this initiative, the market stall becomes a "neutral spot" by displaying all these different occasions, a space that embodies everyday politics which "aligns people with different interests and political views" (Interview, 6 August 2018).

[36] Further information on Raumlabor projects realized in vacant spaces, see their website www.raumlabor.net.



Figure 3.10. Kai Fong Pai Dong, 2016.
(Source: https://paidong.tumblr.com/)

To borrow Cupers and Miessen's term (2002), the works addressed in this scene are located in "spaces of uncertainty", each of which is othered in the course of urbanization for different reasons. These spaces, which emerge on the verge of breaks in capitalist development, offer spatial and temporal intervals for practitioners to permeate through their experiments with specific motivations. Accommodating financial or policy issues render these spaces inoperable, while also creating a ground for spatial practitioners to intervene. Therefore, for spatial practitioners, making these obsolete and/or out of sight spaces available to communities for temporal self-provision, whether by building makeshift artifacts or making use of existing structures, is a way of replacing the declining welfare state with social capital.

3.2.1.3. Space as Receptive

The contexts in which practices take place are not always openly internalized by the crisis of capitalism. In some cases, space is positioned as an indirect reflection of the crisis due to spatial practitioners and their modes of engagement, thus, serves as a neutral

background on which practices are carried out. Spatial practitioners that recognize the unfixed nature of space – that is in a perpetual state of reconstruction, can produce spatial and temporal intervals through events by disrupting the usual flow of everyday dynamics. Different than the first two scenes presenting spatial interstices already in existence, this scene, on the contrary, focuses on how they can come into existence with action strategies, thereby turning into a receptive ground characterized by embodying unexpected usages and social encounters.

The action-based approaches of StudioBasar – Bucharest-based architecture studio, are driven by Romania's transition from socialism to capitalism, which had an impact on the current state of public spaces. For StudioBasar, Romanian public spaces are the consequence of an "in-between" condition that have shifted from state control to privatization, acting like a "kind of a barometer" reflecting the turmoil of society in the past 25 years (Axinte & Borcan, 2017, p. 286). Concentrating on public spaces and their daily manifestations by taking this condition of the country as a frame in its practice, StudioBasar seeks to create an "inclusive, flexible and reversible" common ground with micro-scale interventions (Axinte & Borcan, 2017, p. 287). Working in different contexts of Bucharest, from highly accessed public spaces to more obscure sites, the studio translates the condition of "in-between" into practice, creating an intermediary state in public spaces by introducing event structures.

The 'Public Bath' installation, situated on a street reclaimed for pedestrians during the Street Delivery Festival in 2012, not only offers a swimming pool for citizens to refresh in the hot summer days of Bucharest but also aims to generate public interaction, by turning space into a playful and inclusive place (Figure 3.11). This ephemeral occasion made out of wooden pallets growing in the middle of the street transforms urban public space from a place of consumption – shopping, eating, drinking, into a space based on social engagement. Likewise, the project 'Letter Bench', produced during the 2009 Street Delivery Festival is another public space generator, appropriating a narrow public alley that is suffocated by vehicular traffic and cars parked informally (Figure 3.12). The way the installation is set not only underlines a physical threshold between an inaccessible green space and an alley but also opens a spatial gap that hosts a wide range of users, from everyday passers-by, to homeless people, becoming a spot to meet, chat and sleep. Both practices, which characterize unexpected programs in space, offer spatial and social breaks by facilitating "a new set of spatial relationships among citizens" (Axinte & Borcan, 2018, p. 43).



Figure 3.11. The Public Bath, temporary installation, Arthur Verona Street, Bucharest, 2012. Photo: studioBASAR (Source: www.studiobasar.ro).



Figure 3.12. The Letter Bench, public furniture, Arthur Verona Street, Bucharest, 2009. Photo: studioBASAR (Source: www.studiobasar.ro).

In a similar manner, the practices of Dis/order, a Sweden based collective founded by two landscape architects, lays at the nexus of public spaces and people. Seeking for socially inclusive and democratic design strategies within the existing order of cities, the collective adopts different tools to encourage citizens in the active participation of public life. Introducing unanticipated events in space, such as a mobile cinema stall moving around passageways or remote corners where people pass-by unnoticing, or a public bench that is designed and arranged in a way that is not available for seating, Dis/order invites people to reflect about and take action in spaces they live in. One of the founding members, Karin Andersson mentions:

> "Because we introduce something that is very alien to space, for a brief movement the space becomes something else. And the people who move there become aware of the space in a way they do not experience" (Interview, 8 October 2018).

Mobile cinema, moving around the different public spaces of Stockholm, without a publicly announced program, becomes a tool that enhances a new way of experiencing public spaces (Figure 3.13). Appropriating the blank walls as screens to project upon, or momentarily transforming uncanny passageways to an event place, it not only opens a temporal gap in the usual everyday flow, but also invites people to stop, occupy, engage and actively participate in transforming the function of space, albeit for a short time.



Figure 3.13. Mobile Cinema is a temporary public installation produced under ArchFilmSthlm film festival in Stockholm, 2015 (Source: www.disorder.nu).

In addition to practices in public spaces that promote unexpected events with expected functions such as a cinema stall, a bench or a swimming pool, practices can also stimulate spatio-temporal intervals by encouraging citizens to lead the course of events through open-ended actions. The Open-Cube experiment by AboutBlank, an architecture firm from Turkey, is a reference on how a common ground can be produced within the spatial niches in the city, and on what social occasions it might unfold. The release of white mobiles cubes in several public spots in Antalya's urban fabric, without any prior explanation or a specific function, becomes a tool that empower citizens to act and explore the potentials of urban space through these constructs (Kodalak, 2015) (Figure 3.14). Thus, the different public and private uses of the cubes along with their temporal and mobile character, such as serving as a stage to give a concert, a shelter for a homeless to sleep in, a workstation for students, or a social spot for gathering, not only empowers citizens to appropriate space through different ways but also through their occupation and social engagement spatial intervals emerge.



Figure 3.14. Cubes being activated by people through different uses, Open-Cube, 2013. (Source: www.aboutblack.cc)

Drawing on the projects visited in this scene, it is seen that space becomes a receptive ground through subtle physical interventions. But besides these interventions, what really produces these spatial intervals is the emergence of social encounters generated by action-based strategies. Although, as seen in the cases, they are temporarily opened without being directly stimulated by the present conditions of the socio-political context, the way they are conceived (raw materials with crude aesthetics) and perceived (different experiences in space) can encourage a social and physical interval with the introduction of new programs.

Through the three different scenes described in this section, it might be fair to say that space becomes a fundamental constituent that receives, conditions and projects the visions of spatial practitioners, thus, the course of their actions. Nevertheless, the role of space might have different implications for practice, as the scenes have shown space to be an extensive field that is 'loaded with tension and dissensus' (borders zones, refugee camps, informal settlements), that has 'once been appropriated yet at present discarded or derelict' (abandoned structures, vacant lots, small-scale structures) or 'not yet been internalized by crisis' (fabricated interstices). Such traits of space become a driving force for learning other ways of implementing architecture, a testing ground for re-organizing power relations and establishing social life, or simply offers a channel to practitioners for experimentation. In any case, it is evident that these spaces are grounded in the cracks of capitalism, either openly or indirectly, thus is a contextual equivalent of crises, a catalytic (social, mental, material) measure generating the content of practices. The following subsection will take a closer look into modes of operation that take place in these spatial intervals mentioned so far.

3.2.2. Action

In the discussion on the different states of space expounded in the preceding pages, hints about actions were also revealed. This subsection, with a particular emphasis on modes of 'engagement' in space, concentrates on these actions. It thus explores the processual dimensions of socio-political gestures in practice, thereby revealing the means and forms in which these actions are performed.

In the context of an intensified crisis of neoliberal urbanization, the immediate understanding of action would correspond to large-scale demonstrations we witness in

cities around the world. Lefebvre's conceptualization of "the right to the city" has become not only a guide in translating these social movements and demands for inclusion, but also a compelling concept for thinking about surging social and political concerns under contemporary forms of production. Whereas this conception has been resonated across myriad fields, spanning from institutional politics to urban demonstrations, it has been captivated as a catalyst of action in spatial practices claiming for new imaginations of urban life.[37]

Written from the perspective of civil rights during the 1968 upheaval, the right to the city strongly revolves around the tensions embodied in city and people who aspire to be involved in the production of urban spaces. In the "Right to the City", Lefebvre portrays the city as twofold; on one hand, he recognizes the presence of wider economic and political structures producing the city, on the other hand, he points to the significance of inhabitants in its creation (1996 [1967], p. 111-17). Lefebvre further articulates this dichotomy as two diverse but interdependent components: the former being "the city" as the material reality, whereas the latter being "the urban" as the social reality made up of relationships. Pointing to a clear friction between these two rifts, he defines the city as:

> "a projection of society on the ground that is, not only on the actual site, but at a specific level, perceived and conceived by thought, (…) the city is the place of confrontations and of (conflictual) relations (…), the city is the 'site of desire' and site of revolutions" (1996 [1967], p. 109).

Whilst Lefebvre does not stress a clear agenda about his desire for a radical kind of urban politics and strategies for intervention, he highlights two fundamental rights as a response to the tension between these two components of the city: the right to *appropriation* and to *participation*. Appropriation refers to material rights, such as access to and occupation of urban spaces, and privilege to create a new space that meets the desires of people.[38] Participation, on the other hand, involves the active integration of inhabitants into the decision-making processes in the production of space. Rather than a

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[37] The exhibition and symposium "The Right to the City" held at the Tin Sheds Gallery, in Sydney in April 2011 can be an instance (Begg and Stickells, 2011). For further discussions see, *The Right to The City: Rethinking Architecture's Social Significance* (Stickells, 2011); *The Right to Architecture* (Rabbat, 2013); *Urban Interventions and the Right to the City* (Crawford, 2012); *Cities with the City: Do-it-Yourself Urbanism and the Right to the City* (Iveson, 2013).

[38] However, for Lefebvre, appropriation is not about "localizing in a pre-existing space a need or a function, but, on the contrary, of spatializing a social activity, tied to a practice as a whole, by producing an appropriated space" (quoted in Stanek, 2013, p. 146).

token inclusion[39] or only for material rights such as to housing and public amenities, for Lefebvre, it is a right to produce the "oeuvre"; an action that stands for collective participation in making the everyday life of the city, a need for desire, for play and creativity that is closer to forms of art (Lefebvre, 1996 [1967], pp. 147-155). Appropriation and participation in urban life, in a way, also implies to the practices of spatial practitioners in the context of this study, as they engage in the formation of physical layers of the city and therefore the material and social structures of everyday experiences. Consequently, the constituent 'action' within the framework of this study can be read as operating for rights to appropriation and participation pursuing desires to unleash liberating ambitions in space, hence, a re-action against issues complicated by the neoliberal crisis.

In spatial fields, particularly architecture, appropriation stands for not only physical appropriations of buildings or spaces for unintended uses, but also their (un)sanctioned occupation with social and political intentions (Böer, Otero Verzier, Truijen, 2019; Maudling, Vellinga, 2014). Participation, on the other hand, is a controversial concept in the history of architecture, raising the questions of power, user control and architecture's relevance by putting the discipline in direct relation to society. As Lefebvre warns, representation is a critical issue in participation, which is underlined in Sherry Arnstein's 1969 seminal essay "Ladder of Participation" and in Giancarlo de Carlo's 1970 essay "Architecture's Public", both arguing for participation beyond a social counseling to legitimize design schemes but a political issue seeking for radical democracy. The issue of participation reiterated in the last decade with the co-edited book "Architecture and Participation" (2005) that compiles histories, politics and practices of participation, the journal volume "Participatory Turn in Urbanism" (2013), or the books "Participation" (2006), and "Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship" (2012), with an emphasis on collaboration in the field of public art.

A critical issue concerns how participation is practiced. The distinction between the spatial practitioner, space, and society remains compelling in participatory processes. Design based on inclusion and consensus in decision making can hinder the social and political capacity of participation as a consultation process. Markus Miessen (2006; 2011;

[39] Against the institutionalization of the procedures of participation, Lefebvre underlines the danger of representation: "Without self-management, participation has no meaning; it becomes an ideology, and makes manipulation possible. Self-management is the only thing that can make participation real, by inserting it in a process that tends towards the global" (Lefebvre, 1976, p. 120.)

2016), a provocative voice against the instrumentalized design processes, advocates the inversion of participation as a model of social consensus, and calls for a conflictual format that positions spatial practitioner as an independent actor with a conscience navigating through conflicts, negotiations and maneuvers among the multiplicity of agents. Such an interpretation of participation is closer to Lefebvre's notion of oeuvre that emphasizes the production of collective actions in the urban due to the agonisms that arise in the system.

Going back to Lefebvre's call to the "right to the city", although the conception has been consulted broadly to explain the structures of social movements and spatial interventions, it has also been seen to leave behind uncertainties and complexities. Taking up the implications of Lefebvre's ideas, geographer Mark Purcell (2002) undergirded the radical intends of Lefebvrian "right to the city" as an "open concept", whereas the critical urban theorist Peter Marcuse (2009, p. 189) pointed it out to be "a compelling slogan, theoretically complex and provocative formulation". Adapting the concept to the contemporary context, David Harvey's essay "The Right to the City" has been widely influential in terms of his clear depiction of globalization of capitalism and pervasive commodification of urban space, in which he asserts as:

> ''The question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire. The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city" (Harvey, 2008, p. 23).

However, Harvey shows limited interest in how this change can be implemented in practice, and what kind of rights urban residents seek to claim space, and in what ways and under what circumstances the spatial practitioner can encourage alternative visions in urban space. According to Margaret Crawford, Harvey's approach to the right is more in economistic terms, explaining the ""rights" as a response to the evident "wrongs" of capitalism", whereas Lefebvre strives to "identify rights from the urban subjects themselves" (2011, p. 35). Therefore, for Crawford, although Lefebvre's conception of the right to the city is based on "complexity, ambiguity and contingency", it offers far more of an "emancipatory project" for urban dwellers and spatial practitioners claiming alternative possibilities for urban life:

> "The question of what strategies and tactics should be used in these struggles is both open and inclusive. Lefebvre's insistence on the centrality of thought, and the key role of urban imaginaries in understanding, challenging and transforming "the urban" opens the door to a multiplicity of

> representations and interventions. It also empowers artists, architects and other cultural activists to become key players in defining struggles and outcomes" (Crawford, 2011, p. 36).

This subsection explores what kinds of actions, or "experimental utopias" as Lefebvre calls (1996 [1967], p. 151), are invoked in the face of the neoliberal crisis, and which operational tools and intervention strategies are used in practices stemming from different socio-political contexts. The actions visited in the succeeding pages, as Crawford suggests, come in many forms aimed at bridging the disconnection between space and society. This disconnection at the same time presents potential intervals through which social and spatial relationships could be worked out. As Lefebvre argues:

> "Between the sub-systems and the structures consolidated by various means (compulsion, terror, and ideological persuasion), there are holes and chasms. These voids are not there due to chance. They are the places of the possible." (1996 [1967], p. 156).

Seeking for an alternative urban life through these voids, actions are also located at the nexus of time and space, forming encounters, negotiations, and possible conflicts in the act of healing both space and social relations. Therefore, based on the studied works in the thesis, the constituent action in the following three scenes relates to different urban imaginations that span from material to intangible interventions. Departing from the conception of the right to the city, each scene opens up the right to appropriation and participation in different ways and degrees: the first scene, acting, explores physical and labor-intensive actions in the making of space; the second scene, mediating, exposes interventions at policy or pedagogical levels through the application of digital/physical tools, events, meetings, and workshops to raise the qualities and concerns in spaces; and the last scene, simulating, portrays off-site engagements dealing with the development and testing of new tools and methodologies by loosely interacting with the social and political issues the space embodies. However, it should be noted that, these scenes do not have to be strictly separated apart from each other in a project, since in some projects we see these scenes intertwined. Sometimes a project, for instance, can both include acting and mediating strategies, or a collective can work across the scenes depending on the nature of their projects. At the intersection of concrete situations and scenarios, these three ways of working point to multiplicity of acts of right to space, which aim for the exertion of social justice, decentralization of power, or disclosing emancipatory ambitions through user empowerment; in short, in the negotiation to preserve changes against crisis.

3.2.2.1. Acting

In this scene, acting can be understood as a perspective that serves for a specific purpose, aims to achieve a desired effect on the ground, and provides practical interaction with the issues in question while establishing a relationship with the everyday life. Blended with the mental, physical, and social layers of the city, it is a form of staging that materially engages in the becoming of differential spaces. While not limited to, acting strategies take place largely in conditional and receptive spaces, and they can also be animated temporarily or permanently. Appropriation in these strategies range from physical reconditioning of buildings and sites to the reformulation of bureaucratic policies, whereas participation is closer to forms of self-management that happens at the level of redefinition of the use and the creation of space, and its subsequent occupation. Although the tools and techniques used in these practices might differ, the common point is 'hands-on' involvement, and 'immediate' engagement with spaces of dissatisfaction.

An instance of acting is evident in the practices of architectural studio Recetas Urbanas (Urban Prescriptions). Founded and led by the architect Santiago Cirugeda since 1996, Recetas Urbanas focuses on the resolution of specific urban problems through urgent practical responses. Although not limited to, Cirugeda's studio takes off from the financial crisis unfolding in Spain, leaving thousands of semi-built abandoned structures behind. In his numerous projects, ranging from systematic occupation of unused or derelict spaces through mobile and fast-build structures, to the construction of prothesis for facades and rooftops of existing buildings, Cirugeda deals with complicated social life with the gradual reduction of public spaces (Gandolfi, 2010, p. 113).

A large part of Cirugeda's physical operations proceed in alegal or illegal contexts, making him known as a 'guerrilla architect'[40] with subversive occupation strategies. Indeed, for Cirugeda, to work in alegal ways, taking advantage of loopholes that arise in the absence of definitive legal frameworks or operating completely in an illegal manner does not mean to work against the institutional bodies, on the contrary, it is a tactic to achieve "immediate effects" as a response to needs on the ground while waiting for support from authorities in the later stages (Cirugeda, 2013, p. 126; Gandolfi, 2010, p. 142). The direct and unlawful physical interventions also aim to increase the

[40] For instance, see Al Jazeera's Rebel Architecture documentary series which premieres Santiago Cirugeda as Spain's "Guerrilla Architect", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=674N2SnaAfs&feature=youtu.be>, accessed December 24, 2020.

studio's visibility on media while expanding their outreach to public authorities and government bodies to reformulate their policies (Figure 3.15). In this regard, acting in the practice of Cirugeda points to a concern that is not limited to the subversion of existing policies or physical recuperation of unused spaces in the short-term, but supports a long-term mediating strategy to inspire a collective mobilization to make people's demands visible:

> "Experience has shown me that, when you start building a structure or a space for the community and you adopt a collective, self-constructionist approach, the projects you make end up producing lasting results and consensus… Another important aspect to be considered is that of using the construction process to encourage a sense of appropriation in people, as well as a sense of dignity, even when the places are right out on the fringes" (Interview with Cirugeda, in Gandolfi, 2010, p. 143).

In the last two decades, Recetas Urbanas projects, which were initially self-initiated by Cirugeda, have gradually started to take place at the invitation of communities. Therefore, self-management is at the center of projects since they are realized at the request of the public. In addition, these projects are self-built, constructed out of prefabricated, recycled, donated, or reused materials that are repurposed more than once on different occasions. Choosing such materials, due to their low-cost and easy-to-install properties, adds a crude aesthetic to the studio's work. However, this doesn't occur as a problem for Cirugeda, as for him "architecture should be cheap, functional and it should be an excuse to bring people together" (Al Jazeera English, 2014). This makes it clear that studio's interest in the socio-politics of space proceeds its aesthetic value:

> "We aim to produce another type of politics. In other words, as long as the state does not expand citizen rights and improve the legal system, we have found our own way to function by means of collectively produced, inhabitable interventions. Each action demands greater rights for our citizens, yet the question remains: what must a group of citizens do to obtain legal rights for publicly-driven re-use of abandoned and obsolete buildings?" (Cirugeda, 2013, p. 126)



Figure 3.15. Recetas Urbana's strategies for subversive occupation attracting media attention: Skips – Taking the Street (top left); Scaffolding – Building Yourself an Urban Reserve (top right); Institutional Prosthesis 1 – Capsule 1 (bottom left); Insect House – The Tick's Stratagem (bottom right) (Source: www.recetasurbanas.net)

The answer to Cirugeda's question comes to the fore in the practices of Assemble, a London-based architecture collective. Their work at Granby Four Streets in Liverpool, which nominated Assemble for the prestigious Turner Prize in 2015, not only poises acting as a strategy to appropriate derelict structures but also stands out as a result of a long-term

campaigning effort by local residents to reclaim deprived streets and abandoned houses back into use. By forming a Community Land Trust, the participation of local residents claiming their legal rights to a vibrant neighborhood life encourages the engagement of Assemble, followed by the refurbishment of abandoned houses through hands-on construction with available materials on site (Fitz & Ritter, 2018, p. 78). This particular instance demonstrates that community participation plays a crucial role in design beyond decision-making processes and reflects a form of self-management that becomes a fundamental driving force for creative action. The project also shows that, depending on the characteristics of contextual predicaments, appropriation of buildings and spaces can also occur following the active involvement of communities in acting strategies.

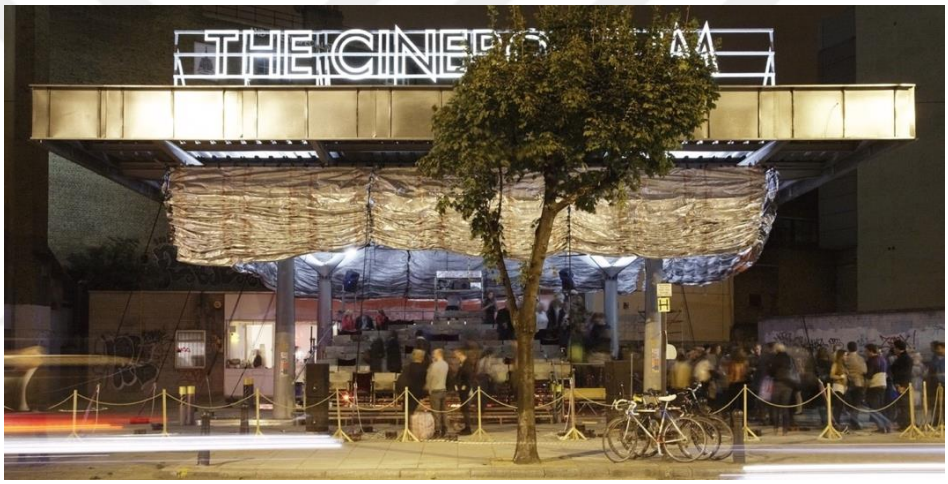


Figure 3.16. The Cineroleum, realized in 2010, is a self-initiated project by the Assemble studio that transforms an abandoned petrol station on Clerkenwell Road in London into a cinema. (Source: https://assemblestudio.co.uk/projects/the-cineroleum)

Not all the projects of Assemble are realized upon invitation. Indeed, a large part of the collective's practical and hands-on engagement is self-initiated by its own efforts through budgetary and legal processes in earlier stages, and then supported in partnership with financial stakeholders. Similar to the Recetas Urbanas projects, Assemble endeavors temporary programs in derelict and neglected spaces, such as constructing an art venue under a flyover in 'Folly for a Flyover', or repurposing a former petrol station as a movie theater in the 'Cineroleum' (Figure 3.16). The projects of the collective have a subtle aesthetic quality that comes with the use of donated, recycled materials and low-tech

manufacturing that are handcrafted on site by the member's own hands and means. Therefore, collaborative construction sits at the foreground, and physical production takes place on site by the crowded members of the collective, together with the volunteers who are assisted by manuals written by Assemble (The Cineroleum, 2010). Despite its similar trajectory, what underlines Assemble's practices, unlike Recetas Urbanas, is to pursue their actions through legal means.

The features of acting strategies exemplified above – self-initiation in demand for occupation of buildings and sites legally or illegally, hands-on involvement in the construction phase, authentic aesthetics that come with the combination of reclaimed materials, and self-management before or after appropriation by communities – can also be related to other practices included in this study. As briefly discussed in Chapter 3.2.1.2 and 3.2.1.3, acting as a strategy can be also openly recognized with Raumlabor's inhabitable sculptural installations, small-scale modules serving as micro-infrastructures in aaa's urban gardens, or StudioBasar, Dis/Order and AboutBlank's public installations and urban furniture designs. These instances taking place in various contexts uncover different concerns and motivations and are accomplished with customized tools and techniques – as this scene tried to explain in detail in the practices of Recetas Urbanas and Assemble. Nonetheless, what marks these actions as common is the concentration on formal explorations in space with the introduction of programmatic functions. Acting, in this regard, corresponds to a primary focus on space; an immediate interaction with sites and buildings to highlight their current potential through physical recuperation. Appropriation of such sites goes beyond a concern in architectural form that deals only with the aesthetic quality of spaces, rather it explicitly claims that the physical making of space can respond to social and political concerns – through establishing social organizations via making unused spaces available to public.

3.2.2.2. Mediating

The works examined in this study reveals that social and political engagement in the production of space ranges from constructions to intangible actions. As for intangible actions, mediating is a strategy aimed at stimulating the citizen's right to the city. In this scene, the term mediation points to a way of working that suggests an indirect engagement with space. Different than acting strategies, what triggers these actions is not the

improvement of the physical conditions of space or its occupation, but the social and political concerns embodied in or reflected through the space. Hence, the primary focus is on encouraging people to discern the spaces they live in and interact with the issues they encounter.

As Emiliano Gandolfi suggests, mediating processes position spatial practitioner as a "strategist rather than a designer of buildings", and as an "intermediary actor" who develops "strategies and intervention tactics to sensitise people, enable them and push them to embody a new attitude" (2008, pp. 126-130). Consequently, this intermediary position is also "pro-active and practical when working with and within the production of space" (Kossak, Petrescu, Schneider, Till, 2009, p. 6). Practical extensions of mediating actions include various ways of working with people, and they are carried out at the pedagogical levels through the application of digital or physical tools, events, meetings, and workshops to raise the concerns and potentials in spaces. Rather than a spatially oriented approach that aims to provide short-term physical interventions, appropriation in such kind of actions happen indirectly, acknowledging people about their rights through ideological programs while also empowering them to intervene in their localities. In this regard, mediating is about community organization and advocacy, it suggests long-term strategies concerning democratic participation of people to voice their demands in spatial production.

Mediating actions can be traced in the work of Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), based in New York City. Since 1997, the projects of CUP centers around community engagement and participation, with the goal of taking these conceptions beyond an abstract idea – locating "in specific scenarios where it can have an impact" (Ermacora & Bullivant, 2016, p. 126). These scenarios aim to make policies accessible to the public; each informing different sections from urban life, ranging from zoning rules, regulations on street vending to affordable housing rights (Figure 3.17). Bridging the gap between city officials and citizens, CUP aims to empower especially under-represented urban residents who are excluded from decision-making processes, to make them critically question how the city functions, acknowledge them about their rights, and eventually bring them together with decision-makers. The pedagogical model covers a variety of design tools – booklets, posters, pamphlets, documentaries, animations, web sites, interactive graphics, hands-on workshops, each of which focuses on the visualization of policies. While these tools are integrated in the projects to understand the complex urban policies that produce the city, they are also used to reveal the fact that social injustices

are not naturally occurring, but "are the products of decision-making" (Gaspar, 2016, p. 83). Therefore, in the works of CUP, mediation corresponds to utilizing design as a means of promoting meaningful civic engagement to encourage opportunities for self-management. As the architect Damon Rich, the founder of CUP states:

> "We try to find ways of talking about how new urban citizenship requires new urban literacies, and how approaches to studying the world from architecture and art can help all kinds of students understand how the physical forms of the observed world connects to abstract political, economic agendas. This hopefully builds towards critical education for social decision-making, moving out from the primordialist understandings of the landscape… towards training a regulatory imagination for the long haul, how we as citizens hitch our imaginations to the administration of the state to design our lives" (Interview with Rich, in Upmeyer, 2015, p. 63).



Figure 3.17. What is Affordable Housing is a comprehensive project developed by CUP in the form of a toolkit that includes an online interactive map, a guide, and a wall chart to inform communities about housing policies. (Source: http://welcometocup.org/)

Pedagogical processes in mediating actions not only encompass educational programs to outline how policies shape the city or enhance citizens' rights to urban life, but also facilitate the ways in which communities can organize to collectively shape their futures. The community-embedded projects of the artist Jeanne van Heeswijk are an example of how this facilitation can foster alternative forms of social organization. And, in such mediating processes, it also shows how a spatial practitioner can move between situations, spaces and the communities who inhabit them (Westen, 2003, p. 24). Her projects operating in the field of public art are closely related to architecture in terms of collaboration with architects and dealing with spatial issues in urban contexts. Although Van Heeswijk's numerous projects are shaped by the specific conditions at the junction of publicness, politics and social organization of public spaces, the fundamental

procedure that guides her works is to create a "field of interaction" between the people involved (Gandolfi, 2010, p. 134). Her latest project "Philadelphia Assembled", which encompasses the whole city of Philadelphia as a backdrop for collective imagination, is a clear representation of this concept defining the key method of her work. In the project, Van Heeswijk no longer offers solutions to social issues through intervening space, instead reaching out to connecting people to redefine and activate space. (Interview, 14 May 2018). Seeking ways to "radicalize the local" who make up Philadelphia's transforming landscape, the project reveals that Van Heeswijk explicitly aims for the "production of social change" as a precursor to spatial production:

> "I am interested in the process of change. Through interactions, confrontation, and, eventually, conflict, ultimately a movement starts happening. And if a movement starts happening, change starts happening" (Interview with Van Heeswijk, in Gandolfi, 2010, p. 135).

In addition to above-mentioned abstract strategies that promote the right of people to participate in the production of space, it also appears that mediation can explicitly target material outputs by setting guidelines for spatial appropriation. The user manuals prepared by Recetas Urbanas, introduced in the earlier section 3.2.2.1, exemplify such a situation. Following the appropriation of vacant public spaces, Recetas Urbanas translates its hands-on experiments as user instructions for people to prompt their own actions, as a way to demand an active role against institutional arrangements that confine urban life. These instructions or toolkits, as the name of the studio suggests, are in the form of 'urban prescriptions' – covering project data sheets, technical drawings and construction materials and costs, synopsis, evaluation and protocols, which are all open-source, hence available online on the studio's website[41] to anyone for replication. Detailed manuals on how to occupy and use public spaces not only encourage people on how to appropriate spaces by physical means or guide them through legal procedures, but also present an opportunity to participate for their rights to the city. Thus, as the members who take part in the studio's projects indicate, the reproducibility of prescriptions implies an "act of generosity", turning into non-one-off "political gesture", which triggers further possibilities for generating social spaces (Ose & de la Vega, 2020, pp. 28-29).

[41] The studio's website can be visited at <http://www.recetasurbanas.net/>

Mediating actions can be further expressed in Estudio Teddy Cruz+Fonna Forman's work with the marginalized communities at the San Diego-Tijuana border crossing[42] and Raumlabor's Floating University project, which experiments an offshore laboratory that creates programs with neighbors, volunteers, and guests[43]. While the motivations are different in these exemplified works, the common purpose is to encourage people to seek their right to participate in urban life. In this regard, mediation could be identified as a strategy with the intention of generating relational spaces, in which social relations and connections between people, institutions and spatial practitioners are worked out. Hence, mediating as action corresponds to the understanding of spatial production beyond the physical making of space, but the connection with space as a social concept that empowers communities in its production.

3.2.2.3. Simulating

The final scene that emerges as a result of the explored works in this study covers actions in the form of urban research and curation of observations. Unlike the previous two scenes, the primary purpose in such actions is not to respond to social and political issues by the physical making of space or mediating for its bottom-up production, but to critically question, expose, and propose schemes to alter the forces that play a role in its production. As Markus Miessen asserts, spatial practices staging debates and discourses differ from traditional understanding of architecture-as-practice, in which research-as-practice becomes a distinct form of action to "relocate spatial politics on the discursive horizon" (Miessen, 2016, pp. 36-37). These research-oriented actions, whose outputs are in the form of publications or exhibitions through art and architectural events, take place at a more discursive level, considerably intervening loosely to the problems contained in the space. Simulating then, as a form of action research, seeks to develop alternative methods to investigate urban transformation, with the principal aim for projecting scenarios to change the conditions that produce space. In this way, it contributes to the investigation of rights to the city, by refining the background of rights, and modes of action. Since it is not necessarily directly attributed to contexts, the discursive nature of

[42] For a complete discussion on the mediating actions of Estudio Teddy Cruz+Fonna Forman see, 'Space as Projective', pp. 65-68.

[43] For a brief introduction on the Floating University project see, pp. 76-77.

these actions follows a transdisciplinary and multi-scalar approach to understand urban dynamics from macro and micro viewpoints.

The practices of Cohabitation Strategies (CohStra), a cooperative dedicated to socio-spatial research and development with a focus on the conditions of urban decline, inequality, and segregation around the world, can be explored as an instance to simulating actions. The cooperative's projects foster a dialectical thinking that is in the synthesis of scientific and popular knowledge, participatory processes and pedagogical instruments, design of strategic processes and intervention manuals (Rendón, 2016, p. 100). Action research sits at the center of its urban research, in which transdisciplinary collaborations are encouraged to develop long-term strategies with the contribution of scientific, artistic, and community perspectives. Miguel Robles-Durán, one of the co-founders of CohStra, explains why they entail research-as-practice rather than adopting acting or mediating strategies in their practice:

> "The city is not produced by the locals. This is one big dramatic point of view that against the majority of current practitioners who talk about engagement, participation, or the empowerment of community, etc… For CohStra, that does not really matter, unless you are in love with the community, you live in that neighborhood and you want to make your neighborhood better…But making a half block, whole block or the neighborhood better will not change the conditions. On the contrary, you can exacerbate it worst. [Mentioning other spatial practitioners] The way we tend to look at urbanization is completely wrong…We provide ways or methods supported by research, in which points of view, different organizations – governments, foundations or institutions are able to take better decisions in how to develop and what kind of projects to be developed. In many ways this is how we see our practice. After all the previous different projects we are engaged in, our role was to provide insights, methods on urban transformation" (Interview, 13 March 2018).

In this context, simulating is a form of action in which deciphering the origins of problems such as social marginalization or urban decline is at the forefront rather than mediating people to participate in urban life or healing the physical conditions of space through formal explorations. Although building a dialectical thinking of what produced such issues in the first place requires a theoretical orientation, it nevertheless suggests practical expansions that can be tested in place. Among the many projects CohStra has conducted and displayed at biennials and cultural events around the world, "Playgrounds for Useful Knowledge", an action-research project on South Philadelphia, is the first one in which the cooperative tested the whole scope of the theoretical framework and the methods that it is developing. Whereas the thick manual[44] CohStra reported is based on

[44] The report can be accessed from <http://www.playgrounds.restoredspaces.org/publications/>, accessed March 2018.

the quantitative (inquiring policies, economy of the area) and qualitative (district excursions, participatory research through community meetings) investigations to unearth the processes of urbanization and the resulting socio-spatial exclusion, it nevertheless paves for the ways in which theoretical knowledge can be met on the ground. After the project ended, the manuals for action strategies circulated among further spatial practitioners[45], leaving a basis for organizing, a way and a direction of knowing how to proceed. In this regard, the project did not end, but took on new forms of action, based on the scenarios CohStra provided. From this particular project, we can understand that the aim of simulating actions is to disclose the conditions of urban crisis from which further insights and methods on urban transformation can be inferred.

Another collective, Stalker, whose works are a culmination of mediating and simulating strategies, can be highlighted in this scene as an instance to discuss a different form of research-oriented action. Walking – or 'walking through' as the collective suggests – marks the founding principal of Stalker, a group of young architects and artists based in Italy. Walking, which is enhanced as a form of action research, situates the spatial practices of Stalker as exploratory. Lorenzo Romito, one of the founding members of the collective, defines the role of walking in the following:

> "Walking through the actual territories becomes a means of access that allows us to look beyond the inanity of contemporary spatiality while seeking to seize the lost meaning of places, to put back in motion the possibility of a different future, beyond the omnipresence of the contemporary (Romito, 2016, p. 28).

Inspired by literary and artistic sources – particularly the International Situationists from the 1960's and the 70's – walking on the outskirts of Rome becomes a 'modus operandi' for Stalker, suggesting a different kind of research action that is based on learning from marginalized territories. Neither making predictions nor plans in the places visited, simply developing a cartography of these experiences, the act of walking becomes an action itself. It marks a process of change in the ways the space and the social are perceived, and triggers new ways of understanding and intervening space. Different than CohStra's action strategies projected in the form of scenarios (how-to manuals) circulated across relevant platforms, Stalker tests their strategies when funding

[45] Following the completion of the manual, CohStra invited the architect Damon Rich (from CUP) and the artist Jeanne van Heeswijk, to continue on working in the field with the designated network of communities (Interview, 13 March 2018).

opportunities from cultural institutions arise, which takes their project from action research into different forms of mediation[46].

In addition to the works of CohStra and Stalker, the forms of experimental research and urban scenarios in the work of other spatial practitioners explored in this study encourage different forms of action simulations: various models of urban practices projected and curated in relation to the research conducted in the border zones by Estudio Teddy Cruz+Fonna Forman (Cruz, 2016, pp. 9-24); "The Wild City" project cataloguing Belgrade's non-planned and scarcely regulated processes of urban transformation which feeds into a simulation environment by STEALTH.unlimited (Džokić, Kucina, Topolovic, 2003); or fifteen-years of field research and project-based practices looking into Palestine's social and political conditions presented in the book "Permanent Temporariness" by DAAR (Hilal & Petti, 2018). The ultimate goal in these actions is to identify, decipher, translate, and further link the complexities that produce the urban, in contrast to actions whose primary impulse is to recover or heal the relations established with the space. Nevertheless, as Robles-Durán contends clearly, the point of research as a form of action is not only to understand and document the forces at play, but to use and circulate the gained knowledge among communities and institutions to provoke for other ways of producing space (Interview, 13 March 2018). In a similar vein, Giancarlo De Carlo describes the contribution of these research-based actions as in the following:

> "Everywhere small groups of young people, even temporarily working together to tackle some specific problems, are paving new roads such as the identification with the laws and rhythms of nature, or the active redefinition of the territory as cause and effect of any spatial event; they aim at "reading" the city and the region, no longer as an analytical collection of data but as a physical and mental interpenetration of places to spy out real history and its probable evolutions. They see the "tentative design" as a sequence of hypotheses to be explored not to reach univocal solutions but to open possible ones whose meaning relies on the circumstances surrounding the problem" (De Carlo, 2004, 61).

To summarize the constituent action, so far, three different scenes are discussed in the light of studied spatial practices. While acting strategies are closer to conventional modes of practicing architecture where the physical production of space is at the forefront, mediating concentrates on how the space can be accessible and inclusive, whereas simulating tackles the restructuring of capitalism, addressing the socio-spatial issues that come with the crisis. These three ways of working, spanning from concrete situations to scenarios, propose

[46] Stalker's mediating strategies can be recognized in their projects Campo Boario and Transborderline. For a detailed review of the projects, see, Lang, P. T. (2006). Stalker *on* Location. In Franck, K. A. & Stevens, Q. (Eds.), *Loose Space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life* (193-209). London, New York; Routledge.

different acts of right to the city, each of which adopt customized tools and methods in practice that are tailored to specific motivations. What is common, however, is that each action seeks ways to incite a change in the way space is produced, opening up a social interstice that brings about encounters, negotiations, and possible frictions in the act of healing both space and social relations. As Miessen argues (2016, p. 33), these practices may not be delivering "blueprints for ideological change", but as the scenes demonstrate, their actions are distinct enough to separate themselves from the modernist project.

3.2.3. Position

Building on the analysis of the spaces and the actions performed, this section questions who are behind these actions, directing the focus to spatial practitioners and the ways they organize their work. Position[47], as the name of the final constituent suggests, discusses the roles of spatial practitioners with regard to their disciplinary orientation, the collective structures on which they base their work, and their attitudes toward institutions.

As highlighted earlier in Section 3.2.1., in his book "The Production of Space", Lefebvre observes the producers of space while analyzing space profoundly within the capitalist reproduction process. From Lefebvre's point of view, "(social) space is a (social) product" (1991, p. 27), and as Tatjana Schneider interprets in the context of socially and politically engaged practices, it "belongs to a multitude of those who pass through, write about, produce, live, work, and play in it" (2013, p. 255). From Lefebvre's statement and Schneider's comments, we can understand that space comes into being not only with the means of the architect – drawings, blueprints, sketches or images, but also with the actions performed by social interactions. This is also evidenced in the preceding constituent action, that different approaches to space production is encouraged by spatial practitioners beyond the means of the architect, despite they are largely undertaken by architects and/or together with professionals coming from different backgrounds. The final constituent, position, emerges from this dilemma, and questions the figure of spatial practitioner following Lefebvre's reflections on the renegotiation of architectural labor.

[47] As for the theoretical framework of this dissertation stated at the beginning of Chapter 3, this section opens up the constituent position following Lefebvre's thinking. However, it should be noted that Antonio Gramsci's analysis "war of position" is also noteworthy as a cultural and political struggle to challenge capitalism. See, Gramsci, A. (2007). *Prison Notebooks, Volume 3*. (J.A. Buttigieg, Trans.). Columbia University Press.

With his sharp criticism on the position and the space of the architect[48] Lefebvre explicitly underlines that the space does not only belong to the discipline of architecture. Nevertheless, under capitalist production, he also recognizes the plight of the architects in the following lines:

> "The architect occupies an especially uncomfortable position. As a scientist and technician, obliged to produce within a specified framework, he has to depend on repetition. In his search for inspiration as an artist, and as someone sensitive to use and to the 'user', however, he has a stake in difference. He is located willy-nilly within this painful contradiction, forever being shuttled from one of its poles to the other. His is the difficult task of bridging the gap between product and work, and he is fated to live out the conflicts that arise as he desperately seeks to close the ever-widening gulf between knowledge and creativity" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 396).

Based on this paradoxical position of the architect[49], Lefebvre points out on the one hand the restricted role of the architect under capitalism. On the other hand, he is critical of architects who are in favor of the capital, hence, who claim architecture to be specific to space and production. Lefebvre frequently returns to the question of space, addressing the limitation of thinking about space production through purely tectonic and formal gestures, in line with his attack on different specializations, including architecture, which fragments space and treats it within its mental and physical borders.[50] Acknowledging the limited opportunities beneath the forces that capitalism plays, Lefebvre does not provide a clear guide on how to overcome the suppression of the division of labor. Nevertheless, he gives insights about the possibility of emancipation beyond certain specializations towards new forms of practice. Łukasz Stanek, a keen explorer of Lefebvre, mentions in the following:

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48 The details of Lefebvre's criticism can be reached as follows: "As for the eye of the architect, it is no more innocent than the lot he is given to build on or the blank sheet of paper on which he makes his first sketch. His 'subjective' space is freighted with all-too-objective meanings. It is a visual space, a space reduced to blueprints, to mere images – to that 'world of the image' which is the enemy of the imagination ... The tendency to make reductions of this kind – reductions to parcels, to images, to facades that are made to be seen and to be seen from (thus reinforcing 'pure' visual space) – is a tendency that degrades space" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 361).

49 For a further discussion on the contradictory position of the architect, see, Hill, J. (Ed.). (1998). *Occupying Architecture: Between the Architect and the User*. New York, London: Routledge; Hill, J. (2000). *The Illegal Architect*. Black Dog Publishing; Anstey, T., Grillner, K., & Hughes, R. (Eds.) (2007). Architecture and Authorship. Black Dog Publishing; Adjaye, D., Hirsch, N. & Otero-Pailos, J. (2011). "On Architecture and Authorship," *Places Journal*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.22269/111024>; Ponce de Leon, M. (Ed.) (2019). *Authorship: Discourse, A Series on Architecture*. Princeton University Press.

50 The details of Lefebvre's criticism can be reached as follows: "The dominant tendency fragments space and cuts it up into pieces. Specializations divide space among them and act upon its truncated parts, setting up mental barriers and practico-social frontiers. The architects are assigned architectural space as their (private) property, economists come into possession of economic space, geographers get their own 'place in the sun', and so on" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 89).

> "Within Lefebvre's theory of space, architectural practices are to be conceptualized as transversal, that is to say cutting across ontological categories and contributing to all stages of the production of space, from formulating a demand to the phases of research, programming, designing, construction, and the continuous appropriation of buildings" (Stanek, 2014, p. lix).

The practices visited in the previous section 3.2.2., contribute to these stages with the mobilization of people for their rights to the city, translation of urban policies, redefinition and activation of space, or with the formulation of different methods for restructuring spatial production. Building on Lefebvre's criticism on architectural space and architectural production[51], and his speculation for "the possibility of an architectural practice that is beyond architect's position" (Stanek, 2014, p. lviii), this section raises the question of whether the studied practices in the particular context of this study expand the role of the architect or define a new position. In what follows, I explore the answers to this question through the articulation of two crucial points in the works studied: first, organizational structures, regarding their roles in relation to their disciplinary backgrounds and legal entities; secondly, resources, in relation to human and monetary means.

3.2.3.1. Organizational Structures

Although the works which the framework builds on are largely based on the practices of architects, since the beginning of this dissertation, the study refrained calling architectural practice and architect, instead chose to refer to them as spatial practice and spatial practitioner.[52] One reason for this is that the study tries to explore the causalities, processes and the repercussions of spatial production in the face of capitalism's crisis. With this goal in mind, the study aims to analyze not only the architectural production but spatial production in a comprehensive manner, spanning from an understanding of the historical background of spatial interstices, to the inclusion of spatial practitioners in the process and their attitudes in their modes of action. The second, and the more constructive reason for that lies in this section. The analysis of the studied groups showed different inclinations toward their positions. Whereas several founding members of the groups clearly denied their roles as architects – even if coming from a background in

[51] For Lefebvre, "[architects] raise the question of architecture's 'specificity' because they want to establish that trade's claim to legitimacy. Some of them then draw the conclusion that there are such things as 'architectural space' and 'architectural production' (specific, of course). Whereupon they close their case" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 104).

[52] To spot the initial reason for this claim, see 'Scope of the Study', p. 3.

architecture, others stated that the financial resources their legal entities depend on require them to steer to other directions:

> "I studied architecture, practiced architecture and had an office for like five years. I can tell you that I felt a certain attraction to the possibility of transforming urban conditions… And form, I'd say centuries, through a Western tradition had been pushed that the person who is in charge of the production of the city is the architect, you know? It came to a point that, when I have been already practicing for three-four years, I realized that pretty much anything that I know is useless. To really understand the urban condition, what actually produced those conditions… But it took a few years where I was – I'd say the period between 2005 and 2008 has been the strongest period when I just said f*** all of that and how is it possible that the disciplinary lens of architecture continues to be the dominant lens in which the majority of the world kind of tends to see what happens in the city? I don't even want to talk about the architects as they feel that they own the discipline" (Interview with Miguel Robles-Durán from CohStra, 13 March 2018).

> "We consider all of our work integral to the domain of architecture. Still it can manifest itself in different contexts – from a research context, to urban or architectural settings, and to artistic or cultural contexts. Once we started tactically playing into them, we noticed that we could realize some of the projects and ideas that could hardly happen if they were regular works of architecture. What the art world offers is an environment to develop and realize projects in which you can do something unique, for which you do not have a proven previous excellence. This is usually more restricted in the world of architecture" (Interview with Ana Džokić from STEALTH.unlimited, in Hasan, Ibramigova, Lax, 2014, p.21).

> "Our strategy is not just 'architectural' – it's also political. And in a way, the project is both social and artistic. When I say artistic, I mean 'art' as a 'free space' for architecture. For an 'architect', ways of producing space are very standardized and restricted by norms and regulations, whereas for an 'artist', there's much more freedom to do things" (Interview with Constantin Petcou from AAA, in Mörtenböck & Mooshammer, 2014, p. 261).

These excerpts show that in order to understand their organizational structures, it is crucial to look at the disciplinary backgrounds that they have or may have rejected, along with their legal entities. Regarding the former, out of the twenty groups studied, ten of them either partially or fully have their founding members coming from different disciplinary grounds such as art, sociology, law, political science, whereas in exceptional cases, such as in 596 Acres or Kai Fong Pai Dong (KFPD), there are no founding members with architectural background.[53] Nonetheless, these groups demonstrate to be employing the tools of the architect, such as mapping and visualizing in the case of 596 Acres, and refurbishing and expanding the space in size in the case of KFPD. And as in the latter case, these groups show that they have diverse legal entities, including but not limited to architectural firms. Indeed, only ten of the groups have a profit-making status and founded as an architecture studio, while seven of them have a non-profit status under a cooperative or NGO.[54] Three of the groups, Stalker, Plankton Project, and KFPD have

[53] See Appendix A for details.
[54] See Appendix A for details.

no legally recognized status at all. The status of their legal entities inevitably has effects on the format and the content of the projects they conduct. Both representing the profit-making groups, the founding partner of DAAR, architect Alessandro Petti, and the co-founder of muf Architecture/Art, Liza Fior, mentions one of the consequences as follows:

> "I felt the need to take some critical distance from our own practice. Here in Palestine you always run the risk of turning into an NGO, becoming a doing-machine. When DAAR began getting external commissions, we started realizing that we were on shaky ground. Until we began working as artists, neither making architecture nor working with/as an NGO gave us the freedom to experiment" (Alessandro Petti in conversation with Maria Nadotti, in Nadotti, 2018, p. 40).

> "I like the term (quote) "architecture is more than architecture" because the limitations of the discipline can be addressed. There are many architects who operate as kind of fund managers; 'architecture' as fund management. You assist in how to shape somebody's investment. That is one mode of operation" (Liza Fior in conversation with Melanie Dodd, in Dodd, 2020, p. 204).

Although Alessandro Petti mentions that to be in a profit-making status helps to reach the mission of DAAR or Liza Fior points out to the fuzzy edges of an NGO, on the contrary, Damon Rich, the founding architect of CUP, argues for the opposite:

> "Part of the conscious trade-off of the non-profit form, something we negotiate as we institutionalize, is that in return for access to certain types of funding, there are limits on ownership and investment profit. The deliberation about whether this was a good choice, instead of a more traditional form for incorporating a design firm, was an earlier story. By 2004, we were committed to a model of CUP belonging to no one and instead, as the nonprofit consultants say, being 'owned' by its mission (Interview with Damon Rich, in Bernd Upmeyer, 2015, p. 58).

The contradictory opinions coming from DAAR, muf Architecture/Art and CUP suggest two different strategies toward the liberation from institutions. Nevertheless, whether a profit or a non-profit status matters not much as long as the objective of the groups head in the same direction. Hence, looking into organizational structures in terms of disciplinary orientation and legal status proves that the trends of the studied groups are beyond architect's position. The following section will observe this tendency from a different direction.

3.2.3.2. Resources

Besides the disciplinary tendencies of spatial practitioners, it is also important to explore their dispositions with regard to institutions. As discussed in the preceding pages, one way to observe this situation is to look at their legal status, the other is how their projects started and executed. Legal status has implications on the nature of practices,

indicating spatial practitioners' view on the liberation from the division of labor, as well as how they finance their actions. In this context, resources, both in terms of monetary and human, are worth to inquiring into.

Monetary resources are particularly a crucial determinant of spatial practitioners' goals for new forms of space production: to develop research strategies, to supply hardware/software in realizing objectives, to run the actions on-site or off-site, or to generate income for livelihood. This list may be extended or shortened according to the nature of action strategies and the tools needed, but these actions may also have restrictions such as where the funding comes from and to whom it serves. Based on the analysis of the works in this research, three approaches to running projects have been identified.

The first and the most independent approach is to take actions in self-sufficient and self-managed ways. Whereas self-sufficiency implies the financing of a project through groups' own means, self-management relates to the execution of projects together with volunteers. An instance to this can be found in almost all the projects of Recetas Urbanas, and also in some of the works of Plankton Project, Assemble, aaa, KFPD, and Stalker. As for the acting strategies, donated or discarded materials, and their use for building installations or small-scale structures by the help of students or communities is a common way to execute projects. The second approach is funding or sponsorships to conduct projects. The definition, scope and target community of projects are fairly limited in this way of working, but allow spatial practitioners to decide on context, activities, and stakeholders. The analyzed projects of CohStra, studioBASAR, Dis/Order, Jeanne Van Heeswijk, CUP, AboutBlank are in this line, and are mostly realized on the occasion of biennials, triennials, or art and cultural events. Since the initial theme or content is given, there is a certain level of institutionalization and absorption by the marketing and branding mechanisms as Schneider suggests (2013, p. 3). The final approach follows the conventional operating patterns of the architectural office. Projects are initiated with the demands of clients; in urban spaces this means local authorities and municipalities where the ideology of the clients can be renegotiated. Estudio Teddy Cruz+Fonna Forman, muf Architecture, and STEALTH.unlimited work along this line, yet challenges conventional ways of practicing with process-driven projects that negotiate urban policies and encourage user participation.

One final remark can also be made on the founding members, some of whom already have full-time or part-time positions in institutions. For such groups, running a

sustainable enterprise is not crucial, giving them the freedom to decide when or what content they want to produce.[55]

In this final section of the framework, the constituent position looked into subjects who engage in the production of spaces, encompassing mainly the spatial practitioners. Addressing their roles in relation to the disciplinary capacity of architecture, legal entities and resources, this subsection reveals that the organizational structures in flux, with the architectural studios giving way to collectives, associations, and platforms. These wide spectra of initiatives anticipate fluid roles as designers, fundraisers, community activists, entrepreneurs, whose works are often unsolicited or funded/commissioned under cultural projects and events. Miessen's views on spatial practices also confirm this situation:

> "Today, it is no longer viable to think through overarching practices such as spatial practice by attempting to analyze where the different modes of disciplines come into equation… One of the main achievements of critical spatial practice over the last decade is that it has managed to produce a meta-level of collaboration in which "the disciplinary" is no longer regarded as an issue, and professional boundaries have melted into a central promise that unites complex knowledge and its scalar potential" (Miessen, 2016, p. 43).

Position, in this regard, can be conceptualized beyond a transcendence of disciplinary constraints, or the commonplace interpretation as the expansion in the role of the architect. On the contrary, it can be framed as an expansive field of knowledge simultaneously coalescing both architects' and non-architects' skills and their presence, broaching the formation of interstitial subjectivities.

With the aim to understand how the ruptures of capitalism impel the tendencies of spatial practices, this Chapter moved between theory and practice. At the nexus of space, action and position, Lefebvre's seminal work production of space offered a route to think of, and the works of spatial practitioners disclosed the complexity behind their organizational structures, modes of action, and the contexts in which they base their works. Inquiring into this complexity reveals that the condition of interstitial is integral to each constituent and allows a conceptual framework through which a comprehensive picture emerges (Table 3.1). Using this framework instrumentally through the works of three spatial practitioners, Chapter 4 seeks answers to the responses of these works to the crisis of capitalism.

[55] While several members of Assemble, CohStra, Raumlabor or Stalker work in the academy, whereas members of AboutBlank and studioBasar are active in undertaking commercial projects, as in the conventional architecture studios.

Table 3.1. Conceptual Framework of the Research.
(Source: Author).

CHAPTER 4

INQUIRING TRANSVERSALLY: HERKES İÇİN MİMARLIK, DÜZCE HOPE STUDIO, 596 ACRES

> "Critical work is made to fare on interstitial ground. Every realization of such work is a renewal and a different contextualization of its cutting edge. One cannot come back to it as to an object; for it always bursts forth on frontiers…"
> —Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (1991, p. 229)

In this chapter, the research adopts a transversal inquiry to make connections between the tripartite constituents of space, action, and position articulated separately in the previous chapter. The reason for setting out a framework for thinking about spatial production formerly is to highlight the fact that certain predispositions towards these constituents prevail when spatial practices are played out interstitially. Since the analytical approach in Chapter 3 demonstrated that each main constituent has no clear-cut boundaries but indeed presents multiplicities when engaged in real grounds – in other words, splits up into its scenes due to various peculiar conditions urging from the nature of practices and the contexts in which they perform, inquiring transversally here allows to read the situational relationships and interrelated issues across these scenes. Despite each of the constituents refer to something quite particular in revealing the dynamics behind spatial situations, they are at the same time not independent constructions, but interproductions connected to one other. They can only make sense through each other if a comprehensive understanding is to be addressed in accessing interstitial modes of spatial production. Therefore, departing from the former conceptual framework and moving through the sublayers of its constituents, this chapter sets out the ways how spatial practitioners engage, negotiate and respond to spatial conditions and the urging problems they encounter.

In this respect, adopting Deleuzian thinking, I therefore recognize the fact that concepts are no longer "concepts of", understood by reference to their external object, but are immanent to the objects/subjects/things/territories at stake (in Coleman & Ringrose, 2013, p. 7). Consequently, instead of a reflective and a representative treatment of constituents inserted in empirical engagements, in this chapter, I translate them to make

maps of connections to organize and extend my argument into exhaustive formations. This enables a wider political and social understanding of spatial practices[56] – which is the main concern in this dissertation, rather than a flattened reading of the architectural space formed by subjects and objects and their relation to one another. It is in this way that I here also address the question of methodology, by shying away from a partial inquiry that follows a discipline-bound epistemology bringing static stratifications within a totalized system of capitalism, neoliberalism or globalization; when in fact its reverberations accentuate complex settings hence backlashes under changing territorial dynamics.

4.1. Drawing Connections Across the Map

In this chapter, inquiring transversally embodies "an analytic method that cuts across multiple fields" and is affiliated with assemblage methods (Tan, 2015, p. 203). As for John Law (2004, p. 122), "method assemblage" stands for:

> "[T]he process of enacting or crafting bundles of ramifying relations that *condense* presence and (therefore also) generate absence by shaping, mediating, and separating these. Often it is about manifesting realities out-there and depictions of those realities in-here. It is also about enacting Othernesses."

Meanwhile Law's work mainly relates to critical modes of inquiry in social sciences, it also acknowledges methodological openings for architectural research. Following Law's line, transversality allows realities to be accessed otherwise; through a treatment of realities out-there no longer independent or isolated, but as multiple and interrelated. Consequently, for Law, method assemblage involves "the making of relations" to "imagine more flexible boundaries", which I interpret boundaries associated with the sublayers of constituents where each depends on the others to surface "other possibilities" (2004, p. 84). In this sense, I do not adopt transversal inquiry as a method for description purposes, but as a performative[57] tool to seek for the circumstances and to capture a thorough reading by looking across the abovementioned intertwined

[56] Following Lefebvre's, *The Production of Space* and David Harvey's *Social Justice and the City*, Edward W. Soja (1989, p. 76) notes the reciprocal relationship between space, subjects, and their responses; stating that "space and political organization of space express social relationships but also react back upon them".

[57] For John Law (2009, p. 243), methods are inherently performative practices that tend to enact realities. Thus, a performative understanding of knowledge and the worlds that it describes opens up a space for a "politics of the real"; which can only become real in particular networks or systems of circulation.

constituents. Therefore, whilst inquiring transversally, I aim to map the opportunities, challenges, limits, and effects of spatial production, and bring forward constellations which are immersed and complicated by these interconnected factors.

Such an inquiry does not only propose a methodological approach but also possesses a structural manifestation and non-structural openings that fine-tune with the dissertation's main argument. Felix Guattari describes transversal inquiry to be an institutional analysis which is "neither institutional therapy, nor institutional pedagogy, nor the struggle for social emancipation, but which invoked an analytic method that could transverse these multiple fields (from which came the theme 'transversality')" (in Genosko, 1996, p. 21). Therefore, escaping the binary of institutional compulsions versus emancipatory competences, yet thinking transversally about socially and politically engaged spatial practices in question also brings about a tool that is also inherently political. Such a tool endorses to observe maneuvers of practices across institutional apparatuses that take part in the process of spatial production. In the words of Isabelle Stengers (2005, p.185), dealing with the "ecology of practices" – which are of main concern in this chapter, by definition become relevant tools for thinking to address and actualize the power of situations and allow us to think through, rather than simple recognition. As a result, moving across the constituents of space, action and position when thinking about the nature of these practices helps to bring in the proximity of the where, how and the who. It thus facilitates a conspicuous inquiry into situations by introducing constellations that can be observed both at macro and micro levels.

In the multitude of different projects presented in Chapter 3, the actors, the operations and the contexts might have changed, but the underlying interest in this study remains the same: How can a transversal reading allow to reveal the complexities of socially and politically engaged spatial practices? What kind of forces and situations acknowledge and drive the content of practitioners' reactions? What effects do they develop within the dominant social order of global capitalism? How do their modes of engagements in the social and political sphere reflect on the position and the agency of practitioners? And finally, how are all these questions met when they come to a very specific territorial context?

This chapter departs from these broader questions, yet at the same time, it traces responses by closely carving into spatial situations that bear their contextual challenges triggered by political, historical, social, economic and cultural determinants. Embracing an inductive sensibility – and tracing spatial practices from a series of distinct directions

in the meantime – presents an opportunity to read the agency of spatial practitioners over a sweeping ground, hence enables the possibility of delivering wider accentuations and repercussions that surpass the objectives of this study. It is in this way, this study intends to underline the complexity of spatial practices pertaining to the contextual divergences, as well as the convergences that underline the socio-political role of architecture and that of the architect; contrary to a reverse enactment that is commonplace in the architectural discipline.[58] Since it would be limited and straightforward to explain with simple and structured reasoning or conclusions under such multifariousness and contract of reciprocity, this chapter therefore opens up ground by explicating various aspirations and imaginations to tread my argumentations.

Based on the documentation of the spatial practices visited in the previous chapter, I have found evidence of diverse patterns that contribute to a critical rethinking of social and political engagement in the formerly rendered tripartite framework. I have drawn on the constellations of *recovery*, *resilience,* and *resistance,* being to provide this chapter's three sections, each one emphasizing a different facet when addressing spatial production in an interstitial manner, inherent to the constituents of space, action and position. These emerging constellations, I believe offer an opportunity to trace the connections between diverse approaches to spatial production – as a material artifact, as a means for social organization and as the agency of practitioners – and their ambiguous relations to concatenating crises of capitalism.

To elucidate these constellations distinctively, this chapter departs from three such groups respectively – Herkes İçin Mimarlık (Architecture for All) based in rural lands of Turkey, Düzce Umut Atölyesi (Düzce Hope Studio) in Düzce, Turkey, and 596 Acres based in New York – whose works not only provide a backdrop to depict different ideological receptions against the global capitalism organizing space but also allow to examine how the content of their critical stances remain situational and context-specific. On that account, these works are not accessed via a complete detachment from their milieu; on the contrary, the confluence of economic, political, spatial and cultural forces are examined to disentangle expanded relations that connect actors across a range of sites and scales – to consolidate my argument from several views. In other words, they are not

[58] Unlike the overarching application in architectural literature that deals with the intentions of architects and the efficacy of architecture by isolating the subject matter from socio-political circumstances, here, I revert my focus onto factors that influence the position of space producers along with a reading of their agency. For further discussion, see Chapter 1, pp. 8-11.

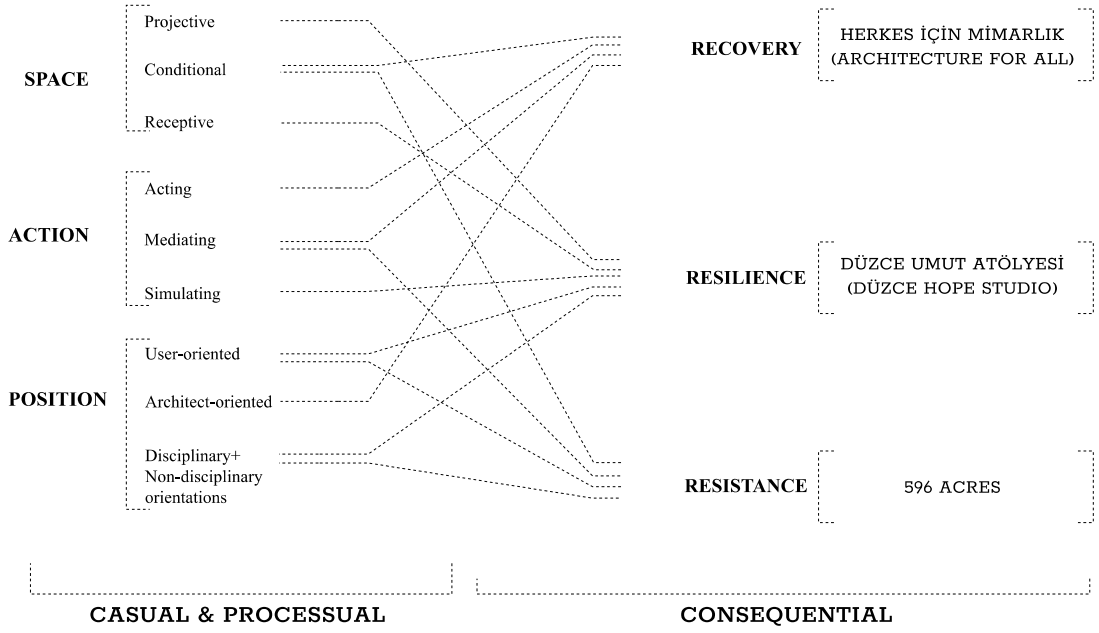
considered as confined case studies to unfold or transpose what is or what should be the nature of spatial works but rather delineated as practices – in the sense of Isabelle Stengers' 'ecology of practices' – "for thinking through what is happening" (2005, p.185).

These practices are by any means comparable to one other. Nevertheless, the aim in this chapter is other than portraying comparative argumentations to reveal differences or similarities regarding how they perform, but to reach them out as tools to seek for varying inceptions and repercussions lying beneath contemporary forms of social and political engagement. Out of a broader documentation presented in the previous chapter, the particular selection of these works for a closer examination is based on the criteria of (i) as indicated in Table 4.1, demonstrating distinguishing patterns (for mapping extensive constellations) when stitched through the scenes of space, action and position in the conceptual framework; (ii) presenting continual and processual dimensions both spatially (contested spatial situations carrying their entangled histories) and operationally (dealing with the corporeal reality of architecture) – rather than one-off or transient engagements; (iii) addressing and involving communities – users, inhabitants – outside their cultural class or collegial networks, specifically the ones who either remain marginal or are excluded socially from public and private assets.

In this chapter, the transversal method does not only allow us to move across the tripartite constituents of space, action, and position for mapping constellations but also organizes the inquiry into each selected practice in three ways. Firstly, the research allows for an articulation that is cross-scalar and perpetually shifting between micro and macro scales, and sites. In other words, in each section, contexts in which the practices embedded are weaved both from the vantage of everyday life dynamics, and the power of the state which affects the current social and spatial conditions of each locality. Departing from contemporary discourses shaped within the context of the global political economy, research in this sense treats context beyond a fixed location by recognizing its interchanging scale. Secondly, myriad research techniques have been applied to understand the spatial practitioners' work, not only because of the diversity of practices and the contexts they are placed in but because of entangled, complex and occasionally contradictory situations, making it necessary to tailor slightly different procedures for each practice. Although the weight of the available empirical material varies widely from practice to practice, it relies mainly on: *on-site observations*, to capture the current state of affairs by exploring the social and the physical aspects of sites, to access everyday life

practices where and if possible to observe the ongoing activities and the internal dynamics through shadowing communities; conducted *interviews*, with the key spatial practitioners and engaged communities to draw out a historical background, and to discern the underlying concerns, intentions and reflections of multiple actors to put forward further contextual, motivational and operational features that cannot be otherwise accessed; *collecting documentation* on the history of sites, reviews of practices from books, magazines, journals and exhibition catalogs written by critics or users, and further accounts and publications produced by the spatial practitioners have been the essential parts of the research in each practice. Thirdly, even though the research builds largely on practice, it bridges between non-discursive and discursive representations, weaving practices and theoretical references, along with historical precedents when relevant. Without renouncing theory, such approach also allows to unfold architecture's trans-disciplinary nature as a "concerned practice", interlacing both the reflective and the practical endeavors (Doucet & Janssens, 2011, p. 11). By embracing hybrid modes of inquiry in this space-related research – and through calling for embodied, relational and situational perspectives, I also refrain from an introspective analysis and internalized discourse that is confined to the discipline of architecture.

Table 4.1. The Constellations of Recovery, Resilience, and Resistance in the practices of Herkes İçin Mimarlık, Düzce Hope Studio, and 596 Acres (Source: Author).



4.2. Emerging Constellations: Recovery, Resilience, and Resistance

In line with the formerly mentioned practices, in the following sections, three approaches to recovery, resilience, and resistance are discussed to explicate various forms of social dynamics and political entanglements; as well as to reflect different levels of alleviation by spatial practitioners that emerge in response to the contemporary crisis of capitalism. Whilst it would be too insular to claim the conditions and the alleviations to be in "solid states", an examination in the form of constellations allows us to witness these relations in non-static and in "liquid states", hence encourages to trace through the emerging trajectories (Yaneva, 2011, pp. 126-127). Recognizing the fact that these trajectories emanate from specific territorial conditions, institutional dynamics, and further involved actors, one could arrive at more than one approach embraced in distinctive spatial practices as a result of their trajectories. Nevertheless, recovery, resilience, and resistance are the integral aspects of the selected works respectively. Describing these three reflections, and adopting them as conditional assorting means, I believe divergences and convergences may become discernible, inspiring us not only to observe the current state of socially and politically spatial practices but also the prospective pathways on how they can move forward productively.

Emerging from constellations, recovery is the first repercussion that weaves across conditional spaces, acting and mediating strategies employed by architects. Recovery transpires as a systematic excess in spatial terms, and as the withdrawal of community from public assets, which in turn is addressed through the re-establishment of definitive boundaries of the architectural profession. In this respect, Chapter 4.3 examines practices of recovery, which reciprocally engage with the position of the space producers, challenging both the conventional modes of conveying architecture and recuperating the predefined position of the architect. Analyzing particularly the *Abandoned Rural Schools* work of Herkes İçin Mimarlık (HIM), which is set in various rural geographies in Turkey, I argue the consequences of collectives' practices not only to be an architectural performance in physical terms, but also simultaneously calling for the rehabilitation of community life, through and with the reconstruction of an abandoned architectural past – which has been made redundant by the state, yet also redeemed under the state's supervision. Under such conditional spatial grounds, recovery points to dealing with perceived problems that are a consequence of the state, and despite the state, it

becomes a physical act facing social issues together with a group of incomer catalyzers and communities.

I contend that HIM's work constitutes a counter-narrative that alters from *right to city* into *right to rural*, by demonstrating that the rural is no more an excluded geography or a divorced periphery from the center, but a territory that is equivalent to urban, and that is entitled to physical and social infrastructural investment likewise the urban. HIM's work exposes the conditions of uneven development, and how its consequences come in contract on social grounds, forcing people to migrate out of the rural. Recovery then becomes a reverse enactment against the crises of urbanization that discards the rural and its communities; and through the recuperation of rural byproducts, HIM invigorates an interstice for architects to act in, by reversing the course of architecture as service provision.

Resilience marks the second of constellations, where space is both projective and receptive, with the actions simulated by architects, non-architects, and users. Resilience untangles a state of emergency resulting from politico-ecological concerns (civil war, border zones, natural disasters, climate change, and others). Under such occurrences, it links with the position of communities at stake, who thrive in response to threats and uncertainty, whilst overcoming institutional challenges of social and spatial marginalization. These circumstances offer an interval for spatial practitioners to conjoin, to endeavor interdisciplinary engagements, simulate collective production models, and alternative spatial conditions for resilient living. Originating from the post-earthquake region of Düzce in Turkey, Chapter 4.4 examines practices of resilience in Düzce Hope Studio's work, which is incited with the long-term struggle of a low-income tenant community who remained homeless yet strived for their rights to housing which has been lagged in legal limbo.

When rendered from the perspective of this struggle, I argue Düzce Hope Studio to be a fleeting plug-in body and a synthesis of diverse disciplinary skills lurking in the interstices of pre-defined professional positions, bringing together a group of enthusiastic post-struggle enablers. The collective's work exposes a clear representation of how spatial practitioners operate under contingency, what they can achieve when united with a prudent community, and through what means they simulate to strengthen the already built resilience in spatial terms; meanwhile offering liberation from the boundaries and the particularities of professional positions. The practice, therefore, offers a compelling

critical discourse in which to rethink the positions of professionals and laypeople, and who produces space.

Unlike the majority of contemporary forms of social and political engagement, here, spatial practices are not a result of contextual predicaments of space. On the contrary, space is consequential; it acts as a receptor in which space is posited as a background, a stage which would have not come to light unless solidarity, tenacity, and resilience was built among the community. Resilience then embarks against an invisible process of displacement, in which a counter-image is represented against capital absorption played over the collapsed lands having faced a natural disaster. It also points to how claiming space in a rightful way can invert the destructive impetus of state policies and exclusionary dynamics of increasing social segregation.

Resistance is the final emerging constellation, visiting acts of mediation that take place in conditional spaces by non-architects and communities. Resistance points out to public/private lands that are physically deprived, derelict or vacant due to having a legal hold, financial issues or simply ignored; a community that is precluded from the decision making of land use planning processes. Refusal of such a state happens through the crudest forms of opposition, in which urban agriculture and community gardening become commonplace micro-interventions. What is striking in this state is not a romantic desire to beautify, or to take care of something that was not taken care of, but to create a communal space for social cultivation that potentially enables residents to compete with developers, and to have a say in the decisions that have consequences in their communities. In Chapter 4.5, I examine the current interest in community gardens in relation to 596 Acres' work, positioned in different locations across the boroughs of New York City. Unlike the introduced former two practices or the community garden schemes developed by architects, here, the gardens are self-organized places not run by business, by architects, not even by individual people. On the contrary, everyday rules are set by neighbors who work together for making space, coming up with their system that renews itself.

The practices of 596 Acres allow us to observe the produced gardens over varying lengths of time, yet the overall spatial pattern emerges at once with the embodied online mapping tactics. In this sense, 596 Acres alters power dynamics by inverting the use of the map; putting forward it as a means to initiate a geographical organization and spatially organized social networks. Adopting designerly tools, 596 Acres utilizes mediating strategies such as the new interpretations of the law to unravel lands that are ignored but

ceases to exist, which are out of sight and city control. By locating those lands under the responsibility of organized communities, it exposes the consequences of uneven development across the neighborhoods in the city and prepares ground-up networks to confront with the top-down governance. In other words, it sheds light on the lands that are insulated from the market, developing unforeseeable urban quarters, by individuals or groups with no particular larger agenda, by groups that do not necessarily see themselves as political. Through making invisible structures visible, resistance becomes a subtle act engaged in everyday life by insider catalyzers, who are not only given the opportunity to start engaging with the vacant lands but also with each other and the political process they are to pace into. These conditions turn into resistance by enduring vacant lands' life span and keeping them off from future potential developments by private investors and the city.

As the above-mentioned constellations disclose, there are different geographies at stake, different cultures, political contexts, actors and time dimensions. The rest of the sections will be spent revealing thick descriptions of each practice applying the conceptual framework. At the nexus of space, action and position, the critical and analytical lens of interstitial will help to turn these experiences into "narrative re-mediation" from a contemporary perspective (Berlant, 1998, p. 666). By doing so, each practice will be explained and explicated as much as possible; it's precise context, it's precise collaborators, and the ways it tries to achieve moving across the constituents this study's conceptual framework. There are many different parameters, yet a concise picture emerges when they are situated. Through situating in such messiness, the following three sections draw out the implications of spatial practices, thereby revealing the agency of spatial practitioners within the dominant social order of global capitalism.

4.3. Recovery of Abandoned Excess

"There is a village there away" is a well-known folk song in Turkish culture. Any child at elementary school age in the country must have sung it in chorus at least once. Although the following section does not have much to do with the song itself - which is

originated from a poem,[59] its cultural construction builds the contextual background of this section. Having written in the early Republic years when an aspiration towards the rural lands was encouraged, the verses of the poem acknowledged this yearning, but in the meantime emphasized a far-off contextual perception. It talks about the unseen, unattended, distant geographies that are out of reach and out of mind from a state point of view, but that are at the same time inside the nations' geographic borders, belonging to the nation's land. In other words, from a socio-spatial standing point, it oxymoronically catches a rural urban division, a state of inclusion yet an exclusion, a separation of peripheries from the center, development of certain geographies whereas abandonment of others, lacking physical and social infrastructure.

In the context of Turkey's rural geographies, what the verses of the poem acknowledge is current today. Located in the Eastern Black Sea Region, at the intersection of Tokat and Ordu's provincial borders, Kargı village is one such instance. The village is hard to access on both ends; physically due to its mountainous topography, and socially due to having no landline. This may or may not consequently result in a disinvestment in its social infrastructure, but the village was left in dire need of an additional school structure to support the growing young population, which eventually came to be built by the village inhabitants through their own means. Not far from Kargı, Çaka village on the other hand, is located in one of the few coasts that remained intact thanks to the coastal highway passing through inland. However, the fact that the new highway route plan severed the connection of Çaka with the main road has also become a reason to migrate out of the countryside due to economic reasons. With the economic deprivation, shrinking population has ended up leaving former school structures abandoned over a scenic view for the last 25 years (Figure 4.1). When observed from within, these two particular instances are just a couple reflecting the current conditions of far off rural geographies and the reality behind education in the rural; however, focusing on neither Çaka nor Kargı is sufficient enough to capture the thorough picture to explain why the lack of social infrastructure connected to a physical one may result in scarce education and abandoned physical structures.

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[59] The poem was written by Ahmet Kutsi Tecer in 1927, during the years when Tecer used to serve as the Director of National Education in Sivas, in the Eastern district of Turkey. The first four verses of the poem go like this:
"There is a village there away, / That village is our village. / Even if we do not visit, / That village is our village."

This section takes on from these 'other'[60] geographies touched by uneven development and explores approaches to revive abandoned structures to enhance education and community engagement through process-based spatial responses in the rural. Departing from the works of Herkes İçin Mimarlık (HIM)[61], whose projects stemmed from Kargı and Çaka but not limited to those rural lands, I will examine a series of intertwined projects located in Turkey's rural geographies. HIM's focus on abandoned rural structures is a depiction of under what particular circumstances architectural artefacts can be deprived of their use value and become 'spatial excess' due to being removed out of the state mechanisms of production, and how consecutively, those dysfunctional structures can turn into potential sites of recovery.



Figure 4.1. Rural schools in Kargı (above) and Çaka (below) villages.
(Source: HIM Archives)

[60] Here, the term 'other' is adopted to point out rural contexts that are being othered by the state, which face the consequences of a structural deprivation. Michel Foucault acknowledges other spaces to be exposed to spatial and temporal disruptions; in other words, manifested differently in different times and places (1986, pp. 22-27). Rural contexts in this chapter, thereby, are found to be captivated and altered over time with the forces of development which will be examined in the following sections.

[61] Herkes için Mimarlık translates as Architecture for All.

In this section, I claim HIM's approaches toward abandoned educational structures in rural lands to be an 'interstitial recovery' when examined from three angles: first, identification of rural properties owned, yet abandoned by the state and their recovery under state's supervision; second, operations undertaken in the physical recovery of these spaces intrinsic to, yet transcending the disciplinary boundaries, hence the tools of architecture; and third, recovery in the form of a social rehabilitation carried with rural inhabitants together with HIM members who are outsiders to rural localities.

Focusing on these three aspects, the section is divided into respective subsections to elaborate on the notion of investigation within the previously discussed analytical framework of interstitial production of space. The first subsection opens up with the recent background of the organization, an architecture collective whose works are majorly situated in rural lands addressing social issues through architectural practices. Then, I will draw on the relation between architecture and abandoned education structures in the historical context of rural geographies in which they operate. Following the casual conditions, proceeding subsection deals with the acting strategies to discuss in what ways the collective engages in the recovery of 'spatial excess'. And finally, the section discloses with a consequential reading that brings up implications upon such practices, with a reflection upon its actors.

4.3.1 An Amateur Will to Put Failure into Use

In 2007, having not been aware of the reasons of abandoned structures in the rural formerly, yet troubled with the architecture education on paper, a group of architecture students based in Istanbul started off looking for potential sites of intervention. In the hope for moving from architecture on paper to experiencing an architecture on actual site – in other words, moving from architectural scale to real scale, they started Ölçek 1/1[62] group and wrote down a manifesto which said:

> "It is a different approach to the concept of scale entrapped during the architectural education. Not being afraid to scale up, grappling with details, seeing what we can do when we free ourselves

[62] A literal translation of Ölçek 1/1 would be Scale 1/1. The collective started by a group of architecture students at Istanbul Technical University. Although it had core team members (Hakan Kaçmaz, İbrahim Emre Gündoğdu, Ege Özgirin, Hakan Gözlüklü, Ayça Yontarım, Betül Alioğlu, and Selin Şentürk), the group expanded into a larger body by following an anti-hierarchical structure < http:// http://olcek1e1.blogspot.com/> accessed 05/02/19.

from the boundaries of academic education. Facing with the problems and solving them, not being satisfied with what is given but to get what we want. In a way, it is messing with dirt" (2007).

Ölçek 1/1's quest for a liberation from the scale of architecture education and a will to confront actual issues resulted with an intuitive project. Being hometown to one of its members, the group decided to take on the renovation of a school in deprived conditions at Hacı İbrahim Uşağı village, in the province of Kahramanmaraş. The school was serving only for the first five years of elementary education, whereas after those five years, students were transported to nearby schools. It was run down physically and there was no proper outdoor area; the classrooms in the main building were insufficient, and the lodging of four teachers were squeezed into a single room attached to a restroom on the other side of the school site. After a positive application to the Provincial Directorate of National Education and signing a protocol to undertake the renovation of the school, Ölçek 1/1 pulled in financial, material, transportation and logistical support from ten different sponsors. In three months-time, the group completed the construction of an additional lodging for teachers, renovated the run-down school, and designed its landscape together with the help of village inhabitants and participation of twenty-two architecture students who replied to the open call.

Although Ölçek 1/1 carried a second project in another rural geography, it dissipated soon upon the graduation of its members and due to the platform having no legal grounds.[63] However, Ölçek 1/1's short lived experiments and expeditions in the rural brought about potential geographies to delve into, and most importantly, paved way to unearth a systematic crack; abandoned rural schools upon the commencement of transportational education system, which was brought to HIM's agenda in further years.

In December 2011, with the union of several former members of Ölçek 1/1 and Kayıtdışı[64] initiative, and new graduates from various universities in Istanbul, HIM was founded by twelve young architects under the status of a not-for-profit organization, and made a twelve square meter office in Kadıköy, Istanbul its base. Built particularly on the

[63] During the conversation with Ölçek 1/1 former member, İbrahim Emre Gündoğdu pointed out that having no legal status had its disadvantages such as not being able to pull in financial sponsors, and also the non-recognition by state mechanisms leading to problems in terms of receiving permission for in-situ construction (Interview, 23 February 2018).

[64] Kayıtdışı – stands for 'off the record', is an informal architecture and design collective which used to be active in the years 2007 and 2008. It is formed by architecture students and scholars of Yıldız Technical University in Istanbul. The motivation of the collective is to find different ways of seeping into the formal education through events, workshops and lectures series open to disciplines other than architecture (Köm, 2009, pp. 85-87).

experiences of Ölçek 1/1, HIM came to the architectural agenda with their practice of architecture in the crisis environment, with a description of their motivations that tell:

> "HIM is a platform where volunteer students and professionals come together from different endeavors to bring the social problems encountered in the country to the agenda in creative ways, to raise awareness about these problems and to produce solutions. The association aims to evaluate the existing architectural and social potentials in the geographies where it works. In urban and rural areas, it wants to increase the awareness of architecture within the society by encouraging participatory mechanisms, which are lacking in the design planning and construction processes of the projects" (HIM Archives 2019).

Questioning the mechanisms of spatial production and architecture's disciplinary relevance, whilst seeking to build a platform in order to speak out problems out of legal motives and agendas, HIM shortly built recognition among architecture circles with its motivation toward socio-spatial issues. Whereas the initial works of the collective were considerably short run and scattered around different themes, the common ground was built around creative learning and critical thinking via running workshops, events and forums together with different age and social groups.[65] Simultaneous with these former projects taking place within urban contexts, HIM also took on from the previous experiments of Ölçek 1/1 and started addressing potential social issues in rural geographies. Abandoned rural schools, which was inherited by Ölçek 1/1, instantaneously entered the organization's agenda, and was given a priority to be scrutinized.

Over a short time, HIM's focus on urban contexts shifted majorly to rural geographies in which the organization continues to work for the last seven years. Escaping from the political cul-de-sac, entangled power dynamics and profound urban conflicts that are found hard to cope with, HIM encountered rural areas to be more plausible in terms of being able to actualize its objectives in concrete (Interview, 23 February 2018). To this end, majority of HIM's works are positioned in and around abandoned rural schools; a systematic failure that is incrementally constructed over

[65] Prior to exploring HIMs' works majorly taking place in rural geographies, a brief overview of the organization's projects remains essential. HIM foresaw how social concerns could be spatialized in the urban with the Gezi Park debates prior to the uprising and sought for what reactions could be undertaken to respond these issues. Meanwhile, #occupyGezi has been a well-known archive that appeared across various media sources, Beyoğlu Movie Theatre was another critical project initiated as a response to inclining consumption through leisure in everyday life which in turn results in the withdrawal of small-scale independent initiatives. Whilst the recent global tendency squeezes movie theatres into shopping malls, addressing a consumption-based conception of leisure is indeed what HIM underlines by supporting the survival of Beyoğlu Movie Theatre among such juggle (HIM Archives 2019).

history and that face its consequences spatially, socially and culturally in today's rural settlements – in which the following content of this section is particularly based upon.

4.3.2. A History Abandoned: Rural Schools

To understand the context of current structural interstices in the rural, it necessitates a brief visit to the history of rural education. In the early Republican period, due to the majority of country population settling in the countryside,[66] envision of modernization at city scale was extended towards the rural. Within the framework of rural development, education has been considered as an essential constituent, which has been set forwards with the formation of Village Institutes in 1937; a milestone supporting rural education for the desired progress in the country. This institutionalization, in a way, has been contemplated as an improvement in the conditions of peasants who have been alienated by the state (Geray, 1974); evaluated in terms of social and physical infrastructure, hence the engagement of the rural in all respects. However, the aspiration encouraging rural development had its downfalls following the dissolution of Village Institution model in 1954.

Starting in the late 80's, akin to the termination of Village Institutions, another impetus in the development of rural education has been brought to an end with the withdrawal of village schools from the rural. Due to the reasons such as the extension of compulsory primary education from five to eight years resulting with the insufficient number of education structures, along with the conflicts taking place in the South Eastern parts of the country and the consequent internal migration, transportable education system initially started in the 1989-1990 academic year in two pilot cities with the transportation of 305 students from 12 village schools. Having reached a significant level in the last 25 years, children at primary school age living in less populated and sparsely settled rural areas were transported to nearby cities to reduce the number of schools with combined classes, in turn, to offer more qualified education and training services.[67] This resulted in the abandonment of existing education structures in many villages.

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[66] In 1927, rural population in Turkey constituted 76% of the total population. The rates have been stable until 1950's prior to the intensive migration from rural to urban (Yılmaz, 2015).

[67] According to the 2008-2009 statistics of Ministry of National Education, number of transported schools reached to 25.025, whereas number of transported students climbed to 683.415 <http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/istatistik/meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2008_2009.pdf> accessed 05/02/19.

Although the structure of Village Institutes and rural schools might have followed two disparate frameworks and timelines in developing the rural, both initiated with similar motivations and concluded with likely consequences: withdrawal from the rural, disengagement from peripheries and a concentration on the urban. In addition to the centralization of primary education, rapid urbanization and growing cities distressed rural education further. In 2012, with the Metropolitan Act, 14 new metropolitan areas joined to 16 metropolises in the existing structure; meaning that, the authority and planning boundary of the metropolitan municipalities have become the provincial property boundary, transforming villages into neighborhoods. Rural population which had already faced a decline from 80 percent in the early Republic years down to 20's, shrank from 22,7 to 8,7 over one night.[68] This had implications on the growing number of abandoned rural schools, which are currently estimated to be around 17 thousand in the country.[69]

According to Henri Lefebvre, these developments conclude with the unclear demarcation of spatial boundaries of an urban or a rural life, with the disappearing hierarchical distinction between the city and the country (1967, p. 158). David Harvey further portrays this fading distinction as "a set of porous spaces of uneven geographical development" which he relates to the hegemonic command of capital and the state (2008, p. 36). As a result, what has been initially strived in the early Republican period has turned into a reverse aspiration today. The conception of development which was once built on prospering the rural lands conceived in later years as growth linking rural to urban, concentrating power and wealth in certain places by leaving rural areas and rural people behind. Although the legal status of villages transforming into neighborhoods on paper might have been considered as advancement, on the obverse, it pointed to decentralization of individual properties and disappearance of collective grounds (Ekinci, 2019).

Consequently, "there is a village there away" now remains a poem in which its meaning is altered with intense migration from rural to urban, peripheries within a system that is more centralized than ever. Under these circumstances, rural schools, which oscillate between the pendulum of rural and urban, are not only emptied out in the aftermath of transportable education and thus became spatial residues, but also both

[68] The Metropolitan Act No. 6360; effectuated in the Official Gazette on 6 December 2012 and was finalized with the amendment on 22 March 2013.

[69] Despite the fact that there is no clear statistics revealing the number of abandoned rural schools precisely, several sources mention 17 thousand education structures to be abandoned. This number has also been mentioned during the interview with HIM member İbrahim Emre Gündoğdu.

prompted by, and triggered the discharge of rural life.[70] In this sense, what does it mean to mend idle structures in the rural within the conceptual framework of interstitial production of space?

Whilst rural education steering from the peripheries towards the center empties those peripheries in return, what HIM aspires remains to be a counter approach. The organizations' practices in the rural are a demonstration of how *the right to the city* surpasses by large the urban itself and evolves into *the right to the rural* by demonstrating that the countryside is no more an exclusive place for the rural, but "a place of confrontations and of conflictual relations*" under the forces of urbanization* (Lefebvre, 1967, p. 109). Examining this brief history, I argue the intentions and consequences behind the recovery of abandoned structures by HIM are beyond a physical recuperation that is self-contained in the discipline of architecture but are manifold when drawn on this larger picture.

4.3.3. From Abandoned Spaces to Relational Places

It is in this wider historical context that HIM realizes its projects. A brief research regarding this situation in Turkey reveals that some abandoned rural schools are demolished, some are sold, and others cannot be mended without a permission due to their historical value, whereas some have been left to their fate. Nevertheless, apart from the works of HIM, there are also other attempts to repurpose these dysfunctional structures. Meanwhile the state rarely takes the initiative to refurbish, responses also emanate from within; village inhabitants who witness the circumstances of abandonment and take the will to recover these spatial residues.[71] There are also incomer approaches which are inherent to the discipline of architecture, taking this failure as an opportunity to experiment architecture education in practice.[72] Situated amidst these three different

[70] Based on HIM's practices in diverse rural geographies, and engagement with local communities, rural residents point out education to be an important factor for inhabitants to hold onto their localities (Interview, 23 February 2018).

[71] In Rize, Aslandere village, a group of village inhabitants started a not-for-profit organization in order to renovate the former education structure which came to be abandoned since 1995. Calling themselves 'Hayat', which is translated as 'Life', the organization raised donations from the locals to renovate the structure, hence provide a common space for the rural inhabitants serving for cultural and social purposes. <http://www.radikal.com.tr/hayat/atil-koy-okulunu-koyun-gencleri-hayata-dondurdu-1353699/> accessed 15/02/19.

[72] In 2018, several branches of Chamber of Architects organized "Architecture Students Summer Camp" to revitalize an abandoned masonry school structure located in Fındıklı, Rize. Together with architecture

propositions, the reason for examining specifically the works of HIM in this section is also what distinguishes their projects from these relatively singular and short-run approaches. The organization does not focus on a particular spatial residue but follows a holistic approach by working across multiple residues in numerous sites through rural acupuncture series; what HIM named 'abandoned rural schools' project, continuing since 2012 (Figure 4.2).

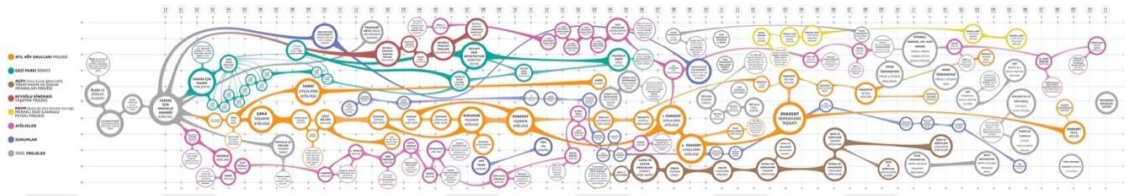


Figure 4.2. A timeline of HIM projects from 2011 until 2016. Orange color refers to Abandoned Rural Schools project, which is the most continuous and dominant project among the other works of the organization (Source: HIM Archives).

HIMs' practices spring from a small-scale structural gap in a village towards the scale of broader rural geographies, which eventually grow into the national scale. Consequently, these lasting projects in the rural suggest a network at a wider level, in which the organization aims to draw attention to abandoned structural gaps rather than one-by-one recovery. As the co-founder of HIM, Yelta Köm states:

> "…[T]he centralization of all the systems and distancing from rural areas might prompt a romantic activism. However, today's activist state is not just to bring a specific service to the rural area, but embody new resourceful strategies, to establish a game that everyone participates in, without the rule-maker." (2014, p.3)

In order to deliver a comprehensive approach, hence make these gaps visible en masse, in 2015, the organization started rural schools network over an online platform (Figure 4.3).[73] The content of the platform was generated over the map of Turkey, initially

students participating from various parts of Turkey, summer camp involved execution and landscape workshops, along with the education and discussion sessions. Rendering the subject of rural settlements from the aspects of everyday rural life, vernacular construction methods and rural conservation, summer camp aimed to enhance an alternative architecture education.
< http://www.mimarlarodasiankara.org/index.php?Did=9679> accessed 15/02/19.

[73] Due to the ongoing maintenance, the digital interface of *Abandoned Rural Schools* map cannot be currently reached online.

displaying the works of HIM in rural geographies, through which the organization expected to appeal attention, hence set off and include further potential incentives coming outside the organization. The map and the consequent layers it captures – including the regions, status of idle structures and their organizers – is more than a visual medium presenting the projects, but operating as a social interface in two terms: first, the established virtual network of projects turns into a relational medium to stimulate and bring about new online alliances in order to undertake the responsibility of other abandoned structures; secondly, paving way to establish an actual relational place on the ground, by encouraging participatory mechanisms together with village inhabitants under the approval of Ministry of National Education.

Interpreting this line of thought in a rural context, the online network of abandoned schools and on ground physical recoveries formulated by HIM allude to Doreen Massey's conception of place as a relational term. Massey describes relational place "as the product of interrelations" that is "predicated upon the existence of plurality" (2005, p. 9). For Massey, plurality is intrinsic to the multiplicity of distinct individual trajectories, of social relations that intersect under particular moments, hence forms nets "which have over time been constructed, laid down, interacted with one another, decayed and renewed" (Massey, 2005, p. 120). In the case of abandoned rural schools project, forming social relations point both to the virtual and the actual nodes driven from abandoned spaces via the online network and on ground experiments respectively. In other words, the intersection of social connections is what constitutes abandoned structures as relational places. Consequently, the following section elaborates on how these social connections unfold in HIMs' operations, by concentrating on a selection of nodes on ground that are comprehensively tackled by the organization. I will epitomize these operations by drawing on three main strategies on how to bring about relational places over state's 'spatial excess'.



Figure 4.3. The digital interface of *Abandoned Rural Schools Project* map.
(Source: HIM Archives)

4.3.4. The Recovery of Excess: Expedition, Interaction and Resource

Whilst the consequences of a systematic centralization might leave out education structures in the rural abandoned – in other words, discarded, unused or unoccupied – it also points to a released 'spatial excess' which can lead to a potential proliferation in their localities. Elizabeth Grosz calls 'spatial excess' to be intrinsic within architecture or any conception of space and habitations. It carries an extra dimension which transcends beyond the concerns of functionality, beyond "their relevance for the present, and into the realm of the future where they may function differently" (2001, p.151). In line with this thought, conserving the architectural form of spatial excess whilst exploring potential functions based on the nature and necessities of each specific context is what follows the operations of HIM.

In the case of abandoned rural schools, constituted from the immensity of the national to the intimately smaller-scale countryside, discharged spatial excess – albeit problematized and portrayed negatively at a wider glance – can consequently turn into a social and cultural abundance when appropriate circumstances are procured. Replacing abandonment with abundance, whether or how this excess is recovered and activated relies on the strategies of expedition, interaction and resource, which are three essential and intertwined constituents inherent to HIM's each particular practice. They are not phases nor suggesting a model for recovery to be addressed in a linear order, on the contrary, are enmeshed components in which the presence of each constituent both determines and determined by one another.

Firstly, expedition entails a continuous exploration in the rural, a recognition of the social and geographic nature of particular rural contexts. It addresses more than marking down one-by-one and analyzing the current physical nature of abandoned structures on site; yet, it is also an observation of local dynamics by vertically moving down the ladders of decision making bodies in the retrieval of lost spaces, and reaching eventually out to rural communities in the wake of their disappearance. In other words, whereas expanding the disciplinary boundaries of a conventional architectural practice, HIM's expedition of getting to know also implies getting to meet inhabitants and visit the origins of social issues. Merve Gül Özokçu, one of the HIM founding members, specifies this in the following way:

> "Actors needing to do something do not know from where to begin and how to grasp the matter nor they can reach people who live in unequal conditions. The absence of a widespread culture despite the existing accumulation of action and the absence of archives reduces the pace of action of civil society, leaving them incompetent in understanding what is going on around it and advocating for rights. People who are stuck in their own positions / geographies and who can only discuss things through their own experiences, and people who can only think through their own discipline and who can(not) encounter the 'others' hence come together and unite under same concerns" (2015).

HIM's first expedition of abandoned rural schools was fed by Ölçek 1/1's former experiences and local knowledge of the Black Sea region. Since each rural geography and each community brings together their own context, encompassing a regional scheme was anticipated instead of reaching out a particular spatial excess, hence a bounded perspective over the map (Jeff Talks, 2013). Following a preliminary research and finding out that the city of Ordu having a higher rank in terms of transportable education system,[74] the organization decided to initiate a pilot scheme in hoping to establish a benchmark for a larger scale project in the country sides of the region. After a successful application to Ordu's governor in 2012, HIM was put in touch with the city's Provincial Directorate of National Education (PDNE) and conveyed an excursion under the guidance of an inspector, traveling across potential rural sites for intervention (Figure 4.4). It came to be tailored in accordance with the priorities and stakes of the PDNE, who is the proprietor and the eventual decision-making body of educational structures in the province.

[74] During the meeting with the PDNE, HIM members were informed about around 900 education structures to be abandoned in Ordu province.



Figure 4.4. HIM starting to practice in Ordu as the pilot province.
(Source: HIM Archives)

To that end, expedition also becomes a matter of question on how to work with government bodies who contributed to the generation and exclusion of spatial excess. It is on ground exploration, and in the meantime finding the middle ground between the state and rural inhabitants; coming to an agreement with the top-down to find ways to alter excess while responding to each particular context's impoverishment. Among a visit to seven sites and out of a negotiation between HIM and PNDE, interests in Kargı and Çaka villages stemmed from this expedition and grew into the first two works of abandoned rural school series. The decision to focus on Çaka evolved from the presence of its breathtaking yet compelling context, exposing the abandoned school structure for 25 years to corrosion due to its location on the coast. HIM members were impressed with the context as well as the architectural quality of the space, which was originally designed as a local club in 1965 but has never served its function yet has been occupied as an educational structure until 1987 (Interview, 23 February 2018). In this sense, architect's professional perspective remains an important factor in determining which excess to alter, incorporating the disciplinary knowledge of site analysis under the strategy of expedition.

On the other hand, selection of Kargı was due to its location in a difficult geography, clinging in between a valley behind the mountains, resulting with the lack of

basic amenities such as water, road and land line. In the words of a local, being far away is stressed out as an unknown aspect, "whether if the current conditions are due to being physically out of sight or remaining unseen on purpose" is obscure (HIM Archives 2019). In such context, the school in Kargı was still actively running, but it was found to be in deteriorating conditions; an additional education structure was built by the inhabitants in 2005 to suffice the growing number of students in the village itself and surrounding villages yet was serving partially due to insufficient finances. Thrilled by the locals and their struggle in such geographic shortcomings albeit insignificant financial aid by the provincial state, HIM decided to give support to complete the unfinished structure (Interview, 23 February 2018). Although the school was not abandoned, it was considered as a part of abandoned rural school series; both to test HIM members' construction skills on site, but mainly to restrain a potential migration out of the rural upon the closure of the school which would otherwise take place unless the school served fully.[75]

Expedition then is not only about visiting sites of spatial excess by embodying a retrospective approach that deals with future potentials to re-function an abandoned past, but which can also embrace a prospective approach that buffers a likely consequence in the near future when looked into present circumstances. In other words, as much as the presence of physical infrastructure determines the livability of a settlement, the presence of educational facilities in the rural are notable social infrastructures for families to hold onto to their localities.

Until today, HIM performed over ten on-site excursions stretching from the Eastern parts towards the Western provinces in the country (Figure 4.5). Whereas some expeditions resulted in putting a hold on the projects before their commencement, due to difficult local dynamics or a clash with the provincial state objectives and financial constraints as such, some others were developed further. Although the initial ones took place upon the individual incentives of the organization members, the following projects were initiated through invitations, upon the recognition and dissemination of the previous projects. Several invitations came from within, through a member of the organization wanting to bring a change in his/her locality, yet other times a rural association, or someone who recently moved to the rural and willing to repurpose leftover compounds.

[75] During HIM's interview with rural inhabitants in Kargı village, Mustafa Ali Akçam – the chairman of the school family association, stated economic and educational concerns to be the biggest reason for migration in the region. Whereas economic concerns are surpassed with seasonal internal migrations in Kargı, nearby villages to Kargı on the other hand, demonstrated that the lack of school is the reason for permanent migration (HIM Archives 2019).

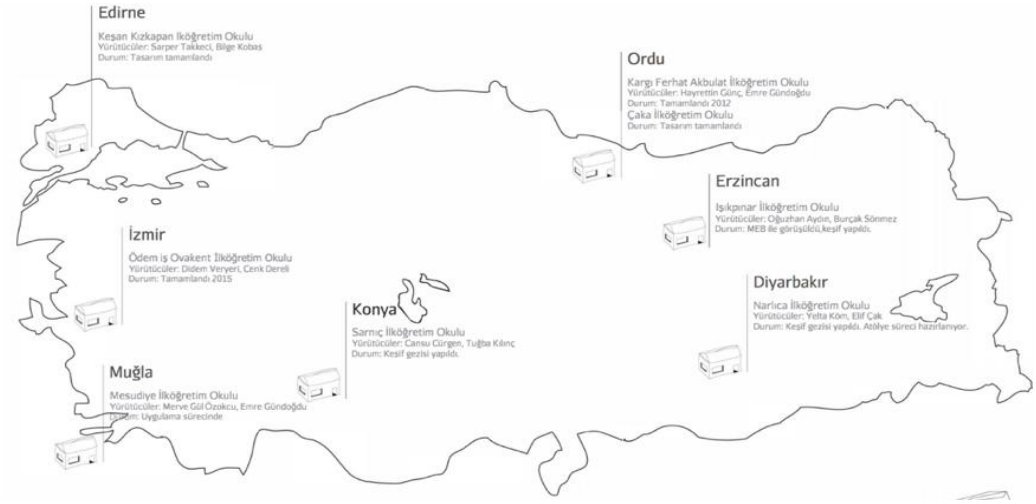


Figure 4.5. Converting schools in different regions of Turkey, HIM aims to create an awareness in rural geographies (Source: HIM Archives).

Understanding the complexity of local dynamics along with the state/province objectives, and taking a place in between underlines the practices of HIM. On the one hand, considering the fact that abandoned structures are under the management of Directorate of National Education, they cannot host functions other than education programs for the public interest (Interview, 23 February 2018). But on the other hand, it is necessary to estimate what is the best benefit for the community. In order to provide a mutual platform for common goals, HIM ensures the widest possible participation and support in their works and communicates with all relevant interlocutors without discrimination and classification (Özokcu, 2015). Whilst dealing with issues that are on the agenda of the state, and responding to calls from people or from institutions, HIM steers procedures by embracing a sensitivity for community benefit, without abusing volunteering and labor relations.

Secondly, interaction, associated with expedition at this point, becomes another essential constituent embodied in the works of HIM. In order to channel active engagement with the place, people and environment for a spatial production at the structural interstices, the platform assumes horizontally organized relational networks to develop actions integrated within the whole project processes. Balancing out the relations between the state, the civic and incomer communities, this growing network follows anti-hierarchical processes through collective participation and taking responsibility for social problems. In this vein, HIM mediates between different bodies perpetually in which interaction occurs at three entangled levels. It stems from the body of the platform itself

which grows and shrinks based on the nature of each project, rural communities who are the eventual occupants of what is recovered, to provincial directors in order to receive approval and financial support for future functions the recovery subsumes.

Building a common ground between these different bodies, workshops are integral instruments to enhance interaction in the works of HIM; to further observe the everyday life of rural communities, to explore what particular purposes abandoned structures would serve in those localities, to detect damages in the buildings and introduce design solutions in accordance with the predicted building functions, and finally, to settle how and with whom the physical recovery would ensue. HIM adopts a participatory framework in these workshops, however, when doing that, it refrains from predetermined functions, programs or procedures. In other words, rather than becoming restricted to stereotyped participatory design methods inherent to architecture discipline, HIM embraces participation with emancipatory intentions. As one of the HIM member specifies:

> "The transformation of architectural processes into an open experiment suggests a solution to social inequality through process and space. The future of this approach, which can be possible by breaking the existing roles, works collectively and transforms the research into an open source, without the concern of authorship" (Özokcu, 2015).

Pursuing an open experiment supports Kenny Cupers' claim, who finds the contemporary advocates in architecture and urban design to consider participation as a part of a "social or political project of empowering the disenfranchised" (2013, p. 10). As a result, participation appears beyond a mere design methodology in reaching an ultimate architectural artefact and implementing its use per se, but as putting architecture discipline in direct relation to society at large without distinguishing the roles between the laypeople and professionals.

In this line, fed by the implementation of a broader understanding of participation throughout the workshops, HIM member Cenk Dereli expresses that "the purpose, scope and context of each project delivers original development methods followed throughout the process" (2017, p. 30). Consequently, although each project might call for a unique approach for interaction, examining the full body of HIM's works nonetheless reveals certain patterns that unfold with the structures of the workshops. Rendered under the aspects of design and execution, these workshop stages are central to build interaction, for the sake of a social and physical recovery.

In terms of assessing the physical conditions of abandoned buildings and exploring the existing social dynamics of local contexts, the first segment of design workshops can be considered as a deeper extension of expedition series. However, unlike expedition – undertaken by the assigned core team members of HIM which results in the decision of what rural contexts to focus on, design workshops happen upon the termination of expedition if results successfully. Additionally, they are open to other HIM members and further non-members, who participate in order to share and practice their disciplinary skills by responding to HIM's open calls on social media. Although not limited to, architecture students and young architecture graduates comprise the majority of design team who join to workshops from various parts of Turkey.

Whereas building survey step comprises detecting damages in the buildings, measuring them and estimating further fundamental structural shortages, it is followed with the social documentation of everyday life, which stretches from the boundaries of the abandoned area toward its surrounding. Meeting with the locals often start at the social heart of the villages, such as the tea shops or little squares near mosques, which may end up with becoming guests to their houses and accompany their everyday lives over meals. Consequently, meeting with the rural community is central to observe the local dynamics, not merely a step asking what communities demand prior to a design consultancy but to understand whether if the recovery is vital by deciphering the recent past and present social relations to estimate potential building programs.

The anti-hierarchical process, hence, having no concern for an authorship allows participants to experiment the site freely, and to establish impromptu relationships within a plural structure rather than following a discrete and systematized channel (Özokcu, 2015, p. 50). Although the workshops have assigned coordinators selected from HIM core team members to manage the workload and program flow on site, participants and coordinators are not distinguished as learners and instructors respectively. Even if a likely hierarchy prevails, it turns upside down on the ground due to both parties being outsiders to the localities in which they work (Jeff Talks, 2013). Whilst the first segment of the design workshop encourages the adoption of basic disciplinary tools – photographing, voice recording, conveying semi-structured interviews, sketching – for in situ analysis, the main objective for such an analysis is to establish relations between the participants and the local community; by gathering participant outsiders with rural insiders, converging professional knowledge together with the local know-how. To this end, interaction encompasses a mutual learning, and sharing a common ground for a certain

amount of time in which the duration is determined by financial resources and participants' academic schedules.

Depending on the nature of each context and the limited time period, the outcomes of the first segment results with a documentation in the form of fanzines, booklets and newspapers prepared to inform local people about the potential interstitial recovery, as well as delivering local voices, history, and nature of each locality (Figure 4.6).



Figure 4.6. A selection of newspapers and fanzines produced during the design workshops series taking place in various villages (Source: HIM Archives).

Fed by the outcomes of this first segment, second phase of the design workshop deals with how in the future abandoned structures could serve for rural communities. Although embodying an architectural practice that is more attentive to people's everyday environments, in this phase, the approach is still inherent to the discipline of architecture;

renders, plan and section drawings, sketches are the typically consulted medium for a visual communication among the participants and with rural inhabitants. Nevertheless, in contrast to an architecture with a strategic hands-off activity of spatial planning and design, here, a hands-on approach is adopted by blending the professional language infused within everyday life.

Whereas it is ideal for HIM to handle the first and the second segment together with the same participants on the ground, due to time constraints, the second segment of the design workshop usually happens afterwards departing the rural (Interview, 23 February 2018). However, whether it is on site or off the rural site, this phase still proceeds with the same format, respondents to the open call join the workshop and take on from the documents where the previous participants leave. In case the execution workshop is made possible, the findings at hand together with the future scenarios, participants return back to the rural, in order to present alternative building programs to rural communities in where a negotiation takes place. Interaction, all throughout this process, is being nourished by the communication with the locals, rather than bolstering the local with the disciplinary knowledge and imposing decisions that outcome from the workshops.

Whilst such an interaction build via the design workshops is frequently welcomed by rural inhabitants, other times, it becomes a matter of contact which turns out to be problematic. HIM encountered such issues in Çaka and Mesudiye villages, where rural communities repelled the idea of a physical recovery:

> "'We are aware of the fact that these schools had been closed for many years' said the locals, and 'if we wanted to, we could have already done something' they mentioned. They have a right to say that. Although some of us still think that we could not do much in Çaka and Mesudiye, we learnt a lot from these experiences. Eventually, we do not need to build something physically. This is a long process of getting to know each other, it is not about going there and wanting to do something. Building a trustworthy reciprocal relationship takes time. Even if we did not transform the abandoned structures, at least we triggered something. Although it is not the most perfect local organization, inhabitants organized upon our departure by starting their own associations" (Interview, 23 February 2018).

On that account, spatial production at the interstices becomes an intricate play at where the role of architecture and that of its practitioners' motivations and commonplace tools remain ineffectual once in a while. Questioning the role of architecture, or better, how can architect take position under dissensus, such conditions reveal Giancarlo de Carlo's remarks on participation. De Carlo reminds that the designer's task is not to produce constant results but quite the contrary, it is to obtain the results filtered through

endless confrontations and encounters (1980, pp. 74-79). This way abandoned rural schools project becomes a process-based practices of recovery, at where the recovery unfolds to be a social rehabilitation which can only than after prompt the physical recovery of spatial access.

Thereby, execution workshops are the last phase of interaction, hence of this process-based recovery. Since 2012, when the abandoned rural schools project first initiated, only two out of eight projects have been realized fully and were put into use. This points to neither a success nor failure in putting spatial excess into use, but most importantly, it means that interaction takes time and reaching out to rural communities remains an essential motive in the recovery of spatial excess. In other words, it implies that the consequences of a recovery in place to be more indeterminate than a recovery on paper, which eventually depends on contingent relations and the (un)predicted future occupants, and finally resource as another essential constituent for the recovery – which will be examined in the following.

Within these two fully executed projects, school in Kargı was already functioning and consequently refurbished partially, whereas the abandoned school in Ovakent re-conditioned physically to host a vocational training school for the mentally disabled. Although both works followed a similar process like the rest of the abandoned rural school projects, the latter one evolved into a considerably distinctive path. The need of a vocational training center for the disabled in Ödemiş province was already determined by the PDNE, thus the abandoned school structure in Ovakent was selected to host this need. What remains remarkable about Ovakent, at where the school is running fully today, is how a reverse aspiration from urban to rural can be triggered by pulling in disabled students coming from larger towns to such a small settlement.

Similar to design workshops, execution workshops are structured in a relevant manner. However, under uncertain situations – such as loose interaction with rural communities and/or limited resources, execution starts from the peripheries of abandoned school structures rather than an interior physical recovery emanating from the structural envelopes toward within. Summoned as landscape workshops, in Mesudiye project instance, execution took place with clearing the school backyard including an old masonry building from trashes; painting woodworks of the façade facing the backyard; and eventually, turning the backyard that is occasionally used during wedding ceremonies into a common space to be used by village inhabitants on all occasions (HIM Archives 2019). This open common space was arranged with found materials from the village and

equipment provided by the locals. Recycling materials such as palettes and car tires, participants designed outdoor furniture and planters as landscape elements (Figure 4.7).

In the case of Mesudiye, despite the fact that future functions other than the open space infrequently hosting wedding ceremonies remain unknown, landscape workshop demonstrates how a collective production could be experimented and how the future of spatial excess that respect to common existences be imagined. To this end, execution does not only entail a beautifying operation of a space that is hardly used, but also to both make spatial excess and social capital visible. Although the physical outcomes are temporary landscape elements due to the nature of available materials, it may still be a vital step in fostering interaction with rural communities by implying that a change is happening on the ground. During this brief workshop, it was observed that not only the food was provided, but also labor and financial support was given by the rural communities. In this vein, even if the recovery is ephemeral, a change might likely to continue by acknowledging the presence of a common ground. Mesudiye project did not proceed further; however, visiting the village a year after following the workshop, HIM came across that Mesudiye local association was founded (Interview, 23 February 2018). Whereas currently the future of the structural recovery remains unknown, formation of a cohesive rural community is what known to be certain.



Figure 4.7. Images from Mesudiye Landscape Workshop.
(Source: HIM Archives)

Landscape execution series are also considered as a potential precursor of the forthcoming construction practices, contemplating a preparatory work in school structures (HIM Archives 2019). Peripheral execution scheme was also embraced in Ovakent project, at where the majority of the participants were high school students joining HIM from a nearby school in the province. Local aid was also expanded further with the children and adults of the village providing material, equipment and labor support. The workshop, which only lasted for three days, was not only pivotal in fostering communication with the village inhabitants who were willing to see the transformation (Interview, 23 February 2018), but also a demonstration of how such a little disciplinary skill was needed in order to trigger a social change. In this sense, HIM acts as a catalyzer of transformation by taking a place in-between the student participants and enthusiastic locals, rather than acting as the body willing to take on the recovery through its own means.

Resource is the last essential constituent in terms of having sufficient social and financial capital to ensure actions of recovery in place. Whereas expedition and interaction are two intertwined constituents that majorly deal with the social and design aspects of altering abandoned structures, resource marks how such a recovery is actualized in place in three terms: human resources, to receive professional and labor support to participate in such change; financial resource, to transport and accommodate participants during the projects, to cover the labor costs of workers helping on site, but most importantly, to recover abandoned buildings physically; and finally, material resource to cover the needs for construction through sponsorships and to repair spatial excess with excess materials found in the vicinities of rural contexts.

Regarding the human resources, together with its 20 core members, HIM has reached a total number of 95 members since it was established (Interview, 23 February 2018). Disseminating Ölçek 1/1's former intentions to liberate from architectural scale on paper and together with an interest in participatory mechanisms, HIM achieved to pull in this large body who are majorly architecture students looking for an opportunity to practice an internship or to break free from the boundaries of a conventional education. In such a considerably large-scale non-profit entity, which keeps growing gradually yet functions on a voluntary basis, participation and transparency emerge to be important factors in proceeding with the projects:

> "Some members who used to engage actively in our projects are not active anymore. Sometimes there are those who show up after being non active for 3 years. There are also newcomers who join us after participating our workshops, who manage periodic works and then become members. There is not much of a model, it is all about taking responsibility. Some projects are more controversial. These inquires can be followed in the open mail group, where all the members are involved in. If the majority decides to take on the project, we are allocated to smaller e-mail groups with who are willing to contribute" (Interview, 23 February 2018).

Participation in this line, is also inherent in the internal structural organization. Whilst addressing responses to social issues on site, HIM also embodies a social model that points to a collective recovery by opening a transparent ground to its participants and members. This transparent ground is also visible during execution workshops; without dictation, participants can select the tasks they want to manage or to be involved in and devote as much time as possible.

Transparency also matters when seeking for financial and material resources. Similar to open calls for participation in the workshops, HIM also creates calls in order to include as many financial contributors as possible in the projects. Rather than receiving a bulk amount from a single source, HIM tries to make the source participatory as well:

> "Participation and transparency are two factors in our processes. As a proof of this transparency, many project processes are published online via booklets. In this way, instead of going to individual companies to seek for money one-by-one, we value the visibility in order to grow the project larger. We also keep our processes open and take the support of individuals and institutions" (Jeff Talks, Hayrettin Günç, 2013).

Within this overall picture, if fortunate, the state provides a lot less than half of what actually is needed. To close the gap in order to proceed, HIM devotes quiet a lot of time seeking for in kind supports, sponsorships and donations. Meanwhile the majority of financial and material supports come from construction and design industries to reconstruct the school roof, to pour in concrete, to fix the ceramic tiles, or to paint the façades as such, HIM addresses contributions from rural inhabitants to be more valuable (Interview, 23 February 2018). As minor as fixing the school gate with paying from their own pockets, preparing foods and drinks to workshop participants from their family budgets, or someone letting their empty home to accommodate participants rather than renting it out, financial resources supported from the rural siders are perhaps paid back more than in the form of a physical recovery. Enhancing place attachment and cultivating the rural identity, such instances remark the transformation of financial resources into a social capital, which takes longer to build than a physical one, yet sustains longer.

4.3.5. Debriefing the Architect

Set in various rural geographies, proceed within different social networks and together with diverse actors, the works realized under abandoned rural schools project are nevertheless entangled when looked into their operations and brief histories. This is why, rather than separating and dealing with the cases one-by-one, the section followed a comprehensive approach to address the constituents of interstitial recovery. Previous section tackled on the three major strategies that predominate the recovery of abandoned rural schools project, and the work of HIM: expedition, interaction, and resources, which altogether shape the social and physical efficacy of their projects. Yet, when rendered from the perspective of HIM's view on architecture as a profession, discipline and practice, what do such works happening in the cracks of the rural tell about their actors? And what role does architecture play in the further articulation of such spatial practices?

On one level, within activist architecture practices, there is already an interest in making use of spatial excess.[76] Emanating from diverse histories, geographies and contextual dynamics, such practices suggest an expansion in the role of architects (Kaminer, 2017, pp. 113-120). Among them, HIM does not necessarily introduce new methods of working or designing. Similarly, the idea of running an architecture collective, a focus on participation or social issues is not a peculiar territory. However, what is remarkable about HIM, is the manner in which amateur and professional split coalesce and come together in the body their works, by locating their projects between academic education, local know-how and professional practice respectively. Taking a place in-between, through opening a channel for incomer future architects, young graduates and insider communities to exchange knowledge while experimenting an in-situ rural recovery together, matters as much as detecting a breach to operate within, whilst confronting social and physical scarcities. Curiosity perhaps, is what upkeeps HIM's quest of learning, meanwhile unlearning the conventions of an architectural practice:

[76] For instance, "City in the Making" association is co-initiated by STEALTH.unlimited that deals with bringing vacant 'toxic' buildings into life in Rotterdam. The project responds to a dramatic vacancy that has occurred following the start of the 2008/2009 financial crisis. Moreover, "Cineroleum" is a project by Assemble that experiments the physical transformation of an empty petrol station into a cinema. The project was seen as a potential precursor in the wider re-use of the UK's 4,000 empty petrol stations. For further information, see the works of STEALTH.unlimited and Assemble. <stealth.ultd.net> and <assemblestudio.co.uk> accessed 10/05/19.

> "Although there is roughly a format in our projects, we are open to innovations in order not to limit ourselves. Even if we have hesitations at first, we give the opportunity. Sometimes even the expedition process is risky itself, and when we first go, the people from the village immediately perceive as we will do something. Even if we make clear that we have come to see, it is like giving hope. We are not so professional; we cannot pontificate. It is not that simple. Sometimes there is a negligence in our works out of our control, other times things do not proceed due to external dynamics and issues such as time and resource. In this sense, we are more amateurs than professionals, and that is due to our endless curiosity" (Interview, 23 February 2018).

Nevertheless, in order an endless curiosity not to kill the cat, unlearning in this vein also means to be ready to take on the responsibility and confront with cautiousness within a field of social unknowns from the viewpoint of an architect. In this line, as much as an amateur spirit can be constructive, it's destructive consequences should also be overcome at all costs. In the hope for recovering social issues through opening up an experimental channel of architecture in such a delicate field – that is exposed to entangled historical dynamics more than that of an abandoned education structure itself – any likely potential disruptions within an existing social setting should be well measured and acknowledged beforehand.

If in case the idea of a physical recovery of an abandoned structure – such as encounters in Çaka and Mesudiye villages – is repelled by the majority of the community (no matter how much they are lack of cohesive social bonds) or leads to an increase in abandoned land's exchange value by unearthing its location and potentials,[77] than a careful balance between the heteronomy (subjection of profession to external factors) and the autonomy (disciplinary skills) of the architect and its profession can be poised. In other words, as much as the amateur and professional split plays well off within HIM's internal organization and relations, it should be noted that experimenting an architecture outside its known agenda means to venture its autonomy in order to confront potential challenges.

In his article, HIM member Yelta Köm questions about whether if it is possible for "the profession of architecture, as a lifeguard, to problematize its own issues and to begin to speak" (2014, p. 2). A response to this question relies in the intertwined cases examined in this section, which are located in potential cracks outside legal motives and agendas of architecture. Yet, it is critical to relate architecture to be conceived as a "lifeguard" whilst talking about production of space at the interstices. Therefore, no

[77] Upon departing Çaka and meanwhile continuing on with the project off-site, HIM found out that several inhabitants reached to PDNE, in order to lease the abandoned structure located by the water and to open up the coast for tourism (Interview, 23 February 2018).

matter how much the collective intends to operate within the breaches, a critique regarding HIM's practices would be embracing an approach or adopting ways of communication that are highly intrinsic to the discipline of architecture.[78] However, figuring out disciplines own issues, particularly within a context overwhelmed with social issues, perhaps calls for an extrinsic perspective to collaborate with.[79] If the recovery at the interstices responding to social issues is sought to be conceived beyond its literal meaning – through which the cases demonstrated recovery not only to be in physical terms – expanding a discipline-specific approach remains essential.

Nonetheless, trying to embrace a social scientist's perspective, together with the tools of an architect, a gloss over such cases in the rural fosters the particularity of HIM's struggle with a social belief. It also discloses the organization's more apparent interests – in the retrofit of buildings; in everyday rural life; in the responsibility of architects to serve rather than to dictate the needs of rural inhabitants – along with concerns in geographical and economic circumstances. "It opens up a new gap, an interstice for people in the field of architecture, or people who want to deal with social issues" recalls Yelta Köm, "the association was founded for this reason" (Jeff Talks, 2013). With an ambition to revive spaces of an abandoned past, HIM also invigorates a space for architects to act in, by reversing the course of architecture as service provision. When viewed from such an interval, the organization acts without a mandate – or better, introduces its own mandates, by exploring the interstices and reaching their clients in the first place, meeting with potential users, pulling in financial and social capital, and finally, receiving permission from government bodies to pursue a change. For the last eight years, HIM continues to assume this responsibility, and interrogates "an alternative way to practice architecture" rather than acknowledging "an alternative to an architecture office" (Jeff Talks, 2013).

In other words, it might not be wrong to mention that HIM debriefs the role of the architect who is in conventional means conceived to be the service provider if only requested. It is not to reject the disciplinary knowledge, but to dismiss it and use it when needed (Özokcu & Gündoğdu, 2017). The collective embroils the confines of architecture

[78] The tools of architecture communication – such as 3D models, renders, sketches, technical drawings, remain to be the dominant outputs when analyzing HIM's body of works. This shows that, no matter how entangled the social dynamics are, design and construction aspects turn out to be essential motivations.

[79] One of HIM members, İbrahim Emre Gündoğdu, stated that founding member's wish to establish HIM together with people coming from different disciplines did not materialize eventually (Interview, 23 February 2018).

and that of the architect by opening up a territory which "allows for different identities to coexist and be choreographed" and "play out their differences" (Hirsch & Miessen, 2012, pp.158). Yet, it should be reminded that the existence of this territory depends on the territorial excess released by the state in the first place, in order to become vital and useful for others. Such excess only afterwards can turn into "a space based on collaboration rather than neoliberal modes of cooperation" (Hirsch & Miessen, 2012, pp.158). Nevertheless, the works examined in this section unveil that the future social content of the territorial excess still depends on the permission received by the state, under its supervision and perhaps even recovered together with the state – as observed in the case of Ovakent project.

Lastly, in the case of abandoned rural schools project, the works of HIM do not necessarily address all the dimensions of recovery at all times. Whereas recovery sometimes refers to get in touch with local dynamics in order to trigger more cohesive social bonds, or operations to undertake a physical reconstruction if possible, it nevertheless helps to re-establish the definitive boundaries of an architectural profession. As the collective suggests, the real challenge is to "ask questions rather than seeking for defined answers", and "triggering social matters rather than solving profound issues" (Jeff Talks, 2013).

4.4. Resilience in Pleading for The Non-Yet



Figure 4.8. Tenant earthquake victims sharing the legal basis of their struggles with the public (Source: Düzce Hope Homes Archives 2019)

A banner in the protest reads (Figure 4.8):

> "It is enough!
> We are not 'freeloaders.'
> We are not asking for anything without a 'return'.
> We are demanding our rights guaranteed in the constitution."

It was four years following the two devastating earthquakes in 1999, initially breaking out in the epicenter of Gölcük on August 17 and Düzce on November 12, claiming 18.000 lives, destroying beyond 100.000 homes and leaving over 140.000 people homeless[80]. Whilst the state driven post-disaster reconstruction allowed entitlement to property-owned survivors, tenant earthquake victims were left with nowhere upon the removal of the temporary prefabricated emergency shelters.

On September 2, 2003, 650 tenant victims from Düzce province reached to the capital of Turkey by walking 240 km, in order to confront politicians regarding their unreturned rights to healthy and adequate housing. Their inconclusive efforts resulted in a mass demonstration in Ankara, and eventually followed by settling at Abdi İpekçi Park lasting for 72 days. Emplacement in the park to be heard by the government was the first and a shorter attempt out of two and succeeded to be a conspicuous manifestation of the first tenants' movement in the country; a legal quest for 'right to housing' which persisted for 15 years. Düzce Solidarity Housing Cooperative for Homeless and Tenant Earthquake Victims[81] was established in the same year, as a result of tenant victims' housing problem not tackled by the state.

The section stems from this initiative's continual state of struggle, a contestation that occurs due to legal insecurity resulting in the lack of access to shelter as the basic amenity; and consecutively, emerges as a complex negotiation process for rights to acquire public land despite the juridical setbacks. Drawing on this socio-political ground, the section renders this pleading for the 'non-yet' from three aspects: first, as a yearned space which has been lagged in legal limbo and designated years after by the state; second, as a becoming of a collective body learning to practice solidarity and to encourage a strong sense of community meanwhile awaiting for a place to be conceived; and finally, as an undergoing spatial production envisioned together with the community by Düzce Hope Studio[82] – a collective who would have not been established unless such a solidarity

[80] Retrieved from Chamber of Mechnical Engineers, 2012.
[81] The name of the cooperative in Turkish reads as "Düzceli Evsiz Kiracı Depremzedeler Konut-Yapı Dayanışma Kooperatifi".
[82] The name of the initiative in Turkish reads as "Düzce Umut Atölyesi".

was built. Consequently, here, non-yet indicates a concurrently transpiring spatial narrative proceeding toward a compelling but a hopeful future, called Düzce Hope Homes[83]: a cooperative housing project focusing on post-disaster reconstruction, in which the content of this section is built upon.

In this section, I consider the social and political issues engendered by the "right to housing" as a background to Düzce Hope Homes project. Considering both the institutional challenges – through remaining within the system whilst fighting for constitutional rights and straining for ways other than conventional modes of inhabitation – through embracing a community driven process, the project superimposes tactics of survival within the system onto spatial practices. Altogether, I argue these two directions to be forming an interstitial resilience[84], investigating another right of ownership and housing production, contrary to an acceptance based on real estate market equations.

Focusing on the aforementioned facets, and under three subsections, the section opens up the previously discussed constituents of spatial production in this dissertation within the framework of Düzce Hope Homes project. The first subsection carries a casual reading. It overviews the contextual background by rendering how a reciprocal relation between the struggle for the non-yet space and the becoming of a resilient community is built, and how over time the community expanded into a growing network of solidarity with the subsequently conjoining bodies. The second subsection deals with how the right to space succeeds in the production of spatial practices. It looks into operations upon accessing the land, a desire for a collective spatial production that informs the formation and influences the actions of Düzce Hope Studio. The section questions on what ways the studio interconnects with the project, by reflecting on the disciplinary engagements, internal organization and the strategies of the studio. Finally, the section discloses with a consequential reading. It explores the current state of the project by focusing on the everyday life at the ongoing construction site. It reflects on how practices of solidarity bring about the communal spaces, shape its functions and spatial qualities.

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[83] The name of the project in Turkish reads as "Düzce Umut Evleri".

[84] The intention in this chapter is not to open up or apply the theory of resilience, but to adopt the concept as a condition and a consequence of such spatial practices. In contrast to the neoliberal framing of resilience – a conception that supports the status quo by putting forward the term as politically neutral – this chapter situates the term 'resilience' to discuss how communities in this particular case thrive in response to their struggles; and how under an uncertain long time frame, community mobilization and empowerment results in self-managed action series in producing space. For further detailed debates and theories on resilience, see the article "Co-producing commons-based resilience: lessons from R-Urban" (Petrescu, Petcou & Baibarac, 2016).

4.4.1. Dimensions of struggle through and for space

> "As you continue to seek for your rights, they are pulling you toward a dead end. And unless you receive your legal rights, you remain in there. What we have lost, we came to win in law; and the ignorance in the eyes of the state might have wounded but has also made us ambitious. This is called existing, co-existing side by side to receive a right: A dwelling, a space, a living space".
> – Sami Kılıç, Head of the Düzce Solidarity Housing Cooperative for Homeless and Tenant Earthquake Victims (Interview, 26 July 2019).

In 1999, with its 90% of buildings collapsed after the two earthquakes, Düzce turned into a rubble ground. This rubble ground was not only the evidence of how devastating a natural disaster can be, but at policy and planning level, it was also the representation of unhealthy housing production, bearing the consequences of rapid urbanization. The lack of emergency action plans and inadequacies of public institutions after the disaster has made it necessary for aids to be provided by civil society. The Association of Solidarity Volunteers[85] was among the many others founded following the disaster; and as of 2005, it continues to practice solidarity with tenant earthquake victims under the name One Hope Association.[86]

As a solution to the housing needs of thousands of homeless people, through the state and international aid organizations, tent cities and prefabricated emergency shelters were established, and rent aid was provided respectively. During the first three years, in terms of aids, the state did not distinguish the tenants and homeowners. However, it was until the completion of permanent housing reconstruction by the government, undertaken by public funds and international aid, that the state declared landholders to be the only rightful owners:

> "In order to erase the traces of this earthquake, the state annulled the prefabricated shelters by issuing a circular. But where is the tenant going to live? After the earthquakes, the buildings collapsed. How are we supposed to live in those remaining damaged buildings? On the one hand the state is pinching, on the other hand, people started to plaster the cracks and roll up the damaged structures, expecting us tenants to be renting those flats" (Interview, 26 July 2019).

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85 The name of the initiative in Turkish reads as "Dayanışma Gönüllüleri Derneği".

86 The name of the initiative in Turkish translates as "Bir Umut Derneği". Although the association originated from the 1999 earthquake with its search and rescue operations, it established soon to be a platform working across diverse contexts, scales and fields – such as seeking for inhabitant rights in informal neighborhoods exposed to urban transformation, collective housing models for the low-income, and workers' rights – in pursuit of legal processes against social injustice and inequality in urban space. Since its establishment, the association works in close relation with the Düzce Solidarity Housing Cooperative for Homeless and Tenant Earthquake Victims, seeking together for other models of capital accumulation in enabling spatial transformation.

Entrapped between the state politics producing housing formulations in favor of home owners and on the verge of falling into homelessness by refusing to live in damaged buildings, tenant victims started to legally self-organize by founding Düzce Earthquake Victims Association.[87] Calling out for a rallying cry, by organizing countless petition drives and campaigns, their motives to access a healthy space to dwell in appeared initially at ephemeral spaces – across various prefabricated settlements soon to be removed. These were the initial signs of a struggle for the right to housing, and in Lefebvrian (1967, p. 158) terms, it was "a cry and a demand" to counter the market-dominated governance, socio-spatial exclusion and displacement.

Whilst having no property ownership and being on low-income status excluded tenant victims from the benefits of accessing to the state's housing rights available only to property owners, it also paved way to unearth another right that is available but buried in the constitution. With the judicial advocacy of One Hope Association, tenant victims started to seek for their rights to receive subsidized loans and serviced land from the government in accordance with the laws numbered 56, 57 and 775[88]:

> "If it says in the constitution that in order to prevent citizens from building shanty towns, the state forms planned lands and infrastructure, and offers it to citizens in affordable equally distributed installments, we said we could actually get that right!" (Düzce Hope Homes Archives, 2019)

Establishing a housing cooperative was the only rightful way to access this demand. In 2003, Düzce Earthquake Victims Association, with 3180 partners, extended into Düzce Solidarity Housing Cooperative for Homeless and Tenant Earthquake Victims. As a result of a series of official requests undertaken by the Düzce Earthquake Victims Association[89], in 2005, the state initially allocated six plots of land to meet the housing needs of low-income citizens, which were to be used for the construction of 850 dwellings. However, this allocation was rejected by tenant victims, since it was found to be unfair and that it did not meet the demands of the cooperative.

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87 Düzce Depremzedeler Derneği – DEPDER.

88 Laws numbered 56 and 57 are cited respectively:
"…everyone has the right to live in a healthy and balanced environment"; "The state meets the housing needs within the framework of planning that takes into consideration the characteristics of the cities and environmental conditions; and also supports the collective housing enterprises."
The act numbered 775 on the other hand, declares that the state authorized Mass Housing Administration is supposed to allocate lands and resources to low-income inhabitants to prevent the tendency to create informal settlements.

89 Legally, a non-profit organization may carry out the struggle for the search of rights and/or organize rallies. However, a building cooperative cannot carry the search for legal rights. Therefore, Düzce Earthquake Victims Association carried out the judicial processes on behalf of the cooperative.

Following the rejection and through opening up a new lawsuit that continued for 6 years, in 2012, Mass Housing Administration finally allocated a new piece of land in Beyköy District of Düzce. Although the cooperative was officially assigned the land, development of urban plan for the area by the Mass Housing Authority, approval by the Düzce Municipality and finally by the Directorate of Land Registry took 2 more years to access the land physically. As a legal requirement, the land was transferred conditionally; land payment was scheduled to be paid in ten instalments by the tenant victims, and the groundwork was required to be completed in two years.

As a result, from 1999 until 2014, the official negotiation process with the state lasted for 15 years. During that interval, it took many lawsuits opened up, stating tenants' demands in diverse ways situated in the constitution; several mass demonstrations across the earthquake effected zones; and finally, two public space occupations in the capital lasting for 72 and 142 days respectively, resulting with detentions in each emplacement.

An overview of this recent history of struggle can be interpreted in three points. Firstly, it suggests that claiming right to space in a post-disastrous context of concern is hardly a solely spatial matter; instead, here, space becomes "a partial cause and aggravation" having its "origins lie in economic, social, political arenas" (Marcuse, 2009, p. 195). Consequently, to address the constituents of spatial production in this section – whether it is at a known or a non-yet known territory – also means to formerly acknowledge these entanglements, conflicts and contestations over a historical duration. It is only after making connections between these dynamics that the spatial aspects – the emergence and the becoming of interstices – can be revealed clearly. What appears from a casual reading in this particular case is that the spatial focus is neither self-contained nor the only constraint in accessing spatial situations.

Secondly, presenting a conflictual involvement that is played out between the tenant victims and the state for years, the story underlines who legally has – but has likewise precluded from – the right to access healthy and affordable housing. At the backdrop of this quest, there lies a struggle against an invisible process of displacement. David Harvey suggests this displacement to be an "accumulation by dispossession",[90]

[90] Harvey calls the term to draw the relation between urban development and gentrification under global capitalism. Although the term is developed to portray the conditions of informal settlements, which is different than a post-disastrous context of concern, it carries resemblances in terms of displacement of urban poor contrary to how it is stated by laws. Whereas in informal settlements, there is an illegally occupied land which often has deemed to be taken from the low-income, in this particular case, there is the land which has been put off to be given to the low-income, invisibly enforcing them to occupy

which results in numerous conflicts over the capture of public land from low-income populations to form a habitat (2008, p.34). In this sense, the case does not only represent a counter image to that of capital absorption through urban development played over the collapsed lands having faced a natural disaster, but also demonstrates how claiming a space in a rightful way can invert the destructive impetus of state policies and exclusionary dynamics of increasing social segregation.


Evlerini deprem yıktı çadırlarını hükümet!

AKP'nin zulmü

Yetkililerin, günlerdir Ankara'da taleplerini duyurmak için bekleyen depremzedelere duyarsızlığı, zulme dönüştü.Çadırları ile battaniyeleri polisler tarafından zorla alınan Düzceli depremzedeler, geceyi soğukta açık havada geçirdi. Çevreden yardım için getirilen battaniyeler de alınmak istendi.

Bu nasıl açıklama?

Çadırların sökülmesi sırasında polisin, Büyükşehir Belediyesi'ni gerekçe göstermesine rağmen, belediyenin böyle bir emir vermediği ortaya çıktı. AKP'li Bülent Gedikli, depremzedelere "O sizin sorunuz" yanıtını vererek, AKP'nin tavrını gösterdi.

sayfa 4

Figure 4.9. "Earthquake destroyed their houses; government destroyed their tents!" Police intervention to tenants' make-shift structures during their emplacement at Abdi İpekçi Park (Source: Evrensel 17 September 2003).

Finally, contributing to a public visibility (Figure 4.9), mass demonstrations in earthquake effected zones and two long emplacements at Abdi İpekçi park in the capital manifest that the struggle for space is not only a simple series of acts taken place through

informally. As a result, it might not be wrong to mention that this particular story of struggle follows a series of lawful acts – as it is also clearly stated in the law no. 775 – with the claim against the formation of slum settlements.

lawsuits, but also embraces spatializing actions in the wake of claiming the right to space. According to Alain Badiou, these actions are political events, counting on the fact that their material is collective, and that they attribute to a collective multiplicity (2005, p.142). On this account, a struggle for space develops into a struggle through the occupation of public space (other than what is claimed), transforming this ground into a field of resilience by creating a collective civic embodiment:

> "Everybody was so determined to stay there, because we did not have any other option. The situation was so that we were going to be kicked out of the prefabricated houses and left to live on the street. The next day was November 12th, and it made it big on the news that they detained earthquake victims on the anniversary of the earthquake" (Düzce Hope Homes Archives 2019).

In Chantal Mouffe's terms, agonistic approach appears to be at the center of this building resilience, which emanates due to a fomenting dissensus with the state mechanisms, against what the dominant consensus tends to obscure and obliterate. Whilst the struggle unveils all that is repressed by the dominant consensus, agonistic approach gives "a voice to all those who are silenced within the framework of the existing hegemony" (2007, p. 12). In this line, dissensus with the state resulting in emplacements in public sphere (along with the lawsuits) contributes to turning an invisible repression by the government into a visible one, as well as enables the coexistence of the community, enhances solidarity and strengthens the prospects of future socialization. With the demand for space – and through the civic effects of occupation, agonistic struggle brings about a growing self-organized network of solidarity that co-produces[91] resilience over time, which has been latent yet awakened by virtue of the earthquake.

4.4.2. A Maneuver Within State Mechanisms: Principal Actors and Conjoining Bodies

In this particular case, through the growing network of solidarity, empowerment aspect of resilience processes appears to be two folds. Firstly, resilience is built internally – within the organizational structure of the Düzce Solidarity Housing Cooperative for Homeless and Tenant Earthquake Victims, carrying the legal quest together with its

[91] Co-production here implies 'the process through which inputs used to produce a good or service are contributed by individuals who are not "in" the same organization' (Ostrom, 1996, p. 1073). The term plays an important role in building resilience in terms of putting forward the importance of collective operations.

sibling partner Earthquake Victims Association. However, since 2003, meanwhile the solidarity grew stronger, the total number of partners in the cooperative contracted from thousands into 234 respectively:

> "Wouldn't hopes ever die? Only 80 cooperative partners are left from the early days of the struggle. The rest are newcomers. The process was also prolonged. If we have told before that this path was so long, that it would have taken 18 years, who would have entered this path? Even if it is known, even if it is believed that it will be taken, this road would not be walked for 18 years" (Interview, 26 July 2019).

Whilst the unknown timeline and the nature of the struggle both inspirits and disheartens hopes, on the other side, the unlikely structure of the cooperative has consequences over the lessening number of its partners. Despite the cooperative is an institutionally recognized body, its membership criteria differ exceptionally than what is expected from a conventional housing cooperative model. In order to become a partner, a number of conditions are expected to be ensured: not to own a property; to have a low-income status; to live in Düzce; to work one day a week per household at the construction site; to participate in the design and at the managements of the project; and finally, to be living in Düzce during the 1999 earthquake (Düzce Hope Homes Archives 2019). As the membership criteria suggest, the formation of the cooperative was not only to legally access the land, but also to structure the terms on how to design and realize a social housing model collectively.[92] Having sustainable aspirations and relying on financial self-sufficiency, the distinctive nature of the cooperative offers a dedication to an experimental model described in the following:

> "We talked about the cooperative process for one year. What are we working for? About building a home for the homeless. We are not paid for what we are working for. This is a work of desires, and we are volunteers. Our goal is to present an exemplary livable environment; despite many delays, the struggle for the search for rights has not been given up at any stage. We will experience whether this model can be applied one-to-one or can be executed like semi-amateur and semi-professional potpourri" (Interview, 26 July 2019).

On one hand, considering its legal grounds, this internal network of solidarity is not an absolute break from the existing state affairs. Institutionally, it is a reminiscence of housing cooperatives which have been widespread in Turkey's recent past. Housing cooperatives existed since 1930's, however, they are short lived bodies and are meant to

[92] The relationship between the membership criteria and its implications on the social housing model will be elaborated in the following sections.

disintegrate upon the completion of housing construction. The individualization of cooperatives and their for-profit objectives put further stress on their reputation across the country. Providing an overall perspective, the United Nations report[93] underlines this perception clearly; stating that "...the word 'cooperative' implied a specific political attitude and recalled stories of fraud and corruption, particularly when associated with housing cooperatives."

In addition to these aspects, from 90's and onwards, due to external factors – such as the reduced financial support by the state, financial crises, and increase in the land value – housing cooperatives experienced operational deficits and their numbers declined incrementally (Düzce Hope Homes Archives 2019). With respect to this entangled past and given today's circumstances – amidst capital absorption under a post-disastrous context and a structurally corrupted image, Düzce housing cooperative does not only challenge a resurgence of a different cooperative model in producing housing formulations for the marginalized low-income, but also tries to "restore the lost reputation of housing cooperatives" (Interview, 26 July 2019).

On the other hand, recognizing the institutional nature of housing cooperatives, yet maneuvering their objectives, tenant victims were conscious about their strategies following the struggle to access state's land. Nevertheless, what the cooperative envisioned as a housing production model is not totally new. Solidarity Houses[94] project, which was completed in 2002 across the three villages connected to Düzce, offered both an inspirational and an experimental model in terms achieving a collective construction in practice. Adopting use value over commercial or exchange value of properties, and presenting a low-cost livable housing production, the project allowed post-disaster reconstruction alternative other than state led public housing programs or the private construction industry approaches (Demirel, 2005, p. 33-56). What remains critical in this model is the effective participation of its users in the construction process; both to reduce the costs of construction, and to ensure the reliability of the structure and the safety of the

[93] The United Nation's Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2013 Report.

[94] Although Solidarity Houses project can be considered as an inspirational scheme in realizing Düzce Hope Homes, it differs in terms of its scale, financial resources, location on privately-owned lands, and participatory design methodology. The project comprises the building of 57 houses across Hacı Süleymanbey, Aksu and Çay villages that are located in the province of Gölyaka, Düzce. Supported financially by Gelderland Aid for Turkey Organization in Netherlands, the project model was sketched out and supervised by Association of Solidarity Volunteers. Erbay Yucak, who was the legal representative of the association that time, was among the main figures in generating this model. Today, assigned as the cooperative director, Yucak continues to implement the improved version of this model in Düzce Hope Homes project (Interview with Yucak, 26 July 2019).

product. In this sense, participation, which is a crucial factor in anticipating a social model in Düzce Hope Homes today, is in fact built on an augmented version of Solidarity Houses experience; in order to liberate from state mechanisms following the access to land and alter this hegemony with further internal operations.

Secondly, in addition to learning from Solidarity Houses and maneuvering cooperative's organizational structure respectively, a prolonged struggle for housing suggests wider networks of support. In both accessing, envisioning, and realizing a space in a collective manner, these support networks are crucial to maintain the strength, desires, and the achievement of the community. Becoming an external companion since the early days of the struggle, One Hope Association has played an indirect role in contributing to the formation of collectivity, hence mobilization of a community of tenant victims by acknowledging their legal rights. As the cooperative partner Sıddıka Özbakır mentions:

> "We did not achieve this on our own. It would be appropriate to say that we were able to stand high through the solidarity of the volunteers, lawyers, psychologists of One Hope Association throughout the whole process" (Düzce Hope Homes Archive, 2019).

The successful advocacy of One Hope Association, which was predominant in ensuring the struggle to space in a rightful way all through the 15 years, consecutively cultivated the demand for a design supervision upon the access to land. In 2014, although the cooperative could have assigned the Mass Housing Authority (MHA) for the design and construction phases of the project[95], it instead made a request to One Hope Association for the design of their settlement over the master plan. The marginalized political position and being on low-income status underlined the main reasons behind this unusual request. Due to having experienced two earthquakes, the distrust against MHA as a forceful state body, along with its disreputable profile in producing fast but unhealthy and poor-quality housing projects abstained the cooperative from this choice. Moreover,

[95] Following the '99 earthquakes, a similar struggle for rights to access space was carried by another housing cooperative based in the city of Izmit. Due to having taken place under different social dynamics, 85% of the cooperative partners in Izmit voted for MHA to undertake the design and construction of their housing settlement, which contained 716 flats. As of 2011, the partners created their own housing management structure at the housing compound they started to live in and took over the management from MHA. This was observed for the first time within the practices of MHA (Interview with Yucak, 26 July 2019). This instance demonstrates that the socio-political dynamics, the scale of housing, and the solidarity among cooperative partners are important determinants having effects on the further stages of a collective management.

the revised membership criteria of the cooperative which acknowledged a full presence of its partners in the design and the production processes, was to reduce both the construction and labor costs as well as to ascertain the production of affordable and healthy housing (Interview, 26 July 2019). These reasons assert that a lengthy struggle for the right to space perseveres upon the access to land, and that its amplifying effects further influence the attitudes of the cooperative in challenging another way of spatial production against the state-led capital growth in space.

The cooperative's receptiveness to interact with fluid networks of support, solidarity and collaboration contributed and encouraged the construction of a new subjectivity. As a consequence of the design supervision request by the cooperative, One Hope Association made an open call among its network of professionals to take part in the collective work for the design and realization of the project. As a member of the association states:

> "There was an unfamiliar demand from the users regarding shaping their environment. Architects knew how to design, and planners knew how to plan. However, none of us knew how to respond to this request. As planners or designers, for months we discussed amongst ourselves how to cover the users' demand. We desired our response would be worth of this request" (Deniz Öztürk; in Başak, 2016, p. 89).

What was found to be bewildering from the professionals' end, was indeed a clearly indicated design demand, which was expected to be led by a participatory approach from the cooperative's end. In this sense, the unexpected demand marked an earlier confrontation within and among the different professions' specificity, questioning and challenging the limits of their own professional positions and capacities. In the meantime, along with the ongoing internal discussions within One Hope Association on how to manage the spatial operations collectively, the association reached out a group of professionals, academicians and students from the disciplines of architecture, city planning, civil engineering, communication, sociology and law. In this respect, in early 2015, replies to the open call pioneered in looming a further collective called Düzce Hope Studio; formed by a volunteer team of amateur and professional spatial practitioners, and established within the body of One of Association.

Conjoining the post-struggle development with subsequent design services, the formation and the practices of Düzce Hope Studio offers a reciprocal analysis of how the collective's agency influences in actualizing spatial forms of solidarity, and how in turn, the community of tenant victims imbue a common ground among the volunteers who are

not only unknown to each other but are also coming from different professional backgrounds. In other words, among the community and the collective, a mutual network (per)forms over a simultaneous encounter series; of acquiring and acknowledging, of unlearning and reflecting, and of sharing and contributing professional knowledge and lay experience to envision a space. The following section will articulate these interactions by scrutinizing the motivations and the operations of Düzce Hope Studio, which I argue to be a fleeting plug-in body and a synthesis of diverse disciplinary skills lurking in the interstices of pre-defined professional positions, bringing together a group of enthusiastic post-struggle enablers.

In overall, a long read of the preceding socio-political context and the consequent formation of diverse subjectivities acknowledge how space is contested in the first place, and how political dimensions of space disintegrate its communities as a result of fragmenting state-led approaches. Hence, reactions and operations against this social and spatial marginalization, which build the content and the flow of this section respectively, confirm that carving in the interstices of capitalism is conceivable upon successful maneuvers within state mechanisms. In this manner, the case represents a peculiar and a reverse experiment unlike its counterparts claiming right to space; in which a lengthy struggle for the non-yet space formerly succeeds in the formation of a resilient community who subsequently leads to the construction of an interstitial space. If according to Lefebvre (1991), space is not a neutral container but a social construct, then the emergence and the becoming of spatial interstice in this case, in fact turns into an evidence ground of resilience upon which the excluded social beings solidify. As a result, an overview of this section delivers the interactions and frictions between the overlapping dimensions, hence the becoming of the non-yet(s); space, subjects and operations, which altogether unveil the fact that they are intertwined tiers that cannot be isolated from one another.

Based on the observations of conflictual positions and dissensus among the state and marginalized tenant victim communities, ‘agonism’ appears to be constructive and that can yield to spatial justice on resilient grounds. Resilience, which is co-produced among communities by cause of a spatial concern and hence an aspiration for the non-yet space, then embarks further actors and produces accompanying practices of resilience. In this line, whereas the preceding section revealed *how* resilience is co-produced in an interstitial manner, the following section examines *what* this built resilience co-produces spatially.

4.4.3. Resilience in Practice

In the wake of a lengthy struggle for space in which the community of tenant victims were situated in a difficult position and challenged many times by the state, campaigning, mass demonstrations and government lobbying bolstered in achieving the access to land. Resilience in practice, which I refer to open the ensuing operations of spatialization in this section, is in fact the reverberations emanating from these prior processes. Unlike the former's expanding course flow hence an uncertain time interval, the latter operations were marked by a deadline as a legal requirement. The groundwork of the buildings had to be finalized in October 2016, following the two years of the cooperative's first instalment payment for the land (Interview, 26 July 2019). In other words, conditionally accredited land reveals that no matter the private ownership status on paper, the disbelief and the discouragement by the state required the land to be under a continuous surveillance.

Acknowledging the pressure from the state, thus the limited time frame for the design, what is the agency of Düzce Hope Studio, in the face of a prudent community who is both the client and the user, and who precisely calls for participatory objectives on how to design and realize a social housing model? What is the motivation of the actors in the studio who are willing to volunteer their time and contribute their disciplinary knowledge? And finally, given the open format of the studio, how does the implementation of such a participatory program affect the studio's internal participatory affairs?

To begin with, having such a compelling agenda, adopting a participatory approach aggravates the critical position of Düzce Hope Studio. Participation – recognizing its ranging interpretations with diverse political views and the scale of interventions – is commonly taken as "a catalyst for transformation of the role (and eventual lives) of users", situating them from passive consumers into active doers in architectural production (Blundell Jones, Petrescu & Till, 2005, p. xiv). However, in view of an already actively engaged community, I contend that transformation in this project is not from the users' end but from the subjects of the studio. Switching from serving for a capital centered production into facilitating a human-centered one, in other words, from a pacified position in the service of power into a progressive role, Düzce Hope Studio becomes an intermediary body translating the spatial demands of a community by

reflecting and relocating diverse professional knowledge on ground. Therefore, rather than accepting the term uncritically or confining within design methodologies per se, participation is projected in a reverse manner at a wider aspect, at where users engage the studio members in the design process to administer another spatial practice, influencing the direction of a housing production as well as suggesting a transformation of architectural practice.

It comes no surprise that participation is embraced and consolidated in the long fight for the right to space. It is emerged from a frictional and potentially dissensual stage towards attaining a common goal, aspiring for a democratic process vocalizing repressed tenant victims; emanating from their empowerment and expanding with solidarity, which is expected further by the future inhabitants to be performed as a design pillar for a social housing model. Therefore, participation has already been exercised among the cooperative partners, which then is directed for design purposes as a response to the confines of the architectural establishment. In this respect, the involvement of the studio is an indication to support a collective establishment that is not inherent in conventional architectural practices, in which a tone against normative modes is stated by the members clearly (Düzce Hope Studio Archives 2019):

> "In a period when we are tired of grappling with concrete examples that architecture is a means of feeding and pointing to the power of the state; I think that in spite of all the restrictions, another world is possible, and that we can practice our profession by responding to the desires of the neighborhoods, not the power in that other world. The best of all is to see the rising of the walls in the neighborhood that will be built with the power of solidarity which further will increase hope" (Derya Karadağ, Architect).
>
> "In the geographies where despair prevails, trying to pursue a piece of hope, trying to build it, is to destroy the wistfulness in the geography" (Ceyhan Çılğın, City Planner)
>
> "Nowadays, when those other roads are obstructed by the ambitions of economic growth, Düzce has managed to become a crack where hope can infiltrate" (Deniz Öztürk, City Planner).

As much as the motivations within the studio render critical, optimistic and projective outlooks on the future, they also concede a polemic position, a political interest in and engagement with a contextualized and vocalized interstice foreign to their professional formation. In this sense, the plug-in status of the studio becomes an opportunity to embroil in a state "colonizing the margins left open by generic spatial development" (Miessen, 2016, p. 31), thus offers a crack for its members to contribute in order to wash away the glitches of market impulses. However, given the progressive tendencies of spatial practitioners within the studio, it is questionable whether if their

contact with the complex narratives of the political within the spatial processes strengthen or dwindle their professional positions.

Participation in this manner, also appears to be a condition that influences the internal dynamics and the collaborative framework of the studio. Gathering together volunteers who are not only limited to design professions, the formation of the studio offers its subjects an opportunity to actively engage and participate in the neighboring fields of knowledge; and presents a potential dissolution of disciplinary boundaries, hence a reworking on the pre-defined professional roles:

> "Düzce project…is an opportunity that I hope will make me forget my architecture. The opportunity to enter into a utopia; to design and implement a real living space where the users are known and have a say" (Hande Akarca, Architect).
>
> "When we started to shed our professional egos, and stereotypical ideas defining what an architect, engineer, urban planner can and cannot do, we noticed that we can be very productive" (Faruk Büyükyoran, Civil Engineer).
>
> "This is an interesting experience for all of us actually. Actually, an architect is not used to working together with an engineer or a planner since the beginning of a project" (Yaşar Adanalı, Urban Sociologist).
>
> "We are coming from different backgrounds, architects, engineers, urban planners, sociologists, landscape architects, psychologists. There are plenty of people from different perspectives and we made it a principle to make decisions together about every single subject" (Çiğdem Furtuna, Architect).

Whereas the consistent dialogical affair among the subjects in the studio offers a liberation from the particularities of professional positions, hence certain specializations' subjection to mental barriers, it also opens up a mutual channel to unlearn and reflect, and to share and contribute reciprocally. In this sense, against the "ideologically dominant tendency [that] divides space up into parts and parcels in accordance with the social division of labor" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 90), participation surpasses the existing design protocols, averts an alienation to entire design processes, and becomes a professionally (and non-professionally) unified route in producing spaces of solidarity.

Nevertheless, participatory engagement does not always deliver a consensus within the internal dynamics of the studio, but also dissensus emerges once in a while when trying to overcome the challenges of a collective decision regarding the terms of how to conduct the process:

> "Regarding my personal assessment, it was more difficult to obtain participation among professional experts than with the community in Düzce. It was probably a very instructive process for all of us. We had a lot of discussion, so much that at some point we had to remind ourselves

> the blocking measures of this much discussion. For some of us, the process was important, yet the others said it is the result which matters more. We said that we will do participatory design, so we had to fulfill this worthy. There was a part of us that said we should not make concessions by surrendering to time and similar restrictions. These positions were constantly transforming, and sometimes I was in this position, sometimes turning and becoming an architectural identity and saying that 'we have to rush the project, we have a very little time, we need to train the project license'" (Özgül Kırlangıç, Architect; Kırlangıç, 2016).

Adopting an anti-hierarchical process within the internal affairs of the studio has its effects over the interchanging and fluent roles members embrace. It is particularly a demanding practice for the volunteers coming from design fields; where everyone has a different perspective on participation and design, and where the design itself is known to be the product of the designer in a conventional model.[96] It takes a lot of effort to reconcile, hence dedicate to create a participatory process and turn design into a collective product. Consequently, building a common sense whilst formulating such an experimental model is subjected to be a continuous disputable ground; among the studio members to formulate a collective decision-making mechanism, and between the studio volunteers and cooperative partners to provide an effective participation.

So far, building on this particular project, I have initially attempted to articulate participation and its relevance within the practices of resilience, where the notion participation moves beyond a design process but rather embodies a transformative model alternative to conventional spatial practices. The demand for such a process from the community of tenant victims reveals the significance, hence its relevance to a lengthy struggle for space. As Merve Bedir, one of the Düzce Hope Studio members puts into words, the process is a result of "the destruction" and "the transformation of the common past", which consequently "breeds into a collective mind" (Düzce Hope Studio Archives 2019). This collective mind, which calls for a participatory process, in fact implies a horizontal power structure in pleading for a spatial production, and a genuine participation "that runs parallel to that of democracy" (Till, 2005, p. 20). The request from the community, which leads to the formation and informs the operations of Düzce Hope Studio, opens up a new gap; offering a transcendence of disciplinary boundaries in spatializing resilience. The former practices of building resilience through building a resilient community, thereupon "influences existing disciplines as well as produces a new

[96] Having a background in city planning, this claim is the reflection of a personal view belongs to Hazal Gümüş, who has participated in the practices of Düzce Hope Studio (Gümüş, 2017, p. 81). In her Master thesis, Gümüş has mentioned the difficulties in overcoming professional boundaries based on her experiences in the studio.

body of recognizable work"[97] (Miessen, 2016, p. 45). In this respect, Düzce Hope Studio, whose agency is tied up to the cooperative's agency in the first place, becomes a fleeting body whose members are assembled specific to the project thanks to the strong community bonds. Nonetheless, recognizing these entanglements, the interstitial agency of Düzce Hope Studio presents an opportunity other than "the architecture's traditional focus on the look and making of buildings" (Awan, Schneider, & Till, 2011), and plunges into a field that brings architects and non-architects together under a series of operations.

4.4.4. Simulating Tools: Design Games and Campaign

Aforementioned aspects which informed the formation and introduced the organizational structure of Düzce Hope Studio, has also had effects over the flow of a series of operations. Thus, the process, which has been designated and conducted by the studio volunteers, was in fact the result of a solidarity built within the community:

> "If this was a community not so used to practicing solidarity, I wonder if we could conduct this kind of participative process. I think this is a question that needs to be considered" (Faruk Büyükyoran, Civil Engineer Düzce Hope Studio Volunteer).

In other words, whilst the organization around solidarity brings participatory design opportunities, on the other hand, the formation of collective decision mechanisms transforms solidarity into a relational model. Participation in practice, which then points to a mutual design process between the community and the studio members, offers another route in delivering a housing model that locates use value at its core; contrary to a commonplace housing production at where the exchange value remains in the forefront, resulting with the withdrawal of its users from the processes. This alternative course, which has been marked with the catchphrase "Struggle Together, Design Together, Build Together"[98] by the studio volunteers, defined the studio's bounded position amidst the three phases, as well as projected its explicit affiliation with the design stage – with a partial association in the building round. Yet, in this togetherness, in other words a

[97] In his book, "Crossbenching: Toward Participation as a Critical Spatial Practice", Markus Miessen defends an a-disciplinary approach and argues for a new profession to unite and frame critical spatial practices (Miessen, 2016).

[98] This slogan was embraced under the campaign organized by Düzce Hope Studio, in order to facilitate a crowd sourcing model for the construction process of the project.

coexistence for space, how does the agency of Düzce Hope Studio prompt the design and building phases?

Initiated in early 2015 and lasted around seven months over a series of meetings held in Düzce, the studio had the opportunity to design and run a series of simulating actions. Simultaneous to the meeting with the community, these actions were initially devised and tested internally, among the studio volunteers over its in-house weekly gatherings in Istanbul at Mimar Sinan University – which has been the studio's institutional and financial supporting body. These design steps are indicated in detail at the online blog of the studio[99], which reveals a chronological order since the formation of the collective and works both as a design journal and an agenda unravelling programmatic elements to the wider public. On this account, the transparency and the clear demarcation of the design steps over the online platform points to two things. Firstly, at a broader glance, the process is envisioned not only to be specific to Düzce Hope Homes project, but as a representative and an experimental model disclosing the details and the consequences of the struggle for housing; displaying an exemplary route to similar occurrences that concerns the rest of the housing production for the low-income in the country (Düzce Hope Studio Archives 2019). Secondly, at a closer peek, it indicates the studio's continuously expanding and contracting scale which contains between 50 to 85 volunteers, and which is overcrowded with respect to a team that will handle a similar scale project on the market (Öztürk, 2015). Therefore, the online interface becomes a facilitating medium for the new joining volunteers along the way, as well as the irregular participants who can be informed through and adapt themselves to the process easily. Consequently, having such an elusive team structure leads to the necessity of a virtual platform to connect, communicate, discuss, and inform about the proceeding steps.

Prior to epitomizing these steps, hence articulating on why I argue the design operations to be a series of simulating actions, a brief description of the contextual factors and the planning restrictions remain important. Regarding the former, the land, which is allocated by the MHA, is situated in Beyköy district, at the outskirts of Düzce (Figure 4.10). Served by the transportation infrastructure, the project site comprises a cluster of three parcels that are located in between a glass manufacturing plant and MHA mass housing blocks; in a locality that is defined as the new urban development area and an

[99] The website of Düzce Hope Studio can be reached from <https://duzceumutatolyesi.wordpress.com> accessed 01/06/2019. The following pages will unravel operations extracted mainly from this blog.

informal housing prevention zone.[100] The latter required a revision in planning decisions, since the existing zoning plans for the parcels did not commensurate with the number of partners in the cooperative. The modifications in the plan were made in accordance with the zoning plan of MHA houses located next to the project site. With this new amendment, it became possible to produce sufficient housing for 389 cooperative partners, with the maximum allowance of 4 floors. According to the master plan, social infrastructure was expected to be included besides the residential blocks, however, commercial activities were not allowed to be built on the site. In short, besides the state's restrictive upper scale planning measures, the scale of the land – and the number of housing units expected to be fit in –revealed a further challenge in terms of conducting a ground up approach together with a populous community; in which such a large scale is rarely observed in participatory design processes, along with the unlikely scale of the studio. Recognizing these limits, and under the further constraints of budget accounts, legal confines, floor numbers, and square meters, how can an agreement be made on a housing settlement that takes the visions of future residents and the views of the studio members into account?

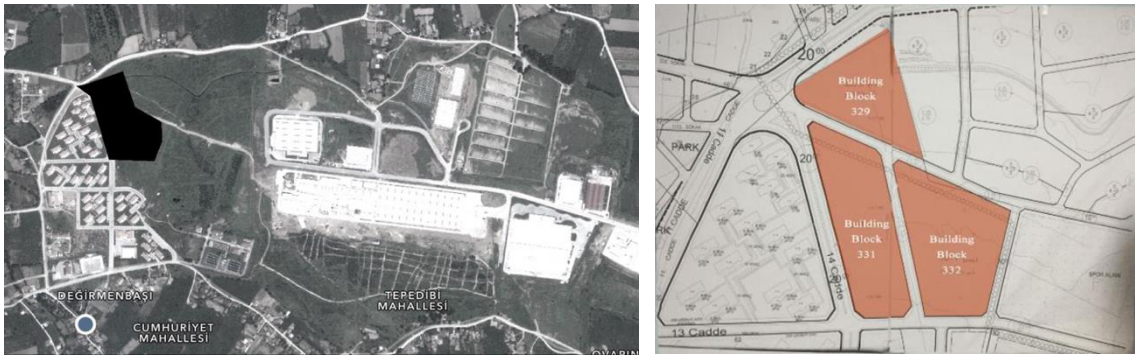


Figure 4.10. Cooperative land (marked in black) is located west to the Düzce Glass Factory and east to the MHA housing settlement (Source: Düzce Hope Studio Archives 2019).

Acknowledging these circumstances, hence the physical and social constraints, designing the process lasted longer than the actual design of the housing settlement. In order both to ensure an effective management of the process and a productive

[100] The declaration of the land within the scope of the informal settlements law number 775 is the success of the tenant victims' long legal struggle.

administration among its large number of volunteers, Düzce Hope Studio organized itself internally around a number of groups with a particular focus on different themes: (1) modelling, to translate the emerging alternatives onto a digital medium; (2) participatory design, to analyze and interpret the findings; (3) design working, to translate the layout schemes by putting their perspectives on the received findings; (4) ecology, to develop alternatives to economic and ecological measures in residential and communal areas; (5) financial, assessing the costs of each alternatives; and finally, (6) communication and grant, to seek for material and machinery support at the construction phase (Düzce Hope Studio Archives 2019). In line with these working groups and following several Saturday internal meetings together with the volunteers in Istanbul, Düzce Hope Studio initially generated a design game that is composed of two rounds. Before it was presented to the public, the format and the rules of the game were discussed and simulated among the volunteers (Figure 4.11). On February 8 and March 15, 2015, two separate games were held with the community in Düzce, at the Municipality's wedding hall. In this respect, with the permission of the Düzce Municipality, the wedding hall attributes a further meaning to its public function; as a space encapsulating celebration turns into a space celebrating the practices of a new collaboration between the studio and the cooperative partners.

During the first phase, 189 rights holders (in total 250, including their families) and nearly 50 studio volunteers participated; in the second round 140 rights holders and the same number of volunteers joined. Whereas the objectives of the first game[101] was to acquire information regarding the configuration of building masses, common areas, and the master plan respectively, the latter102 aimed for the interior design solutions of the

[101] The first game comprised 10 participatory sessions in small groups of 25 people, each lasting 10 minutes. Three building types with floor areas of 50 m2, 80 m2 and 110 m2, and common areas (representing playground, garden, sport area, kindergarten, orchard) were introduced in colored blocks at 1/200 scale. Participants were expected to place these various units over the site model. During the game, the studio volunteers were assigned roles such as moderator, reporter, site manager and negotiator, and were not expected to interfere the sessions unless the users placed the units unlawfully. The outcomes of the first game were 10 different layout design tendencies which were photographed and reported during the workshop. These results were transferred into a digital medium with AutoCAD and Rhino modelling programs. Eventually, based on the interpretations of Düzce Hope Studio and their possibility for realization, 5 design alternatives were generated.

[102] Prior to playing the second game, studio members presented the outputs of the former game – through the layout plan alternatives over poster presentations and by the help of 3D models – to the users. Simultaneous with the presentations, minor alterations over the 3D models were made based on the feedback of the users. Whereas immediate results were acknowledged, the visuals also remained useful to gain a clearer perception. During the discussion session, measures such as environmental-friendliness, security, accessibility, common areas, green spaces and neighborhood relations were discussed to meet the bottom-line settlement objectives. The second game, which also included ten user

housing units. Since the design games were insufficient alone to estimate the housing settlement, drawing sessions with the children, focus group meetings (with women, man, children, young and elderly) and household surveys were held with the community both prior to the launch of the games and during the two meetings with the public (Figure 4.12).



Figure 4.11. Düzce Hope Studio volunteers devising the rules of the game during the internal meeting on 24 January 2015 (Source: Düzce Hope Studio Archives 2019).

groups, was based on generating interior design alternatives with the design units consisting various functions and sizes. Numerous space configurations were generated and tested with each household, steered by one studio volunteer. Accompanying interviews with the users supported the reliability of these design configurations, as well as brought about further ideas collective production and the development of socio-cultural relations.



Figure 4.12. Master plan and interior design games are held on 8 February and 15 March, at Düzce wedding hall (Source: Düzce Hope Homes Archive).

In this respect, devised by the volunteers of Düzce Hope Studio, the design process can be identified to be a sequence of simulating operations, which I contend to be performing at three levels. Firstly, it operates within the internal dynamics of the studio; experimenting with the potential aspects of an interdisciplinary engagement, the possibility of a management structure together with its large body of attendants, hence a concurrent collective production that is not inherent in conventional architectural practices. Architects and non-architects, who happen to gather for a specific cause under a defined time interval and assemble under the pre-defined roof, who are mostly unknown to each other and whose disciplinary skills are ranging, project a possible formation of another subjectivity – other than architect as the sole author – that can alter the standard models of architectural practice "situated in a fixed body of knowledge" (Hill, 1998, p.

5). However, given the studio's interim position, hence the surrounding ambiguity[103] in the feasibility of such a formation, I argue that the studio does not necessarily intervene in the course of spatial production by itself. On the contrary, it exercises the capabilities of becoming a complimentary body emerging from One Hope Association, contributing with experimental design tools. Thereby, when looked from a wider aspect, Düzce Hope Studio's 'one-off' design service is not different than that of a conventional architect (other than curtailing his/her authority) who is in charge of the demands and desires of the clients – in which the case proves both the client and the users to be the same body.

Secondly, simulating operations are also embedded within the interactive nature of the devised design games; releasing the repressed voices of a community, encouraging them to speak up, to "exaggerate with their imaginations and push the limits while dreaming", and to "look at the design process from a different perspective" (Düzce Hope Studio Archives 2019). Such a game formulation by Düzce Hope Studio, does not only deliver a comfortable zone of expression, but also opens up a space free from manipulation[104]:

> "I am happy that the process is user-centered. Human comfort, ability to express our own ideas… Of course, all of these different ideas will not be realized, but the middle way will be found. Asking about our ideas shows the value given to people" (Nurcan Çakır, Düzce Hope Studio Archives 2019)

> "… [W]e created interfaces to ensure that each individual's dreams and expectations for the future can be spoken. Otherwise, there was no consensus. Not everyone was equally convinced of the ultimate design product. But people were able to talk to each other about the differences in their minds in a way they are not used to. A mutual field was established…This collective platform, "common ground" we built is to increase the sense of a community; to be able to discuss all these future-oriented problems and conflicts right from the outset; in order to comprehend both the users' ownership of the project and the reality we are dealing with" (Gizem Pilavcı, Düzce Hope Studio Volunteer; in Yapı Magazine, 2016).

> "The game itself is beyond an interface that enables the demands of the users, but a tool that provides an agreement or disagreement between users debatable. Different views within a community can cause problems that are much harder to resolve over time, but when these different views and demands are made disputable, you are actually blocking the possible problems in that place, and it is very valuable in that respect. It showed that architecture and design can be used as a tool for problem solving" (Anonymous, Düzce Hope Studio Volunteer; in BiÖzet, 2017)

[103] The interview with the head of the cooperative supports the fleeting position of Düzce Hope Studio: "Once an idea is said and released, the excitement of the first listeners is high. But they are young friends, you see. With the initial enthusiasm, they did their duties within a year without any major interruption. On the other hand, they have a life, so there is such a thing as supporting yourself financially. But among them, there is a core team which still supports us whenever we are in need" (Interview, 26 July 2019).

[104] For detailed discussion on the subject of manipulation in the controversy of citizen participation, see the typology of eight levels of participation developed by Sherry R. Arnstein, in her article 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969).

These commentaries entail that the objectives of the design games are more than accessing the ultimate architectural design itself, but rather a tool to simulate the practice of building commonalities and mutual respect, exercising social equity, and searching for horizontal ways of community engagement for establishing future relations. The demand for designing space thus appears to be transcending its physical aspects in the first place, and becomes an idealistic ground formerly, which welcomes varying positions, perspectives and motivations of its inhabitants. That is why a series of simultaneous games are devised to reach as many voices as possible rather than holding one big game.

Nevertheless, whereas the functional aspects of the design outcome will be articulated in the next section, the physical outputs of such design simulation prove to be dissenting. Although the design games recast the volunteers as facilitators – with the assigned positions of a moderator, negotiator, reporter or site manager, they were eventually remained responsible for setting the rules of the game. Particularly during the first round of the design games, introduced mass blocks which came in predefined forms, reconciled site layout alternatives that were predictable beforehand. Therefore, whilst the practice of participation is commonly brought forward by the studio to be more valuable than the outputs of the process, the anticipated aesthetic dimensions of such a process revealed the tones of frustration among the studio volunteers:

> "What came out was a bit disappointing for me. Because it seemed what we designed was not different than the MHA housing blocks in the adjacent land. And also, there was this common tendency that the community was inclined to accept whatever we would design. It was something I could have expected less. But apart from that, the practice itself is very valuable. It's worthwhile just to see it. It is actually a gain in every sense. When we think about it as a whole, the house where people live at the end of such a process will be much more valuable for them. There will be a neighborhood where they will own more and take better care, which in itself is a valuable thing" (Merve Bedir, Architect, Düzce Hope Homes Archive 2019).

> "When we look at the design language, we cannot see the contribution of participatory design. There were restrictions such as zoning and earthquake regulations and building codes. Those constraints inevitably put us in this design frame…We had to be stuck in two parcels because the third parcel was not suitable for the residential settlement…The majority of the studio was convinced that the economic settlement was the MHA form. Layout of the conventional MHA actually makes the job very easy." (Özgül Kırlangıç, Architect; in XXI, 2016).

Following Jacques Rancière, who advocates aesthetics and politics to be akin[105]; hence, contrary to the predominant tendency of theorizing participation through a

[105] In his book "The Politics of Aesthetics" (2004), Rancière explores the notion of political subjectivity and its relation to aesthetics. By particularly addressing those who remain invisible and inaudible, and who can only penetrate the state mechanisms via a mode of subjectivization, the author asserts suppressed communities

presumed disparity between meaning making and form making – in other words, locating either within the extremes of democracy (politics) or function and design (aesthetics), I argue both aspects to be relational, but having a discord in this particular project. Despite the project demonstrates a distinct course of participation to have been emerged out of a political will against spatial marginalization and a preoccupation with democratic agendas of the tenant community, material examination of such participatory design scheme reveals the relation between politics and aesthetics to be puzzling. Regarding the aesthetic measures, architectural discourses around participation entail its processes to be leading to alternative aesthetics and spatiality; unravelling crude and impure appearances unlike the standard architectural categories that are presumed to be refined and clean (Blundell Jones, Petrescu & Till, 2005, p. xv). Counter to this assertion, what has been observed in this particular outcome is an acceptance of predominant aesthetics of state mechanisms, visible not only over the site layout but also in the form of housing blocks (Figure 4.13). On this account, it remains questionable whether if such a game simulation is effective in envisioning the design of a housing settlement, in which private ownership surpasses collective forms of ownership; contrary to the overarching application of participatory design games in undertaking urban actions in public spaces or over master plan schemes.[106]



Figure 4.13. (On the left) Render from Düzce Hope Homes project resembling (on the right) MHA dwelling units located on nearby plot of the project area (Source: Düzce Hope Homes Archive).

(proletariat, the poor, minorities, etc.) to be transforming the aesthetic coordinates by altering the universal presupposition of politics; stating that "[t]he channels for political subjectivization are not those of imaginary identification but those of 'literary' discorporation" (p.40). Therefore, for Rancière, politics is a matter of aesthetics and form; thus, aesthetic judgment is also a political one.

[106] For instance, the practices of "Play the City" supports public and private parties on large scale development projects through city gaming, whereas The Glass House Community Led Design majorly works across diverse geographies and scales, focusing on the rehabilitation of public spaces in the UK. For further information, see their works at <playthecity.nl> and <theglasshouse.org.uk> accessed 10/08/19.

The third and the final aspect of simulating operations corresponds to the "Build Together" phase, which is held by Düzce Hope Studio in the form of a campaign a year after its formation. In late 2015, in order to ensure the feasibility of the design implementation on site, the studio launched a campaign through an event at Studio-X[107] in Istanbul, which marked the completion of the design stage and the beginning of the construction phase. The campaign aimed to increase the visibility of the exemplary process of struggle for housing, hence, to call out for a solidarity to reach a wider circle; with the underlining agenda to seek for financial opportunities to support and overcome the capital difficulties that the cooperative was facing. In hoping to establish autonomous economies to realize the construction phase, Düzce Hope Studio organized a fundraising event through designing an interface that presented various means of supporting the project. Sharing with the wider public, I contend this interface to be seeking for an alternative outline for the financial projections of design applicability, as well as pointing to the studio's expanding position that outreaches the design process. Whereas the campaign interface was designed in a manner that is open to further possibilities, it was defined around the themes of material, logistical, and grant supports; in order to access affordable materials (without added profit value in market), to borrow construction machines, and to apply for potential funds respectively (Figure 4.14). Reaching toward the implementation phase, the cooperative's motive to retain its financial self-sufficiency proves to be shaping the contents of the campaign:

> "We are not asking for donations for the housing construction, instead we want to borrow. It is a private space, so we cannot receive donations under the cooperative structure. However, the communal space is open to the public. When it becomes public, it is possible to receive donations" (Interview, 26 July 2019).

Organizing a fundraising campaign, which emerges to be the closing contribution of Düzce Hope Studio, reveals the fact that simulating operations surpass the objectives of an experimental design delivery of architectural objects on paper, hence projects further visions and solutions to realize envisioned design schemes. In other words, and in Bruno Latour's (2004) term, Düzce Hope Studio expands the critical responsibility of its spatial practitioners by altering the commonplace understanding of architectural production as a

[107] Established as an initiative of Columbia University GSAPP, Studio-X Istanbul is an urban laboratory that aims to identify the current and future issues facing the city and seeks to generate innovative forms of thinking for their solutions. The Studio has not been active since June 2019 <studio-xistanbul.org> accessed 10/08/19.

“matter of fact” – design of architectural objects subjected to rules and methods, toward an architectural production as a “matter of concern” – entering into a field that deals with the real accounts of space making; which unfolds via the encounter with the marginalized community who seeks for autonomy albeit confronting financial difficulties.

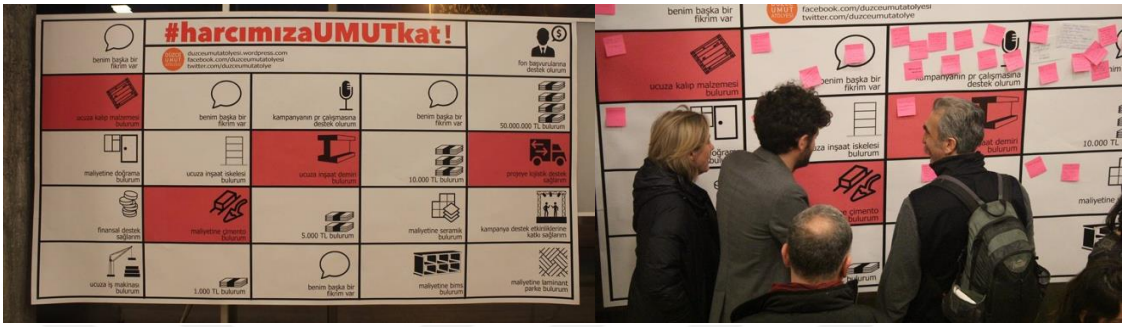


Figure 4.14. The interface of the campaign calling for support titled under the hashtag #harcımızaumutkat (translated as #addhopetoourmortar) (Source: Düzce Hope Studio Archive 2019).

Nonetheless, it should be reminded that this critical attention ultimately originates by means of an invitation of the community of tenant victims who steers Düzce Hope Studio’s modes of behavior as much as its modes of making. Modes of behavior, which is marked in accordance with the long-term struggle and the consequent agenda of the cooperative, does not only challenge the studio’s internal organization and induce peculiar ways of approaching the process, but also culminates further ways of actualizing spatial production. Simulating operations in this sense, which is driven from the cooperative’s political motives, renders the provisional formation of Düzce Hope Studio in the first place, as well as encourages the possibility to test a series of participatory actions devised in accordance with the objectives of achieving a social housing model. As a consequence of a self-managing community who seeks a right to urban life, hence exercise their demands in the primary decisions concerning their housing and public facilities, operations in the making of space proves participation to be taking on different forms. In the form of identifying inhabitants’ needs, it proceeds no more a design for but a design with, and moves beyond a mere representation of the user, or a manipulating ideology (Stanek, 2003, p. 150). In short, simulation – a term that is articulated to optimize a performance, process or a system – coincides with the position and the

practices of Düzce Hope Studio; whose sustainability as a large collective body containing diverse disciplinary backgrounds and continuity of experimental actions remain questionable under different socio-political circumstances.

Many questions and constituents arise when examining the position and the practices of Düzce Hope Studio. Adhering to such an inquiry, so far, the section attempted to address the answers to the questions of why and how interstitial practices of spatial production take place; who produces space; how a design process can embrace use-value in a context where exchange value is dominant; and finally, how different disciplines come together and configure this process.

In overall, examining the position and the works of Düzce Hope Studio in relation with an expanded contextual reading delivers an alternative route in understanding interstitial spatial production. Contrary to a prevalent analysis[108] in contemporary counter architectural culture – which places attention to the intentionality of the spatial practitioners over that of their agency by omitting the wider social and political context (Cupers, 2014), this section followed a comprehensive route by including the position of marginalized communities, the events of struggle and the ways they emerged and proliferated, along with their ultimate repercussions spatially, socially and architecturally. Such a reading reveals the factors that effect Düzce Hope Studio's formation and proves its fleeting status that remains as a plug-in to a long-standing struggle. As a result, Düzce Hope Studio provides a design service which it does provocatively among a wide range of spatial and non-spatial disciplinary formations who voluntarily gather to seek for participatory means as a strategy to spatialize the demands of already engaged users, yet also endeavor for potential financial means to support and sustain the autonomous position of the community of tenant victims for the consecutive housing construction. Within a prevailing state that is propelled with rapid spatial production schemes at where spatial practitioners are administered by client briefs and do not encounter their users, such tools slow down and challenge the course of spatial production by promising an (re)encounter between lay people and professionals:

> "Contrary to the architects designing spaces to be sold in the market, we act together with Düzce earthquake victims to design a space to live in. Nevertheless, we regret to admit that such practice is hardly possible in today's conditions, yet we hope this project to be exemplary in showing another design, another cooperative and another urbanization is possible" (Gizem Pilavcı, Architect, Düzce Hope Studio Archives 2019).

[108] For a detailed discussion, see 'Chapter 1', pp. 8-10.

Whilst the neoliberal impetus continues to drive market forces, it also has effects over state policies reflecting back on the practices of spatial production and that of their practitioners. Under such wider political and economic pressure, and along with the 'withering of the state' (Kaminer, 2014, p. 35), this case represents an exquisite approach in addressing production of space, thus offers a field for practitioners who are preoccupied with the current political agendas, and who question where they stand, what they do and who they serve for. In this line, Düzce Hope Homes, a project that is urged among a community of marginalized tenant victims claiming for a right to space, introduces a channel for spatial practitioners in seeking answers to these questions.

4.4.5. The Current Status: Between the Desires and the Actualizations

Following the instigation of ground works, the voluntary contributions of Düzce Hope Studio diminished as a large collective body. Although majority of the volunteers have not been able to continue due to the fact that they have provided voluntary work, a few of them carry on with their support today (Interview, 26 July 2019). Whilst a cursory interpretation of such kind of a condition opts for the dissolution of the collective body upon the completion of design works, on the obverse, I argue the provisional formation and the fleeting status of Düzce Hope Studio to have opened an interval for further establishments, hence prospered the involvement of other actors directly and indirectly at individual and collective levels. Thanks to Düzce Hope Studio, whereas the increasing visibility of the project and its prolonging process at professional circles pulled in students from various educational institutions to participate with hands on support in the construction site, several individuals contributed with in cash and in-kind donations for the communal facilities. Collectives such as Plankton Project[109] and Center for Spatial

[109] Plankton Project is a collective that brings together designers who hold the belief that small-scale endeavors can achieve wide-reaching impact. Aiming to reach out and support marginalized communities via design services, and through the personal communication with One Hope Association, the collective contacted with Düzce Hope Studio. Plankton Project ran the design of a spatial unit which would initially serve as a supply shed during the construction phase. The structure was expected to be repurposed as the community space upon the completion of construction (Interview, 15 September 2017). During my visit to the construction site in July 2019, supply shed was located next to the realized building designed by Plankton Project, which was neither served as a supply shed nor occupied yet.

Justice[110] – who are concerned with the current state of spatial production and whose stances are situated against such inclination – volunteered with the design services for the structure of the community space and contributed to advocate and represent the project at national and international platforms[111] respectively. On one hand, this implies the network of solidarity in question to be having a fluent and an entangled character, and that its volatile nature substantiates an examination across multiple subjectivities and their engagement in interstitial conditions. On the other hand, when various initiatives are put in dialogue with each other, it signifies a stronger affiliation that makes the possibility of change more tangible.

In actualizing spatiality, the advocacy of Düzce Hope Studio's campaign succeeded in lending an excavator from a construction company to be utilized in the groundwork of the housing blocks, and donation of masonry units to be used in the building construction of communal spaces. Although the campaign can be thought to be successful in terms of having a positive impact in prompting the construction of ground works, in the long term, its unsustainable and unpredictable nature of drawing in further financial comings compelled the community of tenant victims to proceed with its owns means. Amidst a pendulum of the desirable and the realizable, how can a self-organized community, turning into an extended collective structure in the long run, inspire an economic model in actualizing space, at where the generation of wealth is concerned? How does this economic model organize social relations and spatial qualities, and reflect upon the practices of everyday life?

Within the context of a relinquishing state and limited economic resources, the cooperative introduces a self-organized labor structure underlined within its partnership requirements. Introducing sweat equity, which implies a compulsory involvement of the partners in the construction process, manifests a hands-on collaboration that is not only limited to advocating for the rights to housing or involving in design decisions, but also inherent in the process of delivering their own housing:

> "Just because the architect and engineer designs does not make a housing safe; it becomes safe with the users' knowledge and participation in the construction. We met with the authorities and brought the terms for the partners to work in the construction within the main cooperative

[110] Center for Spatial Justice (aka Beyond Istanbul) is a cross-disciplinary, independent, demand-responsive urban institute, focused on issues of spatial justice in Istanbul and beyond. Its principal, Yaşar Adanalı is also an actively involved volunteer at Düzce Hope Studio. <www.beyond-istanbul.org> accessed 10 June 2019.

[111] In 2015, the Project was presented at Antalya Architecture Biennale in Turkey (Düzce Hope Studio Archives 2019).

> agreement. Measures are taken to ensure the participation, if these requirements are met, we aim to be exemplary in Turkey in terms of how to succeed with a good cooperative system" (DHS Archives 2019).

From the perspective of an ongoing process, this aspect can be considered to be an experimental method for a spatial production at the interstices; not only in terms of liberating from state mechanisms in search of alternative economic means for social housing, but also freeing from developer's weight to access a financially viable construction, that is found to be possible with immaterial and physical labor by a group of individuals. In this respect, with the established fluent networks of collectivism and collaboration, whilst Düzce Hope Studio's design services and search for potential financial ways correspond to the immaterial labor, it is the cooperative who eventually bears the physical one.

In search for autonomous economic openings – albeit performing quasi-autonomous ways at a wider aspect, such structure indicates a creative model that eventually introduces other forms of commoning and sociality. In this particular project, commoning does not only emerge to be what is strived to be accessed, yearned to be owned spatially, or produced as property in the form of a collective ownership and management, alternative economic means or a reverse accumulation; but, as Harvey (2012, p.4) suggests, it also proceeds with the 'social relations' connected to everyday life. Almost two years after the completion of ground works, during my visit in July 2019, I witnessed how these social relations are embedded within a state of undergoing spatial processes, shaping spatial functions and qualities that reflect back on the organization of everyday life. Despite Düzce Hope Homes is under a continuous construction due to limited flow of capital, it nevertheless portrays a different conception of a construction site, by transforming the commonplace perception of incompleteness and absence into a present and a lived state.

From a bird's-eye view captured by a drone, the project site – comprising three lots – can be discerned as an enclosure on the western edge of MHA's rising housing blocks that resemble a patch of vertical spatial arrays projecting out in the middle of wilderness, which is blocked towards the west by a glass manufacturing plant invading this wilderness with an industrial look (Figure 4.15-4.16). Under such circumstances, the location can be described as a kind of residential-industrial and rural-urban fault line, a place of tensions and vicious accumulations, resembling the socio-economic struggle of the cooperative in spatial terms. Within this context, Düzce Hope Homes occupies an area

of 31000m^2, representing a future neighborhood with a capacity of 29 buildings and 234 apartment units.



Figure 4.15. Düzce Hope Homes project, view from drone in 2017.
(Source: Düzce Hope Homes Archive 2019)



Figure 4.16. View from Düzce Hope Homes Project, July 2019.
(Source: Author).

Accessing the site by walking, several signs along the fences indicate that it is dangerous and forbidden to enter. However, as I attempt to proceed toward the construction area, human scale viewpoint reveals a different perspective than a drone, with the appearing traces of life to my left. This is the third lot #329, an area of 9912m^2 reserved for community facilities; a triangular form having a topographical difference that separates upper and lower parts, creating differences in the elevation. The upper part contains a series of scattered one storey structures, among which the Plankton Project's design of the L shaped multi-purpose community center will remain permanent. This structure is not yet occupied, but it contains a large communal kitchen, a cold storage room, a meeting room expecting to serve for the events in the neighborhood, and administration offices for the cooperative. The rest of the structures are temporarily occupied containers that are awaiting to be repurposed as a children center and farmers market upon the completion of the housing project, hence the occupation by the inhabitants. Behind the community center, there is a large bread oven with shade, an industrial dehydration oven, and a shed containing units for composting food scraps, which are all currently in function. The lower part contains a large community garden - named after an advocate from One Hope Association who passed away recently – providing fruits and vegetables for the cooperative partners living in the vicinities (Figure 4.17).

This is a mere description of the current state I encounter, a state that corresponds to the 'after agency' of Düzce Hope Studio, which unravels a two-fold story; on one side, emerging housing blocks that are incomplete manifest abandonment and state negligence, whereas on the other side, already occupied make-shift shelters and the community garden expose an experimental 'open construction site' (Düzce Hope Homes Archives 2019), searching for potential financial means to generate income for the most disadvantaged community members, and for the cooperative as site management funds for annual running costs. Along with the economic concerns, and in the long run, this program promises a unique social life for the low-income to participate in. As the cooperative head states:

> "In today's conditions, low-income citizens are not in a position to benefit much from the blessings of social life. But here, in such a center, it may be possible to create an environment that encompasses social life through solidarity, despite the low-income status. It possible to establish an environment where all of these assets are combined" (Interview, 26 July 2019).



Figure 4.17. Lot #329 which is reserved for community facilities, July 2019. (Source: Author)

Although being partially incompatible with the design outputs represented by Düzce Hope Studio, the project nevertheless offers a distinctive environment to that of commonplace housing projects provide. Albeit its large scale and compact nature that is expected to reside over 1000 inhabitants, the social aspects of such a housing compound proposes facilities that recall a self-sufficient neighborhood composed of a coming together of small villages in the form of attached low-rise housing blocks. Unlike the two lots containing housing blocks, the third lot has been completely assigned for this experimental site, which has not been thought of during the design games[112], but has been emerged due to insufficient funds delaying the completion of the undergoing construction. Whereas the housing settlement had a master plan, communal spaces have

[112] As the outcome of the design games, communal spaces have been assigned within the courtyards and in-between the blocks. Yet, due to the topography of the third lot, and with the assessed costs during the ground works, it was found to be expensive to build deep foundations.

not been entirely designed on paper, yet conceived in everyday life with communal practices; contrary to the housing units perceived in blueprints, currently half built and half bare, waiting to be occupied by its future users. Consequently, the design which has been estimated by Düzce Hope Studio on paper together with the community, has been altered on the ground by the community; for the betterment of communal spaces and contained facilities, shaped in accordance with the adopted economic model.

Within this current everyday context and in the case of spatial practitioners, what is thought of agency can perhaps be best apprehended by observing who has it, what is made of it and what emerges to be unfolding on the ground. In other words, despite an architectural critique of mainstream practices has brought together the volunteers of Düzce Hope Studio and offered an interval to intervene through a series of operations, it nevertheless remains questionable in terms of how much its consequences touch the real life. In this line, an inquiry into translating what is desired on paper by the subjects of Düzce Hope Studio following participatory means, and tracing what is actualized in place by the marginalized subjects present an impasse; as well as bring about the question of spatial practitioners and their architecture's efficacy, when performed through a series of simulating operations.

4.4.6. Resilience for the Non-yet?

In 2017, despite unfinished, Düzce Hope Homes was recognized to be among the ten World Habitat Finalists (Düzce Hope Homes Archives 2019). Resilience, along with solidarity and tenacity, were found to be decisive features connected to the achievement of the project. The long-term struggle behind the project demonstrates what marginalized communities can achieve under a post-disastrous context of concern with the lack of access to shelter as the basic amenity. Despite the blockages in the form of constitutional discouragement and insufficient institutional support, the project endeavors how social and political challenges to the production of space are overcome through self-organized action series in thriving response to the struggles. The project underlines why and how resilience is produced among the citizens over time for the non-yet space, and how acting in solidarity for accessing space transformed them from passive receivers to active engagers through building a community under the roof of the cooperative, producing practices and economies of resilience.

Such a process encouraged the formation of a new subjectivity; a collective who would have not been established unless solidarity and resilience were built among the marginalized communities. Consequently, by means of the community, Düzce Hope Studio opens an interval for spatial and non-spatial practitioners to conjoin, and act to strengthen the already built resilience in spatial terms, meanwhile offering a liberation from the boundaries and the particularities of professional positions. Embracing a participatory setting, both within the internal structure of the collective and together with the community, allows an experimentation with the design and creation of new conditions for spatializing resilience. Situated within the context of an existing network of solidarity, Düzce Hope Studio's practice reveals an inclination toward the adoption of dialogical engagements more than material action, leaving the latter to be undertaken by the community itself.

In pleading for the non-yet space, a quest for spatial production strives to rethink the multiple aspect of rights to space, which encompasses constitutional rights, financial support, and alternative forms of sociality inherent to design operations. This requires acting in an interstitial manner, a maneuver across state mechanisms, without a total attachment nor a detachment from the system. Erbay Yucak, the lawyer and the director of the cooperative specifies this in the following way:

> "When doing something with the community, we need to talk about these issues in a common language that you can agree with. Being together, acting together, calling our rights together. These are more simple and real. Access to healthy safe environment, healthy safe housing. We are not in an anarchic act, yet right to shelter is an obligation. We have to agree with the authorities to develop another model. We live in capitalism. What is it that you call the urban, the place…? It is all manmade. We are talking about a human invention" (Interview, 26 July 2019).

Düzce Hope Homes proposes another model for housing. It is more than an architectural project constructed out of mortar and cement, but an exemplary that reflects whether it is possible to create an utterly different way of life for the future. It is likely that the struggle for such kind of a life is an enduring one, exercised continuously through space, with changing forms and action strategies. As the cooperative head Sami Kılıç mentions:

> "What happens tomorrow? The state supports with credit, construction of the housing blocks continues, people settle in their homes, and the process is completed against the outside. But we the process will not end in itself, we thought to facilitate our lives in itself. We are together on the good day, together on the bad day. We will help each other and act in solidarity. That is why we set up the social center and housing compound" (Interview, 26 July 2019).

In overall, a reading of the project encompasses a political and social commitment of emerging subjectivities – users, spatial and non-spatial practitioners, who take stances against capitalist production of space and whose "uncounted capacities crack open the unity of the given and the obviousness of the visible, in order to sketch a new topography of the possible" (Rancière, 2009, p. 49).

4.5. Resistance in Growing Rooms of Hope

New York, known as the city never sleeps. Life presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles where each and every borough, block and lot overflows with the representations of capital entities. Within this center of the bustling capital universe and the congested urban layout it offers, there still appears to be rooms left; rooms to grow something together, growing by getting together with others without hinging on a commercial transaction, rooms to strengthen civic relations and recognize the value of sharing, rooms to exercise bottom-up governances, and plainly, rooms to grow hope.

During my everyday walks, I encountered the traces of these spaces scattered sparsely around the neighborhood of Harlem in Manhattan, at where I lived over ten months between the years 2017 and 2018. Thereafter, I would have cautioned that I saw similar spaces in different parts of Manhattan and the rest of the city. At first, I could not name the constitution of these breathing lots, patching one another with similar visual language; manufactured signboards indicating certain names attributed to these spaces, green fenced off interfaces allowing one wing door to enter through, community boards informing certain activities, and open hour signs attached to these fences. Along with their seemingly controlled and organized nature, there were signs of liberation and life behind the fences; common and personal beds and barrels, planted flowers and herbs flourishing inside, carelessly built warehouses with leftover materials, recycled indoor furniture sitting outside for communal gathering, murals or handmade signage as artworks, and unattended toys and bicycles (Figure 4.18). However, not all the fenced off vacant spaces were under the same conditions. Others were waiting to be revitalized and had no signs of life apart from their treatment as garbage disposal spaces and as if overlooked backyards.

Altogether, these leftover rooms build a narrative of in-between public spaces; not only virtually squeezed between tall blocks but also between the power play of capital

and actual everyday practices. What follows is a becoming process of in-between interstices, leaking from the cracks of the capital, turning from bare into crudely embellished spaces. The conception of in-between space here is built on the reminiscent of Lefebvre's understanding of the production of space.[113] Seeking to exceed the normative definition of space based on a negotiation between top-down governance – underlined as conceived space, and ground-up experience – as perceived space, Lefebvre draws attention to a third level; the lived space, calling out to be taken into consideration in analyzing the production of space (Lefebvre, 1991). From this perspective and in the case of New York's breathing rooms, this section emanates from in-between interstices as the depiction of lived spaces, becoming an interstitial interplay between various forces when explored over a historical timeline.

Thereby, the section unpacks the emergence of landscapes of hope and resistance and inquires into the production of communal spaces through practices of self-organization over the occupation of vacant public lots. Unlike the common perception of reclaiming vacant lands driven by architects or design professionals,[114] here these figures are replaced by inhabitants; true public who acquire the land, deal with its architecture by reconfiguring the very shape and the use of it. Because of this impact, it deserves greater attention in architectural debates. Consequently, in order to read the scale of in-between interstices, the section looks at urban bodies, starting from the body of inhabitants – direct attendants of space, moving towards institutional bodies, and by focusing on 596 Acres as the enabling body operating between the former two.

The section stems from 596 Acres, a New York based organization that builds tools to help neighbors see vacant lands as opportunities. 596 Acres' practice is a demonstration of how leftover, in-between interstices can grow into potential urban commons when they are made visible and overcome bureaucratic traps; followed by pooling in resources, attracting communities as sets of commoners, and social practices commoners undertake at interstices.[115] It is also a demonstration of how top-down governance keep those urban commons under surveillance by regulating bodies and their spatial practices. Hence, in this section, I argue vacant public spaces in New York to be

[113] For a more detailed discussion of Lefebvre's trialectical understanding of the production of space, see, the Section 'Space', pp. 60-65.

[114] For further instances, see the works of Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée (aaa; Studio for Self-Managed architecture) and Assemble.

[115] These three elements – resources, community and commoning practices, are put forward by Massimo De Angelis to conceptualize the commons (An Architektur, 2010).

a manifestation of ‘interstitial resistance’ propagating within and across the different boroughs of the city. Departing from the practices of 596 Acres, here I cover the main points in enabling, creating and reflecting on an interstitial change through occupying and commoning vacant interstices without dismissing the global and the historical content.

The section adopts a transversal trajectory to discuss what I call as ‘interstitial resistance’. Rather than separating and dealing with the above-mentioned layers distinctively – namely, historical constituents portraying the current in-between nature of leftover spaces, urban bodies occupying those spaces and from whom new bodies emerge under institutional governance, and finally, regulations and their corresponding operations undertaken to revitalize those spaces – the following text moves through and across these layers which builds the flow and the structure of the section.



Figure 4.18. Community gardens as vacant public spaces, *Halsey Community Farm & Myrtle Village Green*, Brooklyn Borough, New York City, March 2018 (Source: Author).

4.5.1. Looking Through the Interstices

Garden of Eden has been actively run on 116 Street in West Harlem since 1991. Together with three other neighbors, Sade Akin Boyewa El started off urban farming in two adjacent, run down empty lots in the urge for practicing urban communal living. Borrowing a pickup van from one of the neighbors, and by their own financial means, they used to go to stables to pick up soil, horse manure and seeds from the nearby neighborhood of Bronx. Back in those days when kale has not yet entered the food culture, they used to primarily grow corn, potatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, squash and tomatoes – staple foods which were not in close reach since there were no grocery stores in the vicinity. There was no formal organization during those times, it was only a few neighbors who got together to utilize vacant lands in Harlem, which was known to be notorious for crime and a drug infested neighborhood of Manhattan. As the skin of Harlem changed around it, Garden of Eden is still there, a beacon:

> "I would be calling it beautifying, taking care of something that was not taken care of. If people do not take care of what they have, I do not think they deserve it. Because it is a privilege, so if you have something and you do not care for it, do you deserve to have it? How did you acquire the land in the first place? How did anybody acquire it in the first place? Did anybody ask for permission to take this land? I do not think the first people came and settled in here asked for permission to take this land" (Interview, 12 May 2018). – Sade Akin Boyewa El, Garden of Love Member

In Sade's telling, there is a reciprocal relation between the vacant lot utilized as garden and the neighborhood it is located in. The conditions which caused the neighborhood to be socially and economically deprived, marked behind with rundown buildings and abandoned lots, has also brought about this garden as the communal space, a space for activities that otherwise would not take place. This is the vision of the garden as an interstitial site; ignored but ceases to exist, out of sight and city control but under community organization. It holds values, knowledge, everyday practices that bind a community and define an ideological perspective, a subtle resistance to what is happening around. There is a material and social sensibility embodied in the garden, taken together with its neighborhood organizers, inhabitants and crop sharers.



Figure 4.19. *Garden of Love*, Harlem, Manhattan, New York City, May 2018. (Source: Author)

Fast forwards to today, Garden of Eden converted its name to Garden of Love and has lost half of its vacant land to a developer who replaced it by a tall building in mid 90s (Figure 4.19). On the surface of the things, everyday practices in the garden cease to exist; with only two of its starters have passed on and many new community members joined. However, its grassroots management is replaced by bylaws to be amended and certain standards to be fulfilled.

The story of Garden of Love is the story of many more community gardens in New York. Exploring how Garden of Love – as a matter of fact, also the others – went from a truly run community space to a community space under the surveillance of the city today thus becomes the depiction of this section; of what conditions contributed to the formation of abandoned lands in the first place, how the state improves immunity against an autonomous resistance in vacant public lands over time, and how new tactics emerge from-within the system to occupy other interstices in turn.

4.5.2. Breaking the Narrative

> "All space is occupied by the enemy. We are living under a permanent curfew, not just the cops, but the geometry. True urbanism will start by causing the occupying forces to disappear from a small number of places. That would be the beginning of what we mean by construction. The concept of the positive void coined in modern physics might prove illuminating. Gaining our freedom is, in the first place, ripping off a few acres from the face of a domesticated planet."
> – Attila Kotanyi and Raoul Vaneigem, "Thesis on Unitary Urbanism"

Urban agriculture and community gardening are widespread staple of micro interventions in the urban fabric to revitalize derelict spaces; a transformation developing from unforeseeable urban quarters, often by individuals or groups with no particular larger agenda, by groups that do not necessarily see themselves as political (Kaminer, 2017, p. 111). Apart from the physical recuperation of the space itself, the acts of gardening have been under the radar questioning production dynamics by altering the relationships of individuals to community, of residents to urban space. Thus, gardening extends beyond the intentions of just getting the land to be green. It is an engagement with the local environment, meeting neighbors, building local strength among each other, creating relationships across diverse social and ethnic backgrounds.[116] Although their status, management, and temporary or permanent persistence may be context specific, the underlining basis of such activities extends beyond the intentions of food crop but more in the direction of a social cultivation, a desire to beautify, to create a communal space, and as an expression of residents' rights to their city (Lefebvre, 1987; Harvey, 2008).

To understand how community gardens have emerged in the first place, it helps to trace an earlier genealogy: the rise of vacant lands. In the context of Eastern American cities, vacant lands congeal in pools of inequality; they are the product of race-based disinvestment and neglect, hence the legacy of a racialized history of urban space. Urban agriculture and community gardening are consequences of these vacant lands in historically marginalized communities due to racial segregation, redlining[117] and urban

[116] I visited and observed several community gardens located in Harlem in Manhattan, Bushwick and Bedford-Stuyvessant in Brooklyn Borough. The inclusive character of the gardens and the variety of practices – growing herbs and vegetables, using the garden for vegetation, high schools visiting the gardens and running events – allowed diverse people with minimum friction, including, people having different racial, ethnic, economic and cultural backgrounds. Inclusiveness is also mentioned on the web sites of most of the gardens, under garden rules.

[117] In the 1930s federal government started ensuring home owns to estates if only they are located outside the redlined zones in New York City. Neighborhoods in red swaths were not eligible for insurance by the Federal Housing Administration, and banks did not lend loans. Redlining is an official housing policy designating zones that are not racially homogenous – at where majority of black people live –

renewal operations. In New York, community gardening has turned into a grassroots activism, when these symptoms escalated due to the city's decline in mid 1960's to its complete financial collapse in the mid-1970s[118] – growing abandoned lots in number, turning into dumping grounds and dangerous hotspots.

By mid 1990's, there were over 700 community gardens in New York. However, during Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani's period, when the city bulldozed many gardens and auctioned off over one hundred lands to private interests arguing for the need of affordable housing plans, troubles for the gardens began brewing. Even after the dispute between the City and hundreds of gardeners ended when the city agreed to preserve some 500 community gardens and use others to build more than two thousand apartments, grassroots movement was no more of a question; but more of a narrative conceived as the relic of the past which was not expected to recur in the eyes of the public.

In 2011, with no former intentions to break this narrative, Paula Z. Segal – lawyer and resident of Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn in New York, set on a mission to do something about the vacant lot that was locked behind the fences across the street she used to live. Finding out the lot was originally landscaped as a park in 2006 and since there were no green spaces within a mile, she organized her neighbors and elected officials over a community forum, however, received push backs about the potential housing project over the lot. In proving them that there are many other vacant sites at where they can run their housing projects – and to her own surprise – Segal found out that a lot of the vacant land was indeed publicly owned, following the pattern of urban renewal and redlining; behind fences and held by city agencies that are not accountable to neighborhoods. Through the New York State Freedom of Information Act, Segal obtained the records of all the publicly owned vacant lands[119] in Brooklyn on a spreadsheet and created a map of it to distribute the public. Adding the rows on the spreadsheet, it was 596 acres of vacant public land in Brooklyn Borough only; so, 596 Acres was born.

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which are consequently starved of disinvestment and deteriorated further with the rising racial segregation. Redlining continued till 1980s, and its consequences are still visible today. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/24/upshot/how-redlinings-racist-effects-lasted-for-decades.html> accessed 20/10/18.

[118] "Where We Stand and How We Got There: An Introduction to the Current Legal Status of Our Community Gardens" <http://nyccgc.org/about/history/> accessed 20/10/18.

[119] In the article, "Flowers Follow" (2013), Paula Z. Segal underlines the definitions both for the vacant and the public land: "'Vacant' land is land for which the NYC Department of City Planning has no use code on file; this is land that is literally, from the perspective of the department, not being used for anything. Public land is any land that is being held by a city, state, or federal agency".

What follows is the change in the course of a grassroots narrative, which was once made possible by guerrilla gardening – from accessing vacant derelict lands without permission, to an authorized and legitimized narrative navigating the bureaucracy to move the locked fences of the same interstices today. In other words, it is also breaking the narrative of the past, building on the former autonomous activist orientation with altered tools and tactics, with maps and signs by working interstitially – not against, but from-within.

4.5.3. Marking Interstices: Online Tools and on Ground Tactics

Maps are known to be used for power politics; emerging as inherently ideological entities representative of the social, cultural, and political contexts in which they originate. "An Atlas of Radical Cartography" (Gordon et al., 2008), a book comprising essays and maps, bridges art/design, cartography/geography and activism to provoke new representations of power and understandings of networks. On one of the maps in the book, it is mentioned that:

> "Maps, as descriptions of or inquiries into space, are neither neutral reproductions nor mere copies of space. They rather shape space through the act of naming and confining… Maps are tools to capture the incomprehensible, unconscious, or structurally 'invisible' qualities of space. What they describe is the basis of new realities. As maps both disclose and re-shape what is already in existence, they give it meaning and introduce new layers of perception".

In this line and in the case of 596 Acres, marking vacant public lands over an online city map becomes community organizing tools that point to three things. Firstly, marking becomes an act of exposing unused, 'invisible' potentials by making them 'visible'; which are left hidden, gone unnoticed when walking and observing the city at ground level. It is representing of what is left in resistance in cities, working comprehensively rather than separately, following a different trajectory than 60's fractional guerrilla activism. When united over a map, rather than singled out individually, these vacant lands speak for interstices "bearing witness to complexity, turning into a weapon instead of being subjected to as an 'impurity' or a weakness" (Querrien, Petrescu, & Petcou, 2007, p. 296). It is the initial act of 596 Acres, exposing historical patterns of neglect visible by representing the distribution of "unused, misused, or otherwise untapped resources" (Segal, 2013).

Living Lots NYC is one of the mapping tactics 596 Acres addresses, the outcome of an online map turned into an interactive organizing tool, bringing together diverse layers of interactive maps[120] working conjointly with online advocacy consultation to help neighbors see urban interstices as opportunities for community organizing and civic engagement (Figure 4.20). Over the map, New Yorkers can find by learning the status – why it might be vacant, and the owner of vacant lots in their neighborhoods; can unlock by starting an online conversation with other organizers and keep track of their advocacy; and eventually can gain the means through bureaucratic instructions to protect common resources. On the surface, Living Lots NYC functions as an online interface making vacant lots virtually accessible and valuable, but on the inside, it exposes to the consequences of an uneven development across the neighborhoods in the city and prepares group-up local communities to confront with the top-down governance. In other words, it sheds light on the lands that are insulated from the market, and people who are refrained from decision making of land use planning processes. Through the map, these ground-up networks are not only given the opportunity to start engaging with the vacant lands, but also with each other and the political process they are to pace into. In this sense, 596 Acres alters power dynamics by inverting the use of the map; putting forward it as a means to initiate a geographical organization and spatially organized social networks.

Secondly, in addition to vacant public lots, marking the rest of the public assets can challenge the perception around private assets which are thought to be central to the founding of cities today. As Segal remarks, "…we're in a city, most of our infrastructure and our assets are shared — the subways, the roads, the sidewalks, the water, something like 30, 40 percent of all housing in the city is some form of cooperatively owned. The list goes on and on to the point where privately owned property can start to seem like the real outlier" (Abello, 2016). Thus, gathering a database of all the rest of the public assets – namely, public lands and buildings – and marking their current status over an online map can be used to make public information visible. This could enhance online monitoring of commonly owned shared assets, and trigger public control with meaningful input. Accessing which local authority owns what particular public lands and whether if there are any current or future developments planned for those lands – such as affordable housing plans or selling out the land to private investors for potential real estate

[120] Diverse layers are elaborated over the legend of the map which highlight the current status of vacant lands – whether if local communities are already organizing, already have access, along with the potential vacant lots with no actions taken yet.

development opportunity – could potentially enable residents to compete with private real estate developers, and to have a say in the decisions that have consequences in their communities.

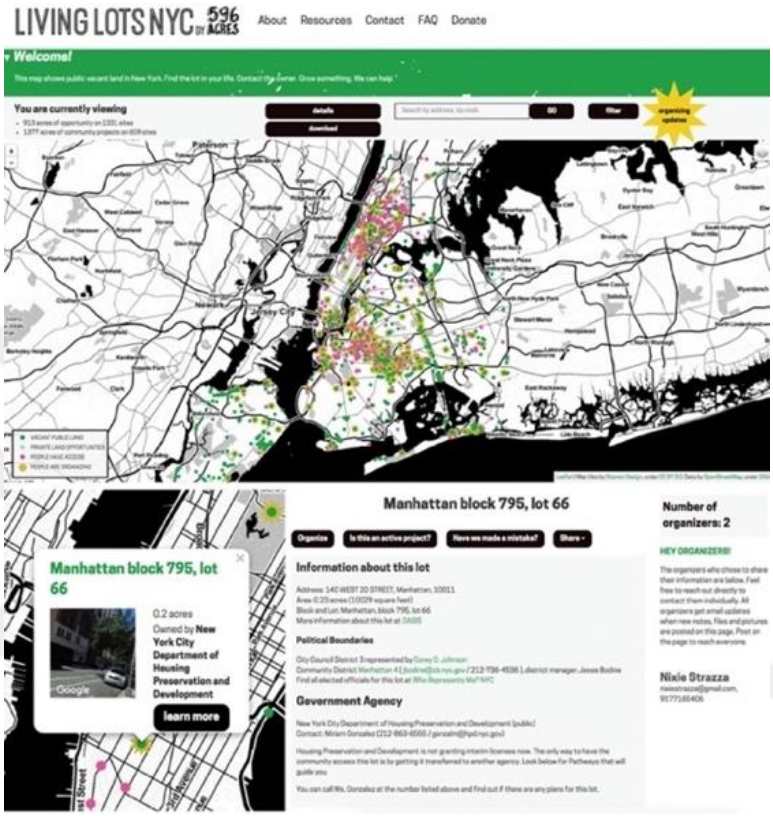


Figure 4.20. The digital interface of *Living Lots NYC* map. (Source: <https://livinglotsnyc.org/> accessed 20/10/18.)

In seeking to understand what opportunities could appear around public assets for community-controlled development or might be at risk of disappearing to real estate speculation, NYCommons is an alternative mapping project bringing forward an extended tool set by 596 Acres, together with Common Cause/NY, and the Community Development Project (CDP) at the Urban Justice Center (Figure 4.21). The map allows to find out not only public lands and buildings, but also reach out their current status, and if requested, take actions over the forum that the online map allows. As Susan Lerner, the executive director of Common Cause/NY, puts into words "…NYCommons can provide an entrée into a fairly sophisticated, experienced, citywide network of groups who are all thinking along the same lines, putting pressure on government to be responsive, with a

similar vocabulary and set of expectations about public assets serving the public" (Gatti, 2017).

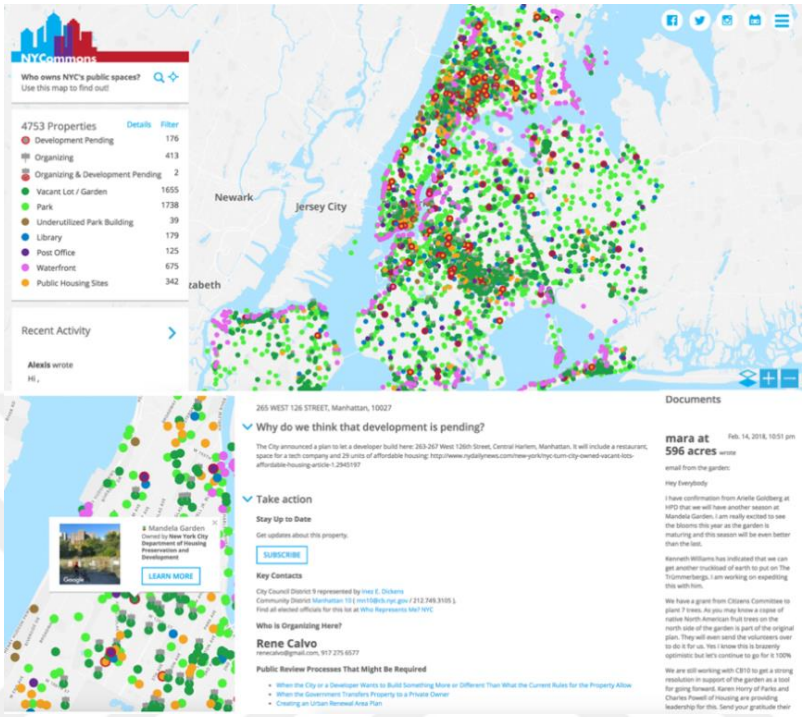


Figure 4.21. *NYCommons* map can be reached from <https://nycommons.org/> accessed 20/10/18.

In this line, NYCommons acts as an extended body of the Living Lots NYC, having a broader perspective by including public spaces – together with vacant public lots. What is critical about this map is the fact that current and future status of public structures are not only made visible, but also their information is made transparent, with a careful outlining of the legend underlining public property usages along with whether if a development is pending or community organization is undertaking. Here, transparency in accessing information remains essential to stimulate actions over protecting the commons; thereupon, in the words of Massimo De Angelis, commons challenge ways to "setting a limit to capital accumulation" (An Architektur, 2010).

Thirdly, marking vacant public interstices over a map tells how previous master plans had current impacts in certain areas by overlapping the past and the present, underlining the formation of edges and centers of a city, stitching them together to reveal a causal and a consequential reading of the current urban interstices' legacies. It

demonstrates how power has historically operated in space and played out in different areas of the city. As Segal explains:

> "The city on a map shows us areas where resources are pooled and vast steppes where resources are scarce. Deleterious conditions concentrated in certain New York City neighborhoods are not accidental, but rather a systemic deprivation enabled through urban geographies. Power congeals in pools of inequality that carry with them their own gravitational pull. The map of vacant public land in NYC is a map that shows both the present-day reality of a city sorted on racial and economic lines and the history of disinvestment and subsequent bulldozing that affected some neighborhoods and not others" (Segal, 2013).

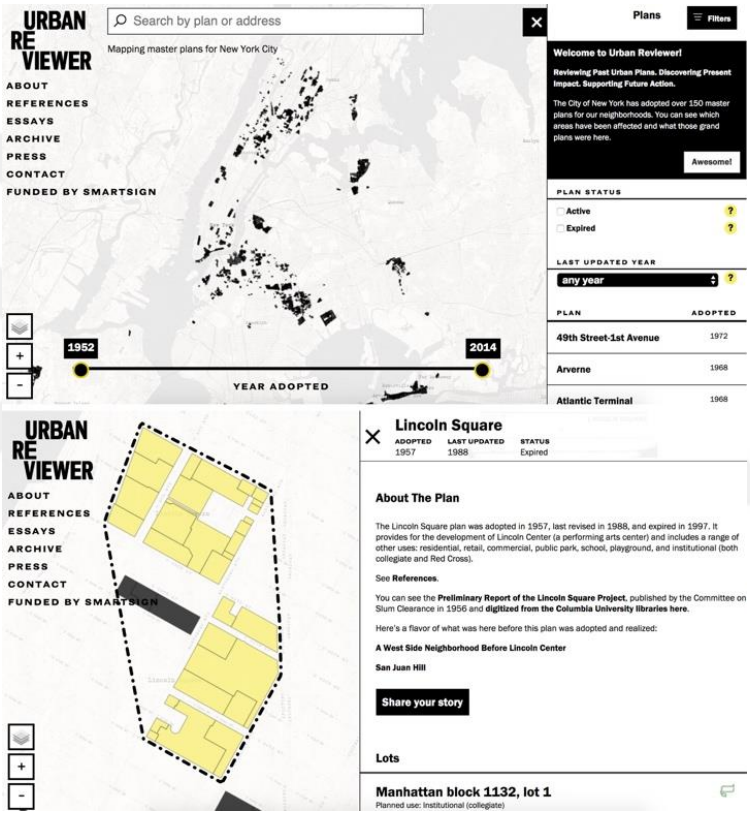


Figure 4.22. The Urban Reviewer is an online archive researchable by specific plan, year and the supposed use of an area in New York City. It provides a map overlaying public vacant lots with places that were planned for use as open space (Source: <http://www.urbanreviewer.org/> accessed 20/10/18).

Maps could also reveal abandoned interstices in legal limbo, when harnessed with technology and policy expertise. What makes the work of 596 Acres particular is how they work across various historical and current layers of information when marking already occupied or soon to be occupied urban interstices in New York City. Urban Reviewer is another comprehensive online map of the organization in collaboration with

Partner & Partners and SmartSign, who together unearthed and catalogued over 150 past urban renewal plans that NYC adopted to get general funding for making way for new public and private development (Figure 4.22). Spending over 100 hours inspecting the records, volunteers identified the currently impacted urban areas due to the effects of past urban renewal plans and found out how two of the lots in Queens and Brooklyn Boroughs originally planned as open spaces under urban renewal plans sat unnoticed more than 20 years. After the two years of community work forcing the city agencies – hundreds of petition signatures, dozens of letters of support from businesses and nonprofits and bringing a layout for the space, a plan to build it using a combination of City and philanthropic resources, The Keap Fourth Community Garden was transferred to the Parks Department and opened to community use as 'Open Space' after 22 years (Cahn & Segal, 2016, p. 239).

In addition to marking interstices through maps as web-tools acknowledging and gathering people over an 'online space', marking also means to go beyond an abstract realm by physically labelling those spaces slipping through the cracks via on ground tactics; going there and putting signs on fences, enabling conversation with people over phone or in person in front of fences, and attaching paper maps that bring the above mentioned online experience to community planning boards and block associations (Figure 4.23). Since not all the people might have access to online tools, working on the ground strengthens the inclusive approach of 596 Acres.

Starting in June 2011 and less than a year, over two dozen projects have started because someone saw one of the 596 Acres signs attached to the chain-link fence in their neighborhood. And in a neighborhood where if nothing has changed for such a long time, putting a big sign on the fences can lead to a big leap to create 'power and the possibility of change' through making information visible (Interview, 29 April 2018). Since waiting for the permission to access interstices can take a long time, unsanctioned ephemeral interventions can play the role along with the signs to keep hope and communication possible. Turning lot fences into vertical pop-up gardens and mounting makeshift pansy pots with plastic bottles saved from local garbage cans on the fences can 'serve as an entry point for neighbors to connect to the larger dreams of taking the land for the community' (Segal, 2012, p. 162-164) and provide a temporary vision of what that garden would be. Segal explains how she initiated on ground organization:

> "I started going to the lots and putting up signs. On the signs, I did not put my number, but I put the city agency's phone number… I put the signs with the code [Borough Block Lot number], a map and a note that I used to handwrite which said like 'this is public land, and it is controlled by the housing agency [could also be other responsible bodies]. They are nice and you can call them. Here is their phone number and if you need help, mail me'" (Interview, 29 April 2018).

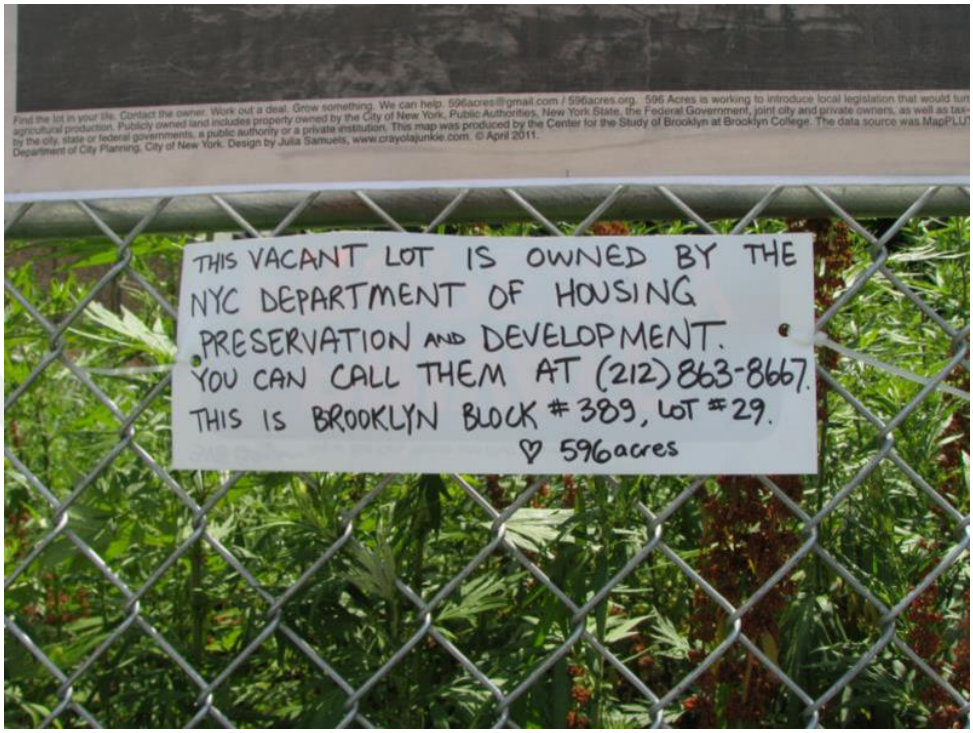


Figure 4.23. A prototype sign on a fence showing how the digital tools of 596 Acres match with physical interventions on site (Courtesy of 596acres.org).

The information that signs contain is critical to understand the experimental approach of 596 Acres. In case residents notice, calling the relevant number on the sign is based on the will of citizens. Therefore, the sign functions as a medium to connect residents with the responsible city agency in a non-reciprocal direction; meaning that the incentive is needed to be taken by the residents first in order the permission procedures to be started. Throughout the whole process, 596 Acres acts not as the actualizing body, instead as the enabling body; 'providing legal advice and technical assistance' by filling 'the gap between policy and people' (Segal, 2015, p. 6). The organization makes information visible by translating data into maps and signs to make opportunity legible till neighbors see them, and if only they want to organize, bridge the bureaucratic gap by providing them organizing, policy, advocacy consultation on how to access those lands legally.

Together, online tools and on ground tactics build Community Land Access Advocacy program to "advocate and make possibilities visible" (Interview, 29 April 2018). The program acknowledges residents to learn the history behind urban interstices, to hear and comment on plans over public assets within and outside their neighborhoods, to give them direction to navigate the bureaucracy to access vacant lots in their neighborhoods by overcoming abandoned properties in legal limbo, government owned lands and buildings. In the words of Segal, the program helps to "pierce the city's concrete skins and form bonds as neighbors, to become the city [they] share and make room for a truly people-driven city strategy" (Segal, 2012, p. 160). It demonstrates how lot-by-lot interventions can be multiplied rapidly when communities are galvanized, and when the process of building urban commons is assisted by tools for community building and ways of accessing commons.

This is the objective of 596 Acres; to trigger interstitial resistance through urban interstices that oscillates between tactics and strategies as Michel de Certeau introduces. For de Certeau, a tactic "takes advantage of 'opportunities' and depends on them… It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers" (de Certeau, 2011, p. 37). In other words, 596 Acres' tactical tools seize opportunities and slip through the cracks, by putting the inverted power map of urban interstices and physical signage on vacant lands' fences at play, which is successively executed strategically, operating by receiving permission to access resources and protection from law enforcement interventions. Thereby, interstitial resistance lies within the system itself, allows room for top-down mechanisms to institutionalize processes, but in the meantime creating a room for the bottom-up to slip through. In a way, this is an answer to state's improved immunity against 60's guerrilla gardening and squatting derelict spaces, by finding 'other' cures to repair public cracks.

4.5.4. Enduring Interstices

Web-tools and on ground tactics building the Community Land Access Advocacy program of 596 Acres are not only limited to the boroughs of New York City, but has also grown into an open-source model adopted across other cities in the country and

overseas.[121] On the website, the organization assists with pathways on how to apply these tools; by sharing their codes to accumulate and render data in order to replicate other versions of Living Lots; by outlining step by step online guide on how to start exploring potential vacant lands and accessing them for community uses; and by giving consultation on how to customize their tools and tactics with respect to specific contexts.[122] Thereby, managing commons under community stewardship is exercised via a tool kit which is not rigid but open to be tailored and shared in line with explicit needs whilst disseminated across urban geographies. This points to a model which could steer towards *enduring interstices*, boosting commons by making them visible and actionable beyond a fixed geography. Occasionally, the tool set is adjusted integrally in accordance with the conditions of the context, yet other times it is integrated partly and run temporarily to secure urban commons against top-down threats.

The former is 3000acres[123], a project started in 2014, by a landscape architect, urban designer and community garden enthusiast in Melbourne. Borrowing the strategies of 596 Acres, 3000acres works with the state government to change the regulations about growing food in the city. However, unlike 596 Acres' deductive approach, 3000acres operates in an inductive manner, forming their own data sets by the help of users who submit information instead of relying on municipal data. Although the project might have political consequences – for instance, being in close relationship with developers as well as government bodies, intending to preserve historic areas by relying on urban farming, or leasing lands from developers, 3000acres project demonstrates that claiming urban commons does not necessarily start as a political act.[124]

Unlike 3000acres, the latter instance entails a political orientation when partially adopting and blending the web tools and on ground tactics. In 2015, Neighborhood

[121] So far, in the United States, 596 Acres built collaborations based in Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and New Orleans; in overseas, in Berlin and Toronto. Further projects situated in Pittsburg, Montreal, Manchester and Melbourne are also inspired by the tools of the organization. < http://596acres.org/> accessed 20/10/18.

[122] See "Bring Our Tools to Your City" and "Maps for Other Cities" sections on the organization's website < http://596acres.org/> accessed 20/10/18.

[123] Further details can be found on the project website. <https://3000acres.org/> accessed 10/12/18.

[124] Here, I should acknowledge Tahl Kaminer, who advocates that the praxis of community gardening does not alter the relations of production and does not necessarily support or undermine capitalism or gentrification. Thereby, interstitial resistance in the case of community gardens could also be challenging; as Kaminer points out, in some cases community gardens can increase the threat of gentrification (Kaminer, 2017, pp. 112-113).

Academy was born from the members of Prinzesinnengarten[125] and started as a self-organized open platform bringing together activists, artists, architects, and residents. In the same year, with the residency of Paula Z. Segal from 596 Acres, the Berlin based group began the process of making Berlin's hidden commons – lands that are in danger of privatization and transforming into a market commodity – visible to residents for potential reclamation (Cahn & Segal, 2015, p. 14-15). Meanwhile the signage system had been re-designed to designate particular public assets in threat, the map was made available online to mark these public spaces and their current status. 'Berlin Commons' map functionally draws from NYCommons and Living Lots and merges these maps with no online forum. The visual language of the signage format is an appropriated version of what 596 Acres had established; without necessarily marking vacant public lots but marking particular public assets for fighting to keep them off from turning into real estate sales transactions.

These two instances show that the web-tools and on ground tactics of 596 Acres are applicable in different urban contexts, however, they are not sufficient to exclusively challenge for an interstitial resistance. Nonetheless, abovementioned instances remain critical in questioning the current spatial practices around urban commons and with their notable contributions to advocate for enduring interstices, albeit their operations from-within are questionable. This points to interstitial resistance to be conceived as a transversal challenge which emerges when read and acknowledged across multiple constituents – namely, historical and operational factors, together with institutional prospect and communal mindset.

Unlike New York City's guerrilla interventions in the 60s and 70s, land advocacy tools of 596 Acres to access urban interstices do not work overnight. Firstly, the effects of interstitial resistance from-within can be slow and gradual, and time is an important determinant in both organizing neighbors and formally accessing the land. It is a democracy practice and conflict resolution; an active confrontation between the competing agendas of people on the ground and of politicians which can last up to two

[125] In 2009, when urban agriculture was not yet a popular topic in the mainstream discourse, Prinzesinnengarten started as a temporary urban agriculture project located at Moritzplatz in Berlin-Kreuzberg to serve for social, educational, and ecological purposes. Later in 2015, the members of Prinzesinnengarten initiated the Neighborhood Academy in order to promote urban and rural knowledge sharing, cultural practice and activism. A detailed history of the garden and the academy can be reached from the article by Marco Clausen (2015), who is one of the co-initiators of Prinzessinnengarten and the Neighborhood Academy.

years till neighbors plant seeds and see them blossoming. Thus, the process of getting access to public urban interstices takes time and involves working with the relevant city agency responsible for the lot. Although the process is lot specific, it starts vaguely with organizing together with neighbors, coming up with a plan for the lot and engage with the community board which then is followed by getting in touch with the city agency (Interview, 9 April 2018). As of August, 2018[126], 596 Acres' Community Land Access Advocacy program directly facilitated the creation of over forty permanent community-controlled spaces where vacant lots used to be, continued with more that are at the phase of accessing land and waiting to be confirmed by relevant local authorities.

Secondly, we learned that vacant public lots as interstices in New York City are historically and systematically constructed. When explored through this timeline, it is possible that interstices might continue to cyclically disappear and appear under ebbs and flows of neoliberal capitalism. Although how long a fissure might stay open is lot-dependent and occasionally temporary, new fissures are likely to appear whilst existing ones are abolished. Thereby, acknowledging social and cultural histories of these interstices is vital for a neighborhood organization, genuine resistance and resilience to build up. Understanding what conditions have opened up these fissures in the first place and in what particular local contexts matter to have a persistent response over these fissures rather than falling for the recent popularity of community gardens. Even if community gardens constituted from-within are leased for a certain duration – depending on which city agency owns and what future plans each particular vacant public space holds – attachment could offer other valuable forms as to autonomous and immediate radical actions.

In the case of 596 Acres, attachment stands for the integration of the civic and institutional spheres via community gardens. Yet, gardening practices over vacant interstices under institutional guidance and neighborhood management allows a different route of activism. I argue that the nature of this activism is in an interstitial manner in terms of producing another form of ownership by leasing the public land from a public body to be used for the purposes of a specific community. This not only contributes to sustain the interstitial value of land but also turns likely into an interstitial resistance by enduring vacant lands' life span and keeping them off from future potential developments by private investors and the city.

[126] 596 Acres, News titled under "Radical Transparency" <http://596acres.org/radical-transparency/> accessed 20/10/18.

4.5.5. Revisiting the Garden of Love and Others

> "Invisible structures and invisible histories make cities as we know them, see them, smell them and dig in their soils."
>
> Paula Z. Segal, in "Ideas City"

What is particular about the survival of these trivial vacant interstices squeezed in-between tall blocks, with their primitive looks and handmade shabby communal beds made of leftover materials? I would argue that communal gardens are more than a common ground at where communities gather, indeed they are vital social infrastructures, which do not only accommodate urban agriculture models but also become stimulants for fostering social capital through other means. On that account, not all the community gardens are just gardens to grow seeds together but are also communal interstices to hold events such as concerts, movie nights, educational programming for elementary school students, or turn into playgrounds in neighborhoods where no safe grounds are available for children to play (Figure 4.24).



Figure 4.24. Events taking place at the Electric Ladybug Garden located in Harlem. (Courtesy of www.electricladybuggarden.org)

As Segal underlines, "what is remarkable about these interstices is that they are self-organized places not run by business, by architects, not even by individual people. On the contrary, everyday rules are set by neighbors who work together for making space, coming up with their own system that renews itself" (Interview, 29 April 2018). Under these circumstances, urban interstices are not only physically improved settings, but also "the means to collectively experiment with possible alternative forms of social organization" (Stavrides, 2015, p. 10); turning into a meeting ground coalescing everyday encounters across differences. However, certain challenges prevail when taking a closer look into the everyday life of the Garden of Love – consequently the others; thus, how a community is formed and organized remains critical under interstitial circumstances. Sade, one of the starters of the garden, explains how grassroots management is institutionalized over the garden's recent history:

> "GreenThumbs[127] back then [early 90s] was not even that organized. But now, they have certain set quotas, rules, and regulations as to how to get to acquire the land and certain standards that we need to fulfill. Therefore, we have to offer, it is not our land, right? It is nothing personal or private, it is for the community, so you utilize some of the space to have a community space for everybody to be able to take part in. Now that we have plots, of course we have to have bylaws, like what the garden is about, who can be a gardener, how to become a member. It is a shared responsibility. We all have to open the garden, clean, keep it nice and neat, clean outside in the wintertime, we have to shovel snow. You know we are still leasing the land" (Interview, 12 May 2018).

It is no surprising that the way Sade describes the nature of community gardens is how Stavos Stavrides acknowledges urban commons; that according to Stavrides, common spaces should be distinguished from both private and public spheres (2015, p. 11). Sade also touches on the issue of how power operates in vacant public spaces, which Stavrides calls as 'institutions of commoning', at where an institution circumscribes a community as a closed world of predictable social practices (Stavrides, 2015. p. 13). Overall, what Sade portrays is how the nature of grassroots resistance on ground has turned into an interstitial one, and how community organization is systematized under bylaws through founding a not-for-profit body, yet how it also allows receiving grants from relevant City bodies for gardening purposes.

This implies a spectrum – different degrees of interstitial conditions built over a timeline at the garden as interstice, along with the changing power relations and the nature

[127] City program GreenThumb issues short-term leases to gardeners on city owned lots, <https://greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/> accessed 20/10/18.

of control mechanisms. In the case of community gardens, interstitial space remains as a condition; as Markus Miessen mentions, “a condition that is not stable” (Hirsch & Miessen, 2012, pp.1-2). It points to a community garden as the interstitial space, based on a complex variety of contributors to it. Nevertheless, no matter the extent of control, interstitial production of space in the case of New York’s community gardens also reproduces its everyday practices, allowing to grow seeds as well as rooms to grow hope.

CHAPTER 5

CLOSING REMARKS: INTERSTITIAL PRODUCTION OF SPACE REVISITED

This research attempts to understand contemporary spatial practices emerging from the interstices of capitalistic modes of production. Contrary to the prevailing architectural discourse – proclaiming with conceptions, categorizing under recurring themes or taxonomies – expounded from architects' vantage points or the discipline's structure, my study argues that there is a need for a critical reflection upon a wide range of spatial practices operating at many scales and levels of intervention. The intention was therefore to offer a framework to draw the contours of their spatial production, and through a mapping over the constituents provided by this resulting framework, to open up their social and political impacts for further discussion. Nonetheless, this framework should not be taken as a definitive elucidation, but rather as one of the many possible configurations, which is after all fractional in terms of the captured structure, the terrain mapped out of the studied spatial practices, and how they are arranged. To deliver a ground to dissect and inspect practices of concern rather than systemizing them, the fundamental claim behind the framework is to guide the readers across its constituents to explore and reveal the relational dynamics and entanglements, which can eventually be approached in different ways that could also allow different analysis attainable.

Within these research limits, the main purpose of this study was to decipher complexities associated with works falling outside the dominant mode of architectural production and to identify a knowledge base of the issue concerning politics and the spread of global capitalism. From this point of view, the study sought answers on how to contextualize socially and politically committed intentions operating under neoliberal forces, alternative to a commonplace contextualization of the issue as a problem-solving tool flattened to techniques and aesthetics. In other words, the study did not treat what is at stake isolated within architecture's critical program, taking spatial practices as autonomous or exclusive of dominant state-of-affairs, rather inquired into countercultural ideas, motivations and ideological stances that are effectuated in practice.

To decipher the crises in mechanisms and means of spatial production – in other words, to dwell on the terrain for mapping to discuss upon the reflections of social and political engagement, interstitial was introduced as a critical and analytical vehicle to unfold the different dimensions examined through practice. The adoption of the notion interstitial as a critical apparatus endeavored a dynamic and critical thinking beyond reductive, oppositional, and dichotomist readings in architecture – in which criticality operates through external and abstract stances; hence, offered internal, situated and embodied accounts of criticality by moving through practices. Because the contents, approaches and sociopolitical contexts of these practices are so diverse, it would be inaccurate to reduce this complexity to a single conception. It should be therefore noted that the notion interstitial is neither another attached banner nor a categorization tool I developed in this study; on the contrary, it was implemented as a potential critical attitude and apparatus corresponding to the production of space. It is also drawn as a condition and an insight that came forth from an inquiry into relevant spatial practices and with theoretical sensitivities.

To scrutinize the research objectives, Chapter 2 scanned spatial practitioners who fall under the rubric of social and political engagement, who accordingly appeared in shared architectural platforms (publications, exhibitions, symposia), and scholars who developed a distinct discourse on the subject since mid-1990's – a period that marks the resurfacing architecture's critical engagement in practice. The chapter glanced through contemporary argumentations in this culture, in line with the global breadth of practices transcending a particular context or a specific content. The overview of these fields' engagement with the real – in other words, to social and political concerns, was found to be fundamentally emerging from the versatile crises of capitalism; in which the crisis consecutively had a wide range of implications on the spaces interfered, the modes in which these spaces come into contact, and the stances of subjectivities concerning the disciplinary capacity of architecture. These implications further shaped the structure of the research framework and laid the groundwork for the rather extensive social and political agenda of architecture, triggered by and interfering with financial, ecological and humanitarian crises.

The framework I developed in Chapter 3 therefore elucidated the ramifying effects of the neoliberal crisis at the nexus matrix of space, action, and position; hence, it helped to explore architecture's critical intentions from a series of distinct directions. Each constituent works in two ways in the study; firstly, I conceptualized and then linked

it with the group of spatial practitioners and their works. Weaving critical theoretical knowledge together with practical research coming from the browsed notable group of contemporary practitioners and their works, these constituents were found to establish an active relationship with each other. Altogether, this tripartite structure identified a significant understanding of the causes and processes of architecture's changing modes of production, which I contextualized under the 'interstitial production of space'. This contextualization is not to undermine but to rather surpass the puzzled and mutable interpretations of ranging conceptions in architecture, and to particularly call for a methodological route both inherent to and observed through the lens of interstice.

The first constituent, space, was drawn to explicate sites of production in which crises are embodied socially, physically, financially, or temporally. Borrowing from counterculture and political theories (of Lefebvre, Soja, Harvey, Massey, Mouffe, et al.), space is framed both as a locus of critique and a condition of capitalist urbanization exposed to consequences of uneven growth. Whilst concerns, such as the social, ecological and monetary, continue to climb up the contemporary crises of politics, what remains clear in the studied practices is the association with an extensive spatial field 'loaded with tension and dissensus' (borders zones, refugee camps, informal settlements, public lands), which has 'once been appropriated yet at present discarded or derelict' (abandoned structures and vacant lots), or has 'not yet been internalized by crisis' (fabricated interstices). Space is therefore portrayed beyond a physical scene or an architectural artifact devoid of social content; rather a public sphere belonging to the state or the ones charged with power, but which nevertheless remains temporally 'inoperable'; visible yet 'out of sight'; or has 'non-yet' been realized. Grounded in the cracks of capitalism, it has been observed that they are contested interstices often evacuated of programmatic functions and social life. Establishing the relationship between body and event, in other words, between the constituents of position and action, space is underlined as a contextual interpretation of crises, a corporeal and catalytic measure generating the content of practices. Consequently, whilst each spatial context comes with its unique features, moving through the practices, the exposure in each context was also found to be with different ends and degrees. From this viewpoint, space was conceptualized as (1) projective, giving rise to actors thus prompting actions under compulsions the space embodies due to ecological, social, and political events; as (2) conditional, inoperable due to accommodating financial or policy issues, and is invisible or disregarded until intervened; and finally, as (3) receptive, temporarily or permanently culminated cracks

that are not directly internalized by crisis but a reflection of it due to actors and their modes of engagement.

The second constituent, action, has been incorporated in the framework to imply manifestations of dissent and discontent in the face of an intensified crisis. Whereas an immediate understanding of action would correspond to large-scale demonstrations we witness in cities around the world in the last decade; in the context of studied spatial practices, it is drawn as a re-action against issues complicated by the crisis. To articulate this aspect of the framework, the right to the city has been applied as a perspective to address the collaborative and processual dimensions of acts (of right) to space; for instance, in the exertion of social justice, decentralization of power, or disclosing emancipatory ambitions through user empowerment, in short, in the negotiation to preserve changes against crisis. Therefore, action has been contextualized as 'a collective experience', as performing collaborative activities 'engaging non-hegemonic ways of producing space'. In line with the close examination of selected spatial practices, it has been marked by the degrees of material and intangible interventions, in other words, between the physical and ideal restructuration. Unlike architecture's normative mode of production corresponding to formal or tectonic gestures in the form of abstractions realized in blueprints, sketches or images; in the particular context of this study, we encounter varying scales of operations taking place both "on" and "off" site, tailored with different tools and methods. In this respect, on-site engagements were drawn as (1) acting, implying physical labor-intensive interventions in the making of space; as (2) mediating, intervening at policy or pedagogical levels through the application of digital/physical tools, events, meetings, and workshops to raise the qualities and concerns in spaces; and finally, off-site engagements were portrayed as (3) simulating, development and testing of new tools and methodologies by loosely interacting with the social and physical problems the space embodies.

An apparent connection with action built the final constituent, position, which addressed the tension within the disciplinary capacity of architecture through examining the status of subjectivities concerning the studied groups. With the financial crisis having an inevitable impact on the building and property sector, and as architecture offices struggling to survive, an evident measure in accessing position has been through the analysis of the organizational structures. With the professional subjectivities in flux, in other words, firms giving way to collectives, associations, and platforms; these wide spectra of initiatives anticipated fluid roles as designers, fundraisers, community activists,

entrepreneurs, and as such. Their works often unsolicited or funded/commissioned under cultural projects and events, the predefined professional role (that is market-oriented) of the architect was identified as having faced diversions lurking in the intervals of laypeople and experts from various fields. Thus, the position is conceptualized beyond a transcendence of disciplinary constraints, or the commonplace interpretation as the expansion in the role of the architect. On the contrary, it is framed as an expansive field of knowledge simultaneously coalescing both architects' and non-architects' skills and their presence, broaching the formation of interstitial subjectivities and agencies.

The framework, which I have briefly outlined above, attempted to project three things in this study: firstly, to assemble and situate the posited critical theories which are addressed frequently yet piecemeal when accessing practices of concern in the architectural discourse; secondly, to divert the lens to the manifold aspects of crisis to unravel spatial works' engagements and entanglements – alternative to an overarching inquiry from within architecture reflecting the disciplinary and professional strategies and intentions; and thirdly, concerning this broader perspective, to provide a comprehensive terrain to bring in a knowledge base of the issue from which a critical mapping can be projected to figure out the repercussions of spatial works. In this respect, whereas all three constituents of this framework ferreted out their multiple scenes drawn from a closer analysis of the studied practices, each one also demonstrated an interstitial condition with the ranging dimensions of the concept – due to being situated in varying spatial intervals steered from socio-political dynamics, operational outbreaks, or lurking in the gaps of predefined professional positions.

Having been amplified and exemplified in detail throughout the study, interstitial was principally applied to speak of the emerging social and spatial ruptures due to capitalism's cause of growth. Performing in the controversial outbreaks of capitalism, it has been found that socially and politically committed spatial practices are nevertheless bound to complex processes, due to institutional structures and their control mechanisms that eventually define the production of space. Under these broader circumstances, the contours of this terrain are identified as a state of dependence whilst grappling with capitalist forces legally and financially; hence a concurrent state of belonging and being outside was outlined anterior to distinctive effects of crises and their mobilization in spatial applications.

Reducing this framework to merely a set of category work would be one-dimensional. Even so, it is important to unstitch and dismantle studied works over terrain

to consider how non-normative modes of spatial engagements are executed in practice, and how their intentions and strategies differ from conventional or established formats. In other words, what are the consequences of this drawn framework for the very manifestations and the expressions of spatial practitioners? The studied works of groups based in diverse urbanized or urbanizing geographies disclosed that crisis is evenly circulating at this particular neoliberal junction; hence the framework granted a reciprocal reading amidst the global and the local. Consequently, with the global being present in the locality thus the local in the global; as long as there is a vigilance of the cultural, geographical and temporal contexts in which the works are embedded, the advanced framework in this study becomes applicable to various regions. It is therefore projected as a base map from which we can stitch across to access, hence, to critically assess impacts, challenges, and potentials through cross-pollination of tripartite structure which consecutively surfaces constellations.

It is in this context, Chapter 4 analyzed the feasibility of the proposed framework and explored what readings it allows by engraving it in a series of practices. It offered a mapping of constellations by seeking how the constituents of space, action, and position fuse and form a reciprocal relationship with one's spatial practice. Moving across the framework, recovery, resilience, and resistance are overlaid to be three emerging repercussions emanating from a transversal reading; examined in the light of three case studies from varying settings and geographies. It should be noted that these reverberations are neither claimed to be particular only to the case studies, nor they are posited as fixed formulations emerging from the precise scenes of space, action, and position. Although the repercussions are untangled and enacted under the immersive and in-depth exposure of case studies congruent with the framework, they are nevertheless useful to a general audience, and that they can be generalizable within the context of other practices.

Besides, the highlighted practices are not intended to be taken as ideal nor they can be reproduced in other contexts. They are highly distinctive with their collective dynamics, their vicinities, the regional and the nationwide connections. They come with their relational aggregations and unique histories, for instance, in New York's community gardens we see the cultural past to be re-emerging in urban practice which influences 596 Acres' actions; while in Turkey's urbanizing territories it is the educational infrastructure neglected for the sake of urbanization that comes surprisingly into Herkes İçin Mimarlık's sharper focus; or in Düzce, it is the strength of grassroots organization that struggle for social housing in the post-earthquake region places Düzce Hope Studio in the role of

professionals. The narratives told in the study are therefore delivered from highly subjective ends, and because they are submerged in particular venues, communities, cultures, and temporalities, it is almost impossible for those specifications to be precisely embodied the same way in elsewhere. On this account, whilst the study recognizes these limitations, it also acknowledges the possibility of objective inferences. This is what the framework is believed to postulate, following practices in accordance with the present global circumstances without undermining local insights.

For this reason, the case study approach I used in Chapter 4 does not arrange the study to test a hypothesis about interstitial spatial production. The quest of understanding meanings, motivations, and objectives – undertaken through interviews, on-site observations and document collection, led to the thick descriptions of social and political engagement. Drawn from John Law's work on critical modes of research, I embraced transversal inquiry as a performative tool in the making of relations and cutting across the multiple fields structured within the framework (that is driven from the group of studied practices), patterns was unraveled. These patterns within each case study both assembled and verified the stratifications in the framework I have already explained in length; and as Deleuze suggests, what they counted were not only the constituents but "what there is 'between'… a set of relations which are not separable from each other" (Deleuze and Parnet 1987, viii). Whilst the practices answered many questions, moving through their spaces, actions, and positions, they also raised new ones.

The case study in recovery, which featured the architect oriented collective Herkes İçin Mimarlık (HIM), revealed the inclinations toward positioning oneself within conditional spaces and embracing acting strategies with the dominant adoption of labor-intensive material interventions. Within the strategies of acting, expeditions have been an essential agenda of the collective, which primarily implied an exposure of the state's tendency toward urbanization, thus became an exploration of the resulting dismissed educational structures across the country's rural geographies. Beyond a direct correspondence of the term that is appropriated in architecture, expedition has also become a matter of the question of finding the middle ground between the state and inhabitants, coming to an agreement with the government bodies while responding to each particular context's impoverishment. Following on-site excursions, interaction with the community whilst meeting the provincial state objectives have become an essential measure coping with the acting strategies of the collective, and forging connections with both sides proved to be equally difficult to challenge. Having no permanent presence in

any particular rural area, the collective floated across various countryside pursuing to put failure structures into use but always joining the communities as incomers. As incomers, they embraced a social scientist's perspective together with the tools of an architect with a strong emphasis on local knowledge. Seeking to build this knowledge in conventional means, community meetings remained central to observe the local dynamics, not merely as a design consultancy but to understand whether if the recovery of abandoned structures is vital by deciphering the recent past and present social relations to estimate potential building programs.

Whilst such an interaction is frequently welcomed by rural communities or the provincial directorates, at other times, it became a matter of contact that turned out to be problematic. In projects such as in Çaka and Mesudiye villages, communities repelled the idea of physical recovery, and in the rest of the abandoned rural school projects, the state either provided minor or no financial resources to establish the physical restructuration. Or as in the Ovakent project, the Provincial Directorate of National Education (PDNE) has imposed on the future programmatic requirements of the abandoned structure. Since the ownership of these structures belongs to PDNE, they should hold a function under the state's guidance to benefit education and the public good. Although such observations are only to form the tip of an iceberg; they nevertheless raise further challenges.

On the one hand, whether if they have been implemented or not, these projects lead to the surplus absorption back in the system through the intentions of recovery. Despite the fact abandoned structures have been either dismissed or undermined within the dominant order, they are replaced into the capital accumulation as their exchange values increase. This is observed in the instance of Çaka, and even if the abandoned building has not been recovered physically nor occupied, it has contributed to the visibility of the structure which is situated by a remarkable coast, becoming an object of focus by the developers who intended to appropriate the structure for tourism purposes. On the other hand, while a common expectancy would be to see abandoned structures in public status to be mended by the state, one strives to think whether it is HIM to undertake the responsibility of what the state should assume in the first place. Even if so, how many of the remaining seventeen thousand idle structures in the country can HIM recover? And how would this responsibility assume the position and the agenda of the collective in the long run, who sets out a journey to discover the ways how architecture responds to social issues in the first place? In any case, emplaced in such messiness for the last eight years, HIM does not only debrief the role of the architect but brings up a new subjectivity that

is located in the intervals of the client and the developer, the designer and the builder, the construction worker and the fundraiser.

Although interpreted at local and national levels, it is not surprising that the case resembles similar patterns across diverse global geographies. Within the scope of Chicago Architecture Biennale in 2019, and together with the collectives StudioBasar (Romania) and Raumlabor (Germany), HIM was invited to develop a project at an abandoned educational structure at Bronzeville in Chicago; a neighborhood known as the city's Black Metropolis. Unlike the policies invoked for urbanizing rural territories in Turkey, in this particular urban geography, educational structures remained idle due to urban development gentrifying the black neighborhood with the hidden agenda of racial discrimination. When viewed under the neoliberal project, regardless of whether they are public or educational edifices, abandoned buildings prone to akin sequences recurring globally, yet emerging at different levels, scales, and temporal intervals. Through structural restoration under such conditional grounds, recovery than also points to a rehabilitation against social segregation, with blurring the definitive boundaries of the architectural profession.

The case study in resilience, which highlighted the multidisciplinary collective Düzce Hope Studio, pointed toward a production that springs receptive spaces and embraces simulating strategies aspiring for collective production models and alternative spatial conditions for social living. Working with a prudent community who strived for their rights to housing for fifteen years under the housing cooperative, Düzce Hope Studio was not only established thanks to the resilience built among the marginalized community of tenant victims but was also assigned to develop a participatory design scheme in which the collective found the opportunity to implement and test collaborative design tools. In other words, the collective interacted with the long-term struggle at a predefined interval which precisely marks the level of design service provision. Joining for envisioning a social housing model in the aftermath of the environmental and humanitarian crisis, and as post-struggle enablers, the group also had the opportunity to anticipate an experimental organizational structure that synthesizes diverse disciplinary skills, including but not limited to architecture.

It is on this particular occasion that the provisional status of Düzce Hope Studio offers a compelling line to rethink the positions of spatial practitioners when not subjected to established disciplinary boundaries, who produces space and how one practices participation. As the long-term struggle granted a reverse participation scheme – at where

users engaged the studio members in the design process, it is no doubt that the direction of the housing production is influenced. Yet, as it is also expressed by one of the collective members, it remains questionable whether if the conventional mode of architectural practice could have been challenged unless it was propelled by the efforts of the community. Under such grounds, simulating actions are exempted from the remainder of the crucial social issues, such as the official negotiation process with the state in seeking for legal rights to access to land, hence become only a process of building commonalities and mutual respect. In this respect, simulation has become an exercise for social equity and searching for horizontal ways of engagement for establishing future relations both among the community, but particularly within the collective's organization structure.

Resilience, which then emerged from the compulsions in a projective space discharging community in the first place, was spatialized with the building solidarity and tenacity among the community and has also come into existence within the internal dynamics of Düzce Hope Studio. In this manner, embedded within a post-disastrous context of concern, the case represents a peculiar and a reverse experiment unlike its counterparts claiming the right to space; in which a long struggle for the non-yet space formerly succeeds in the formation of a resilient community who subsequently leads to the culmination of Düzce Hope Studio. As of today, the project Düzce Hope Homes has received national and international press, and also awards for its innovative social housing model. Yet, it is still uncertain whether the model's communal living visions can ensue after its realization, and whether if the project can even be completed, after all, considering the delay of the construction work for the last two years due to lack of state credit support.

One of the disappointments that the cooperative president expressed to me was the position of Düzce Hope Studio within the overall process. The collective continued further with the campaigns to pull in financial resources to realize the construction, yet their efforts short-lived with the diminishing of the collective. Therefore, what remains less clear for Düzce Hope Studio is how their success could have been ventured into a sustainable model. The collaborative model of Düzce Hope Studio nonetheless carried feasibility challenges, given the fact that it provided voluntary work, and had an expanding and contracting scale which contained between 50 to 85 volunteers coming from diverse disciplines.

The case study in resistance, which visited the group 596 Acres, inclined toward conditionally accessed vacant spaces with mediating strategies that intervene at policy

levels. Unlike the former two case studies, the architect is missing in the group, yet its disciplinary tools are at present and are employed both digitally and physically to foster the qualities of vacant lots across New York City. What is striking in this state is not a romantic desire to beautify, or to take care of something that was not taken care of – unlike the intentions behind the abundant community garden projects run by architects, but to create a communal space for social cultivation that potentially enables residents to compete with developers, and to have a say in the decisions that have consequences in their communities. Applying mapping tools, the position of 596 Acres in this process is to reveal vacant land patterns over a digital platform to enable communities to ensure the new interpretations of the law. As the founder of the group, who is a lawyer, has expressed, resistance happens through the crudest forms of opposition; against the state precluding inhabitants from the decision making of land use planning processes, and as she subtly underlined, it is maybe even against the design professionals who reconfigure the very shape and the use of spaces. This raises a critical claim and proves the position of architecture in practice, which is undermined yet its tools cease to exist invisibly.

Locating vacant lands under the responsibility of organized communities, 596 Acres exposes the consequences of uneven development across the neighborhoods in the city and prepares ground-up networks to confront with the top-down governance. Yet it is a controlled confrontation, in which the responsible local bodies expect the communities to establish non-profit bodies, and to set bylaws on how to use vacant lands. Under this regulated independence, it supports with financial and material resources for social and spatial cultivation. It is no doubt that 596 Acres sheds light on the lands that are insulated from the market, but in doing so, it brings in new struggles for no apparent reason whatsoever, among the communities and the developers who draw a bead on the vacant lands, since it has been experienced in one of the gardens. As of June 2018, 596 Acres is not providing land access advocacy support anymore. But the tools remain online, with the advocacy being fully assigned to communities. The group states to be glad to have contributed to shaping a movement; however, it remains unclear whether the movement has adopted a purely institutional form.

The narratives told in the study ascribe spatial interventions to be loaded with complexities that move beyond the established description of architecture as building, towards other forms of production that include buildings but also much more. An analysis of these forms of production entailed collaborative dynamics between communities and collectives and suggested compulsory cooperation with the state despite playing against

its forces. Located within such circumstances, organizational structures of the studied groups projected new positions to be emerging; with the broader alliances across disciplines, coalescing the disciplinary capacities and the tools of architecture. Whereas actions have been forged with the competences of the collectives, they have also been devised under the contextual predicaments. Moving through the practices, emerging constellations have shown that constituents of space, action, and position contribute to the emergence and content generation of spatial practices in varying weights. While in some cases it is the sequence of events in space that triggers the actors, in others, it is the actors who give shape to processes.

As the case studies disclose, there is a strong correlation between the constituents of space, action, and position; however, it is not a linear, but a relational and entangled one. Thus, inquiring transversally proves to be central, both to enact a manifold perspective of social and political engagement but also to blend those aspects in pursuing the complex materiality of producing space. Therefore, beyond an interpretation of architectural images as the final product or the design process representations confined within architecture's critical program, it is under the ramifications such as the processes of policy, land advocacy, financial resource, construction and inhabitation that a socially and politically committed spatial practice eventually comes into the evaluation. It is without losing those insights that the contextualization against contemporary capitalism remains momentous. Recovery, resilience, and resistance, which are than embarked as a result of emerging patterns attained through the framework, are not only projected as backlashes to the crisis of the neoliberal project, but also posed further questions that this dissertation could not incorporate but has raised.

One question concerns the efficacy hence the possibilities that the studied practices entail. How could the consequences of their implementations avoid being fed in the system, even if they correspond to interfering with the crisis of capitalism? In other words, condemned to the cleaning up of crisis, how do they keep off from triggering the occurrence of further crisis, and/or tackle institutional forms? And how could they create other forms of instituting bodies and practices without never fully reaching the status of an institution? One of the strong contributions of these works certainly is to offer a distinctive trajectory for the production of space. However, how architecture, urban planning and public art can aspire to a direct social and political change in this production remains critical, counting on the fact that it depends on wider forces as it demonstrates with its subjects hence the tools in flux. Another question that deserves attention is their relevance to the process and

progress of crisis. An in-depth exposure of the cases demonstrated that 596 Acres resists against further urban development, whereas HIM recovers after it has been materialized, or Düzce Hope Studio's resilience concedes during its happening. Concerning what outbreaks, hence the stages and scales of the neoliberal project do interstitial production of space appear? Following a decade or so, how could a retrospective inquiry reveal about the outcomes or the consequences of such production?

The terrain of socially and politically committed practices are after all dynamic, but in any case, they involve the interconnections between three sets of constituents – space, action, and position. The uneasiness that sparks these spatial practices are likely to alter as a consequence of crises' cyclical nature, but their main impulses, to recover, to resist, and to resile, will likely remain immanent. The critical interrogation into these three repercussions emanating from the contours of the drawn terrain is aimed to spatial practitioners, particularly to architects who feel more than being the willing servants to those in power, and who consecutively feel the need to bring a change. The thick descriptions of the narratives provided here through the viewpoints of the users, practitioners, and institutions will nonetheless help the engaged ones in spatial fields to better acknowledge their positions and the very contexts they are situated in, and on how to act in more receptive ways in building responses to the crisis. To the ones coming from non-spatial fields, the framework could also be helpful to decipher the causes and processes of such modes of production and encourage the adoption of designerly tools in their efforts.

To conclude, this dissertation poised interstitial as a mode of production in response to recurrent debates in the critical discourse about whether there is an outside to the neoliberal condition. With this point of view, the study did not aim to appraise or counsel spatial productions at the interstices of capitalism as new or changing forms of action and engagement with the city. Neither did it argue that architecture was ineffective in the face of crises. Whilst avoiding both ends of the pendulum, the underlying objective in this study was to provide a methodological route to examine what spatial production mechanisms and means are reproduced from within a crisis. As the recent history demonstrates capitalism not to be in monolithic states, and as its wheel continues to spin, it is likely for us to encounter further crisis-riddled times. I hope this study contributes to architectural and other spatial fields by providing a guide for the readers about social and political engagement, as spatial practices keep altering strategies and forms of engagement with society and politics in line with the prospective ebbs and flows of capitalism.

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APPENDIX A. SPATIAL PRACTITIONERS AND THEIR SELECTED WORKS

	no	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	BASED IN	TURKEY	TURKEY	TURKEY	TURKEY	USA	USA	USA	USA	Hong Kong	Palestine	Serbia/ Netherlands	Netherlands	Germany	Sweden	UK	UK	UK	Italy	Spain	Romania
		HIM	DUZCE HOPE STUDIO	ABOUT BLANK	PLANKTON PROJECT	596 ACRES	TEDDY CRUZ	CUP	COHSTRA	KAI FONG PAI DONG	DAAR	STEALTH UNLIMITED	JEANNE VAN HEESWIJK	RAUMLABOR	DIS/ORDER	AAA	ASSEM BLE	MUF	STALKER	RECETAS URBANAS	studioBASAR
	Foundation Year	2011 (2007)	2014 (1999)	2005	2015	2011	Late 1990s	1997	2008	2015	2007	2000	1993	1999	2013	2001	2010	1994	1995	2007	2006
	Selected Project(s)	Abandoned Rural Schools	Düzce Hope Homes	Open-Cube	DURAK ovack; Düzce Hope Homes	Living Lots NYC; The Urban Reviewer; NYCommons	The Political Equator; Manufactured Sites; Mapping Conflict	Vendor Power; What is Affordable Housing?	Playgrounds for Useful Knowledge	Neighbor's Stall	Campus in Camps	City in the Making; The Wild City	Philadelphia Assembled	Floating University	Mobile Cinema	EcoBox; Passage 56; R-Urban	Cineroleum, Granby Four Streets; The Cineroleum; Folly for a Flyover	General Review: See This is What we do: A muf Manual	Campo Boario; Walking Across Actual Territories	Skips: Taking the Street; Scaffolding; Building Yourself an Urban Reserve; Capsule 1; Insect House.	The Public Bath; The Letter Bench
	DEVELOPING CATEGORIES OF INFORMATION: breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data - through formulating questions.																				
	FRAMEWORK																				
CONSTITUENTS / SPACE	HOW ARE INTERSTICES FORMED? Spatial conditions occurring, compelling, contributing or inspiring spatial practices.																				
	(1) CASUAL_SPACE AS THE PROJECTIVE: EXISTING SOCIO-POLITICAL COMPULSIONS IN SPACE		X				X	X	X		X								X		
	(2) CONDITIONAL_SPACE AS THE MEDIATOR: INVISIBLE/DISREGARDED UNTIL EXPLORED & INTERVENED	X				X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
	(3) CONSEQUENTIAL_SPACE AS THE RECEPTIVE: TEMPORARILY OR PERMANENTLY FABRICATED CRACKS		X	X	X										X						X
	WHERE ARE INTERSTICES FORMED? Spatial contexts where actions are performed.																				
	(2) REFUGEE CAMPS: PERMANENT TEMPORARINESS										X										
	(2) VACANT LOTS: UNDER HOLD (DUE TO POLICY GAPS OR OWNERSHIP ENTANGLEMENTS)					X			X					X		X			X	X	
	(1,2) NEIGBORHOODS OR LOTS: EXPOSED TO URBAN TRANSFORMATION								X			X	X			X		X	X		
	(2,3) SMALL SCALE STRUCTURES: DISAPPEARING GROUNDS									X							X				
	(2) ABANDONED STRUCTURES, SPACES: SYSTEMATIC EXCESS	X										X					X		X	X	
	(1) DISASTER AND THE LOSS OF HOUSING: NON-YET SPACE		X																		
	(2) POLITICAL BORDERS (MIGRATION FLOWS) AS A PHYSICAL BARRIER: INFORMAL INFRASTRUCTURES						X				X										
	(3) PUBLIC SPACES (PARKS, SQUARES, RIVERSIDE, ETC.)			X	X									X	X			X		X	X
CONSTITUENTS / ACTION	HOW ARE INTERSTITIAL OPERATIONS INSTIGATED? Physical and ideal restructurations.																				
	EMANATING FROM WITHIN: INSIDER CATALYZER		X		X	X				X											
	EMANATING FROM OUTSIDE: INCOMER CATALYZER	X		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	HOW ARE INTERSTICES PERFORMED? Tools and tactics of operation																				
	ACTING (physical interventions)																				
	SMALL-SCALE STRUCTURES			X	X					X	X				X	X	X		X	X	X
	BUILDINGS	X					X					X		X			X				
	MEDIATING (community empowerment)																				
	DIGITAL&PHYSICAL TOOLS (TRANSLATION OF URBAN POLICIES & OPEN-SOURCE MANUALS)		X			X	X	X		X										X	
	PEDAGOGICAL PROCESSES (PUBLIC EVENTS, MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS)	X	X					X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	SIMULATING (research-oriented actions)																				
	ACTION-BASED RESEARCH								X		X	X	X					X	X		
	CURATION&DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH (EXHIBITION&PUBLICATION)								X		X		X	X		X		X	X		
CONSTITUENTS / POSITION	WHO ARE THE ACTORS?																				
	ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE																				
	LEGAL ENTITIES/INITIATIVES	Non-Profit	Non-Profit	Firm	Platform	Non-Profit	Firm	Non-Profit	Non-Profit	Platform	Firm	Firm	Firm	Firm	Non-Profit	Non-Profit	Firm	Firm	Collective	Firm	Firm
	DISCIPLINARY BACKGROUNDS																				
	ARCHITECTURE; PLANNING; DESIGN	X	X	X	X		X	X				X		X	X	X	X		X		X
	ARTIST							X		X			X								
	ARCHITECT+ARTIST								X		X							X	X	X	
	USER		X			X				X											
	OTHER DISCIPLINES (LAW; SOCIOLOGY; POLITICAL SCIENCE)		X			X	X										X				
	Resource																				
	MONETARY RESOURCE (s: sponsor; la: local authority; f: fund; ss: self-sufficient; os: other profit-making sources)	s	ss	s	la	f	la + f	f	f	ss	os	f+os	f	la+f	la+f	f + la	os+f+la	os	ss	ss+f	os+f
	HUMAN RESOURCE (PROJECT TEAMS FOR ON-SITE CONSTRUCTION AND/OR RESEARCH) (v: volunteer; p: paid)	v+p	v+p	p	v	p	p	p	p	v	p	v+p	p	p	v+p	v+p	v	p	v	v	p

APPENDIX B. LIST OF SPATIAL PRACTITIONERS INTERVIEWED

Name	Profession / Role	Collective	Date	Location	Duration
İbrahim Emre Gündoğdu	Architect / Co-founder	Herkes İçin Mimarlık	23.02.18	İstanbul	02:18:36
Altıner Yıldırım	Architect / Member		20.10.19	Ödemiş	0:45:19
Gökhan Kodalak	Architect / Academic Scholar	About Blank	05.04.18	New York	01:18:47
Ezgi Çiftçi	Architect / Founder	Plankton Project	15.09.17	Skype	02:58:13
Erbay Yucak	Lawyer / Cooperative Director	Düzce Solidarity Housing Cooperative for Homeless and Tenant Earthquake Victims	26.07.19	Düzce	00:48:16
Sami Kılıç	Inhabitant / Cooperative President				02:04:29
Sıdıka Özbakır	Inhabitant / Cooperative Member				00:13:43
Mara Krawitz	Architect / Co-founder	596 Acres	09.04.18	New York	00:49:34
S. Paula Segal	Architect / Founder		29.04.18	New York	00:31:09
Sade Akin Boyewa	Inhabitant / Gardener		12.05.18	New York	00:49:25
Amanda Sroka	Editor / Assistant Curator	Philadelphia Assembled by Jeanne Van Heeswijk	14.05.18	Philadelphia	01:05:06
Damon Reaves	Artist / Associate Curator				
Michael Leung	Artist / Co-founder	Kai Fong Pai Dong	06.08.18	Hong Kong	00:45:08
Balint Toth	Architect / Member	Valyo	05.02.19	İzmir	00:37:08
Karin Andersson	Landscape Architect / Co-Founder	Dis/order	08.10.18	İzmir	00:34:49
Johanna Bratel	Landscape Architect / Co-Founder				
Miguel Robles-Durán	Urbanist & Academic Scholar / Co-founder	Cohabitation Strategies	13.03.18	New York	00:33:21
			21.03.18		01:39:52

APPENDIX C. LIST OF SOURCES CONSULTED FOR SPATIAL PRACTITIONERS AND THEIR WORKS

research items	resources	item #	1 HERKES İÇİN MİMARLIK (HIM)	2 DUZCE HOPE STUDIO (Düzceli Evsiz Depremzedeler Konut Kooperatifi-Bir Umut Derneği)	3 ABOUTBLANK	4 PLANKTON PROJECT	5 596 ACRES	6 JEANNE VAN HEESWIJK	7 ESTUDIO TEDDY CRUZ	8 DECOLONIZING ARCHITECTURE ART RESIDENCY (DAAR)	9 STEALTH UNLIMITED	10 KAI FONG PAI DONG (NEIGHBOUR'S STALL)	11 RAUMLABOR	12 DIS/ORDER	13 AAA	14 CENTER FOR URBAN PEDAGOGY (CUP)	15 COHSTRA (COHABITATION STRATEGIES)	16 ASSEMBLE	17 MUF	18 RECETAS URBANAS	19 STALKER / OSSERVATORIO NOMADE	20 studioBASAR
A	INTERVIEWS	A.1.	Interview with Herkes İçin Mimarlık co-founder Ibrahim Emre Gündoğdu (23 February 2018) conducted by Tuba Doğu, HIM Office, Istanbul.	Interview with Sami Kılıç, the head of Düzce Solidarity Housing Cooperative for Homeless and Tenant Earthquake Victims (26 July 2019) conducted by Tuba Doğu, Beyköy, Düzce.	Interview with AboutBlank co-founder Gökhan Kodalak (25 April 2018) conducted by Tuba Doğu, New York City.	Interview with Plankton Project co-founder Ezgi Cihşi (15 September 2017) conducted by Tuba Doğu, over Skype	W/Mara Dawn Krawitz (09.04.18) Interview with 596 Acres co-founder Mara Dawn Krawitz (09 April 2018) conducted by Tuba Doğu, New York City.	Interview with Philadelphia Assembled project co-editors Amanda Sroka & Dashon Reaves (18 May 2018) conducted by Tuba Doğu, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia.				Interview with Kai Fong Pai Dong founder Michael Leung (06 August 2018) conducted by Tuba Doğu, Hong Kong.		Interview withDis/Order founders Karin Andersson & Johanna Brated (08 October 2018) conducted by Tuba Doğu, Izmir.			Interview with Cohabitation Strategies co-founder Miguel Robles-Durán (13 March 2018) conducted by Tuba Doğu, New York City.					
		A.2.	Interview with Herkes İçin Mimarlık co-founder Ibrahim Emre Gündoğdu and member Alinur Yildirim (20 October 2019) conducted by Tuba Doğu, Ovakent, Odemiş, Izmir.	Interview with Erbay Yucak, member of One Hope Association and the director of Düzce Solidarity Housing Cooperative for Homeless and Tenant Earthquake Victims (26 July 2019) conducted by Tuba Doğu, Beyköy, Düzce.			W/Paula Segal (29.04.18) Interview with 596 Acres founder Paula Z. Segal (29 April 2018) conducted by Tuba Doğu, Myrtle Village Garden, New York City.														
		A.3.		Interview with Sıddıka Özbakır, cooperative partner of Düzce Solidarity Housing Cooperative for Homeless and Tenant Earthquake Victims (26 July 2019) conducted by Tuba Doğu, Beyköy, Düzce.			Interview with the Garden of Love starter and member Sade Akin Beyova (11/12 May 2018) conducted by Tuba Doğu, Garden of Love, New York City.														
B	FIELD VISIT	B.1.	October 20, 2018, Odemiş, Ovakent Project, Izmir.	July 26-27, 2019. Düzce Hope Homes Project Construction Site, Beyköy, Düzce.		July 26-27, 2019. Düzce Hope Homes Project Construction Site, Beyköy, Düzce.	April 15, 2018, Halsey Community Farm, Brooklyn, New York.					August 5, 2018, Neighborhood's Market Stall, Mongkok, Hong Kong.						September 2012, Sugar Studios, London.				October 2018, One Architecture Week, Action!, Plovdiv- Bulgaria.
		B.2.					April 29, 2018, Myrtle Village Garden, Brooklyn, New York.															
		B.3.					May 12, 2018, Garden of Love, Manhattan, New York															
C	BOOK / BOOK CHAPTER	C.1.	Ermacora, T., Bullivant, L. (Eds.) (2016) *Recoded City: Co-Creating Urban Features*. London, New York: Routledge				Segal, P. Z. (2012). Room to Grow Something. In R. Shiffman, R. Bell, L. J. Brown, & L. Elizabeth (Eds.), Beyond Zuccotti Park: Freedom of Assembly and the Occupation of Public Space (pp. 150–169). Oakland, CA: New Village Press.	Gandolfi, E. (2010). A dialogue between Emiliano Gandolfi and Jeanne van Heeswijk. In Bartucher, A. & Wielander, J. (Eds.), Visible: Where Art Leaves Its Own Field and Becomes Visible As Something Else (pp. 133-139). Berlin: Sternberg Press.	Cruz, T. (2017). Borderwalls as Public Space? In Ronald Rael (Ed.), *Borderwall as Architecture: A Manifesto for the US*. *Mexico Boundary* (vol.xvi). University of California Press.	Hild, S., Petti, A.(Ed.) (2018). Permanent Temporariness. Art And Theory Publishing.	Dönkü, A. & Neelen, M. (STEALTH.Unlimited) (2018). Upscaling. Training, Commoning Constructing a Future That Is yet to Be. Jovis.	J. Maier & M. Rich (Eds.) (2008). Raumlaborberlin. Acting in Public. Jovis.	Kaminer, T. (2017). *The Efficacy of Architecture: Political Contestation and Agency* (pp. 113-119). New York: Routledge.	Ferguson, F. / Urban Drift Projects. (Eds.) (2014). Make_Shift City: Renegotiating the Urban Commons (pp: 110-117). Berlin: Jovis.	Resident, G. (2016). Cohabitation Strategies: Socio-Spatial Approaches, Practices, and Pedagogies with a Dialectical Perspective. In Mitrasinovic, M (Ed.) Concurrent Urbanities: Designing Infrastructures of Inclusion (pp. 99-114), New York, London: Routledge.	Mad (2005): Rights of common: ownership, participation, risk. In P. B. Jones, D. Petrescu, & J. Till (Eds.), *Architecture and Participation* (pp. 233-239) New York: Routledge.	Romito, L., (2016). Walking Out of the Contemporary. In Mitrasinovic, M (Ed.) Concurrent Urbanities: Designing Infrastructures of Inclusion (pp. 24-37), New York, London: Routledge.	Stalker (2005). Stalker and the big game of Campo Boario. In P. B. Jones, D. Petrescu, & J. Till (Eds.), Architecture and Participation (pp. 249-256). New York: Routledge.	Assimo, A. & Borzan, C. (2018). studioBASAR) (2016). Public Works: The Reconnections of Communities in the Dormitory Neighborhood. In Medeşan, S. And Panait, L. (eds.), cARTier - Peripheral Interventions (pp. 131-138), Cluj: Idea Publishing House.
		C.2.					Segal, P. Z. & Kravitz (2019). This Land is your Land: Strategies for Making the Potential Commons Visible and Actionable. in Kuhlenz Orangutanger- (Ed.), This is not an Atlas: A Global Collection of Counter-Cartographies (pp. 76-83). Transcript-Verlag.	van Heeswijk, J. (2013). A Call for Sociality. In Pulvirenti, T. & Selzer, S. A. (Eds.), What We Want is Free: Critical Exchanges in Recent Art. (pp. 287-300). SUNY Press.	Cruz, T. (2016). Opening] Public (Re)source. In Alonso, g., Cruz, T. & Golden, J. (Eds.), *Open Source: A Citywide Public Art Exhibition* (pp. 21-36). Philadelphia: Mural Arts.	Petti, A. (2019). Archipelagoes and enclaves: On the border between Jordan and Palestine-Israel. In Petris, A. (Ed.), Architecture on the Borderline (pp. 77-95). Routledge.		Kafka, G. (2018). What is a School if not a Promise? Radical Hope at the Floating University. In Kafka, G., Lovell, S., Shipway, J. (Eds.), Architheses. - Volume 3: Apocalypse (pp. 96-107), dpr-barcelona.	Ferguson, F. / Urban Drift Projects. (Eds.) (2014). Make_Shift City: Renegotiating the Urban Commons (pp: 102-109). Berlin: Jovis.	Resident, G., Robles-Duran, M. (2017). Social Property and the Need for a New Urban Practice, in Petrescu, D., & Trogal, K. (eds.), The Social (Re)Production of Architecture: Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice (pp. 211-224), Routledge.	Mad (2007). An Invisible Privilege. In Petrescu, D. (ed.), *Altering Practices: Feminist Politics and Poetics of Space* (pp. 57–68). London; New York: Routledge.	Shenfield K., Dumat A., Aisley R., muf (2001). *This is what we do: a muf manual*. London: Ellipsis.	Stalker (2005). Stalker and the big game of Campo Boario. In P. B. Jones, D. Petrescu, & J. Till (Eds.), Architecture and Participation (pp. 249-256). New York: Routledge.	Assimo, A. & Borzan, C. (2018). studioBASAR) (2016). Public Works: The Reconnections of Communities in the Dormitory Neighborhood. In Medeşan, S. And Panait, L. (eds.), cARTier - Peripheral Interventions (pp. 131-138), Cluj: Idea Publishing House.
		C.3.						Bouman, O. (2010). Architecture of Consequence: Dutch Designs on the Future. Nai Publishers.	Cruz, T. & Tara, J. (2010). Design Ops: A Conversation between Teddy Cruz and Jonathan Tara. In E. Choi & M. Trotter (Eds.), Architecture at the Edge of Everything. Cambridge: Work Books, MIT.					Beddeleh, L., Ernsten, C., Heeswijk, J. V., Kaspori, D., Lang, P. Til el. (Eds.) (2008). Archiphonein: Faculties for Architecture. Dutch Pavillion Venice Architecture Biennale.		Ferguson, F. / Urban Drift Projects. (Eds.) (2014). Make_Shift City: Renegotiating the Urban Commons (pp: 182-189). Berlin: Jovis.	Tonkiss, F., Bullivant, L. (Eds.) (2016) Recoded City: Co-Creating Urban Features. London, New York: Routledge.	Thomson, N. & Independent Curators International (2009). Experimental Geography: Radical Approaches to Landscape, Cartography, and Urbanism, Melville House.	Resident, G., Robles-Duran, M. (2017). Social Property and the Need for a New Urban Practice, in Petrescu, D., & Trogal, K. (eds.), The Social (Re)Production of Architecture: Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice (pp. 211-224), Routledge.	Thomas H., Fior, L. (2014). Brief Disobedience and Permanent Gentrification. In Ferguson, F. / Urban Drift Projects. (Eds.), Make_Shift City: Renegotiating the Urban Commons (pp: 146-152). Berlin: Jovis.	Mad (2007). An Invisible Privilege. In Petrescu, D. (ed.), *Altering Practices: Feminist Politics and Poetics of Space* (pp. 57–68). London; New York: Routledge.			
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PhD., İzmir Institute of Technology, Graduate School of Engineering and Sciences, Department of Architecture (2014-2020)
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Part-time Instructor,
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RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

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Design Trust Hong Kong, Seed Grant (2019)

PUBLICATIONS

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Doğu, T. & Varkal Deligöz, M. (2017). "Hafıza Kutusu: Bir Kentsel Kolektif Bellek Deneyi(mi)" [Memory Box: An Experiment on Urban Collective Memory], MEGARON: Yıldız Technical University Faculty of Architecture E-Journal, Vol. 12(4). E-ISSN 1309-6915.

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