

THE PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC SPACES:  
DESIGN DIALECTICS AND PEDAGOGY

by

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## **DEDICATION**

To Sanda and Eugeniu,  
talented architects, loving parents and considerate citizens...

to Ioana and Dudu,  
sister, brother and soul mates...

to Παναγιώτης.

... to children, the clients of planning

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Being aware of the role that the urban planning and design practice plays in shaping the future, I also dedicate this work to children, the clients of planning...

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation contributes to building a dialectical understanding of the process of urban design from the perspective of Henri Lefebvre's theory of spatial production. From this perspective, urban space is the material expression of the practice of a society; space is socially produced by the conflicts and contradictions existent within the social order. A dialectic approach considers the opposite sides in unity, and in design reasoning aims to offer a synthesis that brings in unity the contradictions present within the design process. Hence I propose a dynamic understanding of urban design as an ongoing dialectic of spatial production. In this study the narrative centers on the contemporary production of urban spaces for public life.

The *narratives of loss* that emerged in urban studies in the last decades express dissatisfaction with respect to the disappearance of public spaces in the American cities and the consequence of privatization of public life. At the same time, the practice of everyday life in the modern city is often a disconnected experience that disregards individual experiences and the particularities of places. Despite initiatives of community life revival by design, like in the New Urbanist communities in the USA, there appears to exist a gap between the intentions and the outcomes of the urban design processes. In this research I ask the following questions: How has the relationship between *the public* and *the private* transformed over time? What might be the necessary transformations within the professional



practice with respect to the roles played by planners and designers in the current production of public spaces? How would planning and design pedagogy build a different understanding of spatial research, in order to prepare planners and designers to practice with alternatives to the rational comprehensive models?

The social interaction that takes place in the city core is a good measure for the vitality of the city, which is an important characteristic for the city's potential successful position in the global marketplace. In this study I propose an ideal of spaces for public life that are civil, diverse, and convivial. A characteristic of the production of this ideal is a dynamic understanding of the design process with the consequence of blurring the boundaries between *the public* and *the private*. I argue that the production of this spatial ideal for public life is capable to configure the city's successful image in a globalized world.

In order to find out how planning and design practice should target this ideal, I performed field research regarding two newly developed projects: the Third Street Promenade, a pedestrian street in Santa Monica, United States, and CentrO, a shopping mall and entertainment center in Neue Mitte Oberhausen, Germany. I chose this comparative case study due to its potential to illustrate an irony in the productions of public spaces within the current process of globalization. While in the United States urban development aims to replicate the quality of the European public spaces, new developments in Europe reproduce the suburban, off-center, destination places like the American shopping malls and entertainment centers. I

present in comparison these two projects that illustrate planning and design practices with rational comprehensive models. Among the main findings of the comparative analyses is that in spite of the similarities of these two public spaces, they exemplify different solutions with respect to the project's impact on the city cores of Oberhausen and Santa Monica.

I propose in this study the definition of design dialectics as the dynamic understanding of a life cycle of a place across the moments of the following spatial triad: a sense of a place, the conception of a place, and the life and enduring civic presence of a place. I structured this spatial triad on different ways to interact with places according to Lefebvre's dialectical moments that refer to different spatial representations. As a consequence, the proposed spatial triad generates different ways to represent places that I call an external image, a professional image, and the lived experience of a place.

Furthermore, this study translates spatial theory into planning and design practice in two ways. First, I propose to consider planning and design practitioners as spatial explorers that approach spatial analyses from a phenomenological viewpoint. A phenomenological viewpoint draws wisdom through reflective inquiries into the inner being. From this point of view professionals would assume alternatively different social roles in spatial explorations, and alternatively perform sensorial, conceptual, institutional, and rhythm analyses of places. Furthermore, I suggest they should be capable to incorporate change within the conception process

through a dynamic perspective across the dialectical moments of a life cycle of a place, and to mediate among the three modes of representation within the spatial production. This process of spatial production implies a reflective paradigm of practice.

Second, in order to develop the habit of reflective action, I suggest integrating the social sciences theory into planning and design pedagogy, and familiarizing future practitioners with a critical approach to the design reasoning and practice. The design process is not a series of activities that can be dealt with one after another, but rather it is a process of forming judgments about the problems. The choice between different paradigms of practice is key in adapting to the pace of change within the contemporary spatial production. Hence this study proposes a dialectical alternative to previous methods of planning and design practice, an alternative that values the particularities of places and of individuals including the senses and the inner being.

## **INTRODUCTION: PUBLIC SPACES**

### **ARGUMENT**

This dissertation aims to build an understanding of the production of spaces for public life in Western cities, from the perspective of planning and design practitioners. The narrative presented here is grounded on spatial field research in the Los Angeles region in the United States, and in the Ruhr region in Germany. My understanding of spatial analysis is inspired by Lefebvre's spatial dialectics (1991). In this context I draw from theories of spatial production that propose the social interpretation of urban space (Lefebvre 1991, Gottdiener 1994, Castells 2005, Harvey 2006a). I am particularly interested in public spaces as complex manifestations of the urban design reasoning within the production process.

A dialectical take on the production of spaces for public life is the contribution of this study to the planning and design literature regarding public space development. Dialectical reasoning is the method that takes change into consideration, and understands dynamically all the contradictory sides in unity according to Heraclitus' principle of coexistence of opposites. I propose in this study a dialectical take on the production of public spaces -- the dialectics of design -- in order to incorporate change in spatial analysis and design reasoning. I argue that the focus of planning and design on change, on life cycles and on public life is capable to make room for the transformation of places over time. I suggest that the ability of places to transform over time aligns with visions of sustainability in urban

design. I draw the idea of design dialectic from Tridib Banerjee (1994). Moreover, on the importance to concentrate on public life the inquiry on the future of public spaces, I refer to Banerjee's article published in January 2001.

In this study I configure an ideal of urban spaces that provide for social interaction and public life. This ideal is a combination of Richard Sennett's ideal of diverse spaces (1992) that continually optimize their capability to accommodate Lisa Peattie's democratic conviviality (1998) and Benjamin Barber's societal civility (1998). From the perspective of this study, public life incorporates political life, from the political economy of everyday life to political actions that aim to strengthen democracy (Harvey 2006b). Considering the Aristotelian understanding of politics as life in the *polis*, I argue that public life truly acquires political dimensions, if the conditions of conviviality, diversity and the practice of civil society are satisfied in public. I present here the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, California, as an example of a public space close to this ideal (Figure 1.1).

The result of this research is a conceptual framework meant to inform planning and design pedagogy and practice. First, the purpose of this exploration is to explain the dialectical framework of design in a manner that is useful for planning and design pedagogy. Second, a dialectical understanding of design is informative for practitioners, whether they conceive spaces for public life or whether they evaluate the spatial quality with respect to provision for social interaction and public life.

**FIGURE 1.1 AN APPARENTLY CONTRADICTIONARY PUBLIC SPACE**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade, the pedestrian shopping street of downtown Santa Monica, California, United States. I took the photograph on July 29, 2007 at 6:30pm. In watching the crowds and observing the activities going on in this public space, I note the multilayered experience that one could have here. I have experienced many times this public space, either as visitor, as professional or as city dweller and user of the place. This public space offers a particular interpretation of community and belonging: it is and at the same time it is not a familiar place. The Promenade is simultaneously local and cosmopolitan, a revitalized downtown street and an outdoor shopping mall, a public space accessible to all citizens and also a business improvement district overly regulated and controlled. In spite of the apparently contradictory characteristics of this public space, the Third Street Promenade manifests a diverse, civil and convivial concept of *the public* (refer to the section *The Public and the Private*).

As participant observer, city dweller and planner I am interested to find out whether there are particular spatial characteristics that contribute to the conviviality of public spaces. Are those characteristics shaped during the process of spatial production? What framework would a spatial explorer employ to evaluate the quality of public spaces in terms of provision for public life? What would be a suitable structure in teaching spatial analysis and conceptual design of convivial public spaces?

Although the formulation of these questions originates in field research, the *narratives of loss* that emerged in urban studies in the last decade stimulate me to attempt to answer these questions. These narratives express dissatisfaction with respect to the disappearance of public spaces (refer to Sorkin 1992, Kunstler 1994, with references in Crawford 1995, Arefi 1999). In defining the architectural “narratives of loss” (1995) Margaret Crawford quotes Richard Sennett’s lament for “the fall of public man” (1977), Michael Sorkin’s and Mike Davis’s announcements of “the end of public space” and the “destruction of any truly democratic urban spaces” (Davis in Sorkin 1992, p.155).

In the Los Angeles region, for example, most public life happens in private locations. Privately owned spaces for public life are enclosed or outdoor shopping malls, simulations of traditional streets, and corporate plazas (Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee 1998, Moustafa 1999). Examples of publicly owned public spaces like the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica are scarce. As a consequence, the

commodification and privatization of public spaces restrict their use and the diversity of activities performed in public. By implication, the privatization of public spaces restricts democracy, political activity and freedom of speech (Kohn 2004), which constrains the capability of these urban spaces to define environments for public life.

In considering the quality of urban spaces in terms of provision for public life, the concern regarding the loss of public space in western cities points to the consequence of privatization of public life. There is a consistent body of literature that tackles the issue of privatization of public life (e.g. Crawford 1992, Boyer 1996, Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee 1998, Lofland 1998, Moustafa 1999, Kayden 2000, Banerjee 2001, Kohn 2004, Low and Smith 2005). Such endeavors recall positions within the larger context of social thought that either assemble the context of *the narratives of loss* (i.e. Sennett 1977, Putnam 1996, Habermas 1989, 1995 & 1998) or oppose the negative effects of modernity on public and private life (Berman 1982, Scott 1998, Lefebvre 2005 [1981], Harvey 2006b). The restrictive effect of the privatization of public spaces on public life is only one of the aspects that characterize modern life. The spatial production in contemporary modernity also is characterized by alienation of the private realm (Lefebvre 1984, 2002, 2005). Scholars agree that one of the consequences of modernity is a decrease in social contact and civic life, while individual isolation becomes the expression of social independence (on seclusion, individualism and alienation of *the private* refer



to Blakely and Snyder 1997, Barber 1998, Harvey 2000, Sennett 1996 and 2002). In the context of this critique, David Harvey argues that within the current environment of segregation and alienation, public space does not have a political character unless *the public* is understood together with its connections to the institutional organization and to private spaces (2006b).

The privatization of *the public* realm together with the alienation of *the private* realm impacts the contemporary life and behavior of modern citizens. As a result they prefer the flexibility of transitory spaces that satisfy the necessity for social interaction between *the public* and *the private*. The availability of these transitory spaces in the form of off-line and on-line communities of interest such as clubs and the like is made possible also due to the new means of communication, which enable virtual manifestations of public representation (i.e. political power). At present public life functions in “the space of places” as well as in “the space of flows” (Castells 2005), that makes the contemporary *agora* a space of conflicts and contradictions. On the one hand, the on-line public life in virtual space does not provide for a complete replacement of the off-line public life in the material space (Barber 1998, Banerjee 2001, Kohn 2004). On the other hand, in the Information Age the off-line public life is significant at both local and global level. According to Castells, the degree of social interaction in the public spaces of the city core is a measure of the city’s vitality, which is capable to determine the city’s potential success in the global marketplace (2005).

Considering the discrepancies that exist in the contemporary *agora* within the context of globalization, I find problematic the lack of viable alternatives to modern thinking in the production of spaces for public life. It appears that the advantages of technological progress and standardized order overcome in practice the intellectual criticism. There are various initiatives to address this tension between theory and practice, for instance through community life revival by means of design and development of New Urbanist neighborhoods. However, the failure to transcend bourgeois categories of thought makes this task almost unattainable.

This tension between theory and practice in the planning and design field brings about questions with respect to the role of practitioners in the spatial production: What are the roles that planners and designers play in the current spatial productions? What are the knowledge and skills, abilities and interests that inform professionals' actions? Do planners act as mediators of conflictual interests? How much power do they have to influence spatial outcomes? What roles might planners and designers play in the production process of spaces for public life? What might be the necessary transformations within the professional practice with respect to the practitioners' roles? Three decades ago, Sennett commented on the role of planners in a somewhat challenging manner:

When town planning seeks to improve the quality of life by making it more intimate, the planner's very sense of humanity creates the very sterility he should seek to avoid (p. 312). [...] The real problem with town planning now is not what to do, but what to avoid. [...] The question is how to recognize symptoms of a peculiar disease, symptoms which lie as much in current notions of what humane

scale and good community are as in the false notions we have of impersonality per se as a moral evil (1992 [1977], pp.311-312).

The practice of planning and design is not a value-free process (Banerjee 1994). As also Sennett suggests above, it is rather based on principles like morality, humanity, intimacy, “humane scale and good community” etc. In the attempt to create a livable realm according to professional principles, planning and design practitioners aim to harmonize the constraints of *bounded rationality* (Simon 1957) with the infinite domain of wishful thinking (refer to Figure 1.2). But ironically in imagining the future planners tend to avoid phenomenological viewpoints, as well as the use of intuitive knowledge or the “unconscious” level of human imagination.

Although the current practice employs a variety of planning models (Friedmann 1987, Sanyal 2005), design reasoning is based on formal linear thinking that helps to simplify and solve the problems (Alexander 1973). The comparative case study selected for this research shows that regardless of the planning culture and institutional setting, professionals resume the practice of spatial production to scientific methods that are rational and self-explanatory. Despite their elegance that seems to be suitable to the current argumentative processes of spatial production, scientific methods are capable to build mostly on the reality of the past. As rational comprehensive models are based on previously experienced spatial and institutional models, they reproduce the order and the experiences of the past within the production process of future space.

**FIGURE 1.2 THE CONCEPT OF BOUNDED RATIONALITY**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Promenade at the CentrO Shopping and Entertainment Center in Oberhausen, North Rhine-Westphalia. I took the photograph on November 26, 2003 at 3pm. Images conveying messages of different connotations juxtapose, as they are present in immediate proximity in the public space. A commercial promotion for H&M women lingerie is located next to a Christmas Market booth that showcases freshly baked Brezel and an innocent depiction of Santa Claus. I use this juxtaposition of necessity and wishful thinking to represent Herbert Simon's concept of *bounded rationality*, which denotes an agent's behavior approximately optimal according to his/her goals, as the resources will allow (1957). "...there are cognitive limits to the ability of people to pursue wholly rational purposeful behaviour. Rather than seek the optimal solution, actors satisfice; that is, they accept a solution which is 'good enough', within a so-called zone of indifference" (Gordon Marshall. 1994. *The Concise Dictionary of Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press).

In understanding the current production of spaces for public life, I focus on the irony between the use of rational comprehensive models and the aim to produce convivial public spaces. Institutional inquiry points to the gap between the capacity of planning and design professionals to understand the environment, and the difficulty to make a choice for the preferred alternative. According to Ronald Heiner (1983), the *CD gap* refers to the gap between the Competence to decipher the environment (knowledge) and the Difficulty to select the most preferred alternative (practice). The CD gap increases with the increase of complexity of the design process, due to intensified social interaction and dependence within the current spatial production. In order to reduce the uncertainties associated with the relation between understanding (knowledge) and choice (practice), the predictable human behavior is to establish institutions that regularize the interactions and limit the patterns of response (refer to Figure 1.3).

The so-called urban design “theories” are based on sets of principles that help practitioners to deal with problems’ complexity and to relax the responsibility of their choices (Alexander 1973). In bridging theory and practice are there options to strengthening the institutional constraints within the design process? As such the main question of this study is: how might planning and design education build a different understanding of spatial research, in order to prepare planners and designers to practice with alternatives to the rational comprehensive models?

**FIGURE 1.3 RONALD HEINER'S CD GAP**



This photograph illustrates a scene from the Farmers' Market at the crossing of the Third Street Promenade and Arizona Avenue in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on January 7, 2006 at 11:30am. The photograph shows an exchange of information between a buyer and a seller. I use this image of market interaction to illustrate Ronald Heiner's CD gap (1983) between an agent's Competence in deciphering problems and the Difficulty in selecting the most preferred alternatives. Heiner uses the relation between human mental capacities and the external environment to explain economic progress. The more complex is the environment, the highest are the uncertainties associated with the relation and hence the greater is the CD gap. In intensified social interaction and dependence, the predictable human behavior is to establish institutions that regularize the interactions and limit the patterns of response.

In conclusion, in this dissertation I argue in favor of a dynamic perspective within design reasoning, by means of designer's performance of various roles as spatial explorer. In light of this dynamic perspective, I propose a tripartite dialectical structure of spatial exploration to be used in planning and design pedagogy. This structure follows the lifecycle of a place from its conception, to its physical appearance, and to its life and enduring presence in the city. Rather than presenting a sequential argument, this study experiments with an illustrative montage of various manifestations of the design dialectics in the production of public spaces, and of the lessons derived for planning and design pedagogy and practice. Besides suggesting it as a method of spatial exploration, I propose the dialectics of design as a method of reasoning. I argue that a dialectical take on design reasoning is capable to inform practitioners' action in the spatial production of urban environments that stimulate social interaction and public life, in aiming to attain the ideal of diversity, civility and conviviality in spaces for public life.

## **THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE**

A significant premise of this study is that the conceptual meanings of *the public* and *the private* transform over time, and, together with the meaning, the physical expression of the relationship between the public and the private also transforms. The etymology of the word *public* brings us to the Latin *publicus*, analogous to Latin *populus* that means 'the people'. Nowadays, as a noun, *the public* usually refers either to the general body of mankind, of a nation-state, or to a

community or a particular body of people. In any situation the noun public concerns totality and completeness in an aggregation of people. As an adjective, *public* confers to any noun its relationship to the people: either that is pertaining, or belonging, or accessible to the people, or that is perceived, or affecting the people, or being in the service of the people, or that the people has certain rights over it, just like in *public life* or in *public space*.

Yet in each language these words have a different semantic nuance. For instance, the German adjective for *public* is *öffentlich*, which literally means open, free, or without restrictions. *Der öffentliche Raum* is the public space, the space that is accessible and of use to anyone without restrictions. This openness implies equality and totality as in everyone's right. But similar social arrangements guaranteed by the state like in the Hellenic *polis* may still be in place such as the absence of citizenship rights in the case of guest workers in Germany. Such social restrictions affect the elitist construct of Habermas' public sphere, which otherwise is *öffentlich* or equally accessible for all citizens. Also what in English is called *publicness* or *public* translates in German with *Öffentlichkeit*, which is a noun that possesses the intrinsic quality of being open, free, and without restrictions. This manner to perceive *the public* according to physical spatial boundaries is similar to Kevin Lynch's understanding through evaluation of the "openness of the open space" (Banerjee and Southworth 1995, p.396).



*Private* draws its origins from the Latin *privatus* that derives from the noun *privus* [private or individual], *privatio* [privation] and from the verb *privare* [to deprive or release]. Both the German *privat* and the English *private* have the same Latin origin. *Private* basically means either restricted to the use of a particular person, group or class, or unsuitable for public use or display (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*). Many connotations of the word *private* are defined in contrast to *the public*.

If they don't refer to the individual, both *the public* and *the private* are defined as pertaining to a certain group. As a result, the definitions of these two concepts depend upon the definition of boundaries, whether they are physical, social or symbolic boundaries. At the same time, *the public* and *the private* function together and cannot be dealt with in a separate manner. For instance, just to suggest some of the challenges brought forth by these two concepts, I consider them in the case of physical boundaries. How can we determine what is *public* and what is *private* in the urban space that we perceive with our senses? Are there obvious ways to define boundaries of the "urban sensorium" (Goonewardena 2005) such as sound, and smell?

I note however, that there is a generally accepted modern understanding of *the public* that has political dimensions, as in public life and public space, that derives its origins from the organization of the Hellenic *polis*. I am particularly interested in the symbolic value that ancient Greeks associated with the relationship

between the public and the private. In order to identify and to differentiate the forms of contemporary public life, I propose to reflect on our current understandings of *the public* in light of the Hellenic *bios politikos*.

In the Hellenic city-state there was a clear dichotomy between the public and the private life, which physically took place in the spaces of the *agora* and the private home. The *agora* acted as a marketplace and the assembly place (forum) to all citizens of the *polis*. Yet resident foreigners (*metics*) for example did not have citizenship rights, and hence had not been capable to contribute politically to the life of the *polis* (similarly to slaves and women). Hence being a citizen in the Hellenic city-state was regarded as highly important. “One thinks Socrates’ refusal of exile as evidence of the belief that even death as a citizen was more honorable than exile. Or of Thucydides’ remark that foreigners have no speech – by which he meant that their speech counts for nothing in the polis; it is the chattering of those who cannot vote” (Sennett 2002, p.192).

Public life in the Hellenic *polis*, or the exercised *bios politikos*, was constituted in action, *praxis*, and speech, *lexis*, and both took place in the *agora* (Aristotle 1995, Arendt 1998). From the point of view of its symbolic connotation, the Hellenic *bios politikos* described “a realm of freedom and permanence” in contrast to the private “realm of necessity and transitoriness” (Habermas 1995, p.4). This perpetual dimension of *the public* has lost its meaning in modern urban environments. Public life was suited to confer permanence, because the temporal

dimension of the *polis* was the cosmic duration that was based on cyclic time and repetition. In contrast to the Hellenic city-state, modernity is incapable to provide for immortality by means of public action, due to the irreversibility of historical and linear temporalities that organize our modern life. Moreover, in modernity “Transcendent Nature was replaced by immanent sensation and immediate fact as the hard core of reality” (Sennett 1992), and the political economy of everyday life has been consigned to *the public*. In contrast, the Hellenic *bios politikos* made visible only the latent values existing within the secular, *the private*. To understand this transition in the symbolic meaning of *the public* and *the private*, in the next paragraphs I present a brief overview of the public spaces’ transformation from the Hellenic city-state to the modern nation-state.

Modernity in the nineteenth century manifested through fast urbanization and the predominance of industrial capitalism, which had a huge impact on social relations with transformative consequences on the relationship between the public and the private. The surfacing individualism of the modern era brought new dimensions to social groups, like, for example, voluntary associations in order to satisfy individual purposes. As a result of these transformations, in the mid nineteenth century American cities, the central square -- the symbol of political status -- declined from being “the only truly public, or people’s, space” (Jackson 1984, p.279) in favor of the busy streets, train stations, waterfronts and the more egalitarian rural cemetery and the park. The public square is modeled after the

classical royal European squares that were specially designed for the purpose of “the scenography of the political”, as part of a complex mechanism of power representation. That was due to the fact that “between the medieval monarchy and the monarchy of the early modern age, a profound change in the nature of theatricality of the public realm occurs: we pass from belief to make-believe” (Henaff and Strong 2001, p.16). It was then that for the first time *private* and *public* life became separate in a specifically modern sense, as the separation of the individual from the (state) authority. At this time, “public” defined what was in relation with the state apparatus, and “private” referred to what was excluded from the sphere of the state (Habermas 1995, p.11).

The inclusion of other spaces within the preferred public spaces in the American and the European cities represented the escape of modern individuals from the formal society based on class differences, and from the society’s overly regulatory spaces of representation. This shift in preferences for public spaces mirrored a more inclusive understanding of *the public*, as the aggregation of people in its diversity. But to counterbalance the relaxation of restrictions on access in public spaces, modern people craved for retreat into the intimacy of the private space. In contrast to the Hellenic *public*, wherein *bios politikos* represented the essence of human life (Aristotle 1995), in modernity the meaning is conferred to *the private* that can offer individual’s full realization (refer to Sennett 1992 and 1994). In this sense modernity is associated with the era of the Roman decline,

when *res publica* could not satisfy any longer citizens' passion for the sacred, meaningful and permanent.

The public ceremonies, the military necessities of imperialism, the ritual contacts with other Romans outside the family circle, all became duties – duties in which the Roman participated more and more in a passive spirit, conforming to the rules of the *res publica*, but investing less and less passion in his acts of conformity. As the Roman's public life became bloodless, he sought in private a new focus for his emotional energies, a new principle of commitment and belief. This private commitment was mystic, concerned with escaping the world at large and the formalities of the *res publica* as part of that world. This commitment was to various Near Eastern sects, of which Christianity gradually became dominant; eventually Christianity ceased to be a spiritual commitment practiced in secret, burst into the world, and became itself a new principle of public order (Sennett 1992, p.3).

This shift in emphasis within the relationship between the public and the private in the modern society produced new forms of public spaces. For instance, in the modern European cities we experience a compromise between the layers of ownership and use. This is either the case of sidewalk cafés that are examples of private concession and use of public space, or the case of bourgeois shopping arcades, which allow public access to, and use of private property. By blurring the boundaries between different forms of ownership, the new public space development in the form of shopping arcades represented, according to Walter Benjamin, “the precise material replica of the internal consciousness, or rather, the *unconscious* of the dreaming collective” (Buck-Morss 1989, p.39). At the beginning of the twentieth century, the modern intellectuals of Benjamin's

generation identified with the interests of the working class. From their perspective, the shopping arcades were the physical expression of a classless society.

Rather than aggregating people in public spaces in close proximity in the city core, the neocapitalist social organization stresses more on spatial accessibility, with the consequence of spatial segregation (Lefebvre 1991). As a result of spatial segregation, the current spatial order produces overly controlled and privatized public spaces. Moreover, nowadays we have the simulation of public streets or shopping galleries within privately owned and operated developments like shopping malls, reinvented streets, or reinvented city cores (Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee 1998, Moustafa 1999, Banerjee 2001). In these developments, physical boundaries between private and public property are apparent and clearly delimited. Spatial delimitations become the replacement for dissolute social hierarchies with the effect of predominantly homogeneous environments (Lofland 1973). With the decline of the authority of the capitalist state, the civil society appeared as the alternative (Barber 1998). The public sphere described by Habermas (1995) and Taylor (2005) seems similar to the Hellenic *agora*. However, the social takes over the political public space, and the preferences of the contemporary public require different types of public life than that associated with Aristotle's *bios politikos*.

The sense of loss associated with the perceived decline of public space assumes that effective public life is linked to a viable public realm. This is because the concept of public life is inseparable from the idea of a "public sphere" (Habermas 1989) and the notion of civil society, where the affairs of the public are discussed and debated in public places. The domain of the public sphere is seen to

exist between the privacy of the individual and domestic life and the state (or the government).

But there is another concept of public life that is derived from our desire for relaxation, social contact, entertainment, leisure, and simply having a good time. Individual orbits of this public life are shaped by a consumer culture and the opportunities offered by the new “experience economy” (Pine and Gilmore 1999). The settings for such public life are not necessarily public spaces. [...] Today, it is the appropriate mix of *flânerie* and third places that dictates the script for a successful public life. [...] whether it actually takes place in a private or public space does not seem to matter. The line between public and private spaces blurs very easily, as was the case in the Parisian arcades. [...] the form is only a stage set that can be easily changed and embellished to accommodate celebrations, happenings, and other such ephemera (Banerjee 2001, pp.14-15).

Although some of the current public spaces inherit the nineteenth century ambiguities within the relationship between the public and the private, the contemporary modernity seems to value more the physical (material) aspects of space rather than the social and symbolic value of space. Public life is transformed into “entertainment driven by reality” (Jerde in Moustafa 1999), and urban space is treated as a commodity. *The public* “shifts from being an arena for critical debate and argument to the passive consumption of pre-packaged news (on the one hand) and entertainment (on the other)” (Villa 2001, p.161). In this fusion of *the public* and *the private*, also “role and individual, the essential and the anecdotal, major decisions and ‘news in brief’” are mixed (Henaff & Strong 2001, p.23). Modern cities turn into “instruments of impersonal life” (Sennett 1992) because “as it expands, this society (neocapitalism or corporate capitalism) can generate only chaos in space” (Lefebvre 1974, p.420).

## THE PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC SPACE: PROBLEM AND CONTEXT

Henri Lefebvre is “one of twentieth century leading urbanists” (Soja 2000, p.9) and “the last great classic philosopher” (Jameson on Lefebvre 2006). According to Lefebvre modernity has imposed on the modern citizens a particular spatial order – the spatial practice of neocapitalism – that is abstract and remote from our quotidian experience and activities. In a three-volume project written during the post war decades, *Critique of Everyday Life*, Lefebvre explores the impact of modernity on our daily lives. He meditates on the inherent alienation and dehumanization entailed by forces that govern the quotidian experience. Lefebvre argues that the “mystification” that resides in the bourgeois life deepens alienation by means of utility, consumerism, commodification, technological modernism and leisure, which he considers a form of social control. Moreover, Lefebvre challenges the modern dichotomy between the private and the public life, which does not reflect the complex realities of the urban experience. Among various ways to illustrate his argument, the mention of “a Japanese philosopher” provides a counterexample to the modern understanding of *the public* and *the private*:

We [in the Shinto and Buddhist traditions] do not separate the ordering of space from its form, its genesis from its actuality, the abstract from the concrete, or nature from society. [...] Nature and divinity in the first place, then social life and relationships, and finally individual and private life – all these aspects of human reality have their assigned places, all implicatively linked in a concrete fashion (Lefebvre 1991, pp.153-154).



In the context of the critique of everyday life in neocapitalism, at the beginning of the 1970s Lefebvre aimed to build a unitary theory of spatial production that materialized in his seminal book *The Production of Space* (1991 [1974]). He proposes to replace the dichotomy between *the public* and *the private* with a dialectical approach to spatial analysis. In doing that he adopts Hegel's understanding of dialectics as a triadic approach that follows the relationship thesis-antithesis-synthesis. In order to advance an understanding of a unitary theory of urbanism, Lefebvre suggests to link practically, and discursively, the fields of physical space, mental space and social space. At the same time Lefebvre takes into consideration the need to avoid the reductionism that a unitary theory of the production of space may imply. Lefebvre means to build a theory that:

...seeks to grasp a moving but determinate complexity (determination not entailing determinism) [...] the aim is to discover or construct a theoretical unity between 'fields' which are apprehended separately, just as molecular electromagnetic and gravitational forces are in physics (2004 p.12 & p.11). [...] The project I am outlining, however, does not aim to produce a (or *the*) discourse on space, but rather to expose the actual production of space by bringing the various kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis together within a single theory (1991, p.16).

According to these concerns, Lefebvre constructs the spatial triad that reflects the perceived, the conceived, and the experienced (lived) space. The moments of the triad are: a) *spatial praxis*, or the (non-verbal) spatial practice of a society b) representations of space or the conceptual dimensions of space, and c) representational spaces or the symbolic dimensions of space.

It is reasonable to assume that spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces contribute in different ways to the production of space according to their qualities and attributes, according to the society or mode of production in question, according to the historical period. Relations between the three moments of the perceived, the conceived and the lived are never either simple or stable, nor are they 'positive' in the sense in which this term might be opposed to 'negative', to the indecipherable, the unsaid, the prohibited, or the unconscious (1991, p.46).

According to the spatial triad, modifications of the boundaries between *the public* and *the private* stimulate the potential of public spaces to impact the social structure through the transformation of social relations. From this point of view the first component of the triad is highly significant in the production of public space, as spatial practice contains the reproduction of social relations.

The spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it. From the analytic standpoint, the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of space.

What is spatial practice under neocapitalism? It embodies a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, 'private life' and leisure). This association is a paradoxical one, because it includes the most extreme separation between the places it links together. The specific spatial competence and performance of every society member can only be evaluated empirically (idem, p.38).

By unveiling the ideological structure of everyday life, Lefebvre suggests that modern society may become meaningful if it would find some purpose beyond consumption, and would allow individuals to manifest the experience of space that reflects their own personality (1984, 2002, 2006). By and large American urban

studies tend not to emphasize this aspect of the individual experience. But Lefebvre is recognized as the founding ‘father’ of the new approach in urban analysis (Gottdiener 2000, p.94). Beginning with the 1960s, the paradigm shift in urban studies brought about the social and spatial understanding of urban analysis. The so-called “socio-spatial approach” replaced “human ecology” that constituted the dominant view of urban processes among sociologists and geographers, and that “grounded the relationship between social and spatial processes in a biologically based metaphor borrowed from the plant and animal kingdoms” (Gottdiener 2005, p.140). In the 1980s emerged an alternative approach, called “the new urban sociology”, and was introduced in the 1990s as the new paradigm in urban studies, namely the “socio-spatial approach” (Gottdiener & Hutchison 2000). In this context Gottdiener places Lefebvre’s spatial theory within the new urban sociology, and recognizes his leading role in reviving urban political economy (Gottdiener 2006).

Lefebvre discusses the state’s use of space as a form of social control. The fragmentation of the modern metropolis could be understood as a result of the economic, social and political transformations in the neocapitalist space. The second circuit of capital refers to land ownership and real estate investment. Lefebvre’s interpretation of it brings forth real estate as the “leading edge” of growth, and as the aspect of economy that results in the production of space. Also Gottdiener (2006) points out that the second circuit of capital is among Lefebvre’s particularly relevant contributions to the new approach in urban sociology.

The real estate sector of society constitutes a separate circuit of capital where money can be made, not in the manufacture of things for sale, but in the ownership of land that can then be sold as is, or developed and sold at some later time when the social wealth of the surrounding area has made that investment more valuable. This quality of wealth creation in the second circuit of real estate is quite different from the way capitalist investment returns a profit in the primary sector of manufacturing. We owe to Henri Lefebvre (1991) the insights that have enabled the socio-spatial perspective to advance the argument that space itself is an important factor in metropolitan development and one that is governed by a logic of profit-making at some variance from the way capitalists in the primary circuit make money (Gottdiener & Budd 2005, pp.143-144).

Consequently, in a society based on market alone, the commodity prevails over everything, and space and time that are dominated by exchanges become the space and time of markets (Lefebvre 2004, p.6). As a result, nowadays globalized markets and cultures produce commodified spaces, and nation-states and corporations favor spaces that can represent themselves in the global marketplace. By means of capitalist transformations of use into exchange values, the state replaces social space with abstract space.

[Abstract space is the space where] the world of commodities is deployed, along with all that it entails: accumulation and growth, calculation, planning, programming. [...] where the tendency to homogenization exercises its pressure and its repression with the means at its disposal [...] which transports the body outside of itself in a paradoxical kind of alienation. [...] Abstract space] emerged historically as the plane on which a socio-political compromise was reached between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie (i.e. between the ownership of land and the ownership of money) ... (Lefebvre 1991, p.307-308).

Nevertheless, by replacing the social space, the abstract space fosters homogenization, commodification and lack of identity among other effects.

According to Lefebvre, in the modern production of space, the state's intervention manifests through the implementation of the abstract space, as a compromise between land ownership and money ownership. Mark Gottdiener argues further that the state uses the ideology of planning to mask its interventionism (1994, p.124).

In context, the dialectical approach to the spatial production, mainly the second element of the triad -- representations of space or the conceived space -- is capable of bringing some light into the transformation of the relationship between the public and the private over time. In modernity, the conceived space, the dimension of space as knowledge and action, prevails over the lived space and that "causes practice to disappear along with life, and so does very little justice to the 'unconscious' level of lived experience *per se*" (Lefebvre 1991, p.34). The distinction between the conceived and the lived space contributes in building an understanding of the conflicting interests, relationships and circumstances that shape the conceptual framework for the production of public spaces (Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee 1998). In addition, an understanding of the production of public spaces could counterbalance the sentiment of loss that has dominated the writings on public spaces in the last decade (refer to the *narratives of loss*).

Besides the lament persistent in urban studies regarding the lack of convivial public spaces, the domination of the conceived and abstract spaces impacts also the everyday life. Given citizens' incapability to influence the world they live in, the multitude of consumer subjects demands room for individualized

privacy. In order to transform the ubiquitous modern alienation and isolation from each other, a new social and spatial order must emerge. Considering citizens' capability to transform and recreate the world, the spatial production could make use of the creative human potential, as a social and liberating act (Lefebvre 1984).

In the 1950s, while Lefebvre had begun to assemble the critique of modern everyday life, the CoBrA (Copenhagen, Brussels, Amsterdam) group of architects and artists initiated experimental projects of what they called "unitary urbanism." In Amsterdam and Strasbourg, for example, they used walkie-talkies as means of communication to connect the fragmented city, and produce concomitant urban experiences. The group had as leader the utopian architect Constant Nieuwenhuis, who is mostly known by his first name. Constant's writings argue in favor of a classless ludic society that mostly values creativity, in contrast to the class-based utilitarian society that appreciates only the productive work. According to his arguments, social space in the ludic society allows for the convergence of abstract space and the space of action, in contrast with the utilitarian space that is anti-social (*New Babylon*, 1974). In a fundamental text, *For an Architecture of Situation* (1953), Constant suggests that architecture could transform modern daily reality.

Nowadays communication technology facilitates urban connectivity easily. Via the Internet we are able to create simultaneous urban experiences by connecting not only parts of a city, but also various places around the world. As for the physical urban reality in modernity, the state of affairs is different, ironically,

despite early criticism of spatial fragmentation, polarization, and social segregation in the modern metropolis. For instance, in his writings Constant criticizes the way architects and planners imagined and planned the contemporary city based on Le Corbousier's modernist simplification of everyday life.

A growing discrepancy can be observed between the standards applied in allocating urban space and the real needs of the community. Town-planners and architects still tend to think in terms of the four functions of the city as defined by Le Corbusier in 1933: living, working, traffic and recreation. This oversimplification reflects opportunism rather than insight into and appreciation of what people actually want today, with the result that the city is rapidly becoming obsolete. At a time when automation and other technological advances are reducing the demand for manual labor, plans go forward to build working-class [housing] districts suitable only for passing the night. While privately owned cars are multiplying so swiftly that their very numbers render them practically useless, more and more living space is given up to provide parking facilities (Constant 1966).

In the last half of the twentieth century, all over the world, urbanization evolved towards spatial fragmentation and social segregation rather than towards compact cities and spatial and social cohesion. Although communication means in the global era forge the environment for instant connectivity and simultaneous experiences, the practice of everyday life in the city is often a disconnected experience (Jameson 1998, Tajbakhsh 2001, Castells 2003).

Constant's argument for everyday life-transformational architecture (1953), and Castells' initiative for a theory of urbanism in the Information Age (2005) construct an arch over time that encompasses many common lines. These two proposals draw on spatial theories that derive from critiques of the capitalist city in

the context of urban political economy. On the one hand, Castells' perspective has directed urban sociology towards physical aspects of the spatial production. Over the last four decades he understood that urban space is a fundamental expression of society, and that spatial change cannot be separated from its context of social transformation (2000). On the other hand, physical interventions and experimentations in the city reflected in Constant's writings, and in the urban activities of the CoBrA group, were inspired in part by Henri Lefebvre's *Critique of Everyday Life*. At present Castells captures the contradiction regarding connectivity within the current urbanization in proposing the spatial dichotomy between the "space of places" that refers to the tangible and material realm, and the "space of flows" that refers to the intangible realm of transactions and exchanges within the network society (2000 and 2005).

The process of globalization that is "most likely to be a new phase of exactly this same underlying process of capitalist production of space" (Harvey 2000, p.54), which is "in a state of flux. Consequently, it is also a process that keeps individual locations in state of flux as well" (idem, p.49). Considering these characteristics of the process of globalization, Castells argues that in the Information Age, "architecture and design may bridge technology and culture by creating shared symbolic meaning and reconstructing public space in the new metropolitan context" (2005, p. 63). My aim in this study is to develop an understanding of the production of public spaces in the new metropolitan context.



To understand the production of public spaces within the globalization process, I propose in this study to look at the spatial production in a dynamic perspective. Such dynamic perspective aims to an ideal for spaces for public life that imply the cohabitation of the space of places and of the space of flows. Photographs taken on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica illustrate three of the characteristics of this idea (pp. 32-34). Richard Sennett's understanding of 'publicity' (1992) implies the production of inclusive and diverse public spaces (Figure 1.4, p.32). In Figure 1.6 (p.34) I illustrate Peattie's advocacy for democratic conviviality (1998) by means of an urban scene that depicts an outdoor public dancing activity. In Figure 1.5 (p.33) I illustrate Barber's concept of civility. The capability of the spaces for public life in the new metropolitan context to accommodate Benjamin Barber's vision of civil society (1998) depends upon overcoming the below-outlined three obstacles to civil society.

There are three obstacles to civil society as the mediating domain between the government and the private sector: government itself, when it is arrogant and overweening; market dogmas, when they presume that private individuals and groups can secure public goods; and the yearning for community, when it subordinates liberty and equality to solidarity. As to the first, the tendency of all institutions to ossify and become distanced from their constituents (the so-called iron law of oligarchy) turns government representatives into enemies of their citizens, and eventually makes even democratically elected governments rigid and hierarchical with the representatives regarding themselves as the sole civic actors on the political scene, governing on behalf of citizen instead of facilitating citizen self-government. When that happens, the democratic citizenry in whose name the governments govern is actually disempowered, at once both dependent and alienated.

As to the second, the myth of the invisible hand encourages market enthusiasts to believe that privatization is a synonym for democratization and empowerment, and for civic liberty to flourish, one need only government out of the way. But the results are quite otherwise: an eclipse of the public, a one-dimensional culture of privatism and greed, and an addictive materialism that turns autonomous citizens into dependent consumers.

As for the third, the communitarian thirst for the restoration of lost values and value communities encourages people to impose on others their own cultural values through either government or quasi-censorious institutions of civil society. In the resulting solidaristic community, insiders favor identity over equality as the most precious of all social values and everyone else is left feeling like outsiders (Barber 1998, pp.69-70).

There is a consistent body of literature that refers to such inclusive, diverse, and convivial places (e.g. Sennett 1992, Barber 1998, Peattie 1998, Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee 1998, Arefi 1999, Moustafa 1999, Banerjee 2001). The new social and spatial order is to be achieved by ongoing mediations and negotiations of disorder, which call for a different understanding of the planning and design practice. I argue that a dialectical take in the design reasoning is a method of developing judgments, and derive missing information that is necessary in the spatial production. Moreover, at the community level, the interaction with strangers within diversified public spaces is capable to work towards interactive collective learning. “A disordered city that forced men to deal with each other would work to tone down feelings of shame about status and helplessness in the face of large bureaucracies” (Sennett 1992, p.196). So besides higher sensitivity of city services to the needs of its citizens, the urban disorder creates a civilizing publicness.

**FIGURE 1.4 REPRESENTATION OF DIVERSITY IN PUBLIC SPACES**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on September 03, 2000 at 10am. This street scene that shows a transient (homeless person) resting on one of the fountains on the Promenade helps to represent the concept of diversity in public spaces. According to an ideal civilizing ‘publicity’ Sennett proposes the ‘survival communities’ based on a new anarchism: the need is for men to recognize conflicts, not to try to purify them away in a solidarity myth [referring to purified affluent communities], in order to survive. ... Building a survival community where men must confront differences around them will require two changes in the structuring of city life. One will be a change in the scope of bureaucratic power in the city; the other will be a change in the concept of order in the planning of the city (1992, p.139).

**FIGURE 1.5 REPRESENTATION OF CIVILITY IN PUBLIC SPACES**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade, at the crossing with Santa Monica Boulevard in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on July 29, 2007 at 6:30pm. I use this public outdoor gathering that implies socializing and people watching to represent the concept of “civility” in public spaces. Arguing in favor of an ideal civility, Barber asks the question: Is a civic space imaginable that is neither radically individualistic nor suffocatingly communitarian? ... we may want to think about the actual places Americans occupy as they go about their daily lives, when they are engaged neither in politics (voting, jury service, paying taxes) nor in commerce (working for pay, producing, shopping, consuming) (1998, p. 48), referring to Libertarians think of civil society as a play space for private individuals and for the voluntary and contractual associations they choose to contract into, and treat it as little more than a condition for solitude. Communitarians, on the other hand think of civil society as a zone where people interact and are embedded in communities, and they treat it as the condition for all social bonding (p. 23).



**FIGURE 1.6 REPRESENTATION OF CONVIVIALITY IN PUBLIC SPACES**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade, on the block between Wilshire Boulevard and Arizona Avenue in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on April 30, 2006 at 6pm. I use this public outdoor dancing activity to represent the concept of “conviviality” in public spaces. Although there are not immediate material consequences to this activity, this representation refers to the everyday life understanding of Lisa Peattie’s ideal of democratic conviviality that bonds people in communal public actions. Peattie described democratic conviviality as small-group rituals and social bonding in serious collective action, from barn raisings and neighborhood cleanups to civil disobedience that blocks the streets or invades the missile site (1998, p.246). Peattie’s description is based on Illich’s definition of conviviality (1973, p.11): autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment (both cited in Banerjee 2001, p.15).

## STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This study is organized in six chapters. Two introductory chapters explain and introduce the topic of this research. The next three chapters, Chapter Three, Four and Five correspond respectively to one of the three moments of the production of public space. In each chapter I analyze one moment of the triad and illustrate it with examples from the comparative case study. The last chapter is a discussion of the findings, limitations, and implications of this study for design practice and pedagogy.

This chapter, *Introduction: Public Spaces*, introduces the topic of this dissertation study. The chapter opens with a section that comprises the argument and a concise contextualization of the argument that establishes the significance of the topic. Next I present a succinct overview of the evolution over time of the relationship between *the public* and *the private*. The overview prepares the following section that outlines the production of public spaces and identifies some of the problems within the context of modernity.

Chapter Two, *Research Framework: Theory, Practice and Pedagogy*, aims to structure the background of this research. The second chapter also proposes the three domains of discussion namely theory, practice and pedagogy, as it can be seen in Table 1.1 *Conceptual Organization of the Study* (p.43). Chapter Three, Four and Five are structured according to these three domains of discussion. In terms of theory in this chapter I present an outline of the dialectics of design. The outline

begins with the general understanding of the dialectics as a method of reasoning. It concludes with the application of the method to the design process. In terms of research methods I discuss the comparative method in the related fields and in urban studies. Moreover, in this study I propose a phenomenological viewpoint as a method of spatial exploration that contributes to the understanding of the production of public spaces, and present a concise outline of the method. The description of the two case studies closes the section on study methodology. The last section of this chapter refers to an arguable crisis in the current planning and design pedagogy. I formulate some suggestions about the possibilities to transform this situation, and ways in which this study could contribute to that.

Chapter Three, *External Image of a Place*, deals with the role of planner as outside observer of the place. First, I apply the knowledge from the literature on “the stranger” (Simmel 1971 [1903]) to introduce the profile of the outside participant observer. I discuss briefly the condition of strangers in public spaces. The theoretical section of this chapter discusses the body and tacit knowledge that the outside observer employs predominantly in the production of a sense of a place. Sensual and visual anthropology theory, Kevin Lynch’s concept of sense as identity and structure (1981), as well as Lefebvre’s discourse on the materiality of space (1991) contribute to the understanding of this dialectical moment. The spatial appearance is the outside observer’s object of study. Hence the spaces of representation configure an understanding of the production process, and memory

and recollections bring the sensorial analyses to life. Second, with respect to practice, sensorial analyses of the spaces of representation in the two cases illustrate the external image. In this moment of the production process, public life appears tightly connected to the materiality of space. Third, the notes on pedagogy suggest the inclusion of the above-presented theory within design studios.

Chapter Four, *Professional Image of a Place*, presents the mode of representation of the professional producer of public spaces. First, the theoretical section of this chapter discusses the explicit knowledge that professionals employ in the conception of a place. By and large the object of interest in this case is space as a material product, which contrasts with the consideration of space as a process. By means of logic and explanation professionals configure rational models that produce abstract space. Representations of space become the outcome of the process of spatial production (Lefebvre 1991). One section of this chapter describes physical and institutional models that are used as precedent analogues within the conception process, in order to configure new spatial developments. Second, this chapter illustrates the use of physical and institutional models in the process of production of the two cases: a pedestrian street and a shopping mall. As a consequence of the abstract conception of space, public life occurs as modeling the way the space is conceived. The section on regional trends in comparison evaluates professional visions, to illustrate the conception of a place from the point of view of rational models that produce abstract space. Third, in terms of pedagogy the



suggestions refer to the contextualization by means of sensorial representations of the social sciences literature that informs planning and design theoretical courses.

Chapter Five, *Lived Experience of a Place*, is a synthesis of the previous two dialectical modes of representation: external and professional images of a place. It describes the lived experience of a place. This is the point of view of the rhythmanalyst. First, I shape the profile of the rhythmanalyst according to Lefebvre (2004) and complement this description with the profile of the flâneur strolling simultaneously in the space of places and in the space of flows. The rhythmanalyst is an enactive character that is interested in the spatial experience in terms of both spatial and social practice. Next the chapter provides an outline of the understanding of intuition, imagination and the role of the unconscious in the production of space. Intuition and imagination bring to reality the representational spaces that describe the moment of spatial production. In terms of practice, the section on institutional analysis provides insights into the structure of the lived experience by means of values, systems of belief, meanings attached to the place, and appropriation of public space (Friedland & Alford 1991, Lefebvre 1991 [1974], Plessner 1999 [1924]). The section on the appropriation of space prepares the analysis of the quality of the two public spaces in terms of conviviality, diversity and the degree of provision for democratic activities. As for pedagogy, this chapter proposes the application of theory and practice within integrated courses of qualitative methods of spatial research.

Chapter Six, *Discussion*, brings together the analysis. The process of globalization is the general context of this exploration of contemporary productions of public spaces. I express this context in the structure of the study, and hence the narrative of globalization connects the three chapters that correspond to the triad of spatial production. To explain each dialectical moment I approach the narrative of globalization from the perspective of the three different modes of representation: symbolic, iconic and enactive (Bruner et al. 1962 cited in Banerjee 1994). This study proposes a dynamic perspective of professionals as spatial explorers that acknowledge and incorporate change within the conception process, and mediate among the different modes of representation.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

This research on the production of spaces for public life brings to the fore three main concerns: one regarding practice and spatial research, another one referring to a theoretical approach in urban design, and a third one regarding planning and design pedagogy. In this study I am interested to build an understanding of practice that is derived from the current conditions of the production of spaces for public life within the process of globalization. The lament about the disappearance of truly democratic public spaces in the American cities, that the *narratives of loss* claim, inspires my research on contemporary spatial productions that include spaces for public life. To find out if the loss of *the public*

is a real concern, I perform field research with respect to two projects developed in different planning environments. In this respect this dissertation contributes to the literature on public spaces with a comparative inquiry into the current spatial productions that provide for public life in two of the most advanced economies namely Germany and the United States. Moreover, the selected case study depicts an ironical particularity of spatial development across the Atlantic. On the one hand, the American public space project imports a European model of pedestrian streets to be developed in Santa Monica, California, United States. On the other hand, the European development imports an American model of indoor shopping malls to be adapted in the new city core of Neue Mitte Oberhausen, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. I place this comparative case study within the process of globalization.

With respect to theory, this dissertation contributes to the urban design literature with two proposals. First, one proposal refers to a shift in the practitioners' attitude in understanding places from the dynamic perspective of spatial exploration. I suggest that this shift could be achieved through the inclusion in the design process of a phenomenological viewpoint that draws wisdom from the study of consciousness. In addition to including in spatial understanding the wisdom of the inner being, this study proposes the restoration of the body through sensorial and enactive spatial analyses such as rhythm analyses. This shift in the professional attitude is a reaction to grounding planning and design practice on

technical and scientific models, which ignore individual perceptions and the particularities of places. In reaction to this state of the field, a dynamic perspective on the design processes is necessary. Such perspective is capable to accommodate in the process of spatial production the complexities of everyday life, as well as the uncertainties of practice in a globalized world. Second, in this study I propose a dynamic perspective by means of a dialectical take on design reasoning that complements spatial understanding through the designer's performance of various roles as spatial explorer. By and large there are neither temporal nor financial budgets to propose that as a method of practice. So I claim that using in pedagogy the design dialectics could turn this approach into a reflective habit of practitioners.

As a consequence, I propose a tripartite structure of spatial exploration to be used in planning and design pedagogy. This structure builds a dialectical understanding of the urban design processes from the perspective of Henri Lefebvre's theory of spatial production. I suggest to approach planning pedagogy in a reflective manner instead of considering school knowledge as a product.

This dynamic perspective implies that in the production of space planning and design practitioners assume alternatively the different roles presented in the previous chapters. As Table 1.1 shows, different roles of the spatial producer and explorer produce different modes of representation. In this study I propose three roles of practitioners as spatial explorers: outside observers, professional producers, and rhythm analysts.

**TABLE 1.1 CONCEPTUAL ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

<b>THEMES</b>	<b>DOMAINS OF DISCUSSION</b>	<b>CHAPTER III EXTERNAL IMAGE OF A PLACE</b>	<b>CHAPTER IV PROFESSIONAL IMAGE OF A PLACE</b>	<b>CHAPTER V LIVED EXPERIENCE OF A PLACE</b>
<b>CONTEXT</b>	<b>Representations: the narrative of globalization</b>	Symbolic of memories and emotions	Iconic of documents/visual representations	Enactive of activities, rhythms, movements
<b>THEORY</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	Body and tacit knowledge	Explicit knowledge	Dynamic perspective
	<b>Ability</b>	Memory and recollection	Logic and explanation	Intuition and imagination
	<b>Object of interest</b>	Perception	Product	Experience
	<b>Tangible space</b>	Appearance	Physical model	Spatial experience
	<b>Intangible space</b>	Language	Institutional model	Social experience
	<b>Design dialectics</b>	Sense of a place	Conception of a place	Life and civic presence
<b>ROLE OF DESIGNER, PLANNER</b>	<b>Spatial producer and explorer</b>	Outside observer	Professional producer	Rhythmanalyst
<b>PRACTICE</b>	<b>Analyses</b>	Sensorial analyses	Explanatory rational and model-based analyses	Institutional analyses and rhythmanalyses
	<b>Production process</b>	Spaces of representation	Representations of space	Representational space; Spatial and social practice
	<b>Public life</b>	Material life	Conceived life	Appropriated life
<b>PEDAGOGY</b>	<b>Reflection-in- action</b>	Design studio and theory	Contextualization & representation of social sciences literature	Integrated courses and qualitative spatial research

The external image of a place is represented mostly through narratives that use symbols like text and language. The professional image depends upon iconic representations such as photographs, maps, design drawings, three dimensional models, slide shows and visual presentations. The enactive representation resides in the rhythms, movements and performances including everyday activities, passing by, rituals and ceremonies that take place in public spaces. In each case the spatial explorer makes use of particular kinds of knowledge and skills. In participant observation, predominantly the body and tacit knowledge produces a sensorial understanding of places. In professional circumstances the explicit knowledge is prevalent. These moments of the design dialectics are not mutually exclusive, and the different modes of representation overlap throughout the process of spatial production. However, the rhythm analyst uses a dynamic perspective across these two types of knowledge. As planning and design pedagogy is an important concern of this study, the dialectical structure is helpful in teaching planning and design. I claim that the dialectical method is capable to prepare practitioners to act in a reflective manner and to be able to mediate between different modes of representation.

*A dialectical inquiry means the argument is complete only when the book has come to an end. You cannot state "the theory" all at once and then lay it like a map over the historical terrain.*

Richard Sennett 1992

## SUMMARY

In this chapter I present the argument of this research study. *The Production of Public Spaces: Design Dialectics and Pedagogy* is an exploration of the contemporary production of public spaces. In the last two decades in the American urban studies literature that is concerned with the condition of contemporary public spaces emerged a series of *narratives of loss* that lament the disappearance of the public and ‘truly’ democratic urban spaces. Through field and literature research I inquire whether this is the current reality. My interest is to find out what or who has a say in the production of democratic public spaces, as to understand the contribution to this process of the planning and design professionals.

In a concise historic overview of the relationship between *the public* and *the private* I show the transformation of the conceptual meanings over time. I compare the understanding of *the public* that the modern urbanization and industrialization brought about with the political dimensions of *the public* derived from the organization of the Hellenic *polis*, where *bios politikos* represented the essence of human life (Aristotle 1991). While the Hellenic *bios politikos* made visible the latent values existing within *the private*, in modernity the political economy of everyday life has been transferred into *the public*. At the same time, the Hellenic public life was suited to confer permanence, as the temporal dimension of the *polis* was the cosmic duration that was based on cyclic time and repetition. In contrast, modernity is organized around historical time, which is irreversible and thus

incapable to provide for immortality by means of public action. Moreover, in modernity the dissolution of the social hierarchies imposed stronger constraints and private control over the public space. As a consequence of that the modern individual's full realization manifests in the intimacy of *the private*, where s/he retreats from the overly regulated and controlled public spaces. At present though, urban scholars like David Harvey argue that the connectivity between the private, the transitory and the public is absolutely necessary in order to have politics in the public sphere (2006b). From the point of view of the planning and design profession, Tridib Banerjee proposes to understand the line in between *the public* and *the private* less clearly determined. In order to provide urban spaces for public life, planners and designers should focus less on space and form, but rather on public life per se, and detach the concept from Habermas' idea of a public sphere (1995) that is located in between *the private* and the state (2001).

The inquiry on the conceptual meaning of *the private* and *the public* brings into the narrative the social construction of urban space. Therefore, the narrative centers on theories of spatial production that propose the social interpretation of space. I summarize briefly three literatures namely Henri Lefebvre's critique of everyday life and the production of space, Mark Gottdiener's social production of urban space, and Manuel Castells' suggestions for a theory of urbanism in the Information Age. In the context of the critique of everyday life in neocapitalism, at the beginning of the 1970s Lefebvre aimed to build a unitary theory of spatial



production that materialized in his seminal book *The Production of Space* (1991). He proposes to replace the dichotomy between *the public* and *the private* with a dialectical approach to spatial analysis. In doing that he adopted Hegel's understanding of dialectics as a triadic approach that follows the relationship thesis, antithesis and synthesis. In order to advance an understanding of a unitary theory of urbanism, Lefebvre suggests to link practically and discursively the fields of physical space, mental space and social space. Two decades after Lefebvre published *The Production of Space* in France, Mark Gottdiener published *The Social Production of Urban Space* in the United States (1994). It brings into the conversation a sociological point of view that stressed on the particular sociospatial organization, which is a direct outcome of the relationships between economic, political, and cultural processes within metropolitan areas. These two literatures illustrate what Lefebvre calls the capitalist crisis that happens through the fragmentation of the traditional city core and of the historical urban form that used to shape social space. In the absence of social space that fosters local identity, an arguable homogenization of the urban environment takes place. The worldwide implementation of abstract space is the spatial manifestation of global political economy. In spite of that or, better said, due to spatial homogenization, the more recent attempt of Manuel Castells to structure a contemporary theory of urbanism emphasizes the importance of the realization of vital city cores for identity representation in the global marketplace (2005).

In light of this context I identify an ideal of public spaces for public life that is defined through democratic conviviality, diversity and civil society (i.e. Peattie 1998, Sennett 1992, Barber 1998). Similarly as in the case of the relationship between *the public* and *the private*, I inquire the reasoning and the social context of the design process, in an attempt to understand how this ideal of spaces for public life could be brought to reality. In this study I present two of the extreme manifestations of reasoning within the spatial production. In this chapter I illustrate one of these extremes in the production of spaces for public life with Constant's utopian view of a common playful space for *homo ludens* (1974). In Chapter Four, *Professional Image of a Place*, I present the other extreme within the United States' institutional framework by means of an evaluation of the *Federal Realty Investment Trust*, a real estate development company that is interested in urban infill (2003).

I suggest in this study to develop a dynamic understanding of the production processes across the different dialectical moments of the spatial production. Such a dynamic perspective is capable of conceiving and producing urban spaces that would respond to change over time, and provide for convivial and diverse public life.

In light of this understanding, the questions of this research study are: What is the role of planners and designers in the production of spaces for public life? What might be the necessary transformations within the professional practice with respect to the roles played by planners and designers? How would planning and

design education build a different understanding of spatial research, in order to prepare planners and designers to practice with alternatives to the rational comprehensive models? Rather than a systematic argument, this study is an attempt to organize some thoughts around these questions. In the last section of this chapter I describe the structure of the research.

## **RESEARCH FRAMEWORK: THEORY, PRACTICE AND PEDAGOGY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The field of urban design could be defined as a complex of urban morphology and the processes of conceiving and bringing to life urban space. Urban morphology is the scientific study of the form and structure of urban fabric (its three dimensionality), and its evolution over time (the fourth dimension). Because urban design is a multilayered domain, its understanding varies according to the magnitude and the level of detail taken into consideration within the analysis of the field.

In the words of Kevin Lynch, urban design “is the imaginative creation of possible form, together with a way of achieving it, that will carry out some human purpose” (1976, p.78). Considering these insights in building an understanding of the urban design field, the planning culture appears to have a strong impact on the spatial production. Bishwapriya Sanyal’s definition of planning culture is “the collective ethos and dominant attitudes of planners regarding the appropriate role of the state, market forces, and civil society in influencing outcomes” (2005, p.xxi). As for the designers’ attitudes in practice, Christopher Alexander gave an explanation similar to Ronald Heiner’s CD gap.

To help himself overcome the difficulties of complexity, the designer tries to organize his problem. He classifies its various aspects, thereby gives it shape, and makes it easier to handle. What bothers him is not only the difficulty of the problem either. The constant burden of decision which he comes across, once freed from

tradition, is a tiring one. So he avoids it where he can by using rules (or general principles), which he formulates in terms of his invented concepts. These principles are at the root of all so-called “theories” of architectural design. They are prescriptions which relieve the burden of selfconsciousness and of too much responsibility (Alexander 1973, p.62).

According to this understanding of the crisis within the design field, one of the questions of this research inquiry on the quality of spaces for public life is What might be the necessary transformations within the professional practice with respect to the roles played by planners and designers?

## **THE DIALECTICS OF DESIGN**

Dialectics is the method of reasoning that aims to understand things dynamically in their transience through the occurring changes and exchanges, and through ways in which things connect to each other. Dialectics considers all the opposite sides in unity. In contrast to formal thinking, for dialectics things could be contradictory in appearance as well as in essence.

Contradiction in appearance manifests in the oppositions between form and content of things. For instance there is a contradiction in the appearance of a suburban shopping center. The buzzing social life of a suburb aggregates behind the hostile monolithic facades of a suburban shopping mall of the first generation. By means of design, the uninviting big box retail stores turn their back to the streets of that suburb. Contradictions in essence are subtle and require in-depth understanding of places and their design processes. Similarly to light being both

wave and particle, contradictions in the essence of design reasoning are difficult to grasp. Within planning and design processes the ‘solution’ to a past problem turns to be the origin of a new set of problems. For instance, a shopping center that is designed within a redevelopment project to boost the economic activities in the area inherently brings therein increase in traffic and consequent disconnection from the urban texture. The development of the new shopping center could balance and disturb at the same time the temporary stability of the urban system.

A dialectical understanding of design aims to bring in unity all the contradictory sides within the process of design. A dialectical Hegelian approach structures design reasoning: thesis, antithesis and synthesis. If the redevelopment of a rundown area is the thesis and the antithesis is traffic generation, the synthesis is the value-inspired vision for the future of that place. Nevertheless, in design reasoning there are moral dimensions attached to the synthesis of contradictory parts. The agreed-upon unity of contradictions is a synthesis in accordance to certain more or less agreed-upon ideals. Moreover, this synthesis defined through mediation and negotiations within the process of design will soon become the new thesis. In a 1994-essay Tridib Banerjee explains the process of design as an ongoing dialectic. He emphasizes that the dialectic of design is a different dialectic than instrumental rationality that is detached from moral ends (1994).

... a different form of dialectic that inheres in design reasoning. It requires a form of creative reconciliation between different arguments that characterize the problem. We further assume that the good lies in the very creative act of synthesis from the alternative

possibilities presented in the dialectic. We realize however that the good thus derived may not only be episodic in an architectural sense, but also impermanent, in a Hegelian sense. For any new increment in the urban form sets in motion a whole new cohort of arguments and counterarguments. The process of city design and city building, thus, is an incessant dialectic (Banerjee 1994, p. 141).

The dialectic method of thinking has its origins in ancient society among pre-Socratic Greeks in the writings of Heraclitus of Ephesus, as well as among Chinese thinkers within Taoism. These ancient thinkers considered Nature as a whole, and understood that everything flows according to patterns of continuity, and that in every state of being there is the possibility of becoming.

This essence that defines a radically anti-materialist project is expressed in Heraclitus famous statement *panta rhei* that means in Greek “everything flows”. He speaks of contradictions in appearance, for instance day and night, as “one” or “one and the same”. The contradictory appearance of things depends upon circumstances. The opposites in essence depend upon someone’s viewpoint, and upon the manners these contradictions are used. “The sea - he says - water most pure and most impure; for fishes drinkable and healthy; for humans undrinkable and deadly” (in Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*, 9.10.2-5). Mostly in the case of connotations of value like good and bad, up and down, straight and crooked, Heraclitus was denying the difference between pairs of opposites, as they can be used simultaneously to denote the same thing. His understanding of coexistence or unity of opposites inspired Aristotle to consider in *Metaphysics* the

so-called “principle of non-contradiction” as a law of thought (not only a law of good reasoning).

But one could quickly force Heraclitus himself (by questioning him in this way) to admit that contradictory propositions can never be true in the same respect. But as it is he adopted this view because he did not understand the meaning of his own utterance. But if what he said is true, it follows in all circumstances that that very saying is false – namely the claim that the same thing can both be and not be at the same time... (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1062a31-b2).

In interpreting that the same thing is and is not at the same time, we understand that what matters is not made out of unchangeable matter, but of fluid patterns of continuity. In the philosophic system presented in *Logic* (1817) Hegel brought together this viewpoint of a universal interconnection and mutability of things. In urban studies Spiro Kostof expresses the same principle in explaining the historic evolution of cities “in cities only change endures” ... “in the end, urban truth is in the flow” (1999, p.280 & p.305).

In this dissertation research I call the dialectics of design the dynamic understanding of a life cycle of a place across the moments of the following dialectical triad: a sense of a place, the conception of a place, and the life and enduring civic presence of a place. The construction of this triad followed a dialectical Hegelian approach, as explained above, according to the three moments thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The construction of the triad is similar to Lefebvre’s dialectics of spatial production namely spatial praxis, representations of space, and representational spaces (1991). Yet in contrast to Lefebvre’s spatial



triad, this study proposes to dissociate the tripartite structure of the design dialectics into moments of representation. The dialectical triad is composed by ‘moments’ that refer to a dynamic perspective on the ongoing process of spatial production.

One moment of representation is the external image of a place. An outside user of the public space produces an external image of the place out of its material appearance that is a space of representation. Professional representations of space compose another moment of representation, which is the professional image of a place. These apparently contradictory images of a place coexist in unity, yet they could be considered opposites depending upon the viewpoint of those who produce and use them. The moment of synthesis is the lived experience of a place, which is a combination of sensorial and mental experiences, similar to what Lefebvre called representational spaces. This moment of synthesis is not a product of unchangeable matter. The lived experience and the civic presence of a place is a continuum of produced images as moments of representation.

In understanding the city, I interpret the three traditions that Ali Madanipour identifies in urban studies (2001), as a reflection of the spatial triad proposed above. That means that a dialectical approach considers the city, within an argumentative process, across the three traditions as a) a phenomenological point of view (i.e. external image), b) a collection of artefacts or a view from above (i.e. professional image), and c) an agglomeration of people or a dynamic view of change, exchanges and social relations (i.e. the lived experience of a place).

More importantly, the place's transformations over time, as well as users' interest in spatial exploration reside within the lived experience of a place, in the cohabitation of spatial representations. I claim that this mutable quality of public space is in accordance with Kevin Lynch's ideal expressed in *The Image of the City*, "Indeed, the function of a good visual environment may not be simply to facilitate routine trips, nor to support meanings and feelings already possessed. Quite as important may be its role as a guide and a stimulus for new exploration" (1960, p.1). I propose that the dialectics of design is a means to interpret the quality of public spaces as representational spaces, analogous to Paul Klee's proposal with respect to the quality of visual art.

The world of qualities which opens out the more one descends into the unconscious depths, is not the world of forms already dead and established, but the world of nascent form of formation, of Gestaltung: it is the world of unending organic relations which are born of real encounters and are measured by the effective strength which each image develops in its particular condition of space and time (Giulio Carlo Argan in Klee 1973, p.16).

Building an understanding of the design dialectics is meant to consolidate a framework for teaching spatial research. This study assumes that the understanding of the dialectics of design would develop future practitioners' awareness of different viewpoints beside the professional one. At the same time this understanding would enhance their capability to act as mediators within the process of spatial production.

## **METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

The construction of this dissertation study is in accordance with the way I conducted my doctoral research. For longer than a decade presently I have been interested in the study of public spaces. I consider public spaces as being the most complex manifestation of shaping open space through urban design. My interest in urban design and public spaces commenced during my studies in architecture and materialized as a master's thesis in urbanism at the University of Architecture and Urbanism in Bucharest (Apostol 1997).

However, my interest in the subject of this dissertation developed by means of a combination of field and literature research, and personal experiences, throughout seven years of doctoral studies at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. Personal experiences imply circumstances, chance and the serendipity of everyday life. I intend to emphasize the influence of personal experiences on research, because they played a major role in the process of defining and completing this project. I will present that in more detail in the section that refers to a phenomenological viewpoint on spatial analysis (p.63). For now I mention only that the cycle of my personal experiences of space and everyday life had a strong impact on defining the structure for spatial analysis that I propose in this study.

## **Data Collection**

In terms of field research, this study began in 2001 with an international comparative workshop of the Los Angeles metropolitan area in Southern California and the Rhine-Ruhr region in Northern Germany. This planning workshop was organized collaboratively between the University of Southern California and the University of Dortmund. The main topic of the workshop was to explore urban sprawl and sustainable development in both regions in a comparative manner. The objectives of the comparative research study were to analyze and contrast the causes and impacts of sprawl within the two regions, in order to assess the applicability in Los Angeles of ‘best practices’ experimented in the Ruhr region.

I enrolled in the Los Angeles-Dortmund Lab course due to the comparative orientation of the workshop. I was interested in role reversed (Banerjee 2001), in other words in doing research on European cities from an American perspective. At the time of the workshop I was a first year doctoral student at the University of Southern California, and had recently landed for the first time in the United States, in Los Angeles, after living, studying and doing urban research in different European cities. In addition, the workshop offered opportunities to understand the Los Angeles spatial experience by looking at the city in the German ‘mirror’. The final study report included a chapter about form and physical development, and one section in this chapter referred to city form and public spaces. The section on city form and public spaces assessed similarities and differences between patterns and

also various understanding of usefulness of open spaces. The ideas I developed during this comparative workshop became the starting point of this research study.

An irony of present development of public spaces seemed to be particularly relevant, as observed in the comparison of spatial developments in the Los Angeles region and the Ruhr region. While in the United States urban development aims to replicate the quality of the European public spaces, in Europe the new developments reproduce the suburban, off-center, destination places like shopping and entertainment centers. I also identified two projects that exemplify this irony namely the development of the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, United States, and the CentrO shopping and entertainment center in Oberhausen, Germany. While visiting the Ruhr region I was already familiar with the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, as a particular example of pedestrian urban spaces in Los Angeles. The third street Promenade is modeled after the European pedestrian streets, to reproduce the atmosphere of the boulevards in Paris. The Third Street in Santa Monica was closed for traffic and transformed into a pedestrian street. The first model for a pedestrian street is the Strøget Street in Copenhagen with the design contribution of Jan Gehl. The CentrO shopping mall in Oberhausen is a replica of the Meadowhall shopping center in Sheffield. Victor Gruen in Los Angeles conceived the first models of a shopping mall. This distinction made me question whether the mutual import of spatial models is a result of globalization. At the same time I began to reflect upon ways to understand the quality of places.

As a follow-up of this first research trip to the Ruhr region, two years later in 2003 I went back to Germany. I spent nine months in the Ruhr region to develop an understanding of the role of flagship projects in regional restructuring and urban regeneration. My research on comparative public spaces was part of this larger study about flagship projects. After my return to Los Angeles in 2004 I started to explore a diverse body of literature in order to corroborate the intuitive and sensorial analyses performed in the field within a systematic theoretical argument.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The first premise of this exploration of the production of public spaces is that space is a social product. The conflicts and contradictions within the social order produce social space. This premise has a general character and is meant to provide context to the spatial analysis. As an illustration of this general premise, I discuss in Chapter One's section *The Public and the Private* the historical evolution of the conceptual relationship between *the public* and *the private*. I concluded the brief overview of this relationship with the definition of the ideal target for the current production of spaces for public life as being convivial, diverse and civil.

The second premise refers to the quality of public spaces, which according to this study is outlined in public spaces that are convivial, diverse and democratic. This study assumes that the production of this ideal of spaces for public life depends upon the degree of harmony amongst the moments of the spatial triad.

These three moments are namely sense, conception and lived experience of a place. Henri Lefebvre coined the spatial triad of the three moments included in the process of spatial production (1991 [1974]). The dialectics of design understand the life cycle of a place across these three moments: a) the physical perception of the material space, which I call in this study a sense of a place b) the mental conception of the abstract space, which I call the conception of a place, and c) the lived experience of the social space.

As a matter of fact, this second premise states that the unity of opposites within the spatial triad produces urban spaces for public life (refer to Heraclitus' principle, in the section on *The Dialectics of Design*). As conflicts and contradictions depend upon circumstances and viewpoints, I understand the unity of opposites in the design process as "the good lies in the very creative act of synthesis from the alternative possibilities presented in the dialectic" (Banerjee 1994, p.141). In order to insure the balanced presence of contradictory interests, the understanding of the design dialectics is essential for professionals to perform as mediators. As Banerjee argues, "the designers can still make some important contribution toward the denouement of contentions over the form and type of development" (Banerjee 1994, p.135). This premise is detailed according to the three moments of the spatial triad across the three main chapters of the study: Chapter Three *External Image of a Place*, Chapter Four *Professional Image of a Place*, and Chapter Five *Lived Experience of a Place*.

The third premise of this study is that modifications of the boundaries between *the public* and *the private* stimulate the potential of public spaces to impact the social structure through transformations of the social relations. This premise is implicit as it is contained in the duality of social space (Lefebvre 1991 [1974], Gottdiener 1985, Harvey 2006b), and I develop it in the *Discussion* section.

In terms of pedagogy and practice, this assumption implies that a precondition for the conception of spaces for public life is to include within planning and design education a phenomenological point of view that acknowledges the role of intuition and body knowledge in spatial analysis. Professionals as well may consider bringing their humanity in the process of spatial production. By bringing professionals' humanity into their practice I understand to explore, and bring to light in the spatial production process what is repressed within *the self* and *the private*, and to connect it within the social space. That draws on Lefebvre's critique of modernity in which the conceived and abstract space prevail over the 'unconscious' lived experience that allows individuals to reflect their own personality. In applying this wisdom to public spaces David Harvey argues for the necessity to connect the public with the private.

First, the result of this exploration is the transition between the intangible inner space (of *the self* and of *the public*) and the tangible social life of the material world. In this sense, and because in the current planning practice visual perception is overly emphasized, this argument proposes to balance the spatial production



between *the visible* and the logic and constraints of *the dramatic action*. Second, such exploration of the ‘unconscious’ in action allows room for contradictions to be deployed in space, and thus is capable to produce dynamic, and convivial spaces (Premise 1). Third, in harmonizing the conflicts within the spatial triad these dynamic spaces for public life are capable to activate in turn the unconscious life of the individual and of *the public* (Premise 3).

In explaining with examples the position of designers as mediators, Banerjee identifies different areas of intervention such as establishing trust, being inspiring according to a clear vision and through powerful communication. Regarding rapport and trust, “the design charettes provided a forum for give and take between the designers and the community groups” (1994, p.135). As for vision and inspiration, “the design team can serve an important function in developing, if not jointly exploring with the community, positive images of the future” (idem). In terms of communication designers can “display factual information about the existing place, and future changes. They can show comparative and historic examples, as well as images of the future development. [...] The worst anxieties arise from uncertainty and absence of information” (idem). In order to be successful the design team can choose to “promote collaboration between different stakeholders and interest groups through alternative design proposals. The team can create “what if” scenarios, examine trade-offs, explore the domains of feasibility. By focusing on the interests, rather than positions of the different groups – as

suggested by Fisher and Ury (1991) – designers can map the terrain of conflict, identify areas of trade-off, define the nature of bargains and deals, and most importantly, nudge the parties to communicate with each other and cooperate” (Banerjee 1994, p.135). What is necessary to produce this transformation in the attitude of planning and design practitioners?

### **A PHENOMENOLOGICAL VIEWPOINT ON SPATIAL ANALYSIS**

I propose to complement the explicit knowledge that planning and design practitioners employ with a phenomenological viewpoint on spatial analysis. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, phenomenology is the branch of philosophy that concentrates on what is perceived by the senses in contrast to what is independently real or true about the world. This is only one aspect of the study of phenomena that emphasizes the sensory appearance rather than thought or intuition. This understanding of phenomenology was fundamental to empirical knowledge in the eighteenth century. *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary* defines phenomenology as a) the study of the development of human consciousness and self-awareness as a preface to or a part of philosophy, and b) a philosophical movement that describes the formal structure of the objects of awareness, and of awareness itself, in abstraction from any claims concerning existence.

At first the term phenomenology was used to denominate “descriptive psychology” (Brentano 1889). Influenced by Franz Brentano’s descriptive

psychology and by Bolzano's ideal of logic (*Theory of Science* 1835), Edmund Husserl initiated the philosophical movement of phenomenology. For Husserl phenomenology is the reflective study of "the essence of consciousness", as experienced from the first-person point of view, together with the conditions of experience (*Logical Investigations* 1900-1901). The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, that means the way it is directed through its content or meaning toward a certain object in the world. The domain of phenomenology deals with experiences such as perception, imagination, thought, emotion, desire, volition, action and so forth (refer to Smith 2003).

The purpose of phenomenology is to study the complex of consciousness and correlated phenomena. Husserl's understanding of phenomenology includes logic and psychology within the same discipline. He represents logic and psychology by means of two Greek words namely *noesis*, the intentional process of consciousness, and *noema* the ideal content or "the object *as* intended" (Husserl, *Ideas* Book One, 1913). Both words come from the Greek word *nous*. Although *nous* translates as mind, actually does not mean the rational. "It's not easy to define, but it means something more like the perceptive power of the soul. The *nous* was created to connect us with the interior presence of God, and to be a living link with our Creator" (Mathewes-Green 2006, p.20). As also Husserl emphasizes, the structures of conscious experience are the starting point of phenomenology, yet

experience shifts into areas that are not obviously conscious phenomena. Accordingly, phenomenology is the study of meaning beyond a discipline of words.

Martin Heidegger, Husserl's successor in the chair at the University of Freiburg, developed his own ideas with respect to phenomenology. Heidegger considers that our deep understanding of being comes from phenomenology, rather than from scientific theories (*The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 1927).

A contemporary of Heidegger and a student of Husserl, Helmuth Plessner studied philosophical anthropology, so as to apply it to social and political phenomena. Through his studies, in the 1920s Plessner attempted to defuse the attacks on modern society, and argued in favor of the individual's self-realization in modernity. Self-realization is due to positive characteristics of the modern society such as interpersonal distance and respect for privacy. Plessner understands that the human being lives eccentrically, which means that the individual is capable to fulfill himself the farther one gets from the center. At the same time Plessner advances a flexible notion of the individual who is defined contextually. The individual is characterized by *positionality* that "juxtaposes the idealistic 'I' with a self-dynamic 'it' (environment) to which it relates through dynamic bordering" (Ernste 2002, p.8). These two perspectives are brought together within an important aspect of Plessner's argument namely the antagonism of human existence between being and becoming, "for behind every determination of our being lies dormant the

unspoken possibility of being different” (Plessner 1999, p.109). Life is both a process and a project.

Shortly following the German philosophers, the influence of phenomenology in France was reflected in the 1930s Marcel Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*. To exemplify I quote three paragraphs from Proust’s fragment about the famous *madeleine*. In the Chapter Three of this study, *External Image of a Place*, I emphasize the role of vivid recollections in reproducing sensorial analyses.

Many years had elapsed during which nothing of Combray, save what was comprised in the theatre and the drama of my going to bed there, had any existence for me, when one day in winter, on my return home, my mother, seeing that I was cold, offered me some tea, a thing I did not ordinarily take. I declined at first, and then, for no particular reason, changed my mind. She sent for one of those squat, plump little cakes called “petites madeleines,” which look as though they had been moulded in the fluted valve of a scallop shell. And soon, mechanically, dispirited after a dreary day with the prospect of a depressing morrow, I raised to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had soaked a morsel of the cake. No sooner had the warm liquid mixed with the crumbs touched my palate than a shudder ran through me and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary thing that was happening to me. An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, something isolated, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. And at once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory - this new sensation having had on me the effect which love has of filling me with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me it *was* me. I had ceased now to feel mediocre, contingent, mortal. Whence could it have come to me, this all-powerful joy? I sensed that it was connected with the taste of the tea and the cake, but that it infinitely transcended those savours, could, no, indeed, be of the same nature. Whence did it come? What did it mean? How could I seize and apprehend it? [...]

And suddenly the memory revealed itself. The taste was that of the little piece of madeleine which on Sunday mornings at Combray (because on those mornings I did not go out before mass), when I

went to say good morning to her in her bedroom, my aunt Léonie used to give me, dipping it first in her own cup of tea or tisane. The sight of the little madeleine had recalled nothing to my mind before I tasted it; perhaps because I had so often seen such things in the meantime, without tasting them, on the trays in pastry-cooks' windows, that their image had dissociated itself from those Combray days to take its place among others more recent; perhaps because of those memories, so long abandoned and put out of mind, nothing now survived, everything was scattered; the shapes of things, including that of the little scallop-shell of pastry, so richly sensual under its severe, religious folds, were either obliterated or had been so long dormant as to have lost the power of expansion which would have allowed them to resume their place in my consciousness. But when from a long-distant past nothing subsists, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, taste and smell alone, more fragile but more enduring, more unsubstantial, more persistent, more faithful, remain poised a long time, like souls, remembering, waiting, hoping, amid the ruins of all the rest; and bear unflinchingly, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection.

And as soon as I had recognized the taste of the piece of madeleine soaked in her decoction of lime-blossom which my aunt used to give me (although I did not yet know and must long postpone the discovery of why this memory made me so happy) immediately the old grey house upon the street, where her room was, rose up like a stage set to attach itself to the little pavilion opening on to the garden which had been built out behind it for my parents (the isolated segment which until that moment had been all that I could see); and with the house the town, from morning to night and in all weathers, the Square where I used to be sent before lunch, the streets along which I used to run errands, the country roads we took when it was fine. And as in the game wherein the Japanese amuse themselves by filling a porcelain bowl with water and steeping in it little pieces of paper which until then are without character or form, but, the moment they become wet, stretch and twist and take on colour and distinctive shape, become flowers or houses or people, solid and recognizable, so in that moment all the flowers in our garden and in M. Swann's park, and the water-lilies on the Vivonne and the good folk of the village and their little dwellings and the parish church and the whole of Combray and its surroundings, taking shape and solidity, sprang into being, town and gardens alike, from my cup of tea (Proust 1913-1927, pp. 48-51).

## THE COMPARATIVE METHOD

Planning and design theory and practice derive knowledge from various fields such as geography, sociology, anthropology, political science and the like. In the following paragraphs I make a brief overview of comparative methods that are relevant to research in the related fields. This exploration provides a broad context to the discussion of comparative methods in planning and design.

At the end of the nineteenth-century Emile Durkheim argued that comparative sociology is not a specific branch of it, but sociology itself. Durkheim was a French sociologist referred as the father of sociology, due to his contribution to establishing the field within social sciences. Since the early years of sociology, comparative research seemed relevant because of the method's capability to go beyond pure description and to explain facts (Durkheim, 1982 [1895]). Moreover, he advised, comparisons in sociology are not about contrasting reality with an ideal society. The most relevant aspect of a society is the idea of itself. So his argument suggests analyses of the manner in which a society conceives itself over time. In other words, according to Durkheim, the comparative method in sociology considers temporal ideological analyses between “the authority of tradition” and “the coming into being” of a society.

[Ideological conflicts within a society break out between] different ideals, between the ideal of yesterday and that of today, between the ideal that has the authority of tradition and one that which is only coming into being. Studying how ideals come to evolve certainly has its place, but no matter how this problem is solved, the fact remains that the whole of it unfolds in the world of the ideal. ... It is

by assimilating the ideals worked out by society that the individual is able to conceive of the ideal. It is society that, by drawing him into its sphere of action, has given him the need to raise himself above the world of experience, while at the same time furnishing him with the means to imagining another (Durkheim 1982, p. 425).

During the same decade Franz Boas, an American pioneer of modern anthropology, published an article about the limitations of the comparative method in anthropology. He was interested in the effects that historical connections have had upon the growth of cultures. There are limitations to the method, he argued, as comparison of “similar cultural phenomena from various parts of the world in order to discover the uniform history of their development makes the assumption that the same ethnological phenomenon has everywhere developed in the same manner” (Boas 1982 [1896], p.274). Franz Boas is known for applying the scientific method to the study of human societies and cultures.

In the United States, between the two World Wars, the scientific study of political systems of various European countries generated a subfield of political science that dealt with comparative studies of political processes and institutions (Rustow & Erickson 1991). Towards the end of the 1960s, Harold Lasswell, an American political scientist and a member of the Chicago school of sociology, argued that in the context of political science the scientific method is inevitably comparative. As for the benefits of the comparative method, Berkeley professor of political science David Collier provides a compelling explanation. Currently we understand that “[c]omparison sharpens our powers of description and can be an



invaluable stimulus to concept formation. It provides criteria for testing hypotheses and contributes to the inductive discovery of new hypotheses and to theory building” (Collier 1991, p.7). Whether by means of the scientific method or by means of qualitative analysis, comparison of case studies leads to the development of theory.

Within comparative studies there is concern with the techniques of comparison. Often comparative method refers to the systematic analysis of a small number of cases. This understanding draws on the definition of comparative studies formulated by Dutch political scientist Arend Lijphard (1971). In an analysis of the comparative method Lijphard identified its weak capacity to sort out rival explanations. This limitation might be solved either by increasing the number of cases or by reducing the number of variables. If there is a large number of variables, he proposed the analysis of “comparable cases.” Comparable cases are considered those cases in which similarities are found among variables that are not central to the analysis, and in which differences are among the key variables. At the same time, stronger theory and the idea of a research cycle would be able to remove the problems associated with the comparative analysis of a large number of cases.

Further developments of the field of comparative studies outline the advantages of keeping the research analysis for a small number of cases. In advocating this method, Harvard professor of political science Sidney Verba advised the need to command the cases in order to assess sophisticated hypotheses,

which he called a “disciplined configurative approach” (1967). From Giovanni Sartori, an Italian political scientist specializing in the study of comparative politics, we learn that the comparative method should avoid conceptual “stretching” (1984). Conceptual stretching refers to certain loss of the initial conceptual meaning through application of a concept to a large number of cases. Because the concepts that we could apply to a broad range of cases are mostly abstract and unworthy of scholarly attention, Sartori suggests using in comparative studies a relatively small number of cases. Under these conditions, appropriate application of the concepts is capable to highlight particularities and specific meanings within the comparative method.

The studies in symbolic anthropology of Princeton emeritus professor Clifford Geertz add to the comparative method the requirement of a “thick description” of a human behavior (1973). A thick description does not refer only to a detailed description, which places the research data in context, but also to the contextualization of research findings to explain both practices and discourse within a society.

Yet in the 1980s anthropologists like Michael Jackson, professor of anthropology at the University of Copenhagen, and other scholars, for instance French historian Alain Corbin, began to challenge the reliance on discourse analysis. Jackson’s “knowledge of the body” and “unity of body-mind-*habitus*” (1983) and Corbin’s “anthropology of the senses” (1986) prepared a sensual turn in

anthropological understanding. At present Jackson's phenomenological and existential perspectives on anthropological research emphasize the subjective encounter over the objective descriptions, and focus on particular events and critical concerns that anchor general ideas. One methodological take within the anthropology of the senses is cross-cultural comparison of sensory ethnographic information, which unveils the meaning conveyed and formed by sensorial experiences (Howes, 2003).

#### **COMPARATIVE URBAN STUDIES**

In the study of urban form, there are different approaches to comparative studies. These approaches deal in one way or another with the issues discussed above with respect to the comparative method in social sciences. In addition, I present below a sequence of various research criteria in urban studies that focus on the social construction of space. Detailed narratives about the historic evolution of urban form employ qualitative comparative studies that focus on several cases, as well as on various socially constructed features of cities.

Amos Rapoport elaborated cross-cultural comparative studies in order to structure the theory of environment-behavior relations (1977). In doing research about vernacular design, he revealed the variability of the definition of cities, as cognitive and taxonomic processes. By means of comparisons he redefined the understanding of urban form in social terms, according to people's values, ideals,

purposes, choices, activity systems. He highlighted the significance of the relationships among elements and of the underlying rules in the organization of urban space. If taking into consideration the relationships and the organizing rules, urban design could be defined as the organization of space, time, meaning, and communication. Rapoport pointed out that urban design varies with the nature of the environment, cultural differences, values, as well as with the intricate concept of environmental perception.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Spiro Kostof published two historical cross-cultural urban studies, in which the factors for analysis were determined according to their contribution to the physical structure of towns. In *The City Shaped* he discussed five patterns of organization according to the manner in which they developed over the centuries. The classification of these five patterns of organization was constructed around the physical overall layout of the city, and they are 'organic', grid, diagram, the grand manner, and the skyline). In *The City Assembled* Kostof deconstructed urban form into its constituent elements completely separately from the structural patterns identified in the first study. He proposed five main categories namely the city edge, divisions, public places, the street and urban processes. Kostof mentioned the arbitrariness of this classification though, given urban form's particularity due to its social content.

There are also examples of cultural and philosophical criteria used to structure comparative studies of urban form and processes. Susan Buck-Morss

wrote *The Dialectics of Seeing* as a proof for the transmission of culture and of the fact that “historical memory affects decisively the collective, political will for change” (1989: xi). By means of Benjamin’s writings, the *Arcades* project, Buck-Morss addressed present days concerns of the modern society that is dominated by the power of representation. The analysis of this “historical construction of philosophy” that is at the same time a “philosophical reconstruction of history” is based on three concepts: myth, nature and history. Influenced by Walter Benjamin and *The Dialectics of Seeing*, at the end of the 1990s Christine Boyer elaborated an intricate and erudite historical study. *The City of Collective Memory* describes a sequence of visual and mental models that organize urban design according to three principal “maps” or categories namely the traditional city as a work of art, the modern city as panorama, and the contemporary city as spectacle.

In the last decade, through research on urban governance, comparative urban studies bridge the development of cities and places with comparative studies in social sciences, particularly in political science. Clara Irazábal’s comparative study of Curitiba in Brazil and Portland in the United States is one example of explaining city making through the understanding of urban governance processes in comparison. Moreover, at present the global economy influences the governance of urban regions, and urban studies by political science scholars deal with this relationship comparatively (Sellers 2002, Savitch et al. 2002).

## **TWO CASES IN COMPARISON: SANTA MONICA AND OBERHAUSEN**

Santa Monica is a small city of less than 100,000 inhabitants (2006), which has developed in a common Southern Californian seaside setting, as part of the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Geographically, there are no particular advantages of this location within Los Angeles' collage of places (Figure 2.1). From a temporal perspective, however, Santa Monica captures a distinct age of the ongoing process of shaping urban space in the Los Angeles region. For me it is the singular rococo touch of Los Angeles urban development, which is most of the time classical, struggling once in a while to become baroque. In context this is an example of high quality urban life, mainly due to active politicians and the civic sense and awareness of its residents.

At a first glance, there is something special about this community; its people make a difference. On Santa Monica's downtown pedestrian street, the Third Street Promenade, yuppies, greens, sophisticated singles, homeless people, cool young parents, weekend crowds, tourists, students, movie stars, corporate blue shirts, organic white linen, and street performers all gather. Its cosmopolitan community is the attraction and also the challenge of this place. Walking on the Promenade the other day, within only one block, music of an Argentinean band, a Chinese musician and a Scottish bagpipe mingled. A multicultural crowd, which takes for granted such diversity, watched the performers. I saw people leaving their cigarettes half way smoked on the litterbin and a bit later homeless guys picking

them up. I suppose it was already a habit because it worked out quite fluently. Then I observed two girls giving Subway sandwiches to a group of rebellious teenagers, who looked less mad but hungry. There are gestures reflecting empathy between residents and homeless, Asian kids and Latino kids, restaurant keepers and walkers. And then, there are the encounters of neighbors, friends, or mates that so seldom happen spontaneously in Los Angeles. I don't intend to present an idyllic image of this mixed crowd, but everywhere there is a sense of cooperation, which is reflected in Santa Monica's operating rules and also social norms. It can be explained by the homogeneity of its stable population, in terms of wealth, lifestyle and social class. The main concern of planning authorities in Santa Monica is to consolidate the city core, and produce representational spaces for its multicultural community.

If the forces that currently lead spatial development in Santa Monica could be seen as centripetal, the former industrial town of Oberhausen is experiencing centrifugal influences. Oberhausen is a small city of less than 220,000 inhabitants (2005) in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany (Figure 2.2). Its downtown Stadtmitte Oberhausen, and the main shopping areas in the city core are in relative decline. In the outskirts, on a former industrial site, a new city core by the name of Neue Mitte Oberhausen develops at fast pace. This is the spatial expression of a deep economic and social transition from the industrial age to a service-based economy. Oberhausen is located in the largest European coal and steel region, the Ruhrgebiet. The nineteenth century industrial progress of the Ruhr

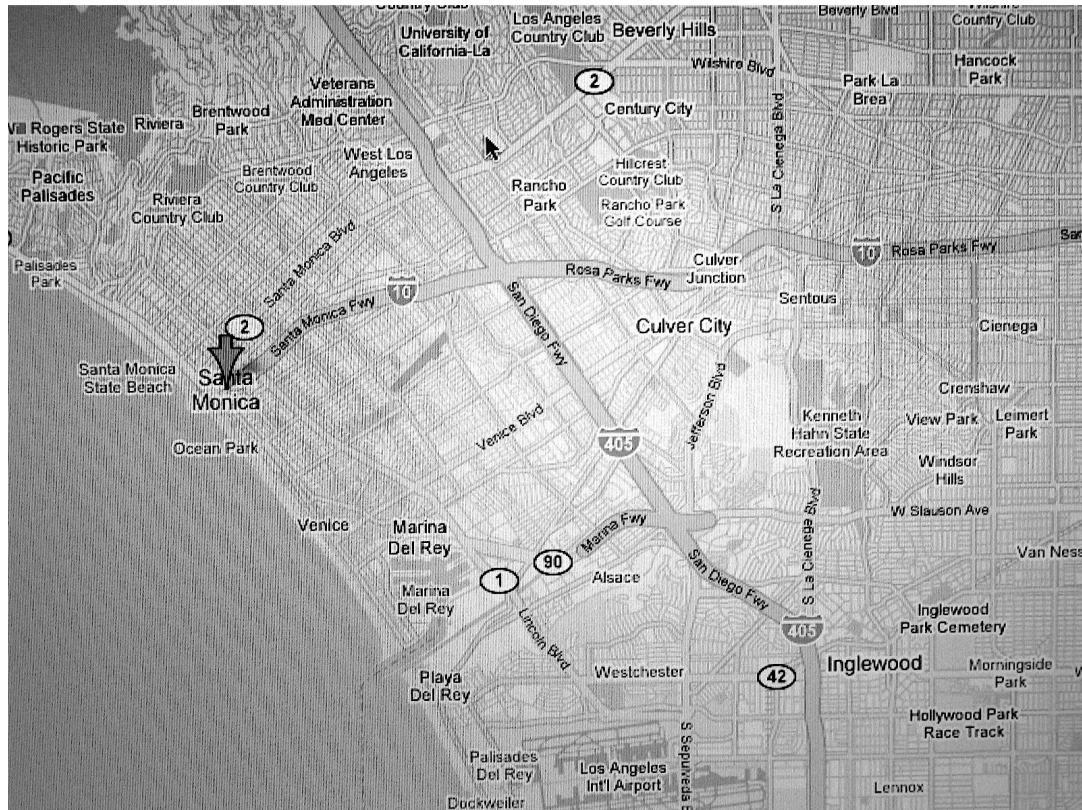
region has shaped dramatically the urban landscape. Nowadays, structural transformations and the need for regional regeneration brought about the search for new drivers of the economy in the Ruhr. The City of Oberhausen made a hard choice towards its economic rehabilitation, by reinventing its urban core.

On a Saturday afternoon, the pedestrian street in Stadtmitte Oberhausen is crowded with people. The clothing is generally grayish in color, maybe due to the cloudy climate, taste developed in an industrial past, transitory mood, or simply European fashion. Most of the crowds are here for shopping, as some of the closing stores have great sale offers. However, I observed local people that came to the city core only to enjoy walking, watching, and socializing. It appears to be a provincial atmosphere of a former steel industry town that made it through the restructuring crisis of the late 1980s.

Not far away from Stadtmitte, the old city core, Neue Mitte is the new downtown of Oberhausen. The beginning of the new city core is CentrO, a private shopping and entertainment development. The complex is adjacent to a preserved gasometer. As the largest enclosed space in the world, the gasometer is currently used for art performances, exhibitions and concerts. This industrial construction is the only element reminding of the former land use, the industrial site of the Gutehoffnungshütte, as a symbolic presence of Oberhausen identity.



**FIGURE 2.1 SANTA MONICA IN CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES**



This image illustrates the location of the City of Santa Monica in its immediate context in the Los Angeles region, California. Santa Monica is a small coastal city in western Los Angeles County. It is situated on the Santa Monica Bay of the Pacific Ocean Coast (on the west), and is surrounded by the City of Los Angeles (Pacific Palisades and Brentwood on the north, West Los Angeles on the north-east, Mar Vista on the east, and Venice on the south). At the regional scale, the Interstate 10 and Interstate 405 freeways define the city's main edges besides natural features like the Santa Monica Mountains and the Coast of the Pacific Ocean.



**FIGURE 2.2 OBERHAUSEN IN NORTH RHINE - WESTPHALIA, GERMANY**



This image illustrates the location of the city of Oberhausen in its immediate context in the Ruhrgebiet region, North Rhine \_ Westphalia. Oberhausen is a city in the north west of the Ruhrgebiet region. At the regional scale, the Emscherschnellweg 42 and Ruhrschnellweg 40 freeways define the city's main edges. The Emscherkanal that is parallel to the river Emscher borders on the north the new city core at Neue Mitte Oberhausen. The old city core, Altstadt, is located on the west side of the city of Oberhausen, and is bordered by the E 34 freeway. The main cities in its immediate proximity are Duisburg on the west and Essen on the east.

## **DATA INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION**

To organize the material that I collected through field and archival research, I employ a technique of montage, similar to a cinematic construction. This technique of montage of images relies on the interpretive power of the visual material rather than on the explanatory power of language. For this method I draw insights from visual anthropology (El Guindi 2004). To provide background to the use of visual tools in anthropology, El Guindi proposes two ways that are appropriate for urban design as well.

On the one hand, a historic consideration suggests that pictorial records of life and ideas are practices that go back to the cave ‘art’. Visual communication never ceased throughout human existence and parallels the beginnings of culture. Overtime pictorializing developed into the earliest systems of representational symbols, and then in writing forms. Symbolic representations marked the developmental stage known as civilization, and made possible the communication across borders such as bridging different languages, for instance between Egypt and Mesopotamia. On the other hand, visual research tools developed together with the development of experimental theories of vision and visual perception, as well as with the development of instruments and technology. El Guindi notes, “pictorial-based global communication started long before the advent of faxes, the Internet, and satellite communication” (2004, p.x). Visual records allow for reaching beyond a discipline of words, and are useful in capturing nonverbal communication, body

language, movements and rhythms (El Guindi 2004, p.69 & p.185). Beyond facilitating communication, symbolic representations contribute to memorializing the universe of human civilizations through the transfer of ideas into “the visible material world to be learned, decoded and studied” (idem, pp. ix-x).

At the same time Walter Benjamin’s urban research and writings are an inspiration for this study in terms of both research methods and narrative form. Benjamin used the montage method of juxtaposition to compose the narrative (1991), as this presentation method is appropriate to the spatial experience itself. Storytelling connects the different fragments whether they are notes from the field trips, literature critiques, archival quotations or suggestions for planning pedagogy. I understand storytelling in the interpretation in planning of authors like Forester (1998), Sandercock (2003) and Throgmorton (2003).

In this study’s narrative, the linear and sequential way of the essay form is replaced with a collection of stories that are arranged according to two sets of tripartite structures. These two sets of triads are defined in three different chapters and within three sections of each chapter. The narrative tells the story of two public spaces in comparison, from three different perspectives that are detailed in the three core chapters. For instance, the main tripartite structure of the dissertation content, which follows the dialectical triad of the spatial production, is distributed among three chapters of the dissertation namely Chapter Three, Chapter Four and Chapter Five. Then each chapter follows the structure of theory, research and pedagogy.

## **PLANNING AND DESIGN PEDAGOGY IN CRISIS**

In an article about planning in the United States Beauregard argued, “[t]he history of practice, however, is only a partial history of planning. One must also pay attention to education and theory” (Beauregard 1989, p.383). In the United States, since early 1920s planning education used to link planners’ actions and their ideology by connecting theory and practice. For instance, planning theory took into consideration the Chicago school of sociology and human ecology, but “there were no ‘planning theorists’, only reformers and practitioners with ideas about how the city should be structured” (Beauregard 1989, p.383). In Europe during the same pre-war decades, Munich Deutscher Werkbund’s art school reform anticipated the enhancement of craftwork. Within this school reform the Bauhaus School provided a model of design pedagogy based on creativity. The Bauhaus model taught spatial research as a combination of conscious analysis and dynamic intuition (e.g. Moholy-Nagy’s Preliminary Course 1923-1928; Klee’s Elemental Design Theory 1921-1931). Ironically, these integrated traditions of planning and design education in the United States and Europe converged into abstract spatial developments (Lefebvre 1991). The production of abstract space was grounded on what became known as the International Style in architecture, and the rational comprehensive model of planning. The rational model informed the modernist project that developed during “the golden years of planning” (Hall 1988, p.324). This scientific model of problem solving was “backed intellectually by theories of location of

firms, initially developed in Germany in the early part of the twentieth century and later introduced in the United States and elsewhere” (Sanyal 2005, p.5). As a matter of fact, after the Second World War the connection between theory and practice weakened within the rational comprehensive model of planning.

[Theorists of the rational model of problem-solving and decisionmaking] believed that they have found the intellectual core of planning: a set of procedures that would generate conceptual problems for theorists, serve as a joint object for theory and practice, and guide practitioners in their daily endeavors. This view proved to be erroneous; while early postwar theorists articulated this ‘essence’ of planning, the modernist project on which such an essence was based was being eroded (Beauregard 1989, p.384).

The rational model of planning informed practice for decades (Friedmann 1987), although it was known that the theoretical framework for planning practice could not be reduced to a set of procedures. In this sense, at the beginning of the 1970s Rittel and Weber’s article on “wicked problems” brought to attention the unique nature of planning problems. Planning problems cannot be completely ‘solved’ due to the fact that planning practice is about performance and not about absolute value. Every planning solution is a “one-shot operation” that leaves little room to learn through trial-and-error. And we cannot transfer across to other problems the lessons learned.

Yet [within the rational model of problem solving] an artful practice of the unique case appears anomalous when professional competence is modeled in terms of application of established techniques to recurrent events. Problem setting has no place in a body of professional knowledge concerned exclusively with problem solving. The task of choosing among competing paradigms

of practice is not amenable to professional expertise (Schön 1983, p.19).

By the 1980s the trends of neo-liberal politics and of the globalization process brought new challenges to planning. Within a decade the planning field was in a state of crisis, as both the rational model of planning and neo-liberal market schemes failed to produce positive planning outcomes and change (Sanyal 2005). In understanding the relationship between place and social reality, as a necessary condition stands out the focus on both physical and social urban space. In this context, Beauregard proposes to reconsider the physical city as the object of practice and theory in order to move away from the current planning ideological ambiguity. Also within the reconstruction of the modernist project of planning he suggests to open planning to a variety of constituencies, and to embrace participation in political action (Beauregard 1989, pp.392-393). From the perspective of urban design Barnett recommends the creation of design constituencies (2003). Along similar lines, but in light of the globalization process, Castells advised the formulation of a new theory of urbanism in the Information Age that is deferent to urban form and addresses the physical city (2005).

The proposal for a new theory of urbanism is compelling. Yet Friedmann's argument is still valid, namely that the traditions of planning thought "revolve around one core concern: how knowledge should properly be linked to action" (1987, p.74). Considering the concern of linking properly knowledge and action, Madanipour urges "the need to go beyond these single-view perspectives [e.g.

rational model] and elaborate a dynamic, multi-view perspective into what is a multidimensional part of social reality” (2001, p.165). Our premise is that such a dynamic and multi-view perspective could be achieved if planning and design practitioners learn to create opportunities for reflection-in-action.

This reflection-in-action is tacit and spontaneous and often delivered without taking thought, and is not a particularly intellectual activity. And yet it involves making new sense of surprises, turning thought back on itself to think in new ways about phenomena and about how we *think* about those phenomena. And examples lie in ordinary conversation, making things, fixing things, riding bicycles (Schön, 1987). ... Practitioners themselves often reveal a capacity for reflection on their intuitive knowing in the midst of action and sometimes use this capacity to cope with the unique, uncertain, and conflicted situations of practice (Schön 1983, pp.viii-ix).

Practice is not a sequence of activities, but a process that occurs in a fashion that depends on the state of understanding the problem. And building an understanding of the problem calls for different procedures. Instead of problem solving according to a prescribed set of performance criteria, “one of the arts [...] is actually postponement of the formal decision in order to enhance the process of forming judgments” (Rittel 1984, p.324). Rittel proposes “the study of the logic of the reasoning of the designer. What I mean by logic is the rules of asking questions, generating information, and arriving at judgments” (p.323). That takes into consideration also the intuitive knowledge, which is unmediated by words or rational analysis (Myers 2002). Moreover, as we know thought and feeling are inseparable brain processes, and in practice “we perform a combination of rational and emotional, of pre-linguistic and linguistic functions” (Madanipour 2001,



p.164). A process of spatial understanding is different than a structural approach to design that proposes sets of performance criteria. Moreover, we argue that practitioners' capability to decipher the environment and their ways to understand phenomena have the potential to balance the contradictions within the process of design.

In terms of pedagogy the above-mentioned understanding of practice implies an alternative to the epistemology of practice that considers knowledge as a product, and what Schön calls "school knowledge". In teaching a course on qualitative methods of spatial research reflection-in-action appealed to us as the most appropriate epistemology of practice. Moreover, instead of thinking of methods practitioners are better off thinking of the "attitude towards planning" (Rittel 1984). As a result I conceived a dialectical tripartite structure of the subject matter to propose a dynamic alternative to the rational models of spatial research.

*We come to the full possession of our power of drawing inferences  
the last of all our faculties, for it is not so much a natural gift as a  
long and difficult art.*

Charles Sanders Peirce 1998

## SUMMARY

In this chapter I explain the framework of this study in terms of theory, research and pedagogy. The theoretical framework opens with a discussion of the design field, in order to establish an understanding of the original source of this research. I consider the practice of urban design tightly connected with the production of urban space for public life. In my understanding, the design undertaking is a manner of shaping the void -- the space in between the material -- as a way of shaping the future. In a concise overview of the dialectical method of reasoning I explain the dialectical understanding of the process of design. I define the design dialectics as the dynamic understanding of a life cycle of a place across the moments of the following dialectical triad: a sense of a place, the conception of a place, and the life and enduring civic presence of a place.

After this introduction of the design field I present the methodology of this research study. During this exploration of the production of public spaces I conducted field and literature research. The field research was the starting point of this study. I visited two developments that include public spaces namely the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, and CentrO in Oberhausen, for the first time with the occasion of doing research on their regional contexts in the Los Angeles region and the Ruhr region respectively. As a first-time visitor of these public spaces I played the role of an outside observer that performed sensorial analyses. At the same time, my ongoing interest in urban design and the study of public

spaces made me aware of an irony of contemporary developments that include public spaces across the Atlantic. Both retail and entertainment projects employ imported spatial models, as the Promenade replicates European pedestrian streets and CentrO is modeled like the omnipresent American shopping mall. At the contextual scale, the irony consists of the fact that the new type of development in Europe is centrifugal and sprawls away from the city center like the American development, while American cities aim to reproduce the atmosphere of the European city cores. As a follow up of my outsider observations, I take on the role of the professional, and as planning researcher I become familiarized with the development in both regions, particularly with respect to the development of urban spaces for public life. As a result of that, the study brings in a personal interpretation of the case studies.

These conditions of the urban development in both sides of the Atlantic require structuring this research through comparative studies. So in the next section I present first an outline of the comparative method in the social sciences fields related to planning. From this outline I draw lessons with respect to the techniques of comparison. Comparable cases are considered those cases in which similarities are found among variables that are not central to the analysis, and in which differences are among the key variables. At the same time, stronger theory and the idea of a research cycle are able to remove the problems associated with the comparative analysis of a large number of cases such as conceptual stretching. In

favor of this method of research come the enhancements that comparisons bring to the data interpretation, in terms of sharpening the power of description, stimulating the formation of concepts, and contributing to theory building. Second I overview some uses of the comparative research method in urban studies.

To begin this research I formulate three study premises that I present in the theoretical section of this chapter. Space is a social product is the first premise of this exploration of the production of public spaces. The conflicts and contradictions within the social order produce social space. The second premise refers to the quality of public spaces, which according to this study is outlined in public spaces that are convivial, diverse and democratic. This study assumes that the production of this ideal of spaces for public life depends upon the degree of harmony amongst the moments of the spatial triad. The third premise of this study is that modifications of the boundaries between *the public* and *the private* stimulate the potential of public spaces to impact the social structure through transformations of the social relations.

As for data analysis and interpretation I present three main techniques that are appropriate to the type of research led in this study. These techniques are used in the construction of this dissertation. First, I present an outline of the visual tools in planning research that are based on techniques of representation in urban design, and on visual records in anthropology. Second, I bring in arguments in favor of the power of storytelling in the practice of planning and in records of spatial research.

Third, I explain the technique of juxtaposition and montage that was used in records of *flânerie*. I use this method to compose the final presentation of this dissertation.

The chapter concludes with an account of the state of planning and design pedagogy that appears to be in a crisis. The crisis in the education system is related to crises in the society as a whole as well as crises within the planning and design field. On the one hand, the trends of neo-liberal politics and of the globalization process brought new challenges to planning. During the 1990s decade, the planning field reached a state of crisis, as both the rational model of planning and neo-liberal market schemes failed to produce positive planning outcomes and change. On the other hand, I argued that planning and design practice is not a sequence of activities, but a process that occurs in a fashion that depends on the state of understanding the problem. Building an understanding of the problem calls for different procedures than instrumental rationality. This understanding of practice implies an alternative to the epistemology of practice that considers knowledge as a product. On the other hand, instead of thinking of methods we are better off thinking of attitudes towards the planning and design field. Hence in this study I propose a dialectical take on the design process namely the dialectics of design.

## **THE PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC SPACE: EXTERNAL IMAGE OF A PLACE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Within the biography of a place, in this chapter I discuss a sensorial ethnographic account of an outside observer. The account is ethnographic (El Guindi 2004) because it unveils, by means of description and comparison, the connection between place and our sensory perception. It aims to be explanatory and build an understanding of the spatial production through ways in which we experience places. Rather than based on a theory of explanation, this account focuses on a technique of spatial observation (Lynch 1981, pp.327-343), and illustrates the understanding of a place by means of sensorial analyses.

Why are sensorial analyses relevant to the contemporary production of public space? In this exploration with respect to our spatial understanding through the senses I draw upon three main ideas that pertain to the relationship between the public and the private in planning practice, theory and pedagogy. As mentioned in Chapter Two, this study advocates a reflective epistemology of practice (Schön 1983) that influences planning pedagogy as well.

First, an idea concerning the planning practice refers to the necessity in the Information Age to consciously incorporate into action our body knowledge. That means to distinguish in action and to be aware of our sensorial connection with the environment. Although a facet of the relationship between the public and the private resides in our personal sensorial ties with the public context, the

Information Age relies to a great extent upon the verbal and the visual aspects of reality. Moreover, sensorial experiences of space and pre-linguistic activities of spatial production are usually taken for granted. Being contained beneath the conscious awareness (Jackson 1983), the body knowledge, which is constructed through the senses like smell, touch, emotions and the like, is not included consciously in the planning practice.

However, language only is not always capable to depict the sensual (Jackson 1983, Howes 2003, El Guindi 2004). Examples of valuing the bodily intelligence are found in traditional societies. In traditional societies “rituals are not texts to be read but rather *ways of sensing the world*, in which body and meaning, media and message, are intimately intertwined” (Howes 2003, p. 34). In the age of the Internet, however, communication and the construction of knowledge within the network society value language and visual representations over bodily intelligence.

Second, an idea that might speak to planning theory refers to in-depth understanding of the bodily intelligence, in order to reveal our intimate relationships with places. Such take in planning theory calls for a phenomenological perspective on spatial understanding. For example Bachelard’s “philosophy of detail” (1958) as well as studies on perception and representation (Klee 1973, Nodine and Fisher 1976) could inspire planning and design theory in understanding the relationship between the public and the private.

The narrative in this chapter describes ways in which everyday spatial experiences develop for the first person through bodily knowledge and experience. I claim that a sensorial phenomenological point of view on the production of public space is a manner to explain the spatial practice. Because spatial practice is lived directly before it is conceptualized, it is “revealed through the deciphering of space”, which “can only be evaluated empirically” through the performance of every society member (Lefebvre 1991, p.38). In Lefebvre’s triad of spatial production, the spatial practice of a society is the projection onto physical space of the relationships and actions within the society. In the study of public spaces, the spatial practice is relevant since within the practice “the reproduction of social relations is predominant” (Lefebvre 1991, p.50). In addition I argue that a sensorial method to understand the materiality of space, as part of the spatial practice, configures an external image or ‘a sense’ of a place (Lynch 1981).

I propose to present this method through the sensorial experiences of an outside observer of public space. To exemplify outside observers who participate in the everyday life of public spaces I mention children, one-time tourists, time-to-time visitors etc. Although the position of an outside observer vis-à-vis the place of analysis is not entirely explicit (El Guindi 2004), the outsider has an enhanced capacity to perceive the place outside of the social practice, in a detached and spontaneous manner. In shaping the profile of an outside participant observer in the public space, I complement the definition in anthropology with the concept of ‘the



stranger’ in Simmel (1971) and ‘the foreigner’ in Sennett (1992 & 2002). Lynch’s research on children’s spatial perception (i.e. 1956, 1960, 1976) and Lofland’s concept of ‘the stranger’ in public spaces (1973, 1998) bring the previous concepts closer to the planning and design practice within the production of public spaces.

Third, in planning pedagogy, there is a gap between theory and practice with respect to sensorial understanding of space. On the one hand, the large majority of spatial research methods courses refer to quantitative analyses. On the other hand, planning practice is vastly based on rational scientific models that do not take into consideration the value of individual experiences of space. Since the purpose of scientific research is to find answers with potential for generalization, phenomenological accounts seem irrelevant to planning practice. Hence there is no emphasis on a phenomenological take on spatial analysis neither in planning theory nor in planning practice. Concerns with the ways we experience urban space are mostly dealt in learning-by-doing teaching processes such as those used within design studios. Yet the design activities within the studio are not always grounded in social sciences theory, and commonly draw on the intuitive knowledge of the designer. The spatial research method proposed in this chapter suggests a way to connect theory and practice within a reflective teaching process. A sensorial ethnographic account of public spaces is capable to bridge the “soft” and “hard” knowledge (Schön 1983), and adds to the rational model the bodily and intuitive knowledge. Moreover, an argument in favor of using a descriptive and comparative

method of spatial analysis is that comparison sharpens our power of description (Collier 1991). Drawing on this statement, I argue that by means of comparisons the participant in public space is capable to enhance individual spatial experience through sharpening her power of perception.

*Love is the bright foreigner, the foreign self.*  
Ralph Waldo Emerson 1841

### **THE OUTSIDE OBSERVER AND THE STRANGER**

In defining the researcher's position as an outsider, El Guindi explains that the anthropologist is an outside observer "necessarily relegated to externality" to use Bourdieu's wording (1990, p.286, n.11). However, the researcher's position relative to the object of study is relatively ambiguous, and cannot be defined completely either outside or inside the space of research. "Just like an insider can become an observer, there is a "native" in every outside observer. There is a native within everybody, including the observer, and a potential observer in every native" (El Guindi 2004, p.191). The outside observer of public space brings into our study explanations that configure, within the process of spatial production, an exterior image of this place. Outsiders' explanations are informed by sensorial analyses of place's physical materiality. These ethnographic accounts are based on descriptions and comparisons, and they unveil the spatial practice of a society.

Georg Simmel is one of the founders of the *German Society for Sociology* in 1909 together with Max Weber and Ferdinand Toennies. He participated

frequently in Weber's intellectual circle in Heidelberg. Intellectuals like Husserl respected his writings, Durkheim appreciated them as "subtle and ingenious" (Coser 1965), and his ideas influenced the German sociological thinking including Weber's *Protestant Ethic*. He lifted sociology "from the level of mere data collecting and general reflection to the rank of a truly philosophical undertaking" (Gassen and Landmann cited in Levine 1971, pp.xliii-xliv). His writings in sociology and social philosophy are abstract and focus on forms of interaction in order to determine typologies. In Levine's words, Simmel's method "does not force all phenomena together into a general scheme nor does it molest them with arbitrary or rigid categories; at the same time it avoids mindless empiricism by providing a context of meanings for sets of observations" (1971, p.xxxii). His central analytical interest is oriented toward sociological dualism in terms of conflicts and contrasts between opposed categories, which are constitutive of social order.

In particular the distinction between form and content is central to his inquiry. Form is a fluid category that follows a life cycle namely emergence, development and disappearance. The category of form informs cognition as well as human experience. He explains the emergence of forms in crises or under unusual conditions. An example of emerging form is (proto)music that expresses powerful feelings and emotions by adding rhythm and melody to language that would be insufficient alone (Simmel 1968). This explanation is similar to the rhythm as

difference in repetition within the study of rhythmanalysis (refer to Lefebvre 2004 in Chapter Five's section *Rhythmanalysis*). "The conflict between established forms and vital needs produces a perpetual tension, a tension which is nevertheless the source of the dialectical development or replacement of social structures and cultural forms throughout history." (Levine 1971, p. xxxix). Simmel's category of form enlightens my study on the production of public spaces, and especially applies to the production of the exterior image of a place.

Furthermore, on the dual relation between form and content Simmel based his take on the study of personality. He understands individuality in a dialectical manner, as a dynamic process directed toward the accomplishment of an ideal. This ideal is endogenously determined by the capabilities manifested in each individual existence. Between 1908 and 1911 Simmel wrote a series of essays on social types that consist of *The Miser and the Spendthrift* (1907), *The Stranger* (1908), *The Poor* (1908), *The Nobility* (1908) and *The Adventurer* (1911). *The Stranger* is particularly relevant for our study, as it contributes to the profile of the outside observer of public spaces.

Based on Simmel's theory of forms as synthesis of opposites, the stranger is at the same time in a state of detachment and attachment to the place. The sociological form of the stranger is similar to the position of the outside observer of public spaces. The outside observer is detached from, but interested in the object of study, is part of the present spatial experience but is involved in the long-term life

of the place only through recollection. Yet there are challenges that the stranger might face in choosing one of the extremes of her dual position. “A foreigner, he saw [Alexander Herzen], could be demeaned by the desire to assimilate, or be destroyed by nostalgia.” (Sennett 2002, p. 205). In anthropology that position for a researcher who becomes an insider and romanticizes his role is described in the expression “going native” (e.g. in ethnographic films Gardner 1964). I argue that the stranger could release the tension between assimilation and nostalgia through a dynamic perspective on her duality. Such dynamic perspective of the researcher in the role of stranger would focus on keeping alive the ties between the spatial experiences and their recollections. Simmel formulates that in the following definition of the stranger. What Simmel refers to as ‘the group’ in this definition, I translate in my inquiry with Lefebvre’s spatial practice.

The stranger will thus not be considered here in the usual sense of the term, as the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather as the man who comes today and stays tomorrow – the potential wanderer, so to speak, who, although he has gone no further, has not quite got over the freedom of coming and going. He is fixed within a certain spatial circle – or within a group whose boundaries are analogous to spatial boundaries – but his position within it is fundamentally affected by the fact that he does not belong in it initially and that he brings qualities into it that are not, and cannot be, indigenous to it. [...] The state of being a stranger [...] is a specific form of interaction. [...] The stranger is an element of the group itself [...] whose membership within the group involves both being outside it and confronting it (Simmel 1971, pp.143-144).

In institutional terms, Simmel gives the example of the outside judge who was recruited in certain Italian cities in order to avoid kin interests and partisan

group separations. In material terms of capital and labor, he identifies the stranger as a no “landowner,” and a trader of goods produced outside the group, a concrete example of that being the European Jews. Not being bound up by “established ties of kinship, locality, or occupation” (Simmel 1971, p.145) the stranger acquires the character of mobility. Hence neither “custom”, nor “precedent”, nor “piety” would constrain stranger’s actions (idem, p.146). “The foreigner is perhaps the most threatening figure in the theater of society. An outsider calls into question society’s rules, the sociologist Georg Simmel believed: the foreigner exposes the sheer arbitrariness of society’s script, which insiders follow, thinking lines have been written by Right, Reason or God.” (Sennett 2002, p.191).

In an interpretation of stranger’s characteristics of mobility and duality for the analysis of public spaces, I associate the stranger with the outside participant observer of space. The outside observer of a place is relatively unaware either of the physical models that informed the production of space or of the institutional constraints within the organization of the production process. Yet the outsider is capable to challenge the established spatial practice through recollections of her spatial experiences based on bodily intelligence. In other words, the outside observer is perfectly equipped to deliver an ethnographic account on the appearance (materiality) of a particular place by means of body knowledge. That complements the lack of *a priori* explicit knowledge about that place. Moreover,

the outsider's account on public space has the potential to disclose the spatial practice and also challenge the order of that particular society.

### **STRANGERS IN PUBLIC SPACES**

Simmel defines the dual nature of the stranger as being “near and far at the same time,” because s/he can be considered a member of the group, but also excluded from it. As a result, the tension created by this duality emphasizes on that which is not common, and makes more difficult the appreciation of the other's value due to the lack of experience and of *a priori* explicit knowledge. Within the public realm, however, we are exposed to “strangers,” which could be in Lofland's definition “any person who is personally unknown to the actor of reference, but visually available to him” (1973, p.18).

In arguing in favor of an ideal of spaces for public life, it is necessary to reconsider diversity within the modern society that implies the interaction with “strangers”. This public interaction is a counterbalance to an excess of order that isolates people in the suburbs of segregated cities or confines public life to the privatized public spaces (Sennett 1970, Lofland 1973). David Harvey explained the semi-privatization of public space as a “lost capacity to celebrate unity and community in the midst of diversity” (1996, p.419).

Lyn Lofland argues for the rehabilitation of the public realm by means of urban design. The privatization of contemporary cities used strategies to control the

“orderliness” by regulations and by design, but the latter being the most powerful. For instance, she contrasts the concept of “locales,” meaning non-private places of diversity, to “counterlocales” to which both entry and behavior are monitored and controlled. Such purified and sanitized counterlocales “prevent the development of a robust psychological immunity to the rough-and-tumble reality of locales” (1998, p.221), but they have been chosen as an “ordering” solution.

In a larger context, the ways people order their environment relate to the type of public realm they express. For example, in the preindustrial city *the public* is ordered according to appearance, which allows for overt population heterogeneity and mixed use of public spaces. By contrast, *the public* in the modern city does not expose the social heterogeneity, and is spatially organized by specialized use of predominantly homogeneous environments. Lyn Lofland (1973) explains the necessity for spatial delimitation and segregation within the modern urban space as a result of the decrease in the power of appearance, and of the dissolution of social hierarchies.

#### **SENSORIAL ANALYSES IN SPACES OF REPRESENTATION**

*... sensory perception is a cultural as well as physical act.*  
Constance Classen 1997

Sensorial analyses inform the understanding of spatial production through awareness regarding the sensorial and non-verbal perception of space that exists outside the formal conceptualization of space. Sensorial experiences of space turn



tangible the body spatial knowledge, which is a conceptual world outside of the verbal signs and of the documented space. In this study I approach a broader meaning of the senses than the Aristotelian categories like sight, smell, touch, taste and sound, including movement and emotions as well. This account reveals the interpretive power of the senses.

The restoration of the body means, first and foremost, the restoration of the sensory-sensual – of speech, of the voice, of smell, of hearing. In short, of the non-visual. And of the sexual – though not in the sense of sex considered in isolation, but rather in the sense of a sexual energy directed towards a specific discharge and flowing according to specific rhythms. But these are no more than suggestions, or pointers (Lefebvre 1991, p.363).

The sensual turn in cultural anthropology agrees that the reliance of ethnographies upon language-based models of analysis is inherently limited (Howes 2003). The qualitative observation methods in anthropology help to delve beneath the surface of a culture, in order to unveil why peoples do what they do. And even though the medium of film, and even the visual element altogether was historically not accepted in the field of anthropology, the desire to record, analyze and understand people eventually outweighed the stigma that was attributed with filming. Now visual ethnographies are abundant in the field, serving as invaluable learning and research tools. So the question arises: what is the difference between planners and anthropologists? Why aren't the majority of planners interested in better understanding the places and people for which they are planning? Is this lack of comprehensive analysis a flaw in the professional practice?

The theory of spatial production provides the theoretical background of this study. Specifically, in this chapter I particularize Lefebvre's understanding of spatial practice to the analysis of public spaces as spaces of representation.

From the analytic standpoint, the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of space. [...] The specific spatial competence and performance of every society member can only be evaluated empirically. [...] spatial practice consists in a projection onto a (spatial) field of all aspects, elements and moments of social practice. [...] Like all social practice, spatial practice is lived directly before it is conceptualized; but the speculative primacy of the conceived over the lived causes practice to disappear along with life, and so does very little justice to the 'unconscious' level of lived experience *per se* (Lefebvre 1991, p.38, p.8 & p.34).

In other words, spatial practice and social practice reveal each other. In addition, these practices are included within the particular political practice and, hence, within the planning culture. So understanding the relationship between the spatial and the social practice becomes essential for this study about the production of urban spaces for public life. I argue that the stranger as spatial explorer, being an outside participant observer of the appearance of places is capable to unveil the spatial and social practice of a society.

Can the body, with its capacity for action, and its various energies, be said to create space? [...] Before *producing* effects in the material realm (tools and objects), before *producing itself* by drawing nourishment from that realm, and before *reproducing itself* by generating other bodies, each living body *is* space and *has* its space: it produces itself in space and it also produces that space. This is a truly remarkable relationship: the body with the energies at its disposal, the living body, creates or produces its own space; conversely, the laws of space, which is to say the laws of discrimination in space, also govern the living body and the deployment of its energies (idem, p. 170).

In urban design, Kevin Lynch proposes sensorial analyses as means of spatial understanding, and according to his claims, “a good place is accessible to all the senses, makes visible the currents of air, engages the perceptions of its inhabitants [...] Occasion and place will reinforce each other to create a vivid present” (1981, p.132). Moreover, based on Lynch’s methods of spatial exploration, behavior mapping and memory analysis have proved very beneficial in successful design of places that are tailored to particular communities. In this study I adapt Lynch’s performance criteria for the good city form to the perception of the outside observer, as the criteria of sense, identity and structure refer to the non-verbal perception of space in addition to conceptual spatial analyses.

Sense is the degree to which the settlement can be clearly perceived and mentally differentiated and structured in time and space by its residents and the degree to which that mental structure connects with their value and concepts – the match between environment, our sensory and mental capabilities, and our cultural constructs (idem, p.118).

Identity is the simplest form of sense in the narrow meaning of the ‘sense of place’ or ‘sense of occasion’ that is given by the events. Identity becomes relevant in the perception of physical boundaries that define the relationship between *the public* and *the private*. At the scale of a small place, structure is the sense of how the parts of the place fit together. In a large settlement, structure is the sense of orientation, meaning knowing where or when one is, which implies knowing how other places or times are connected to this place (idem).

According to Lynch observing our environment through the sensory elements, for example through sight, allows us to identify the most valuable “visual qualities” and the most undesirable qualities, as well as qualities that are changing and qualities that are the most vulnerable to change. For example in an urban community, all of this observation allows the urban designer or planner to know which qualities to either preserve or change to improving the quality of life in the particular community. This observation, according to Lynch, may include a mapping of places and qualities by community members, a photographic analysis of pictures taken at strategic gridlines and/or interviews with the people in the community in question. These three methods, coupled with other sensory surveys of smell, taste, touch and hear will complete the qualitative inventory of a place thus allowing a thorough conceptual plan to be made in order to improve the overall quality of a community (Lynch 1975 in Banerjee and Southworth 1991).

In accordance to Lynch’s understanding of spatial analyses, in the last decades of the twentieth century William H. Whyte conducted field research about the uses and activities in public spaces, which was the basis for re-thinking the New York City zoning ordinance (1980 & 1988). However, in part due to time and budget constraints, often planning and design professionals do not use other than visual sensory components in the understanding of a place’s culture. In the next section I present the juxtaposition of visual and narrative form of sensorial analyses performed in the two cases of my research, in Santa Monica and in Oberhausen.

**FIGURE 3.1 SENSORIAL ANALYSES IN OUTDOOR PUBLIC SPACES**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on January 7, 2006 at 11:45am. The perception of vibrations in the outdoor public space is expressed through light vibrations like in the shadowplays, in the differences between the material textures, in the tremor of the projected leaves' shadows, in this case in the movement of birds and the like. Vibrations are expressed also through differences in sound like wind blowing through the trees canopy and the hanging flags, fountains' water play, birds murmur, pets interactions, whispers, conversations, music, children play, soapbox speakers, street performers etc. The wind blows bring in also scent vibrations such as fresh marine air, flowers and greenery, perfumes of passers-by and transients, smoking cigars or incense sticks, stores and restaurants' fragrances... The perception of these different vibrations is a means to exchange information and interact with the place.

### **THE THIRD STREET PROMENADE IN SANTA MONICA**

This ethnographic account records my first visit to the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica at the end of August 2000. Until then I lived in different European cities, and recently have moved to the United States to live in Los Angeles, California. In California the weather is always good, but that summer's weather was particularly pleasant. To get to know the city and enjoy the summery climate, I received the recommendation to visit an outdoor pedestrian street namely the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica. Knowing that I am a European who has recently moved to Los Angeles, my American acquaintance insisted that the Promenade is a place that resembles the street atmosphere in the European cities. Moreover, she added, a mandatory trip for a newcomer in Los Angeles is a car ride along the city's urban spine. That artery is Wilshire Boulevard, which starts in downtown Los Angeles and ends close to downtown Santa Monica at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.

So on Thursday morning, August 31, I took a trip on Wilshire Boulevard from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica, in order to visit the Third Street Promenade. The car ride was interesting, as I could listen to my favorite music while scenes from the life of this busy metropolis passed by my car windows. I imagined the windshield like the cinema screen, and me rolling through the movie, as I was the one in movement. In the city famous for the movie industry I had a cinematic experience in reverse. The rest of the car ride experience was identical

with the cinema spectatorship. The controlled environment of my car did not particularly challenge my senses. My immediate environment was constant, considering the air-conditioning, the 'lemon scent' air freshener, my favorite music, the comfortable car seat that was similar to those in a movie theater, a *Coca-Cola* can and a popcorn bag on my right side. Apart from a few emotional moments generated by the music, the emotional stimuli came from the outside, and were filtered through the screen of my windshield.

In Santa Monica, however, as soon as I got off the car I had a pleasantly invigorating experience. The fresh smell of the ocean air stimulated my sensorial perception. I was ready for a pedestrian journey to get to know for the first time my destination place: the Third Street Promenade. When I approached the place, the car ride experience was still very alive. By contrast, my first impression of the Third Street Promenade was of a peaceful oasis off one of the busiest boulevards in Los Angeles.

Once I entered the space of the Promenade the pavement had changed. From the grey asphalt of the sidewalks on Wilshire Boulevard, I stepped onto a warmer grey and brick colors pavement made out of a textured concrete surface. The shadowplay on the textured surface created an intense feeling. I was certain that it was possible to sense the vibrations of this place. Then the water fountain in front of me drew my attention; it was a combination of water features, a seating place, an art display, and greenery in the shape of a dinosaur. The water play of the

fountain attracted me closer to it. I saw a man who was seating on the steps, and had the impression that he was enjoying greatly his morning reading. It was a quiet sunny summer morning indeed! I kept walking in the middle of the pedestrian street, in between the sidewalks lined with palms and jacaranda trees. The more I advanced under the tree canopy, the more the light vibrations on the textured pavement fascinated me. The tremor of the projected shadows of the tree leaves created a strong sensation. A little farther away from the fountain, some pigeons were fed on the street pavement. The movement of the birds together with the differences between the textures of the streetscape added more vibrancy to my sensorial perception of the place (Figure 3.1).

As I was close to the pigeons, the listening to the birds murmur drew my attention to the subtler sounds of the place. Then I could perceive the wind blowing through the trees canopy and in the banners hanging over the Promenade. Listening out to the wind, for a moment I could almost hear the silence. It was a very peaceful summer morning. I noticed that the over-the-street banners created a cozy atmosphere on the Promenade. But that silence lasted only a moment, as a blow of wind brought to me the strong fragrance of the lavender flowers from a planter next to the fountain. As I was awakening from that meditative moment, I realized that there was more going on in this place... and first I heard whispers, like fragments of conversations, and then I heard the music of a guitar player, and the clear voices of some children playing farther away... (Figure 3.2).



### FIGURE 3.2 LISTENING OUT TO/IN PUBLIC SPACES



This photograph illustrates a scene on Arizona Avenue at the corner with the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on January 7, 2006 at 12:00pm. I use this image of a woman in the public space that is absorbed in the listening to the cell phone conversation to show two different ideas. One idea is the listening itself. In contrast to more or less attentive hearing, one could purposefully listen out to the place. Another idea is the cohabitation of the space of places and the space of flows within the contemporary public spaces.

It was around 11am. At this time of the day there were not many people walking or spending time on the first half of the block close to Wilshire Boulevard. As I looked farther beyond the kiosk of the *Café Promenade* and across Arizona Avenue, I noticed that there were people gathering and more activities on the next blocks of the Third Street Promenade. So I started to walk faster in the direction of the sound. In a rush I noticed my silhouette reflected in the fashionable windows of the *Pottery Barn* furniture store, and was pleased with my image integrated in that lifestyle context. I passed by different store windows that had huge sale tags, and by a few restaurants that had outdoor dinning. I noticed that every store or restaurant chose a different color for the awnings or for the umbrellas. Yet the store that drew my attention was the visual art bookstore *Hennessey and Ingalls*.

As I was waiting at the pedestrian crossing on Arizona Avenue, the street traffic reminded me of the car ride along Wilshire Boulevard. The alarms of the paramedical and the fire truck that were crossing the avenue on the Fourth Street brought me back to the fast life of the metropolis. Yet from across the street, I could hear the music of a performer (Figure 3.3). While waiting at the crossing for the green light, I looked at the big and almost blank walls of one of the movie theaters that face each other on the second block of the Promenade. By contrast I realized in retrospect that on the previous block there were not many blank walls, but mostly store windows that reflected back the play of light and shadow, the images of passers-by, and the movement of the activities on the Promenade.

**FIGURE 3.3 THE PRESENCE AND IMPACT OF SOUND IN PUBLIC SPACES**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on January 7, 2006 at 11:50am. By listening to the music, the audience develops a sense of mutual body tempo with the live musical performances. The perception of this mutual tempo is a means to exchange information and interact with the place. Similarly to listening to the music, the spatial observer could listen out purposefully to other sounds that are present in the public space. Examples of sounds present in public spaces could be found from the softer end of the hearing range like wind blowing in the trees canopy, silence, whispers, soft conversations, or birds singing to the noisier end of the acoustic spectrum such as street traffic, loud music, alarms, noise from powerful engines (e.g. grass cutters, trucks, construction sites and the like). It is difficult to reproduce the selective perception of sound in the participant observation of a place. Yet the listening out is a first step in building awareness for the next step of spatial exploration that is performing rhythm analyses.

Once I was on the other side of the avenue, I saw some children playing in front of the neon-lit entrance to the *AMC* movie theater. Then I understood that these were the voices I heard earlier. I stopped to read the list of new movies that were playing in theaters at the time, but a strong smell of food distracted me from the reading. I saw in front of me the *New York Pizza* place, but the fragrance was too strong to come only from there.

So I followed the direction of that powerful scent and ended up at the food court, which is just next to the *Mann Criterion Theater* located on the Promenade across from the *AMC Theater*. Tempted by the diversity of fragrances and colors, I left the food court with a tray of freshly rolled sushi. It was almost the right time for brunch. With the sushi meal in my hand, I kept walking to find a place where I would like to sit and eat.

On this second block I passed by another fountain with greenery in the shape of a dinosaur. Next to the fountain a group of teenagers wearing baggy pants gathered. They were listening to the guitar player I had heard from the other side of Arizona Avenue. I was thinking to stop here, and eat while listening to this joyful music. My urge came mostly because of the difficulty to resist the taste of sushi that I was already feeling in my mouth (Figure 3.4).

**FIGURE 3.4 THE PRESENCE AND IMPACT OF TASTE IN PUBLIC SPACES**



This photograph illustrates a scene from the Farmers' Market at the crossing of the Third Street Promenade and Arizona Avenue in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on January 7, 2006 at 12pm. The sense of taste is present in public spaces as a means to exchange information and interact with the place. Although this scene takes place during the market, the purpose of tasting is not purchasing food. Rather by offering a bite to the child the woman initiates a relationship with the place: present enjoyment, potentially ongoing connection & future recollection.



Yet I decided to keep going, as I could see there were other performers farther away. And as I was walking I kept looking at the storefronts, and suddenly I became very emotional. In front of me was the neighborhood bookstore that I would never miss in any new community that I visit. The neighborhood bookstore here on the Promenade was *Midnight Special*, the alternative to national bookstore chains like *Borders* or *Barnes and Noble*. With the sushi meal in my hand I kept walking. But as I was still looking at the bookstore windows, unexpectedly I bumped into someone. I turned my head and saw a tall middle-age muscular man, who smiled at me with a missing tooth smile: “Are you ready to take your brunch, young lady?” and looking at the sushi tray I asked back “Do you like sushi?”... “I don’t like chopsticks! But do love hamburgers...” he replied abruptly pointing at *Johnny Rockets*’ red awnings. As I turned back to get the burger, I saw him taking a seat on one of the benches under the next jacaranda tree. My first conversation partner on the Promenade looked majestic and seemed being at home in this communal living room.

As I departed from the place where I bumped into him, I kept with me the memory of this encounter. It reminded me of the smell of a storage room, in which a bunch of my classmates gathered to smoke their cigarettes, during one of the many parties we had in high school. I smiled and continued walking. And while I still had a big smile on my face, and the high school memory fresh in my mind, the voluptuous fragrance coming out of the *Sephora* store hit me like the sight of a

movie star. Since I was walking through this oasis, this was the second time that I remembered my car ride along Wilshire Boulevard (together with the *Porsche* that I admired and the *Hummer* that I disliked). And as the streetlights were already green, I quickly crossed Santa Monica Boulevard thinking to find that place where I was going to eat sushi.

Once I was on the other side of Santa Monica Boulevard, in front of me was another kiosk similar to the *Café Promenade* that I saw on the first block of my walk. But instead of the outdoor chairs and tables around it, this one displayed silk scarves and dresses. Only seeing their colorful fabric and silky texture made me travel to faraway lands. I could not resist the temptation to touch the silky fabric, and also to check my appearance in the store mirror. Then I walked towards a vending cart that had incense for sale, advertised with burning patchouli sticks. I thought that through these products I completed my Southeast Asian imaginary travel. Shortly though, a Chinese acrobat drew my attention. In front of the *Borders* bookstore, he was juggling with plates and was surrounded by a curious audience. I stopped briefly to admire his skills, and as I was waiting in full sun I realized what a pleasant summer day that was. Although it was hot in the sun, the ocean breeze repeatedly cooled down the air. Looking around I realized that at that moment there were larger crowds around me than when I entered the Promenade. It was already half an hour past noon.

**FIGURE 3.5 THE PRESENCE AND IMPACT OF SCENT IN PUBLIC SPACES**



This photograph illustrates a scene from the Farmers' Market at the crossing of the Third Street Promenade and Arizona Avenue in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on January 7, 2006 at 11am. From a descriptive spatial viewpoint, the attractive flower stands add fragrance and color to the place. From an interpretive viewpoint, a scene that represents contemplation and enjoyment of flowers, and the market activities through extension, is capable to suggest the power of the sense of scent in potentially establishing a close connection with the place.



At lunchtime the buzz was around the restaurants at the corner of the Third Street Promenade and Colorado Boulevard, where the Third Street ended. At the end of the pedestrian area across Colorado Boulevard there is an anchor indoor mall by the name of *Santa Monica Place*. I saw many people coming out of the food court located at the entrance of the indoor mall. So I entered the mall for a moment to compare it with my recent outdoor experience. The music inside the mall was melodic, similar to the music I previously played in my car, the air-conditioning kept a constant temperature, the fast-food fragrance was dominant at the food court, the *Robinsons-May* attracted visitors with the scented perfumes' department located right at the entrance, the shiny hard surfaces of the pavement reflected back the noise...

I came out of the *Santa Monica Place* hoping to find a pleasant place to have my sushi meal. Once I was out, the wind blowing from the ocean brought to me a strong salty smell of fresh marine air. I decided to have lunch on the beach. Although my first visit to the Third Street Promenade was only a two hours walk, I left the public space with the feeling that by perceiving its vibrations I became familiar to this place.

## THE CENTRO IN NEUE MITTE OBERHAUSEN

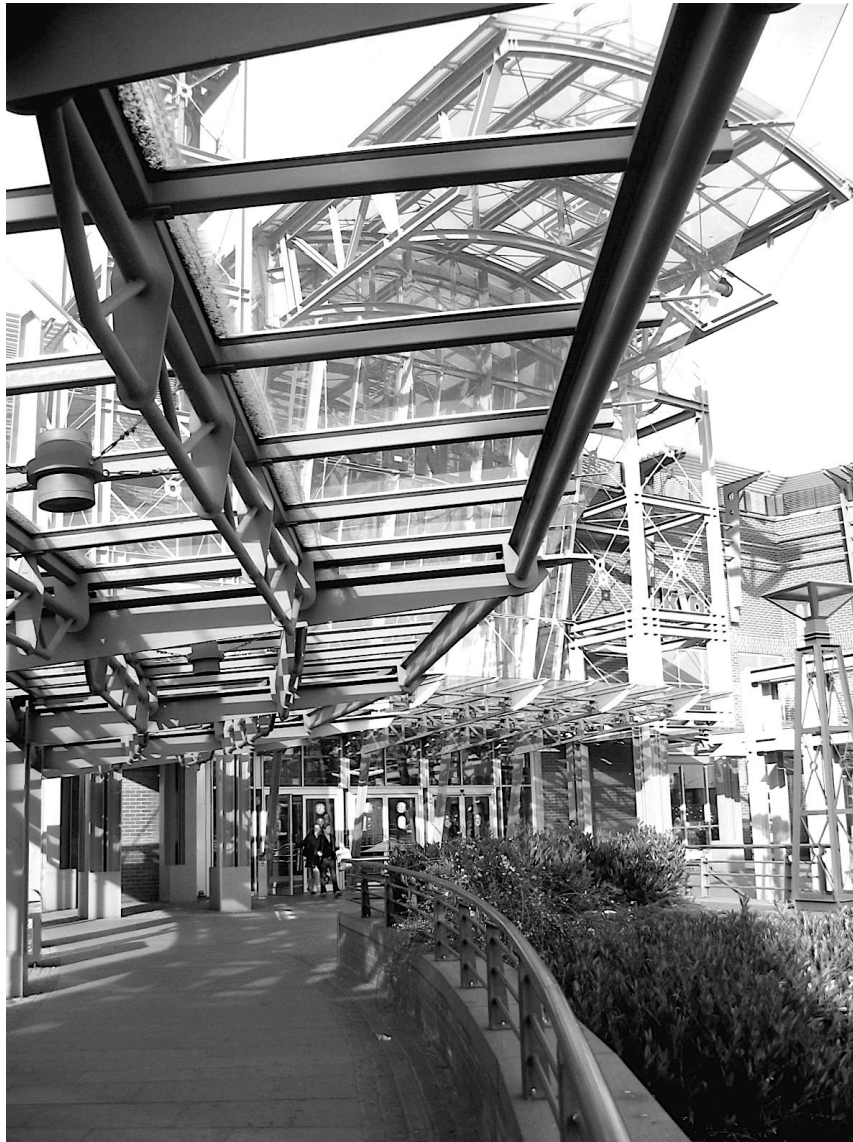
This ethnographic account describes my first visit, in March 2003, to one of the largest shopping and entertainment centers in Europe namely CentrO in Neue Mitte Oberhausen. In the spring of 2001 I visited for the first time the Ruhrgebiet, which is the former coal and steel industry region in Germany. I lived in Dortmund, and traveled with a group of students from California. In one of the tours that we took to visit various environmentally friendly development projects, the guide pointed at me: “We have a shopping and entertainment center here in the region as well, just like the American ones! It is in Neue Mitte Oberhausen; you should go and visit.” So I was tempted to go and visit the place.

Oberhausen used to be a small industrial town, connected with the rest of the region through the regional train system, and with the bus and tramway public transport system. I took the train from Dortmund to Essen. At the train station in Essen I transferred to the city tramway, the *Strassenbahn*, that brought me to the main train station *Hauptbahnhof* Oberhausen. Following the flow of people I crossed under the rail tracks through the underground passage. As soon as I arrived inside the train station I was showered with the light coming from an impressive window that stretched through the entire height of the building. I did not expect this lavish experience in the train station of a small steel industry town. Another unexpected presence was a luxury cigars store, *Schröder’s Tabakwaren*, which

stimulated my scent, while I also sensed the fragrance coming from the freshly baked bread at the typical bakery store that was present in every train station.

Outside the train station I turned around to look at the beautiful glass wall, and I noticed the harmonious and warm brick façade of the building. As I looked at the façade, I saw the train station tower's clock showing the time, 11:30am. So I asked a passer-by about the tramway or the bus stop for Neue Mitte Oberhausen. At the stop a dozen of teenagers were waiting for the same tramway that was going to transport us to the CentrO shopping and entertainment center. I stepped into an elegant tramway that made for a very quiet and comfortable trip. Traveling on the state-of-the-art transit connection to Neue Mitte was an experience worthwhile in itself. As the tramway stopped, I looked through the window to check the surroundings of this stop. Through the window I read *Arbeitslosigkeitsamt*, the unemployment office, and chose not to get off here. As I was approaching my destination, I became really impatient. Next stop is Neue Mitte Oberhausen. I got off the tramway and saw a bus coming on the same lane on which the tram tracks were. I smiled thinking of the notorious German practical ingenuity. Once I saw the transit station I was in amazement; it was a deconstruction of form and structure, all in steel and metal surfaces. Through the diagonal metal bars I saw in the background the silhouette of a brick modernistic building. That must be the *Hauptlagerhaus* by Peter Behrens that I had seen illustrated in a photograph in the Oberhausen train station. Yet I could not wait to get to see the shopping galleries.

**FIGURE 3.6 THE MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND THE SENSES**



This photograph illustrates an image of one of the entrances to the CentrO shopping mall galleries in Oberhausen, North Rhine - Westphalia. I took the photograph on November 26, 2003 at 11am. I use this image to illustrate the impact of technology on our modern sensibility. In this case I contrast the shadowplay of the steel structure, and the transparency and reflections in the glass façade with the more porous natural textures on the Third Street Promenade (Figure 3.1)

From the transit station Neue Mitte I walked next to the blank walls of the Konig-Pilsner Arena. From the size of the trees around me I could tell that this is a newly built place though. But I was looking ahead as I could already see the entrance to the CentrO galleries. Once I was in front of the main entrance I could read on the steel and glass façade written in neon letters: *CentrO*. This was the place then, so I entered the galleries.

Inside the shopping gallery a quieting flow of music, and the constant air-conditioning flow, calmed me down a little. Yet I was very impressed when I looked up at the gallery structure. There were plenty of steel and glass elements, roof windows, chandeliers, shiny handrails, and very clean and shiny store windows... The image of the long gallery reminded me of a kaleidoscope that I used to play with as a child. While strolling I kept wondering whether it would be possible to turn around also the images that were enfolding in front of me.

Since I kept walking, the first gallery opened into a larger gallery. The intersection of the two galleries was covered with a glass cupola. As these two-story galleries curved around, they looked infinite. Through the shopping galleries I continued on the run through colorful displays, neon light, glass and mirror reflections, and product promotions written in large letters on most of the windows.

Then I stopped at another crossing of galleries where in a sand ring some beach games had been organized. I read the banners, *Venice Beach*, and felt closer to my home in California...

**FIGURE 3.7 THE SENSES AND HIGH-TECH INDOOR PUBLIC SPACES**



This photograph illustrates an indoor scene in the Centro shopping mall galleries in Oberhausen, North Rhine-Westphalia. I took the photograph on July 31, 2003 at 10am. I use this image to illustrate the impact on the sensorial perception of the state-of-the-art modern environments. In a privately owned public environment the aspirations are constant in an effort to keep the space comfortable, safe and highly controlled. Hence the space is controlled by design. The clear-cut of the architectural and structural form leaves little room for interaction with this immovable space. Impeccable steel columns support shiny glass galleries, where even the canopy of perfectly trimmed trees remains immobile. This is a straightforward environment that expresses clearly its materiality and that neglects any spontaneous spatial interpretation that could stimulate emotional responses and recollections.

Most of the crowds gathered in one of the main nodes off the main gallery where the food court was. The place spread fast food fragrances from all over the global cuisine. Still the food court extravaganza did not consist only in the diversity of eatery; it was impressive also in the variety of video display screens. The images on these displays changed frequently to the excitement of the various clusters of teenagers who were spending time at the mall that morning.

At the food court there was color and neon light, action and crowds. I thought ironically that here, at the end of the day, a visitor was able to relax from a demanding visual experience along the shopping galleries and watch the commercials advertised on large colorful screens. I called that a supermodern experience at the shopping mall.

After visiting the food court, I left the shopping galleries to enjoy the outdoor areas of this large shopping and entertainment complex. Through the food court exit of the galleries I came out on the Promenade at CentrO. This is a row of restaurants that border the canal of the Marina. So I preferred to continue my walk in the opposite direction, towards the area of the movie theaters. Besides the cinemas, from there one could choose also the entrance to the theme park. I chose the park route and walked towards the König Pilsner Arena along the canal and the Marina. As I walked along the canal, on the other side I could see the restaurant row on the Promenade and the glass roofs of the shopping galleries.



**FIGURE 3.8 SENSORIAL ANALYSES IN INDOOR PUBLIC SPACES**



This photograph illustrates a scene of a seating area in the Centro shopping mall galleries in Oberhausen, North Rhine- Westphalia. I took the photograph on November 26, 2003 at 3pm. I use this image to illustrate the impact on the sensorial perception of the highly controlled environments in the private malls. Some of the controlled elements that contribute to the perception filtering are the constant air-conditioning flow instead of wind blowing in the greenery and tree leaves, the music played in speakers, the hard surface pavements and window walls that reflect back the noise.



## **TWO ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNTS IN COMPARISON**

As presented in the theoretical section, sensorial perceptions of the spaces of representations shape an external image of a place. In evaluating comparatively two projects in terms of sensorial perceptions of their appearance, I propose the following set of criteria: a) sensorial stimuli that are dependent upon intercourse like touch and taste, and b) sensorial stimuli that are dependent upon the design of the spatial product such as sound, scent, light, colors, and materials. The synthesis of the sensorial analyses provides a definition of the space in terms of representation.

As it could be seen in Table 3.1, the sensorial analyses performed on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica and inside the CentrO shopping mall show that the interaction with tactile stimuli is more controlled and less permissive in the mall than in the pedestrian street. The use of the space in the private indoor mall is highly specialized. Besides the fact that the location of food courts and special stores where food could be tasted is fixed, the experience itself is invariable to a certain extent. There is an arguable homogenization of the ‘global cuisine’ at the mall food court that originates in the way fast food is processed and delivered. On the Promenade the location of restaurants, cafes, and food stores is dispersed, and the variety of stores range from the type of products they supply to the ways the food is delivered. In addition, on the Promenade there is the biweekly Farmers’ Market that provides a diversified and spontaneous intercourse with the place by

means of tactile experiences. As Marcel Proust noted, the memory of sensorial perceptions like taste and smell lasts for long time, and potentially brings back memories about buildings and people that are long time gone. So, in other words, the tactile interaction with the public space is likely to contribute to the appropriation of place.

A different type of tactile interaction with the place is through sound, and music, scent, light, colors and materials. I categorized this type of interaction as mostly dependent upon the design of the spatial product. This type of spatial observation does not imply direct intercourse with the space, and could be recorded visually, acoustically or be means of recollections and associations in the case of scent. Similarly to the taste and touch, the scent is specialized according to retail and is filtered through air conditioning in the shopping mall. In an open-air street, many of the fragrances carried by wind blows come from predominantly from natural, less controlled sources.

In terms of audio recording, in the shopping mall the main sources of sound are controlled. The space management provides the sound background whether it is music, or voices that come from speakers, video screens, and commercials. Moreover, the indoor space is protected from noise and city sounds. On the Promenade, in addition to more diversified and spontaneous sources of music from the street performers, the participant observer also perceives the city sounds and noises from street traffic and other sources. The wind carries around whispers,

voices, birds song and murmurs, and brings in vibrations of the trees canopy, the over-the-street banners, and the fountains' water plays.

In the shopping mall, natural and artificial light comes from direct and identifiable sources. The intersections of various sources are controlled by design. The materials used in the construction of the indoor space have mostly reflecting hard surfaces in glass, steel, plaster, ceramic floors, which create an immovable materiality of space. In an outdoor space, vibrations like those of trees' canopy, for instance, contribute to the juxtaposition of natural and artificial light with shadows. Also the wind vibrations of greenery, water, and shadowplay soften the hard surfaces in glass, plaster, concrete and prefabricated materials of the street pavement and of the buildings' facades.

To conclude the comparative analyses, the external image of the CentrO shopping mall is a stereotypical image due to its repeatable and predictable appearance. In contrast, the external image of the outdoor pedestrian space, the Third Street Promenade in this case, is capable of inducing emotional reactions to the place due to its unique details and circumstances. While the classical and explicit space of the mall pertains to an Apollonian spatial category, the romantic and implicit space of the outdoor pedestrian street or, by extension, market square pertains to a Dionysian spatial category (Table 3.1).

**TABLE 3.1 SENSORIAL ANALYSES OF TWO PUBLIC SPACES IN COMPARISON**

<b>EVALUATIVE CRITERIA</b>	<b>CORPORATE PUBLIC SPACE: CENTRO SHOPPING MALL</b>	<b>CORPORATE PUBLIC SPACE: THIRD STREET PROMENADE</b>
<b>EXAMPLES</b>	Shopping mall, reinvented street, themed public space	Market square, main street, agora-type 'public square'
<b>PRODUCT: SOUND &amp; MUSIC</b>	<b>Managed and pre-packaged</b> Sources: speakers, screens, commercials, voices, buffered from noise and city sounds	<b>Natural and spontaneous</b> Sources: wind, trees canopy, water, birds, voices, performers, banners, traffic, city, noise
<b>PRODUCT: SCENT</b>	<b>Episodic and filtered</b> Specialized according to retail, filtered by air conditioning	<b>Continuous and unfiltered</b> Predominantly natural, carried by the blows of wind
<b>PRODUCT: LIGHT AND COLORS</b>	<b>Sharp and direct</b> Natural and artificial light is a direct and identifiable source	<b>Blurred and layered</b> Natural and artificial light intersects with shadows, vibrations of trees' canopy
<b>PRODUCT: MATERIALS</b>	<b>Strong and impermeable</b> Reflecting hard surfaces in glass, steel, plaster, ceramic floors: immovable materiality	<b>Soft and porous</b> Wind vibrations of greenery, water, shadowplay soften the hard surfaces in glass, plaster, prefab materials, concrete
<b>INTERCOURSE: TOUCH</b>	<b>Managed and secured</b> Less interaction with the space	<b>Flexible and permissive</b> Potential appropriation of space
<b>INTERCOURSE: TASTE</b>	<b>Localized and invariable</b> In fixed locations of specialized stores, and food courts	<b>Dispersed and assorted</b> Spread throughout the place in restaurants, cafes, stores, market
<b>EXTERNAL IMAGE</b>	<b>Homogenous &amp; unremarkable</b> Becomes stereotypical due to its repeatable straightforwardness	<b>Heterogeneous &amp; memorable</b> Capable of inducing emotional reactions to the place
<b>DEFINITION OF SPACES OF REPRESENT.</b>	<b>Apollonian</b> Classical and explicit	<b>Dionysian</b> Romantic and implicit

## **NOTES ON PEDAGOGY**

In terms of pedagogy I experimented with sensorial analyses as a method of spatial exploration and representation in teaching a course on qualitative methods of spatial research in the planning program at the California State Polytechnic University in Pomona. In this research methods course “Qualitative Methods in Spatial Research” students learned and used both theory and application. The objectives of this course are twofold. First, the course investigations immersed students in a variety of qualitative methods that apply to planning and design research. Second, participants examined qualitative methods in action. Research methods are part of the knowledge-construction process, and observation and experience of space trigger this process. The course was the result of the teaching collaboration between a planner and a landscape architect. I designed this methods course as an upper division undergraduate planning course, open to students from all Departments in the College of Environmental Design. In this course I taught a mixed group of undergraduate students in planning and master’s students in landscape architecture.

I advocate planning education and practice in a reflective manner similar to Donald Schön’s proposals more than two decades ago (1983, 1987). Schön made the distinction between the ubiquitous “school knowledge” tradition, which considers knowledge as a finite product, and “reflection-in-action”, which adjusts the process to engage and react to particular circumstances. I feel the latter is an

appropriate method in planning and design education. As a result, in addition to structuring a suitable teaching process that accommodates both theory and practice, in conceiving this course on spatial research methods I have been constantly inquisitive about how to prepare students to act as reflective problem-solving practitioners.

Moreover, the concerns with respect to the relationship between theory and practice in planning education originate in my personal experiences as a practitioner and educator. From my standpoint this teaching proposal comes in response to my experiences in the academia witnessing the predominant quantitative research methods taught in planning schools in the United States. As a designer I find inspiration in the interaction between diverse traditions, including polytechnic and workshop-like Bauhaus School traditions.

Hence I propose to complement the rationalist training with an alternative that encourages students to embrace the spontaneity of daily life, to enrich their spatial understanding through sensorial analyses, and to draw lessons from the clarity of the inner being. These methods allow students to codify and express professionally experiences they take for granted.

**FIGURE 3.9 PERSONAL AND INTERSUBJECTIVE EVALUATION**



This photograph illustrates a class presentation of the researcher's visual profile in URP 499 Qualitative Methods in Spatial Research at Cal Poly Pomona, in the spring quarter 2007. I took the photograph on April 4, 2007 at 10:45 am. The students had to introduce themselves to the class by means of a collage of magazine photos. After all the students presented their profiles, I required each student to define his/her role within the group in order to define their intersubjective profile. This exercise was meant to encourage students from the beginning of the course to participate in class in a reflective manner and to become aware of the importance of context. Moreover, they learned how to combine intuitive and rational knowledge by means of visual and narrative research tools. In the final integrated project students had to evaluate a place and reflect upon their personal as well as upon their intersubjective role as researchers.

Students explored the researcher's relation with a place and its culture in the literature. But they also practiced an understanding of their personal relation to the group. As a part of the course introductory session, the students introduced themselves visually by means of a collage composed of magazine photos. After the introduction of the entire class, each student had to define his/her role within the group. The group context defined the individual role. Yet the role also was derived and consistent with each visual psychological profile. Besides an initial group introduction that draws attention to the individual, the purpose of this class assignment initiated a self-reflective process. Such a process stimulated students to embark on a personal trip during this inquiry on qualitative methods of spatial research. In addition to this activity, the course required weekly critical reviews of the readings, a midterm field trip report, and a final integrated project. All of these individual activities developed through class crits similar to a design studio's process.

The first part of the course introduced students to the understanding of a sense of a place. In this part the readings refer to sensorial analyses. I selected, and distributed among three lectures respectively, readings pertaining to a) visual analyses, b) tactile analyses including smell and taste and c) rhythm and movement analyses including sound, music and dance/performance. Knowledge from other fields than design provides a basis for deeper understanding into Lynch's community visual survey (1990), Lefebvre's rhythm analysis in the case of



Mediterranean cities (2004), and Sandercock's inquiry into the role of storytelling in planning processes (2003). Theory about anthropological research complements pieces on urban planning and design, for instance, El Guindi's introduction to the field of visual anthropology (2004), and Howes' overview of the sensual turn in anthropology (2003). Marcel Proust's narrative on *madeleine's* memory emphasizes sensorial connections between memory and space (1913). A couple of excerpts from Bim Mason's account of outdoor performances in Great Britain bring to light the impact of the built and open environment on its users (1992). At the same time, through association this descriptive and prescriptive piece about street interaction is capable to highlight the role of planning practice as a performance art. In an argumentative process of planning, attention must be paid to the communication content as well as to attracting the audience, to selecting the physical setting, and to establishing intersubjective relationships.

At the end of the first part of the course referring to sensorial analyses we took a field trip to the Getty Center Garden in Brentwood, California. Robert Irwin designed the Central Garden to appeal to all of the senses dynamically throughout short and long rhythms of time. This garden immersed students into an exceptional example of sensorial understanding of space. Students prepared a field report as a first exercise to express their sensorial perception of the garden using Irwin's writing to support their exploration and re-presentation.

## SUMMARY

In this chapter I illustrate the external image of a place through theoretical writings, ethnographic examples and suggestions for planning and design pedagogy. In a broad interpretation of Lefebvre's dialectical moments I call this moment of the spatial production "spaces of representation", as it reveals the appearance of spatial materiality. In this dialectical moment of spatial production, the participant outside observer is concerned with the appearance of place, and thus public life is tightly connected to the materiality of space. I understand material space in David Harvey's interpretation of spatial meanings that he derived from Lefebvre (1991), and from Marxian theory in general, as "the space of experience and of perception open to physical touch and sensation" (2006a, p.279).

To prepare the reader for the analysis I introduce the perspective of the outside participant observer in anthropology. I complement that with the profile of the stranger, as it is described in the writings of Georg Simmel (1971 [1908]). I associate the first-time visitor of a public space with the stranger, and also outline the condition of strangers in the contemporary public spaces. The consequences of modernity on everyday life, and by extension on individuals and *the private*, are reflected in the external images that are produced by the outside observers of a place. The deciphering of space reveals the spatial practice of a society.

I present a phenomenological viewpoint on urban research that is similar to the research led in anthropology. Through sensorial analyses the spatial explorer in

the role of outside observer produces an external image of the place. It is this preliminary type of spatial analysis that helps the outside participant observer with spatial orientation and the formation of an impression of the place. Subsequently the spatial explorer is capable to record the external image of a place through recollections of her sensorial perception. An example of that is Marcel Proust's recollection of the power of scent ([1913-1927]).

In the sensorial analysis the outside observer employs "the body knowledge", as sensual anthropology called the tacit (non-explicit) knowledge. This type of knowledge is overlooked in practice. As such this chapter is meant to restore the importance of body knowledge as a means to attain spatial awareness and understanding of places. I present this type of knowledge in comparison with the verbal and symbolic knowledge that is ubiquitous in the production of modern public spaces.

The research part of this chapter includes examples of sensorial analyses of the two case studies: the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica and the CentrO in Oberhausen. I performed these analyses as a first-time visitor of the two places. Next I compare the two accounts of field observation in these two spaces of representation, in order to find those similarities and differences that are significant for the production of convivial public spaces.

In terms of pedagogy, I propose to transfer within the teaching process the phenomenological viewpoint on the construction of spatial exploration that I

presented in the research section. Also I suggest the combination of studio design work with the theory in sensual anthropology, and with the understanding of the outside participant observer's role in the spatial production through readings in sociology. This conceptual addition would complement the visual exploration and recording that is used in design studios by means of traditional methods of Kevin Lynch and William H. Whyte for example. The purpose of complementing research content with presentation techniques is to balance soft and hard knowledge with the end result of a more universal message that appeals to diverse audiences. These teaching suggestions are a means to transform the boundaries between *the public* and *the private* in terms of bringing the individual's spatial perception within the professional knowledge.

## **PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC SPACE: PROFESSIONAL IMAGE OF A PLACE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Within the biography of a place, in this chapter I discuss the understanding of a place by means of conceptual analyses. I illustrate an account of public space that looks at the development process chronologically, from the perspective of the professional producers of space. In this exploration with respect to the conceptual spatial understanding I draw upon three main ideas that pertain to the relationship public-private in planning practice, theory and pedagogy.

First, with respect to planning theory, market rationality and the rational comprehensive model of planning cannot encompass the complexities of everyday urban life. A comparison between the market model versus the social model of planning brings to light advantages and shortages of the two models. As a matter of fact, in a market society like the United States the “modern planning practice is a social and political process” (Friedmann 1987, p.25). In this context, instead of thinking of public space as a finite and marketable product, planning and design professionals might be better off thinking of the process of spatial production. To advance an understanding of the process of spatial production, professionals could look first within the ‘private’ realm of the professional field. Ideally, planning and design practitioners would question and experiment with various professional options, which regard either the ideology that informs the process of production or

the organization of the institutional system in which the planning and design practice is embedded.

Yet whether the outcomes of the planning practice would be socially or market-driven, planning seeks to achieve rational ends. In achieving rational ends professionals make use of explicit knowledge. “Planners claim that their advanced degrees in relevant disciplines and professional fields give them privileged access to scientific knowledge and technical know-how. They also claim that this knowledge is generally superior to knowledge gained in other ways (from practical experience, for example)” (Friedmann 1987, p.40). In discussing the “questions of knowledge” that address the knowledge assumed by planners, John Friedmann suggests that, in a true Enlightenment tradition, modern planning practitioners believe that basing their decisions on science and technical knowledge turns ‘real’ the outcomes of planning practice. That brings modern professionals to a level of world mastery that separates them from communities and everyday life.

Second, this chapter contributes to the planning practice with suggestions that refer to the values that inform planning and design action. For instance, to question whether the practice is place-driven or project-driven practice, and at the same time, whether is community-based or discipline-based practice. In questioning that, the understanding of practice potentially shifts from implementing rational models to adapting planning and design practice to local particularities of place and community. Moreover, in discussing the “questions of action” Friedmann

asks whether planners should always serve those who have the power or resources to activate their interests or services or planners should work specifically to address “the weak” (Friedmann 1987, p.45). A possible model to adjust practice to local particularities and to answer Friedmann’s question is revealing various methods that non-experts can use their local knowledge of their areas. Kevin Lynch, for example, proposed in the 1970s “a relatively simple survey that a local community might conduct for itself” to “convey an objective picture of the general visual character of the area” (1995, p.263). By sharing explicit planning knowledge with the community, citizens could create valuable plans that communicate elements that would not be recognizable to those who only possess scientific knowledge. Lynch therefore introduces how, at the neighborhood level, community members can assess what planners should be addressing.

In addition to that, this research study suggests a dynamic perspective of the planning and design professionals that comes from within, by means of liberating what is repressed within the self. In asking themselves such questions, practitioners could connect their public action with the private inner realm of the individual professional, to ideally establish a method of planning that can equitably and feasibly address all parties. In other words, with respect to the planning and design practice, this chapter argues in favor of connecting the planning culture with places by means of professionals’ understanding of the spatial and social practice.

Third, this chapter proposes an interpretation of bridging the gap between theory and practice in planning pedagogy. In turning knowledge into action future practitioners need to learn how to create opportunities for reflection in action, and how to choose between different paradigms of practice (Schön 1983). I argue that a transdisciplinary approach in planning pedagogy is capable to promote such flexibility of action. It could manifest as the visual and graphic contextualization of the theory in social sciences as well as in the correlation between appearance and content of the graphic representations in planning and design.

## **REPRESENTATION OF SPACES**

In this chapter I present the dialectical moment of spatial production called “representations of space”. This spatial moment produces the conceptualized space that is expressed through symbolic and iconic representations. The conceptual analyses depend upon previously experienced models both spatial and institutional. Planning and design professionals express the precedent models in discourses, which are symbolic representations like verbal signs, and through graphics and visuals, which are iconic representations like drawings, maps, models etc. The precedent models reproduce past products in abstract, usually in a manner that is detached from the vibrations and rhythms of the place.

Representations of space: conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent – all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is



conceived. [...] This is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production). Conceptions of space tend towards a system of verbal (and therefore intellectually worked out) signs (Lefebvre 1991, pp.38-39).

Marxist theories on spatial production are capable to integrate economic, political and historical aspects of the planning and design processes. Lefebvre claims that the representations of space “are tied to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to ‘frontal’ relations” (Lefebvre 1991, p.33). The modern societal organization could be traced back to the French Revolution, more than two centuries ago, when a new society was installed. The state became central to the market society and the modern economy. As a result the production of space depended upon the mode of organization of the economy.

[I]mportant and key spatial patterns which define the *spatial* organization of society are associated with specific aspects of cultural, political, social and economic features of the correlated mode of societal organization. According to this socio-spatial approach, the stages of urban development are related to changes in the political economy of society (Gottdiener and Budd 2005 p.140).

Even more, as Gottdiener suggests, the state used the ideology of planning to mask its interventionism (1994, p.124). Capitalist transformations of use into exchange values turned the commodity predominant over everything else. The modern individual has been losing the connection to its own nature and to the outer material world in a paradoxical kind of alienation. As a spatial implication, the state replaced social space with abstract space.

[The abstract space is] the space that homogenizes thus has nothing homogenous about it. After its fashion, which is polyscopic and plural, it subsumes and unites scattered fragments or elements by force. Though it emerged historically as the plane on which a socio-political compromise was reached between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie (i.e. between the ownership of land and the ownership of money), abstract space has maintained its dominance into the era of conflict between finance capital – that supreme abstraction – and action carried out in the name of the proletariat [...] It is in this [abstract] space that the world of commodities is deployed, along with all that it entails: accumulation and growth, calculation, planning, programming. Which is to say that abstract space is that space where the tendency to homogenization exercises its pressure and its repression with the means at its disposal: a semantic void abolishes former meanings (without, for all that, standing in the way of the growing complexity of the world and its multiplicity of messages, codes and operations) (Lefebvre 1991, pp.307-308).

In order to overcome spatial homogenization, social inequity, and lack of identity, urban scholars like Mark Gottdiener and David Harvey propose transformations in the political economy of society. For instance to take into consideration not only the “actions of growth networks” but also the results of “attempts at renegotiating those actions on the part of other groups carrying the costs of growth” (Gottdiener 1994, p.226).

That requires a new interpretation to social and individual influences on urban politics. Harvey proposed “the perspective of a long and permanent historical-geographical revolution” exercised in the understanding of “how activity and thought in the different theaters of social action relate, combine, and dissolve into each other to create an evolving totality of social action” (2000, pp.252-253). In context, the role of the relationship between *the public* and *the private* would be

to provide porous boundaries that generate “a sense of space where ambiguities of proprietorship, of aesthetics, of social relations (class and gender in particular), and the political economy of everyday life collide” (Harvey 2006b, p.19).

## **PHYSICAL SPATIAL MODELS**

In the decades following the Second World War car traffic increased significantly in many city cores. In addition to traffic congestion, fast growing suburban developments challenged the economic health of the city cores. In the United States, this was the effect of the federal government’s support of home ownership in the suburbs, as well as due to the postwar economic prosperity. The increase in car traffic became a challenge for city authorities, policy makers and planners. They had to imagine alternative solutions either to develop off center facilities and residential areas, like it was the choice of most of the cities in the United States, or to restrict the access and use of cars in the city core.

In this section I present briefly the precedents of these two extreme options. One option that I present here is the pedestrianization of the city core in Copenhagen, Denmark. The other option is the off-center location of destination retail and entertainment centers that became the prototype for the suburban shopping malls in cities all over the world.

Strøget Street in Copenhagen, Denmark is the longest pedestrian shopping street in Europe, and the oldest pedestrian street at this scale in the world. In 1962

the City of Copenhagen transformed the traditional main street into a car-free thoroughfare. Buses, trams, cars and bicycles were banned in order to create an open-air market. Over time the city added to this system other pedestrian-only streets, and linked them to pedestrian-priority streets. Pedestrian-priority streets offer right of way to pedestrians and cyclists and also allow cars at low speeds. These urban interventions that had the purpose to transform the main shopping area into a pedestrian zone were associated with restrictions on car use in the city center. The car traffic in the center of Copenhagen decreased by gradually reducing parking spaces at a rate of 2-3% per year. In this manner within a decade between 1986 and 1996 the City eliminated 600 parking spaces in the center of Copenhagen. The parking lots were later turned into public squares. Currently Strøget Street is the main artery of Copenhagen's pedestrian street system.

Besides being the first street that prioritized the pedestrian use, Strøget Street and the urban transformations associated with it in the city core of Copenhagen are interesting due to the gradual approach in the spatial production. Jan Gehl is an architect and urban designer, director of the Center for Public Space Research at the School of Architecture within the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. For more than three decades, he has systematically studied public spaces and the way they work. He used the pedestrian Strøget Street as a laboratory to study how people responded to this intervention. Jan Gehl is particularly interested in the human side of architecture, which in his view is a facet of the

design profession that is not carefully looked after by architects, landscape architects, and planners.

In a 2002-interview Gehl reflected over some of the political aspects implied within the transformation of a large part of Copenhagen city core into a pedestrian area. The city of Copenhagen has never had a master plan. Moreover, as pedestrian areas and people mingling in the streets was not part of the northern Danish culture, such a radical intervention in the city core would not have been politically feasible. According to Gehl, “if city officials did have a master plan that would say for example, “Ten years from now we will have 100,000 square meters of pedestrianized and people-friendly streets, and we will remove 2,000 parking spaces from the downtown area,” they would utterly fail in the next election” (Gehl in Makovsky 2002). But what had happened is that the city started an experiment and invited people to walk, to cycle and use the city more. In addition, the city did not encourage the use of cars in the downtown areas, and made difficult driving and parking.

The advantage of a gradual implementation over four decades is that there was enough time for people to adapt to changes (refer to Criswell Lappin on Copenhagen’s 10-step program). Pedestrians started to like the experience, and as driving and parking were more difficult, people started to use public transportation. Shopkeepers appreciated this new urban experiment as economically advantageous. Moreover, an incremental solution to implement these changes was financially

advantageous for the city, as the city did a small budget every year. This urban experiment created a precedent that the university studied and then the city could present to the politicians and businessmen.

All these studies have been done not by the city but by the university, and they have been very instrumental in changing the face of Copenhagen. The politicians and city planners became confident because we had all the data measuring the success in hard facts, which in turn they could show to fellow politicians and businessmen. This made them increasingly confident and after a period, they started to be very proud of the city. The university has provided the ideology and the data, the city has laid the stones, and we have worked together (Gehl in Makovsky 2002).

In the United States, the first experiment with a pedestrian mall was in 1959 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The City Commission adopted an ordinance to close two blocks of Burdick Street from car traffic. In August the first downtown pedestrian mall in the nation opened, the Kalamazoo Mall (*The Kalamazoo Gazette* 1980 in Loomis 2000). On the West Coast, the Second Street Pedestrian Mall in Pomona is the first of its kind west of the Mississippi. In 1962 a prominent muralist artist, Millard Sheets, designed the landscaped pedestrian mall that became the city's landmark. Area property owners paid for the \$500,000 street reconstruction project through an assessment district. In this downtown pedestrianization project the designer went beyond only reconstructing the street. The ambition for the new downtown pedestrian mall was to "creating a new and exciting atmosphere that will help build a new spirit for the city" (*Los Angeles Times* 1961).

Victor Gruen is one of the pioneers who proposed alternative solutions for congested postwar cities. In his urban studies, and through his practice *Victor Gruen Associates*, he proposed urban development plans that addressed the difficulty to accommodate automobile traffic within city cores (Gruen 1964). By using statistics and numbers alone (125 Mill people to 82 Mill cars in the 1964-USA), Gruen's studies predicted downtown decline due to traffic congestion and lack of downtown space that would be capable to solve transportation problems.

*Victor Gruen Associates* designed the 1958 *Kalamazoo 1980* Plan that guided the pedestrian urban intervention and the realization of the Kalamazoo Mall. Similarly to the famous 1955 Fort Worth Plan, the Kalamazoo Plan proposed a circulation ring road that would distribute cars from the freeways to parking structures, in order to decongest the city core from car traffic. Once the city cores were to be free from car traffic, they would function as pedestrian only environments.

At the same time, *Victor Gruen Associates* designed the plan for the first suburban shopping mall in the nation, Northland Shopping Mall in suburban Detroit. In 1955 Hudson Department Store family intended to expand their business into the suburbs. As they address Gruen's design firm, he convinced to add adjacent retail and public spaces to the department store. This development became soon an attraction for visitors even on Sundays when the shops were closed, and over time became a community focal point. In the evolution of the mall concept

over the decades, the designer included in the development other community services like post offices, day cares, and the like (Gruen 1964). In the context of suburban developments, the shopping mall became the concentration of urban activity and community life.

A number of prominent designers continued Victor Gruen's legacy among which I mention here John Portman (*Embarcadero Center* in San Francisco, and *Bonaventure Hotel* in Los Angeles), Benjamin Thompson (*Faneuil Hall* in Boston as an example of the "festival marketplace" similar to *South Street Seaport* in New York and *Harborfront* in Baltimore), and Jon Jerde (*Horton Plaza* in San Diego, *Fremont Street Experience* in Las Vegas and *Universal CityWalk* in Los Angeles).



**FIGURE 4.1 THE THIRD STREET MALL IN THE 1960s AND 1965 RENEWAL**



Source: Santa Monica Public Library Online Photo Archive 2006

### **THE THIRD STREET PROMENADE IN SANTA MONICA**

In downtown Santa Monica, the transformation of three blocks of the Third Street into a pedestrian area was undertaken within the downtown redevelopment program. Looking five decades back, during the post-World War II years, the former significance of downtown Santa Monica altered together with the vitality of its shopping street. The decline was caused in part by the off-center location of new regional centers that polarized most of the retail activities.

In 1965 the City initiated a spatial intervention in its urban core, in order to alleviate the disadvantages of functional polarization for the quality of urban living. That urban intervention materialized in a functional solution to interrupt the continuity of automobile traffic on the street grid, in order to create a pedestrian public amenity. An area on the Third Street was closed between Broadway and Wilshire Boulevard. The new spatial element was renamed the Santa Monica Outdoor Mall. However, the Outdoor Mall has not been successful in attracting neither significant shopping crowds nor downtown visitors. This designated public space offered an uninviting abstract space barely showing any emotional or human touches. In order to correct that, the developers and city authorities moved on with another functionalist answer. They expected that a retail anchor of larger magnitude would boost the liveliness of the surrounding public area. So in 1980 the Santa Monica Place, an indoor shopping mall, was constructed at one end of the Outdoor Mall, by consolidating the block between Broadway and Colorado Boulevard.

**FIGURE 4.2 THE PROMENADE ENTRANCE ON BROADWAY**



This photograph illustrates the end of the Third Street Promenade at Broadway in Santa Monica, California. It is a rooftop view of the Third Street Promenade from the parking structure of the anchor indoor shopping mall Santa Monica Place. I took the photograph on January 6, 2003 at 4:00pm. Note in the middle of the street, which occasionally could be opened for vehicular traffic, the location of one of the decorative islands that include fountains, greenery in the shape of dinosaurs, seating places and art displays. Passing this decorative island, the sidewalks are widened to 30-feet, and are lined with palms and jacaranda trees. The left corner building is the 1892-historic Keller Block. Across the street from it, the corner building on the right side is Janss Plaza. This is the only mixed use building on the Promenade that incorporates residential units on top of space floor for commercial and office uses. This mixed use creates a precedent of private space for housing located in the immediate proximity of the convivial and diverse public space of the Promenade.

Although this development was a step further towards downtown revitalization, it did not imply any concerns to involve the participation of the public space users in the production of space. The development of an indoor shopping mall did not include other public amenities in order to address the diversity of users' preferences. A decade later the need for a public management agency became obvious.

By 1984, the City of Santa Monica deemed the mall economically unsuccessful, unsafe and blighted. *The Third Street Development Corporation* was formed in order to manage improvements. The Corporation was a non-profit, public benefit organization, founded by the City in order to redevelop the mall and its surrounding area into an economically successful, thriving downtown center.

Three years later, the City adopted a mixed-use development plan, the *Bayside District Specific Plan*, which the Corporation created with the City's assistance. The redesign of the Third Street Promenade was focused on activity densities and human scale. The design firm ROMA Design Group of San Francisco was hired by the *Third Street Development Corporation* to plan the redesign of the outdoor Santa Monica Mall, "The Old Mall". The project was financed through a citywide bond measure. The downtown mall was renamed the Third Street Promenade, and opened on September 16, 1989.



**FIGURE 4.3 THE STREETScape OF THE THIRD STREET PROMENADE**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on July 29, 2007 at 7:00pm. I use this image to present the streetscape of the Promenade. Although at present the street is pedestrian, there is possible to open it for car traffic. The sidewalks are 30-foot-wide and the vehicular street is 40-foot-wide. The designer intended through the widening of the sidewalks to encourage strolling and to lessen the impact of the mall's width. The sidewalks design had the impact also of the location of sidewalk cafes. The sidewalks are lined up with palms and jacaranda trees. The trees, the street furniture, seating areas, kiosks, art displays, the location of the street performers, and the banners over the Promenade contribute to the intimate scale of the place. The pavement alternates brick and grey colors on a textured concrete surface.

So it was not until the 1990s that the main shopping street in downtown Santa Monica acquired its importance as a regional destination point and as a model for downtown revitalization. It was necessary another decade for all the economic, social, political and design aspects of the spatial production to come together in shaping the actual successful development.

At the same time, the decline of neighboring shopping districts, such as the Westwood Village, directed here the odds of success. That came along with resolute and well-shaped policies and regulations that required the concentration of successful activities on the Promenade. An example is the presence of three multiplex movie theatres within two blocks of the Promenade, which were required locations at the time of their development.

Nowadays locally focused perspectives on success are replaced by the need of worldwide market recognition. That translates into the dominant presence of globally successful superstore chains that demanded the relocation of some of the local attractions. A while back *Anthropologie* replaced the colorful *Ethical Drugs*. Recently two independent bookstores *Midnight Special* and *Hennessey & Ingalls* had to move out of the Promenade, due to an increase in rental prices; the first closed down, and the second moved to a collateral street. Nevertheless, the emphasis on tourism and on attractive retail and entertainment areas of activity brought significant revenues to the City. “At the time when the income of most

other municipalities has been flat, Santa Monica's tax receipts have jumped 21%" (The Price of Success, *LA Times*, May 23, 1996).

According to Denny Zane, the former mayor of Santa Monica who contributed to the creation of the actual configuration of the Promenade, to achieve a social goal and at the same time to comply with individual choice for economic prosperity required a coordinated political effort. That is a reflection of the socially conscious agenda of local government, and as mayor Rosenstein said by way of justification "[t]his is a community that respects itself and struggles to do the right thing – to provide the best quality of life it can in a difficult urban environment" (idem).

The Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica started in the 1960s as a locally focused project to bring back the liveliness of a small seaside community. After four decades it turns out to be an ongoing process of shaping urban lifestyle and space, with the ambition to balance the tensions between political and economic construction of interests, and between local identity and global influences. More importantly, the Promenade provides the example of an ongoing debate over space, and this debate continually redefines the boundaries between *the public* and *the private*. For instance, there is a debate of conducts, with local magnitude, that refers to the regulation of street performing activities. There is also a further reaching debate with respect to ownership values and the negotiation of property use and ownership.

**FIGURE 4.4 ONE OF THE MARKET PAVILIONS ON THE PROMENADE**



This photograph illustrates the crossing of the Third Street Promenade and Arizona Avenue in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on July 29, 2007 at 12:00pm. It is a view of one of the Market Pavilions on the Third Street Promenade that accommodates under its roof different commercial uses such as a café, retail store, newspaper kiosk and the like. At the end of 2007 the French restaurant *Monsieur Marcel* will locate in the pavilion as well. This pavilion is the alternative to the fountain island located at the other end of the block. These islands were designed to reduce the width of the mall and to create the feeling of human scale. At the same time they create the opportunity for a transitory space in between the private commercial space and the public space of the Promenade, and that is the space for outdoor sitting where the café tables are located.



Once the Promenade was opened to the public in 1989, street performers profited of this opportunity of a freely accessible public arena. As they were seeking revenues for their performance, business' owners and other citizens complained to the City. The Council responded through various municipal ordinances (in 1991, 1993, and 1997). These restrictions on street activity brought forth counteractions with respect to constitutional rights to freedom from the side of street performers (1998). Performers also argued that they provide a festive atmosphere on the mall.

In 1997, growing complaints from restaurant owners and retail businesses about noise and interference of the street performers prompted the city to establish an *Interdepartmental Task Force* to assess the problem and make recommendations for a solution. Several of the recommendations of the *Task Force* and the *Municipal Code 6.112* were enacted that year. As a result of these negotiations the street performing activity on the Promenade had been regulated at the beginning through a lottery system, which specified a) the exact location of each performance, b) the allocated time slot, and c) the type of artistic products to be marketed by each performer. Currently, the performers' location is not previously specified, but their performance is limited to two hours in one location. In negotiating and making choices to stage their performance, street performers gather as a self-organizing community. A spontaneous and informal order overlaps the controlling regulations and formal organization of the business improvement district.

**FIGURE 4.5 BLURRED SPATIAL BOUNDARIES AND TRANSITORY SPACES**



This photograph illustrates the crossing of the Third Street Promenade and Arizona Avenue in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on January 7, 2007 at 12:00pm. It is a view of the outdoor sitting area at the Café Promenade, which is located in the Market Pavilion. At the same time the Farmers' Market activities happen temporarily on Arizona Avenue. This juxtaposition of uses of the outdoor space suggests a less clearly determined differentiation between the property boundaries. The private space of the café expands into the public space through the use of sidewalks for commercial activities. That creates a transitory space between the private and the public. Also the public street, which is closed for vehicular traffic provisionally, is used for commercial activities of the Farmers' Market. These semi-private, semi-public uses of space generate an ambiguity of ownership of space, which is conducive to the potential appropriation of the place.

At the end of the 1980s in Santa Monica, the City authorities together with the non-profit development agency and real estate developers promoted the idea to create a new image of the Third Street Promenade. This new image was meant to resemble the atmosphere of Parisian sidewalks. The European space has been simulated through emphasis on design tools such as landscaping, street furniture and public art. The idea was put into practice by design. One example of that is the allocation of a semi-public space to restaurants and cafés, as an outdoor extension of their commercial area (refer to Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4).

This transitory space between *the public* and *the private* could be considered as a compromise on property ownership. The production of a common element of both private and public domains is a relatively seldom-occurring enterprise in the context of Los Angeles. By and large there is a clear delimitation of ownership boundaries. The Promenade provides a precedent that has the potential to model future institutional change. As a public arena, this space has an important role in providing information, and in shaping people's preferences according to the experienced reality.

Although this compromise is promoted through design, in a participatory design process implies mediations and negotiations (Banerjee 1994). On the one hand, the complexity of the design process is likely to impose more rules and regulations (Heiner 1983). On the other hand, the more complex are the societal structures, the more complicated is to achieve agreements.

**FIGURE 4.6 REGULATORY AGREEMENTS IN PUBLIC SPACES**



This photograph illustrates a scene from the Farmers' Market at the crossing of the Third Street Promenade and Arizona Avenue in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on January 7, 2006 at 12pm. Textual specifications such as "no dogs allowed" and "you are entering the certified organic section" suggest the production of modern public space according to agreed-upon rules and regulations.

There is a paradox in the way decision-making actors in American urban development preserve the current institutionalized order in trying to cope with progressive and/or alternative development proposals. *Federal Realty Investment Trust* is one of the development corporations involved in the development of the Third Street Promenade. In a *Washington Post* article concerning the development of mixed-use infill projects, the developer expresses the difficulty to reach a general agreement between various interested actors such as business leaders, planners, environmental activists, and citizens, with respect to the beneficial impacts on the urban region of dense infill developments.

There are far more people with a vested interest when you have a close-in site that is adjoining other property. [...] In the distant suburbs, on a 'greenfield' site, you get people who are theoretically opposed to development on philosophical grounds, but their interest is abstract. It's not like they own a house butting right up against the development (Irwin, Neil *Washington Post*, January 13, 2003).

As community activists are more likely to delay or block a project in urban areas than in outer areas, the financing institutions, the bankers, do not know how to quantify the multiple "complications and political risks" involved in these projects. In consequence the real estate company decided that infill developments "do not make economic sense," as they demand long time and they are labor intensive, as "you have to have lots of lawyers, patience and money." That happens in the context of two satisfied conditions: the market is willing to supply the demand, and, moreover, there is general agreement on the collective good.



**FIGURE 4.7 GUIDANCE IN THE EXPLORATION OF PUBLIC SPACES**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, California. This shopping directory display is located at the crossing of the Third Street and Santa Monica Boulevard, in front of the 1922-historic Juniper Building. I took the photograph on July 29, 2007 at 7pm. Language, maps and signage are used to specify the agreed-upon rules and regulations for the use of this public space.

## **CENTRO SHOPPING MALL IN NEUE MITTE OBERHAUSEN**

At present all over the world, transformations in the retail activity result in trends towards homogenization and polarization of activities within off-center isolated zones, with severe consequences on the urban scale (Peron 2001). As a consequence traditional European towns, for instance, are being reconfigured, accessibility becomes essential, and there is a decay of public spaces as civic arenas. As one of the largest urban entertainment centers in Europe, the CentrO Oberhausen is not only a creative reuse of a former industrial site, but also demonstrates the effects of globalization, particularly on the young European population.

CentrO was developed in the 1990s on the site of a former steel plant, as a component project of the brownfields revitalization program. It is the government policy to only locate shopping facilities on former brownfields, while preserving greenfields (Henig 1998). In 1991, the Oberhausen City Planning Department prepared a master plan for the development. The City gained the support of the state government to modify the Regional Development Plan, and also reached a consensus with the neighboring cities towards the project acceptance. A year later, *Thyssen Company* sold the property to a City owned corporation GEG. In cooperation with the State of North Rhine-Westphalia the city of Oberhausen bought the site. The first interventions from public funds were to clean up the soil and to develop the technical infrastructure.



**FIGURE 4.8 THE GUTEHOFNUNGSHÜTTE BROWNFIELD IN 1952 AND 2000**



Source: Kommunalverband Ruhrgebiet 2003



**FIGURE 4.9 CENTRO SHOPPING CENTER IN NEUE MITTE OBERHAUSEN**



This photograph illustrates an aerial view of the CentroO in Neue Mitte Oberhausen, North Rhine – Westphalia. The photograph is reproduced from the IRPUD/VPL Project, 2000, *CentroO Oberhausen: Urban Entertainment Centre and Public Transport*. Note on the lower left corner of the image the König - Pilsener - Arenas and right from it the public transportation station Neue Mitte. In the upper left corner of the image is the Theme Park and Sea Life aquarium and the Marina. On the extreme right side of the image note the four parking structures; to their left the CentroO shopping galleries. In the upper side of the image, in the center are the movie theaters. The Promenade at the CentroO connects the theaters with the transport station and the Arena. The future development of *O.Vision* in Neue Mitte is on the site that is partially captured in the upper right corner of this image.

CentrO is a private development. It is a joint venture of the British firms *Stadium Group* that holds the overall control, and *Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Company* P&O, that contributes with its worldwide experience in financing, developing and managing entertainment and retail centers. The project was also publicly subsidized in the form of environmental cleanup and site preparation, as the steel industry was relieved from any legal obligations to clean up existing pollution. The model used for the shopping mall and urban entertainment center is *Meadowhall*, the Stadium's development in Sheffield, United Kingdom. The nineteenth century industrial progress of the Ruhr region has shaped dramatically its urban landscape.

Nowadays, the contemporary structural transformations brought about the search for new drivers of the economy in the Ruhr. The Oberhausen complex is adjacent to a preserved gasometer, which is the only element reminding of the former site land use. The gasometer is the largest enclosed space in the world, currently used for art performances, exhibitions and concerts.

In opposing the CentrO project, among the principal arguments of local citizens were a) the increase in traffic and consequent pollution, and b) the decline of neighboring centers. Also the City was aware of the spatial fragmentation and polarization of activities generated by a large-scale isolated development, as well as of the contradiction with the environmental objectives of the State and broader planning goals. But the motivation of local authorities to build the CentrO was

primarily economic. CentrO benefits of a central location within the Rhine-Ruhr region that is the largest European conurbation. The officials expected that this shopping and entertainment center would revitalize the former industrial region, which was facing high unemployment and lack of attractive activities in comparison with other western European regions.

Consequently, the professionals involved in the spatial production process reached a political compromise. In advocating spatial connection with the existent built up, housing units are beginning to be developed in the direction of the Oberhausen old city center. The development of infrastructure included the provision of public transportation for easy accessibility from the region.

The CentrO is more than just a large shopping mall. It contains a shopping centre (70,000 sqm), the Promenade along the canal with more than twenty international restaurants and cafes, a Multiplex Warner Brothers Cinema, a theme park (80,000 sqm), a business park (110,000 sqm), the König-Pilsner Arenas (12,000 seat), a sport facility Oberhausen OTHC (40,000 sqm), and in the near future a marina for sixty yachts. The amusement park is called the *Adventure Island* with a 75-foot long ship and a pirate fortress-like jungle gym, which are adjacent to several story-high pagoda-like structure surrounded by sliding boards (Henig 1998, Kushner 2000).

**FIGURE 4.10 ENTRANCE TO A SECONDARY GALLERY AT CENTRO**



This photograph illustrates a view of the CentrO shopping galleries in Neue Mitte Oberhausen, North Rhine – Westphalia. I took the photograph on November 26, 2003 at 11:00am. This image shows the design and scale of the two-story shopping gallery covered with glass. The model of the CentrO shopping mall is the Meadowhall shopping center, which is developed by the same developer, in Sheffield, United Kingdom.

The shopping mall at CentrO in Oberhausen is designed much like a city centre with a roof overhead. The glass ceiling allows light to filter through and gives the impression of being outside. There are cafes in the centre of the mall that mimic sidewalk cafes typical of European urban life. The floors and walls are lined with marble and granite stones and add to the city centre feeling. The mall has a main corridor with two floors of shops. There are resting places along nearly the entire corridor lined with plants and enticing people to relax between shopping. Shoppers must walk to the centre of the mall or the ends of the corridor to reach the second floor.

The marketing of CentrO appears to be widespread and is known throughout the region as a hotspot for shopping and entertainment. The CentrO appears in the most recent European and German guidebooks as a main attraction for the region and entertainment events, such as concerts and theatre performances, are advertised in publications and posters throughout the Ruhr region. Upon entering the shopping mall from the train station, one can instantly see advertisements for the amusement park and on the weekend there are sometimes employees dressed in costumes handing out brochures to promote an upcoming or current theatre performance. With a number of people coming to the CentrO specifically for the shopping, it is not surprising that marketing efforts for the other entertainment options at the CentrO are targeted at the mall visitors, particularly upon entering.

## **REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRENDS**

The indoor shopping mall Santa Monica Place anchors the Third Street Promenade at its southern end. The mall was built in 1980 and is owned and managed by the Macerich Company. In the last years the revenues from the commercial activities in the mall are not satisfactory, hence the M Company advanced a remodeling plan to the City of Santa Monica. The City considers this initiative as an opportunity to create a coherent link between the Third Street Promenade and the renewed civic center of Santa Monica. The mega block of the indoor shopping mall site was consolidated in the 1980s. The City transferred from the public to the private domain one block of the Third Street between Broadway and Colorado Avenue. The City of Santa Monica is interested to review this past measure, and reopen this block of the Third Street for public use. Hence the remodeling of the Santa Monica Place brings to the fore questions regarding property ownership and the use of public space. The challenge of the future development trends of the city of Santa Monica is how to address collectively the individual preferences of a multicultural community.

The industrial site adjacent to the CentrO development is reserved for a future development called *O.Vision*. This new development project is meant to accomplish the vision of technological progress that the regions aims at, in order to preserve the relationship between industrial progress and the identity of the Ruhr region. The professional producers of space envision for Oberhausen a future that

has the advantage of advance technology. Future development trends are challenging in terms of reinventing the technological advantage that the Ruhrgebiet had benefited from in the past.

### **CONCEPTUAL MODELS OF TWO PUBLIC SPACES IN COMPARISON**

As presented in the theoretical section, the representations of the spatial product shape the professional image of a place. On the one hand, these representations of space are derived from the models experienced in the past, in terms of precedents and analogous projects that inspire the design and functionality of the actual spatial product. On the other hand, professional producers envision future development trends in accordance with the present understanding of the future spatial representations. As such they reproduce the order existent within the current spatial product.

In the comparative analyses of the conceptual spatial production of the two projects I selected a set of nine criteria (Table 4.1). To compare the professional image of a place I examine a) the past image of the place in terms of its previous use, b) the present image in terms of how precedent models have been adjusted to satisfy current preferences, and c) the future images that could be derived from the professional vision of the future development trends. Below I present each aspect in the comparison of the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica and the CentrO in Neue Mitte Oberhausen.

The Third Street used to be the downtown shopping street of Santa Monica. In the 1960s the street was closed to vehicular traffic and developed into the Santa Monica Pedestrian Mall. For the 1989 remodeling of the Mall into the Third Street Promenade, the producers found inspiration in the development of the pedestrian streets in the Western European cities, and particularly in the image of the sidewalks of the nineteenth century Parisian boulevards. Strøget Street in Copenhagen, Denmark is the first project in the world in which a city street was closed for vehicular traffic in order to be transformed into a pedestrian shopping area. In Copenhagen, the planning and development structure was conducive for the successful expansion of this first 1962-initiative. At present the city core of Copenhagen is developed as a pedestrian system of either pedestrian-only streets or pedestrian-priority streets. On the United States' West Coast, the first downtown street to be transformed into a pedestrian shopping area was the Second Street Mall in Pomona, California. In 1962 nine blocks of the Second Street became a pedestrian-only street. Although the Pomona Mall was divided into different districts according to the undertaken public activities, the development framework had proved to be incapable to sustain the Mall as an active space for public life.

In comparison to the Second Street Mall in Pomona, the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica allows for development that encourages the individual choice for economic prosperity, which further leads to a proactive business attractive attitude in the planning culture. In Santa Monica the pro-business



ideology of the planning and development structure balances the same collective ethos that supports the pedestrian system in Copenhagen and the particularly pedestrian friendly Parisian boulevards. As a result, the future development trends in downtown Santa Monica refer to the engagement of the private sector in the extension of a coherent pedestrian system between the Promenade and the civic center.

The CentrO shopping mall and entertainment center is located on the site of the former *Gutehofnungshutte* steel factory of the *Thyssen* Company. In 1988 a first initiative took place to convert this brownfield into the *World Tourist Center*, which was to become the largest leisure and shopping center in the world. The City of Oberhausen negotiated with the Canadian *Investment Group Triple Five Ltd.* to replicate their development in Edmonton, Alberta, the *West Edmonton Mall*. The Land Government of North Rhine-Westphalia rejected the project on the reasoning that the project was not compatible with the urban and regional policy. However, the precedent of suburban off-center retail locations goes back at the beginning of the postwar decade. The first shopping center in the Ruhrgebiet had been developed at the beginning of the 1950s, the *Ruhrzentrum*. Similarly to the Victor Gruen projects that were developed in the United States, the *Ruhrzentrum* shopping center has a peripheral location, in order to decongest car traffic in the city cores of the main cities in the Ruhrgebiet such as Essen and Bochum.

In the 1991 the reinvention of a new center of Oberhausen, Neue Mitte, started on the site of the *Gutehoffnungshutte*. In the core of the new city center the British *Stadium Group* began to develop the CentrO shopping mall, in spite of its appearance as a smaller version of the gigantic regional shopping center *World Tourist Center*. The City of Oberhausen and the State were interested to approve this development, because of the developer's expertise in brownfield redevelopment. The model for CentrO is the *Meadowhall* shopping center, which was developed on the property of the former *Hadfield Steelworks* in Sheffield, UK. As a consequence, the future development trends in Neue Mitte continue the City and State commitment to reconvert the former industrial sites into centers of technology that are potentially competitive in the global marketplace.

In terms of agency in the production of the spatial representation I identified a set of three criteria namely leadership, design and management. In Santa Monica the City and the City Council provides leadership in the spatial production, under the pro-business ideology and the highly regulated framework of operation. The San Francisco-based ROMA Design Group designed the streetscape of the Third Street Promenade as a public space that is deferent to human scale and diversity of activities. The Bayside District Corporation coordinates the management, maintenance and operation of the Promenade's public space through a public-private partnership. In Oberhausen the City and the State, meaning the Government of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, provide leadership in the spatial

production. The shopping mall follows the design of the Meadowhall model. The Stadium Group and P&O privately manage and operate the CentrO private development, as part of their joint venture.

As for the spatial product, the conception of the two spaces for public use is similar (Table 4.1). I identified the following set of criteria a) access and connectivity, b) entrances and c) functions that could describe the conceptual development. Public transportation systems connect both projects to their regions. Both developments include public parking structures. Yet in terms of the coherence of the urban fabric, the projects differ. Although the Third Street Promenade development incorporates only one residential building, it benefits from the proximity of residential neighborhoods. The Neue Mitte development project includes the extension of the residential areas along the public transportation network that connects the city of Oberhausen with the new city core. Yet Neue Mitte does not provide the environment for residential neighborhoods as a traditional city core.

**TABLE 4.1 CONCEPTUAL ANALYSES OF TWO PUBLIC SPACES IN COMPARISON**

<b>EVALUATIVE CRITERIA</b>	<b>CORPORATE PUBLIC SPACE: CENTRO SHOPPING MALL</b>	<b>CORPORATE PUBLIC SPACE: THIRD STREET PROMENADE</b>
<b>PAST IMAGE: PREVIOUS USE</b>	<b>Brownfield of a steel plant</b> Former Gutehofnungshutte	<b>Downtown shopping street</b> The Third Street Pedestrian Mall
<b>PRESENT IMAGE: PRECEDENT MODELS</b>	<b>Shopping mall</b> Meadowhall in Sheffield, UK	<b>Pedestrian street</b> Strøget Street in Copenhagen, Denmark, Parisian sidewalks
<b>FUTURE IMAGE: TRENDS OF DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>Technology oriented</b> Reinvention of the new city core Neue Mitte Oberhausen as a center of technology	<b>Community oriented</b> Integration with the new Santa Monica civic center through Santa Monica Place remodeling
<b>AGENCY: LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>Mayor and State (NRW)</b> Strong role of the mayor in influencing regional decisions	<b>Mayor and City Council</b> Planning decisions independent from the Los Angeles region
<b>AGENCY: DESIGN</b>	<b>Reproduced</b> Replica of the <i>Meadowhall</i> mall in Sheffield, UK	<b>Commissioned</b> <i>ROMA Design Group</i> imagined the place in terms of human scale, diversity of uses and activities
<b>AGENCY: MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>Private Owner &amp; Manager</b> Joint venture of the British firms <i>Stadium Group</i> & <i>P&amp;O</i>	<b>Business Improvement District</b> <i>Bayside District Corporation</i> public private partnership
<b>PRODUCT: ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY</b>	<b>Public and semi-integrated</b> Public transport, parking structures, disconnected from Oberhausen's urban fabric	<b>Public and integrated</b> Public transport, parking structures, pedestrian due to its proximity to res. neighborhoods
<b>PRODUCT: ENTRANCES</b>	<b>Distinct</b> Enclosed public space with clear & controlled boundaries	<b>Subtle</b> Integrated public space within the city grid, closed for vehicles
<b>PRODUCT: FUNCTIONS</b>	<b>Commercial</b> Retail and entertainment, national & global chain stores	<b>Commercial</b> Retail and entertainment, national and global chain stores

## NOTES ON PEDAGOGY

How to bridge the theory with the direct experience of the subject matter? I suggest to introduce experimental and studio-type activities as part of the critical literature reviews, in order to place planning and social sciences theory within a particular physical and temporal context. This chapter proposes an interpretation of bridging the gap between theory and practice in planning pedagogy. In turning knowledge into action future practitioners need to learn how to create opportunities for reflection in action, and how to choose between different paradigms of practice (Schön 1983). I argue that a transdisciplinary approach in planning pedagogy is capable to promote such flexibility of action. It could manifest as the visual and graphic contextualization of the theory in social sciences as well as in the correlation between appearance and content of the graphic representations in planning and design.

At the California State Polytechnic University in Pomona I teach the lecture course “Cities in a Global Economy”. The objectives of this course are twofold. On the one hand the course is meant to provide an initial understanding of the globalization process, and of its various aspects that impact the planning practice in a global economy. On the other hand, the course creates opportunities for general education students to employ a multitude of research techniques, in order to develop the discussion basis of each topic. The course is based on readings and class discussions, which were organized around literature reviews, video

screenings, and PowerPoint presentations. The course is structured according to the aspects of globalization that have a significant impact on the practice of planning such as philosophical, spatial, social, economic, and institutional aspects that include urban politics and governance.

At the beginning of the quarter the students were provided with a course organization table that specified the articles and/or book chapters that were to be read and written about for each week's discussion topic. Students had the opportunity to choose one week's topic to be responsible for leading the discussion and presenting short literature review essays. However, throughout the quarter each student had to prepare an essay on the week's readings, and to post it on the blackboard under the discussion tread of that week. Readings had been complemented by in class video presentations, and recommendation of current related events that took place within the Los Angeles area.

In addition students prepared visuals related to every discussion topic, as a preamble to the class critical discussion of the readings. They mostly prepared PowerPoint presentations and posted them on blackboard for peer review. The class meets three time per week, so I organized the sessions as: a) a first glance at the readings and preparation of visuals, b) presentation of visuals and class discussion, and c) literature review presentation by the discussion leader, and group criticism on the review by means of Louise Dunlap's editing exercise "Reader Response Group".

The course focused on the process more than on the final outcome. Yet every process must have material consequences that measure completion. Hence, the material analyzed throughout the quarter was to be synthesized in a final paper that addressed the particular research interest of each student. Each student presented in class a final presentation (either PowerPoint or video) as both a research proposal exercise and the summary of their paper. The final paper included in all cases the peer feedback received during the final presentation.

As for the course “Qualitative Methods in Spatial Research”, while sensorial analyses proposed a break from the world of words, the second part of the course restored the importance of language. The second part introduced students to conceptual analyses. This course on qualitative research methods proposes an alternative to rationalist and abstract research approaches. So I selected two theoretical texts presenting a phenomenological perspective (i.e. Bachelard and Irwin). Irwin’s notes on the ‘nature of abstraction’ suggest to “abandon logic and requiredness” in art in favour of freedom and creativity (1979). In reading the phenomenology of roundness and the dialectics of outside and inside, the students were introduced to Bachelard’s “philosophy of detail” in the experience of intimate places (1994). In order to appropriate and grasp spatial reality, instead of reasoning and causality a phenomenologist suggests repetition of the act of creation.

After exposure to sensorial and conceptual analyses, the third part of the course synthesized the previous two parts to explain the life of a place. The

readings refer to both theory and field research, and exemplify an array of qualitative research methods (i.e. Low, Hondagneu-Sotelo and Castells). Besides the relationship between theory and practice, the selection of these readings relayed different scales of a place. Setha Low's anthropological field research provides the outsider's understanding of Latin American public spaces (2000). Hondagneu-Sotelo's sociological research unveils the formation of neighbourhoods and immigrant communities in California (1994). Castells' chapter discusses the city within a global context. Moreover, Castells is an urbanist and sociologist who reconnects social sciences to urban form, and claims that, "[a]rchitecture and urban design may bridge technology and culture by creating shared symbolic meaning and reconstructing public space in the new metropolitan context" (2005; p.63).

Students read pieces by various authors such as anthropologists, sociologists, urbanists, planners, and a designer, an artist, a performer, a writer and a philosopher. Regardless researcher's field of study, throughout literature reviews I encouraged students to understand the researcher's position relative to the object of study. Whether as an outsider, as an insider or as a border person in the relation with the analysed space, the researcher brings different insights into the story of that place. In the same way, data collection and interpretation reflect the researcher's capacity for reflection and capability to decipher the environment.



**FIGURE 4.11 COORDINATION OF CONTENT & GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION**



This photograph illustrates a class presentation of a comparative project that coordinates content analysis with the graphic representation in order to convey visually the essence of the analysis. URP 202 at Cal Poly Pomona, in the winter quarter 2007.

## SUMMARY

In this chapter I illustrate the professional image of a place through theoretical writings, examples of precedent analogues and the development process in which they were used, and suggestions for planning and design pedagogy. Similarly to Lefebvre's dialectical moments I call this moment of the spatial production "representation of spaces". This dialectical moment reveals the abstraction of conceptualized space. In this study I understand conceptualized space in David Harvey's interpretation of spatial meanings that he derived from Lefebvre and from Marxian theory in general (2006a). In the "representation of spaces" dialectical moment of spatial production, the professional producer of space is concerned with the spatial content. By performing a view from above, the professional producers use rational models to conceptualize a place. Urban space to be used by *the public* is treated as a material product that is disconnected from the spatial and social practice of the society belonging to that place. As a result public life in the newly developed public space reproduces the spatial and institutional models that professionals had employed within the conceptual phase of the spatial production.

To begin the analysis I introduce the theoretical background of this chapter. Abstract space is the space of modernity that is produced as a means to install the capitalist values within the spatial and social practice of the society. The modern state has a strong role in the production and the reproduction of capitalist values

through spatial development. In understanding the role of the spatial production in the modern society, one mechanism is the second circuit of capital that differentiates the development of land from other market enterprises.

In order to present the process of conception of the two case studies, I make a concise overview of the models employed in the production of the two public spaces namely a downtown pedestrian street in Santa Monica, California, United States, and a shopping mall in Oberhausen, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. In terms of physical models, the professional producers of the pedestrian street in Santa Monica intended to reproduce the atmosphere of the sidewalks in Paris. The spatial model employed in this development is the European downtown pedestrian that has as a first model the Strøget Street in Copenhagen. In California, the first example is the Second Street downtown pedestrian mall in Pomona. In Oberhausen the CentrO shopping and entertainment center is modeled after the Meadowhall shopping mall in Sheffield, United Kingdom. The indoor mall at the CentrO is located in a larger development complex that is the core of Neue Mitte, the new ‘reinvented’ Oberhausen. This commercial core includes also a theme park, a promenade, a large sports arena etc. I trace back the physical model to Victor Gruen proposals for off-center shopping developments in order to decongest the American city cores. Gruen’s proposals that advocated vital and convivial city cores were reduced over time to the omnipresent suburban shopping malls.

As for the institutional models, first I highlight the main characteristics of the rational comprehensive model in planning, and a comparison of the social and market planning models. Next I present the institutional organizations of planning in Santa Monica, within the context of the Los Angeles region in California, in comparison with the institutional organization of planning in Oberhausen, within the context of the Ruhr region in Germany. These physical and institutional models use previously exercised structures, and hence have the potential to reproduce mostly the reality of the past. To understand the future conception of the two places I discuss the professional vision in terms of the production of abstract space.

In terms of pedagogy I suggest the contextualization of the abstract models employed in planning practice, as well as of the theoretical courses that draw knowledge from theory in social sciences. This contextualization presupposes the complementary use of storytelling and records of sensorial and lived experience of a place. This combination stimulates the intuitive understanding of the theoretical readings. At the same time, the habit of simultaneous understanding of language, graphic techniques and sensorial presentations suggests ways to convey knowledge to diverse audiences by means that prove a higher degree of universality than language alone. These teaching suggestions are a means to transform the boundaries between *the public* and *the private* in terms of public exchange of professional knowledge.

## **PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC SPACE: LIVED EXPERIENCE OF A PLACE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Within the biography of a place, in this chapter I discuss the understanding of a place through rhythm analyses of ways to experience the life of the place. This third explanatory part of the spatial production is meant to be a synthesis of the previous two parts that dealt with the exterior image and with professional's image of a place. In this account I synthesize a phenomenological viewpoint about a generic place. This viewpoint combines sensorial analyses of the place with conceptual analyses of physical and institutional models for the design of the place. I illustrate a rhythm analyst's account of public space, and also propose an institutional analysis of the spatial production process. In this exploration with respect to the experiential understanding of space I draw upon three main ideas that pertain to the relationship public-private in planning practice, theory and pedagogy.

Concerning the planning practice in this chapter I draw on an idea that refers to the acknowledgment of different temporalities of urban space. On the one hand, there is a linear temporality that corresponds to modern institutions, and is predominantly public. On the other hand, there is a cyclical temporality that is chiefly private or intimate, and corresponds to the cosmic and body rhythms and rituals. Understanding the rhythms of places calls for adjusting to these rhythms, and for transferring them into planning action.

This chapter's suggestion for planning theory refers to the association of spatial rhythm analyses with the theory of new institutionalism in social sciences. Rhythm analysis is the understanding of spatial rhythms and their practical consequences based on the body experience (Lefebvre 2004). The new institutionalism in social sciences is interested in institutional effects on human action. The field searches for ways to aggregating individual wishes into collective decisions within the institutionalization process (Immergut 1998).

In the context of planning theory, one purpose of the association of rhythm analyses with institutional analyses is to address the gap between theory and practice with respect to the physical contextualization of social sciences theory. Physical contextualization implies the articulation of place and temporal dimensions into the analysis of institutions. Place refers in this case to physical location but also relates to its culture, which brings about the perspective of design reasoning (Chapter Two section *The Dialectics of Design*). Furthermore, to investigate the institutional dimensions of the production process means building an in-depth understanding of places. So another purpose of associating institutional theory and empirical knowledge about places through rhythm analyses is to explain the production of public spaces.

The definition of institutions varies across social sciences fields, and includes norms, mechanisms and rules of the game, as well as values and symbol systems that guide human action. In the interpretation of this study, physical

contextualization of institutions means actually to explain the spatial and social practice of a society (Lefebvre 1991). For instance, in the modern society based on market rationality, social practice is dominated by exchanges. Exchanges include rhythms that become part of the production of space, and through the spatial practice these rhythms reproduce the same order imposed by the modern society based on market rationality.

In terms of planning pedagogy, this chapter recommends the development of integrated courses that prepare future practitioners to interpret mutually theoretical and empirical wisdom regarding physical as well as institutional aspects of the spatial production.

## **REPRESENTATIONAL SPACES**

In this chapter I propose a synthetic interpretation of the relationship between the external image and the professional image of a place. This synthesis is expressed in the lived space that is experienced in action and movement. The dialectical moment of the spatial production process is called “representational spaces”. Henri Lefebvre used this name to distinguish the spaces that are directly lived through their associated images and coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs like those that artists employ.

Representational spaces: space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’, but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do no

more than describe. This is the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects. [...] embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces (Lefebvre 1991, p.39 and p.33).

The representational spaces as a spatial production moment reveal connections between the perception of the material space's appearance and the conceptual framework of the spatial production. Despite revealing a dialectical unity of opposites, this synthetic moment brings to light also the 'underground' and repressed aspects that are present within the process of spatial production. In contrast, in the modern practice of planning, there is a misunderstanding in considering the conceptual representations of space as being the same with the lived urban 'reality'. As I interpret Lefebvre's argument, the professional spatial inquiry should focus on the missing links between the production of the explicit representations of space, and of the representational spaces.

Knowledge [in the modern practice of planning] falls into a trap when it makes representations of space the basis for the study of 'life', for in doing so it reduces lived experience. The *object* of knowledge is, precisely, the fragmented and uncertain connection between elaborated representations of space on the one hand and representational spaces (along with the underpinnings) on the other; and this 'object' implies (and explains) a *subject* – that subject in whom lived, perceived and conceived (known) come together within a spatial practice (Lefebvre 1991, p. 230).

I propose that one of the missing links between the representations of space and the representational spaces is a phenomenological viewpoint in spatial



exploration together with the consideration of the role of the body knowledge in understanding the lived experience. Into that an understanding of the spatial practice could provide insights. In this study, through the case of the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica I argue that, by means of balancing social order with personal disorder, the spatial practice of a society facilitates an understanding of the creation of a convivial, diverse and democratic public realm. According to the spatial triad, the modification of the boundaries between *the public* and *the private* stimulate the potential of public spaces to impact the social structure through the transformation of social relations. From this point of view building an understanding of spatial practice is highly significant in the production of public space, as spatial practice contains the reproduction of social relations.

Considered overall, social practice presupposes the use of the body: the use of the hands, members and sensory organs, and the gestures of work as of activity unrelated to work. This is the realm of the *perceived* (the practical basis of the perception of the outside world). [...] Prior to knowledge, and beyond it, are the body and the actions of the body: suffering, desire, pleasure (Lefebvre 1991, p.40, p.135).

Moreover, the spatial practice includes also the social practice and the social order of a society. Lefebvre explains, “spatial practice consists in a projection onto a (spatial) field of all aspects, elements and moments of social practice” (1991, p.8). So the spatial explorer of public spaces perceives together with the spatial order *per se*, the social order that is directly linked to the political practice. The political practice, which in neocapitalism is controlled by the state power, has power over all the aspects of a society’s practice.

In modernity there is a conceptual separation of the various practices, and this separation leaves room for contradictions. According to Lefebvre, in the modern production of space the state intervention manifests through implementation of the abstract space, as a compromise between land ownership and money ownership.

In the case of the modern abstract space, however, “the bourgeoisie and the capitalist system [...] find themselves unable to reduce practice (the practico-sensory realm, the body, social-spatial practice) to their abstract space, and hence new, spatial, contradictions arise and make themselves felt” (Lefebvre 1991, p.63). The replacement of the social space, which has been shaped over time in the historic core of the city, with the abstract space fosters homogenization, commodification and lack of identity. By contrast, Lefebvre reflects over the development of rural housing over time.

Private space is distinct from, but always connected with, public space. In the best of circumstances, the outside space of the community is dominated, while the indoor space of family life is appropriated [reference to Bachelard’s dialectics of the indoor and outdoor in 1957, p.19]. A situation of this kind exemplifies a spatial practice which, though still immediate, is close, in concrete terms, to the work of art. Whence the charm, the enduring ability to enchant us, of houses of this kind. It should be noted that appropriation is not effected by an immobile group, be it a family, a village or a town; time plays a part in the process, and indeed appropriation cannot be understood apart from the rhythms of time and life (Lefebvre 1991, p.166).

Besides the impact of time and life rhythms, the exploration of lived experience of a place requires a longer time frame. Furthermore, urban space,

which incorporates the spatial practice, invites for a certain type of spatial researcher. An example is the modernization of the nineteenth century Paris produced the appearance of the flâneur as a social type. In the next section I propose the rhythmanalyst as the type of spatial explorer of the lived space.

## **RHYTHMANALYSIS**

Rhythmanalysis was coined first by Gaston Bachelard in *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* (1964 [1949]), although he borrowed the term from the Portuguese writer Lucio Alberto Pinheiro dos Santos (Lefebvre 2004, p.9). Bachelard used the term as “rhythmo-analysis” in *The Poetics of Space* (1994, p. xxxiv) and developed a chapter on “Rhythmanalysis” in *Dialectic of Duration* (2000 [1961]). Toward the end of his life Henri Lefebvre made an attempt to develop a theory of rhythms. My intention here is not to critique Lefebvre’s formulations, but to synthesize some of the main ideas with respect to rhythmanalysis that he exposed in *Writings on Cities* and in *Rhythmanalysis*.

The latest English translation of Lefebvre’s work is *Rhythmanalysis* (2004). This text (1992) that was published in French posthumously draws on the theory of the production of space and further explains it through the proposal of an applied method. The subtitle of the book *Space, Time and Everyday Life* is explanatory for the method in the way it integrates these themes that are recurrent throughout Lefebvre’s work. By integrating the themes within the study of rhythms,

*Rhythmanalysis* could be considered the fourth volume of *Critique of Everyday Life*. Lefebvre calls rhythms and everyday life “the concrete modalities of social time.” Yet rhythms pertain to the natural time, while everyday life is “modeled on abstract, quantitative time, the time of watches and clocks.” (Lefebvre 2004, p.73). The following quote expands on the contradiction between the natural temporality and the time imposed by the modern society.

The everyday is simultaneously the site of, and the theater for, and what is at stake in a conflict between great indestructible rhythms and the processes imposed by the socio-economic organization of production, consumption, circulation and habitat. The analysis of everyday life shows how and why social time is itself a social product. Like all products, like space, time divides and splits itself into use and use-value on the one hand, and exchange and exchange-value on the other. On the one hand it is sold and on the other it is lived. [...] There is bitter struggle around time and the use of time. [...] There is no time to do everything but every ‘doing’ has its time. [...] it is not uncommon for children to refuse social rhythms (Lefebvre 2004, pp.73-75).

In light of this temporal conflict, Lefebvre thought of rhythm as a unifying concept of space and time, and as a tool for spatial analysis. Rhythmanalysis refers to the understanding of spatial rhythms and their practical consequences. Rhythms could be defined as forms of repetition, or movements and differences within repetition. Rhythms are temporal measures that bring with them “a differentiated time, a qualified duration” (Lefebvre 2004, p.78). There are private rhythms of the self and public rhythms of the other. However, rhythms always reveal a tension between an intimate and natural time, and a measured and imposed exterior time like the modern, rational, industrial time. What are the rhythms in the city? Every

rhythm implies “the relation of a time to a space, a localised time, or, if one prefers, a temporalised space” (idem, p.89).

There are linear rhythms defined by the repetition of the same phenomena that mostly belong to the public realm such as routines, successions, predetermined encounters, a social and civil time. There are cyclical rhythms that have a determined frequency and new beginnings similarly to the cosmic rhythms. Cyclical rhythms are the seasonal changes, the succession of day and night, rituals, alternating manifestations of social organization and the like. A physical example of rhythms’ complexity is the movement of waves on the sea surface that extends from temporal elements to movement and memory. More importantly, rhythms are relative and enter into a perpetual interaction like, for example, the succession within rituals intervening in the daily time. Due to the relativity of rhythms, rhythmanalysis is necessarily comparative, which makes it relevant to this comparative study on public spaces.

#### **THE RHYTHMANALYST**

Furthermore, the study of rhythms applies to this study’s method of understanding the production of public spaces, due to its phenomenological viewpoint. Rhythmanalysis is placed inside the body, which is the source of natural (including cosmic) rhythms and at the same time adjusts to the social rhythms. Despite the tension between the natural and the social time within the body, the

study of rhythms intends to bring together the scientific and the poetic, as these two aspects complete one another. “Rhythm appears as regulated time, governed by rational laws, but in contact with what is least rational in human being: the lived, the carnal, the body. [...] The bundle of natural rhythms wraps itself in rhythms that of social and mental function” (Lefebvre 2004, p.9). Notably from my perspective in this study, through the integration of the sensorial within spatial knowledge, rhythms show a non-political appropriation of spaces.

Without claiming to change life, but by fully reinstating the sensible in consciousness and in thought, he [the rhythm analyst] would accomplish a tiny part of the revolutionary transformation of this world and this society in decline. Without any declared political position (Lefebvre 2004, p.26).

In order to analyze a rhythm, however, there is a necessary condition for externality. But like in dance or in music, the rhythm analyst “must have been grasped by [the rhythm], have given or abandoned oneself ‘inwardly’ to the time that it rhythmmed” (idem, p.88). This statement of Lefebvre means in the context of my research that the rhythm analyst embodies the qualities of the outside observer as well as the qualities of the producer. Who is the rhythm analyst?

[The rhythm analyst is] an enigmatic individual who strolls with his thoughts and his emotions, his impressions and his wonder, through the streets [...] More sensitive to times than to spaces, to moods than to images, to the atmosphere than to particular events, he is strictly speaking neither psychologist, nor sociologist, nor anthropologist, nor economist; however he borders on each of these fields in turn and is able to draw on the instruments that the specialists use. He therefore adopts a transdisciplinary approach in relation to these different sciences. He is always ‘listening out’, but he does not only hear words, discourses, noises and sounds; he is capable of listening

to a house, a street, as town as one listens to a symphony, an opera. Of course, he seeks to know how this music is composed, who plays it and for whom. [...] Attentive to time (to tempo) and subsequently to repetitions and likewise to differences in time, he separates out through a mental act that which gives itself as linked to a whole: namely rhythms and their associations. He does not only observe human activities, he also hears [*entend*] (in the double sense of the word: noticing and understanding) the temporalities in which these activities unfold. On some occasions he rather resembles the physician (analyst) who examines functional disruptions in terms of malfunctions of rhythm, or of arrhythmia (Lefebvre 2004, p.87).

The rhythm analyst is capable to ‘listen out’ to the materiality of physical space as well as to the social practice of a place. At the same time he is an outside observer tuned to his body knowledge, and also seeks knowledge that enters the realm of institutional analysis (e.g. “how this music is composed, who plays it and for whom”). In this sense the rhythm analyst is closer to the poet or the man of the theater than to the statistician who concerns himself with the immobility of things.

He will listen to the world, and above all to what are disdainfully called noises, which are said without meaning, and to murmurs [*rumeurs*], full of meaning – and finally he will listen to silences. [...] The sensible? It is neither the apparent, nor the phenomenal, but the present [the font of the word ‘present’ is bold in original]. The rhythm analyst calls on all his senses. [...] without privileging any one of these sensations [...] he does not neglect smell, scents, the impressions that are strong in the child and other living beings, which society atrophies, neutralizes in order to arrive at the colourless, the odourless and the insensible. [...] The rhythm analyst will not be obliged to *jump* from the inside to the outside of observed *bodies*; he should come to listen to them as a whole and unify them by taking his own rhythms as a reference: by integrating the outside with the inside and vice versa (idem, pp.19-21).

In public spaces the rhythm analyst must ‘listen’ to a multitude of rhythms and their interactions while using all of his senses, because he has the capability to

be connected with “temporalities and their relations within wholes” (Lefebvre 2004, p.24). By integrating the roles of producer, participant user and outside observer of space, the rhythm analyst is fully capable to grasp the spatial complexity. However, harmony among different spatial understandings could be achieved if the rhythm analyst is capable, as stated above, to integrate the outside with the inside. To fully grasp the meaning of this necessary attribute of the rhythm analyst I explore in the next section the dialectics of outside and inside, and the phenomenology of the poetic imagination (Bachelard 1994).

#### **UNCONSCIOUS AND THE POETIC IMAGINATION**

Gaston Bachelard defines the poetic images as alternatives to memories or to the images produced in reality (1994 [1958], p.xxxiv-v). The poetic image is a direct product of the imagination, which must be taken into consideration as a major power of human nature. In the *Introduction* of the *Poetics of Space* he dissociates the poetic image from the “simple metaphor”, which according to him is a common confusion within academic psychology.

At present studies in psychological science analyze comparatively the different types of knowing. On the one hand the experiential knowing is rapid, self-evident and generalized, as well as emotional and mediated by vibes from past experience. On the other hand, rational knowing is considered slow and mediated by conscious appraisal, differentiated and justified with logic and evidence (Myers



2002). Yet, while processing information, the ‘unconscious’ and intuitive knowledge is omnipresent.

Our minds process vast amounts of information outside of consciousness, beyond language. Inside our ever-active brain, many streams of activity flow in parallel, function automatically, are remembered implicitly, and only occasionally surface as conscious words (Myers 2002, p.29).

In this study I understand the ‘unconscious’, similarly to Lefebvre’s description of it as ‘self-consciousness’:

What is the unconscious if not consciousness itself, if not consciousness and its double, which it contains and keeps within itself – namely, ‘self-consciousness’? [...] In essence, and by definition, self-consciousness is a reduplication, a self-reproduction, as much as it is a ‘reflection’ of objects. [...] The ‘unconscious’ in this sense, as the imaginary and real locus of a struggle, as the obscure counterweight to that ‘luminous’ entity known as *culture*, has nothing in common with the ragbag concept of the psychologists and other experts (Lefebvre 1991, pp. 207-208).

At the same time, in order to overcome the modern inclination towards spatial abstraction, I suggest adopting Bachelard’s dialectics of outside and inside that is present in language (1994). According to Bachelard, the difference between the meaning and the poetic image is that the first ‘encloses’ while the second ‘opens up’ (idem, p.222). As for urban design and planning, an important quality of the poetic image is its position in between present, past, and future, which at the same time separates us from the past and present reality in order to face the future. The capability of the poetic image to draw wisdom from the future makes it fundamental to planning and design practitioners’ capability to foresee.

## **THE RHYTHMANALYST IN THE SPACE OF PLACES AND IN THE SPACE OF FLOWS**

In this study I suggest to investigate, interpret and evaluate the quality of public spaces from the perspective of the lived experience of a spatial explorer. As presented in the previous section, the rhythmanalyst is the generic type of the spatial explorer, and rhythmanalysis is one of the tools employed in this exploration. Being the study of rhythms, rhythmanalysis pertains to the body knowledge. The body is on the one hand the source of natural rhythms, and on the other hand adapts to the social rhythms. The flâneur could be regarded as a historic example of the rhythmanalyst in the modern city.

I propose next an understanding of the rhythms of public spaces in contemporary modernity through the evolution of the flâneur from the nineteenth century until present days. An overview of the flâneur's performance in its evolution over time makes sense considering him as a rhythmanalyst, whose analysis resides within his body rhythms. And rhythms are forms of repetition as well as movements and differences within repetition. The evolution of this spatial experience stretches from the beginning of the modern metropolis to the current coexisting space of places and space of flows.

In this section I argue in favor of flânerie, which is the spatial exploration of the flâneur, within the contemporary forms of public life in the city in off-line and on-line public exchanges. In order to propose the revival of the nineteenth century flâneur as a social type in contemporary society and a model of rhythmanalyst, I

perform a comparative analysis between the different types of flânerie that developed over the last two centuries.

#### **THE FLÂNEUR OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY MODERNITY**

In the summer of 1835 Victor Hugo wrote in a letter to Adèle, “For me there are two ways to see a city that complete one another; first in detail, street by street and house by house; then as a whole, from the height of its towers. In this manner we have in mind the face and the profile of the city.” This simultaneous understanding of the city at two different spatial scales acknowledges the spatial exploration at the street level, and also anticipates the large-scale vision for the modern development of Paris.

Since the 1830s the French public opinion requested the modernization of Paris (Michel Carmona, *Le Grand Paris*). In response in 1853 Napoleon III delegated Baron Haussmann, who was at the time the Prefect of Seine, to lead the redevelopment projects that will bring to life their vision for the city’s future. According to Napoleon and Haussmann’s conception for Paris, the State financed grand infrastructure projects, from train stations to public parks, as well as the redevelopment of a large area of the historic city. Previously quoted sources in this study such as Harvey (2003), Buck-Morss (1989), and Benjamin (1991) document the circumstances and political intentions at the beginning of Paris’ transformation

into a modern city. The manifestation of these transformations in public spaces had a profound social class character.

The meaning of the new public spaces [in 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris] depended in large measure upon the private interests (such as landowners, developers, construction interests and workers, commerce of all kinds) they supported. ... The validation of the new public spaces (the splendor of the boulevards displayed) was heavily dependent on the control of private functions and activities that abutted upon it. Haussmann set about a process of “embourgeoisement” of the city center that continued long thereafter. He sought to expel industrial activities (particularly noxious ones like tanning) and its associated working classes (often at the center of political revolt) from the center of the city. He strictly mandated design criteria and aesthetic forms for both the public and the private construction on and around the boulevards (with a lasting effect on Parisian architecture and aesthetics). Private activity was forced to support the political goal, which was to shape a certain kind of public space reflective of imperial splendor, military security, and bourgeois affluence. Haussmann sought to orchestrate the private and public spaces of Paris in mutually supportive ways. But he did so in class terms (as has happened recently in the reorganization of New York’s Times Square) (Harvey 2006b, p.21).

Due to the social implications of the Haussmannian transformation of Paris’ urban fabric, social class differences played an important role in its understanding through spatial exploration. Among a myriad of implications, such profound structural transformations called for a new type of spatial explorer of the emerging modern city. At the same time industrialization, and its associated social and economic changes, brought about the need for a new sensibility in art, as recorded in the writings of Baudelaire for example. So at the beginning of the nineteenth century a new social type appears in the Parisian society: the flâneur.

Etymologically the word flâneur comes from the French verb flâner that means to stroll, to take a walk. The origins of the verb are dialectal. In the seventeenth century the verb ‘flanner’ was used in Normandy to mean ‘to waste time’ (*Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales* (CNRTL) online source). The verb flâner [to stroll], and the nouns flâneur [stroller] and flânerie [the act of strolling] became part of the French language in the nineteenth century, in writings of Balzac (1837) for instance, to describe someone who likes to do nothing.

Initially the term flâneur referred to the reflective stroller in the streets of Paris. The flexibility of flânerie became a pleasure for anyone who could be a detached pedestrian observer of the modern metropolis. After the second half of the century though, flânerie in the capitalist city became mostly the pleasure of those who had the capacity to consume (Friedberg 1993, p.147). Nevertheless, the flâneur is the initial form of the modern intellectual whose interest was to explore modernity itself. French nineteenth-century poet Charles Baudelaire, who experienced and also theorized flânerie, coined the concept of the flâneur. “As a specific historical figure, Baudelaire embodies the qualities of the flâneur, [considering] his acute awareness of his highly ambivalent situation – at once socially rebellious bohemian and producer of commodities for the literary market” (Buck-Morss 1989, p. 304). Buck-Morss writes about the flâneur as the origin of the modern intellectual in the context of presenting Baudelaire’s influence on

Walter Benjamin's generation of intellectuals that experienced and studied the phenomenon of *flânerie* (1989).

As a researcher, the *flâneur* didn't have the comfort and the status of an academic spatial researcher. According to Buck-Morss, the ambivalence inherent within the experience of the *flâneur* and the lack of his official status are aspects that contribute to the convergence of the interests of working class and modern intellectuals. This mutual relation between intellectuals and working class interests transferred into the twentieth century. "In the late 1920s, Benjamin seems to have affirmed this public orientation of the *flâneur*, as well as the public spaces of the city and the crowd that moves through them" (Buck-Morss 1989, p. 304).

Throughout its development *flânerie* was related also to the mediation of the social forms of constraints in the public spaces. For instance, the shop display commodified the visual experience and offered "possibilities of escape from physically bounded subjectivity to explore ... and engage in the pleasures of more fluid forms of subjectivity" (Featherstone 1998, p.919). Yet an important aspect of *flânerie* is the bilateral relationship between the stroller and the crowds who witnessed his presence and also interacted with him such as flower girls, cab drivers, prostitutes, homeless and other categories actively present in the streets. The *flâneur* derives knowledge about the modern city in his interaction with these crowds. Like the previous section explained, the *rhythmanalyst* is more attentive to moods than to images, and listens out to the temporalities in which human activities

unfold. So in presenting the flâneur as a rhythm analyst, I argue that his involvement in social interaction is more important than the gaze and interpretation of the window display.

For Benjamin the flâneur is a phenomenon and an interesting social type in the newly shaped modern metropolis. This new social type emphasizes the presence and importance of locomotion and connectivity in social life. To construct the *Arcades Project* Benjamin gathered his social and aesthetic observations from long walks through Paris. Moreover, he used the montage method of juxtaposition to compose the narrative (1991). As I explained in detail in the *Study Methodology* section, this graphic presentation method takes advantage of the interpretive power of images, and makes conceptual explanations by reaching beyond a discipline of words through nonverbal communication, movements, and rhythms. Notably this presentation method of the flâneur's spatial experience is appropriate to the experience itself.

There is a volatile quality in the way the flâneur experiences urban space and crowds, and the way he shifts his perception and moods. "The *flâneur* typically lets associations and memories flow through him which are stimulated by the distractions and impressions of the moment" (Featherstone 1998, p. 915). His aims in exploring the city are similar to the surrealist experience. The leading surrealists sought to explore the unconscious, as Lefebvre points out "to decode inner space and illuminate the nature of the transition from this subjective space to the material

realm of the body and the outside world, and thence to social life” (1991, p.18).

The association with surrealism *avant la lettre* is evident here as the *flâneur* indulges in the play of pre-cognitive flows of half-formed impressions, associations and memory traces. At the same time, the *flâneur* is recording mentally the impressions, either on his walk, or in a quiet place when he returns from the street. ... The *flâneur*, therefore, develops his aesthetic sensibility in the swings between involvement and detachment, between emotional immersion and decontrol and moments of careful recording and analysis of the ‘random harvest’ of impressions from the streets (Featherstone 1998, p.913).

The flâneur observed and analyzed the crowds during his street experience. Afterwards, he reflected, recorded mentally and wrote about his experiences in solitude. In this way the flâneur translated the body knowledge and the enactive understanding of the rhythms into verbal symbols and language, and at times into iconic representations like in Benjamin’s project for example (refer to Bruner’s types of knowledge, 1962).

An example of a recorded flâneur experience of space is Baudelaire’s prose poem *The Eyes of the Poor*, which is quoted and analyzed in other studies of public spaces like Harvey (2003, p. 220, and 2006, pp. 18-19) and Kohn (2004, pp.184-185). It is present in this study as well, due to its potential to suggest a structure for rhythmanalysis. In addition, I chose this fragment because it illustrates some of the insights that the rhythmanalyst could draw from the social interaction in public life. Through this prose poem David Harvey presents the contested qualities of *the private* and *the public* in the nineteenth century Parisian society, as this fragment of flânerie “generates a sense of space where ambiguities of proprietorship, of



aesthetics, of social relations (class and gender in particular), and the political economy of everyday life collide” (2006, p.19).

That evening, feeling a little tired, you wanted to sit down in front of a new café forming the corner of a new boulevard still littered with rubbish but that already displayed proudly its unfinished splendors. The café was dazzling. Even the gas burned with all the ardor of a debut, and lighted with all its might the blinding whiteness of the walls, the expanse of mirrors, the gold cornices and moldings ..... nymphs and goddesses bearing on their heads piles of fruits, pates and game.... all history and all mythology pandering to gluttony.

On the street directly in front of us, a worthy man of about forty, with tired face and graying beard, was standing holding a small boy by the hand and carrying on his arm another little thing, still too weak to walk. He was playing nurse-maid, taking the children for an evening stroll. There were in rags. The three faces were extraordinarily serious, and those six eyes stared fixedly at the new café with admiration, equal in degree but differing in kind according to their ages.

The eyes of the father said: “How beautiful it is! How beautiful it is! All the gold of the poor world must have found its way onto those walls.” The eyes of the little boy: “how beautiful it is! How beautiful it is! But it is a house where only people who are not like us can go.” As for the baby, he was much too fascinated to express anything but joy – utterly stupid and profound.

Song writers say that pleasure ennobles the soul and softens the heart. The song was right that evening as far as I was concerned. Not only was I touched by this family of eyes, but I was even a little ashamed of our glasses and decanters, too big for our thirst. I turned my eyes to look into yours, dear love, to read my thoughts in them; and as I plunged my eyes into your eyes, so beautiful and so curiously soft, into those green eyes, home of Caprice and governed by the Moon, you said: “Those people are insufferable with their great saucer eyes. Can’t you tell the proprietor to send them away?”

So you see how difficult it is to understand one another, my dear angel, how incommunicable thought is, even between two people in love (Baudelaire. Charles. 1947 [1869]. *Paris Spleen*. In Harvey 2006, pp.18-19).

This fragment depicts a street scene in front of a café on the Haussmannian

boulevards of the mid-nineteenth century Paris. First, Baudelaire brings to life a visual description of this urban scene by evoking the subtle vibrations of light, of the gas lamps, the mirror reflections, the whiteness of the walls, and the golden cornices. As explained in Chapter Three, *External Image of a Place*, a sense of a place comes to life through the recollection of sensorial analyses. Similarly, Baudelaire introduces the reader to the urban scene by picturing the memories of his sensual perception of the place by means of light, colors, textures and so forth.

Second, the poet brings into this prose poem the social quality of the street scene. His story with respect to the café spectators (the ‘strangers’ or outside observers) is highly interpretive, and like in rhythm analysis pays attention to the moods more than to images. The poet uses his imagination to assign different roles (e.g. the father, the little boy, the baby). According to the outside observer’s capacity to decipher the environment, these social characters express various emotional responses to the scene. If rhythms are differences within repetition, the reference to the song that “ennobles the soul and softens the heart” suggests the understanding of this social relationship through a rhythmic contradiction. However, the different temporalities that “touched” and “ashamed” the flâneur of his advantageous position are conveyed emotionally to the reader by means of empathy and compassion.

Third, Baudelaire turns inwardly to live the street scene and interpret it cathartically. He transfers his insights subsequent to the public interaction into the

intimacy of *the private* by means of a comparative analysis of his personal position in relation to the outsiders. In light of this understanding the poet evaluates his love relationship in terms of ideological differences. I infer that this phase of the analysis suggests a complete appropriation of the social rapport.

There are various lessons to draw from this short fragment of recorded flânerie. I discuss some of these lessons according to the three powers of the comparative method that I identified with respect to research methodology. These powerful characteristics are sharpening the perceptive power, stimulating the formation of concepts, and enriching the spatial experience (refer to Chapter Two, *The Comparative Method*).

Comparisons sharpen the perceptive and interpretive power of the spatial explorer. As I explained in Chapter II, and derived from Lijphard's definition of the comparative method (1971), comparable cases are those in which differences are the key variables. The exclusive corporate and/or privately controlled public spaces like shopping malls are sanitized of the unwanted people and activities. Kohn illustrates with fragments of Baudelaire's prose poem a detailed discussion on homelessness, and she proposes a classification of the various conditions of homelessness that exist in contemporary public spaces (2004). The homogeneity of the contemporary exclusive public spaces does not provide for the necessary diversity, in order to identify powerful differences within repetition. Just like in the initial description of the place, Baudelaire made use of different vibrations of light,

textures and colors, awareness of the other's condition develops in reviewed interactions within a diversified public life. Hence, in the absence of differences, the purified public spaces lack the cathartic value of a diverse public experience. The awareness of the other's condition further manifests in vibrant emotional states like empathy and compassion.

Comparisons enrich the lived experience. Baudelaire interpreted the outsiders' emotions as well as his personal feelings in order to evaluate the two social conditions in comparison. That becomes possible by means of compassion and empathy, for instance. Compassion is the sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it. Empathy is the act of being aware of, and sensitive to the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another, which are not fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner. The purpose of this *public* evaluation was to develop insights with respect to the *private* space through reflection in action.

Comparisons stimulate concept formation. The flâneur's better understanding of the inner *private* space through associations and half-formed impressions develops his sensibility like in the case of realizing the impenetrability of communication within his love relationship. The transformation produced at the individual *private* level potentially would return into the flâneur's future explorations of the *public* space. Furthermore, the transfer of knowledge in between his personal experience and the *public* space creates a stronger and more intimate

relation that connects the spatial explorer to the place itself. By way of a permeable relationship between *the public* and *the private*, public space has the potential to become an *appropriated* place.

## THE APPROPRIATION OF PLACES

The concept of appropriation is used with respect to properties, ideas, and, in this case, space to designate the act of either setting apart for use, or assigning to a particular purpose, or taking possession of them. In this study appropriation as ‘taking possession of space’ actually refers to a sense of belonging to a certain place. The spatial appropriation is not a one-moment endeavor for a society, but rather it is a process of shaping social space over time. For instance, the process of everyday spatial practice in traditional settlements creates an appropriated space, whether in the case of ancient cities or of contemporary shantytowns. This appropriated social space could be achieved, according to Lefebvre (1991), through “self-presentation and self-representation” of that particular society. I argue that through reiterations of *flânerie*, the spatial experience potentially would transform the public space into an appropriated place.

Lefebvre presents the *appropriated* space in comparison with the *dominated* (and dominant) space of modernity. The dominated space is mediated through technology that “introduces a new form into a pre-existing space” with the result of converting nature directly “from an enemy, an indifferent mother, into ‘goods’”

(Lefebvre 1991, p.165). This dominant relationship between technology and nature is acknowledged in Marxist theory as a means to transforming nature for the needs of the social man. In this acceptance, technology manifests in the city through the construction of infrastructure networks like freeways, rail tracks, large parking surfaces, walls, fortifications and the like.

Analogously, at present the communication networks introduce into the traditional space a new morphology that supports the co-existence of the space of places and of flows (on “space of places and space of flows” refer to Castells 2005, on urban networks refer to Graham and Marvin 2001). In contrast to the technology contemporary with the Marxist social theory, the urban presence of the current communication networks is subtler in nature. I suggest that the everyday life use of communication technology has the potential to build a different understanding of the relationship between technology and nature. Even more, I suggest that the subtlety of this relationship could bring about the softer side of the human nature, which “Marx ... rejected any idea that it might be constituted by laughter, by play, by the awareness of death, or by ‘residence’; rather, it lay in (social) labour and – inseparably – in language” (Lefebvre 1991, p.165).

Lefebvre formulates an ideal reverse relationship between *domination* and *appropriation*, which could be achieved spatially through “appropriation, turning the world upon its head, ... as the imaginary and the utopian incorporate (or are incorporated into) the real” (1991, p.348). This redefinition of the relationship

between nature and technology, between the appropriated and the dominated space is very likely to be realized in the mixed interaction between the on-line (virtual and imaginary) and off-line (physical and material) spatial experiences.

Moreover, “appropriation cannot be understood apart from the rhythms of time and of life” (Lefebvre 1991, p.166). As presented in Baudelaire’s recording, there is a social take on the understanding of the city through *flânerie*, which could be traced back to the Marxist theory, and which is likely to transform public spaces into appropriated place. In addition to this social take, there is a way to understand the city by directly addressing the concrete reality of rhythms. In the next section I present an example of rhythmanalysis that is positioned in between the on-line and off-line experience. Before the critique of the rhythmanalyst profile I make a short overview of the urban development circumstances that until the present have transformed the *flâneur* as a social type.

## **THE CONTEMPORARY SPATIAL EXPLORER**

In the post World War II decades, the urban environment and the spatial practice of everyday life became more and more disconnected. Infrastructure networks such as railway tracks, freeways and large parking surfaces fragmented the urban fabric. At the same time, easy accessibility to off-center locations encouraged sprawling urban development. In the United States, the State and businesses envisioned and financed the process of suburbanization.

The fragmented development of the mid-twentieth century metropolis has a strong impact on the perception and the exploration of urban space. Victor Hugo's understanding of the city fabric simultaneously at the street level and from a bird-eye view is not accessible to the flâneur any longer. The view from above is only part of the professional representation of space, which at the same time is separated from the street level experience. Moreover, as I discussed in Chapter IV, *Professional Image of a Place*, due to the separation of the professional representation of space from the lived experience of space, the contemporary modernity produces and reproduces abstract spaces.

Abstract space *contains* much, but at the same time it masks (or denies) what it contains rather than indicating it. [...] The 'world of signs' is not merely the space occupied by space and images (by object-signs and sign-objects). It is also the space where the Ego no longer relates to its own nature, to the material world, or even to the 'thingness' of things (commodities), but only to things bound to their signs and indeed ousted and supplanted by them. The sign-bearing 'I' no longer deals with anything but other bearers of signs (Lefebvre 1991, p.311).

The development of abstract spaces and incoherent urban fabric works against the realization of an appropriated space. From the conceptual phase of the production of space, the individual spatial experience is unimportant. As a result the individual exploration of *the public* becomes unimportant and mediated through various means.

Appropriation itself implies time (or times), rhythm (or rhythms) symbols and a practice. The more space is functionalized – the more completely it falls under the sway of those 'agents' that have manipulated it so as to render it unifunctional – the less susceptible



it becomes to appropriation. Why? Because in this way it is removed from the sphere of *lived* time, from the time of its 'users', which is a diverse and complex time (Lefebvre 1991, p.356).

As a form of removal from the lived space, the spatial exploration manifests either through fast locomotion or through the mobility of images (reference Lefebvre 2003, Gottdiener 1995). By and large the spatial experience depends upon the mediation of the screen, which "has become the city square" (Virilio 1997 quoted in Featherstone 1998, p.919). The contemporary flâneur perceives the city either through the car windshield or through the television screen, cinematograph screen and computer screen. Similarly to the window display of the nineteenth century, contemporary tourist experiences, cinema spectatorship, and Internet surfing offer an escape from the concrete individual reality and offer opportunities for flânerie.

In the space of places, most of the newly developed physical public spaces are privately owned and designed to deliver prepackaged spatial experiences that provide entertainment through surprises, distractions, and sequences of events for pedestrians (e.g. refer to Moustafa 1999 on Jon Jerde's Horton Plaza and Universal CityWalk). As Lefebvre argued in the *Critique of Everyday Life*, in modernity leisure and entertainment are just variations of social control. The crowds that used to interact and be the audience of the flâneur have been segmented out, and rarely contemporary public spaces gather homeless, prostitutes, strollers, shoppers and visitors in the same place (refer to Kohn 2004 on the homeless free zones). In *Flesh*

and Stone, Richard Sennett pointed to the incapability of current public spaces to acknowledge and represent pain (1998). The spatial experience is carefully controlled to eliminate the uncertainties of everyday life and to preserve a perpetual condition of 'safety'.

As a result of the privatization of the public realm, and also of the alienation of the private realm, contemporary flâneurs need to search for the flexibility of transitory spaces. These spaces satisfy the necessity for social interaction in between *the public* and *the private*. The availability of these transitory spaces such as clubs, 'tribes', on-line communities of interest and the like is made possible also due to the new means of communication, which enable virtual manifestations of public representation. Besides increased speed and a different mode to navigate the on-line space, a significant difference of this spatial experience is the dissolution of the public temporalities by means of controlled individual schedules. In that sense, the on-line spatial exploration adopted the 'safety' and highly controlled characteristics of the off-line spatial public life. But due to the flexibility of the spatial and temporal boundaries, the private control over the individual on-line temporality is both a protection and a challenge.

While one can have a simulation of the 'thickness' of everyday embodied existence, one need not bump one's head when one walks into a wall, one need not grow tired at the prospect of a long walk home when one is lost in a strange quarter of the city, one can just jump out of the situation, or zoom out of the local, so that the simulated city appears below like a three-dimensional map. Hence it is possible to experience the emotional excitement (free from the physical threats found in dangerous cities) and aesthetic sensations

of the street-level stroller, but also that of the detached city planner (Featherstone 1998, pp.922-923).

As argued by different scholars, the public life in virtual space does not provide for a complete replacement of the public life in the material space (Barber 1998, Banerjee 2001, Kohn 2003). Yet a comparison between the differences and similarities between Benjamin's flânerie and the on-line flânerie is capable to bring forth the rhythms of spatial exploration as modifications within repetition. This capability of the comparison suggests future analysis of flânerie as a phenomenon. For this study though, I limit the inquiry to the off-line spatial exploration, and perform a comparative analysis between Baudelaire's flânerie and Lefebvre's 'window' rhythmanalysis.

In the essay *Seen from the Window* included in the collection *Rhythmanalysis*, Lefebvre presents an intermediate position of the rhythmanalyst that is placed in between the nineteenth century flâneur and the contemporary e-flâneur. I call the 'e-flâneur' the contemporary surfer and browser of the on-line space. Protected from the tumult of street life, the rhythmanalyst analyses the rhythms of the *public* space from the window of his *private* space.

From the window opening onto rue R. facing the famous P. Centre, there is no need to lean much to see into the distance. To the right, the palace-centre P., the Forum, up as far as the (central) Bank of France. To the left up as far as the Archives. Perpendicular to this direction, the *Hôtel de Ville* and, on the other side, the *Arts et Métiers*. The whole of Paris, ancient and modern, traditional and creative, active and lazy.

He who walks down the street, over there, is immersed in the multiplicity of noises, murmurs, rhythms (including those of the

body, but does he pay attention, except at the moment of crossing the street, when he has to calculate roughly the number of his steps?). By contrast, from the window, the noises distinguish themselves, the flows separate out, the rhythms respond to one another. Towards the right, below, a traffic light. On red, cars at a standstill, the pedestrians cross, feeble murmurings, footsteps, confused voices. One does not chatter while crossing a dangerous junction under the threat of wild cats and elephants ready to charge forward, taxis, buses, lorries, various cars. Hence the relative silence in this crowd. A kind of soft murmuring, sometimes a cry, a call.

[...] The harmony between what one sees and what one hears (from the window) is remarkable. Strict concordance.

[...] The noise grows, grows in intensity and strength, at its peak becomes unbearable, though quite well borne by the stench of fumes. Then stop. Let's do it again, with more pedestrians. Two-minute intervals. Amidst the fury of the cars, the pedestrians cluster together, a clot here, a clump over there; grey dominates, with multicoloured flecks, and these heaps break apart for the race ahead.

[...] The noise that pierces the ear comes not from passers-by, but from engines pushed to the limit when starting up. No ear, no piece of apparatus could grasp this whole, this flux of metallic and carnal bodies. In order to grasp the rhythms, a bit of time, a sort of meditation on time, the city, people, is required.

Other, less lively, slower rhythms superimpose themselves on the inexorable rhythm, which hardly dies down at night: children leaving from school, some very noisy, even piercing screams of morning recognition. Then towards half past nine is the arrival of the shoppers, followed shortly by the tourists, in accordance, with exceptions (storms or advertising promotions), with a timetable that is almost always the same; the flows and conglomerations succeed one another: they get fatter or thinner but always agglomerate at the corners in order subsequently to clear a path, tangle and disentangle themselves amongst cars (Lefebvre 2004, pp.28-30).

Lefebvre's subject of exploration is "the whole of Paris, ancient and modern, traditional and creative, active and lazy," as presented above. The aim to capture the city's life at a larger scale brings us back to Victor Hugo's understanding of the city at both scales of the street level and from its heights. A

comment to the title of this essay says: “No! this title belongs to Colette. – I write: ‘Seen from my windows, overlooking a junction of Paris, therefore overlooking the road’.” (idem, p. 27). The window through which Lefebvre perceives the city is the window of his private home, and I call him a ‘window’ spatial explorer.

So I suggest that the position of the rhythmanalyst as ‘window’ spatial explorer, exploring the city from his window and overlooking the road, provides an intermediate role between the nineteenth century flâneur and the e-flâneur. On the one hand, Baudelaire and Benjamin as flâneurs were fully immersed in the street interaction, yet they developed their sensibility in between attachment and detachment from the street life. On the other hand, the e-flâneur, who is isolated from the street life within the safety of a quasi-private space, is in search for a more general perspective on public life than the one offered in the controlled and privatized physical public spaces. In between these two positions, the private space offers to the ‘window’ explorer the opportunity for physical detachment from the street life, and at the same time a broader perspective on the life of the city from the height of his private dwelling.

I present this fragment of flânerie as a transition between the nineteenth century flâneur and the e-flâneur in order to suggest similarities and differences among spatial explorations and their change within a century. In this fragment of recorded flânerie, similarly to Baudelaire, Lefebvre provides a description of the physical context of his exploration. But instead of describing the place by means of

the senses, like through the light vibrations, this introduction makes use of names and textual references. In concluding the essay Lefebvre criticizes the predominance of the verbal in the current spatial perception.

The *flânerie* revolves around a physical element that creates physical and social space, that is a traffic light in the street corner. Further into the reading though, the entire fragment refers to the sensorial analyses of the street rhythms that employ sounds, colors (e.g. red lights, “grey dominates”), and rhythmic associations. In this fragment Lefebvre illustrates both requirements in rhythmanalysis for externality and inward abandonment (refer to the section *Rhythmanalysis*).

In order to be capable to perceive rhythms, at the moment of analysis the rhythmanalyst must be detached from the rhythm *per se*. The listening out of rhythms fails, if “immersed in the multiplicity of noises”, which reminds of the necessity of the nineteenth century *flâneur* to shift to detachment from emotional involvement in public interaction. “By contrast, from the window, the noises distinguish themselves, the flows separate out, the rhythms respond to one another” (see above). At the same time, to grasp the rhythm, there is a requirement for internalization of rhythms, which happens like in dance or music through the total abandonment into the moment when it rhythmmed. “Rhythms always need a reference; the initial moment persists through other perceived givens” (Lefebvre 2004, p.36). As it seems to me, this moment of rhythmic reference corresponds to

the flâneur's cathartic experience of the social life in the street. The result of the perception of already internalized rhythms is "the harmony between what one sees and what one hears (from the window)" (see above), which recalls the flâneur's compassionate reaction to the social disparity interpreted in the "eyes of the poor".

Nevertheless, the need for detachment is also necessary in conceptualizing the analysis, similarly to the flâneur's detachment in recording flânerie. Lefebvre expresses that state as a temporal meditation: "In order to grasp the rhythms, a bit of time, a sort of meditation on time, the city, people, is required" (see above). Besides being an example of rhythmanalysis, the above fragment of 'window' exploration is a critique to modernity à la Lefebvre. To conclude this essay he compares the perception of the street crossing from the privacy of his apartment with the immersion in the live activity in a public square. The detached image of the city that is expressed strictly in language produces "simulacra; the image before you stimulates the real, drives it out, is not there, and the simulation of the drama, the moment, has nothing dramatic about it, except in the verbal" (idem, p.32).

In contrast in a public convivial square where "erupts a medieval-looking festival: fire eaters, jugglers, snake charmers, but also preachers and sit-in discussions", "there is something maritime about the rhythms. Currents traverse the masses. Streams break off, which bring or take away new participants" (idem, p.35). Although not in an explicit manner, Lefebvre advocates the nineteenth century flânerie that employed the emotional involvement into the social life of

places. Along these lines and anticipating the e-flâneur, Lefebvre mentions the “rhythms perceived from the invisible window, pierced into the wall of the façade” but “next to the other windows”. I consider this description as an anticipation of the spatial exploration within the network society. In spite of the coexistence of the two types of spaces, which Castells coined as “space of places” and “space of flows” (2005), Lefebvre brings to our attention that “no camera, no image or series of images” can show the rhythms of the city, which are “richer than the musical rhythms”. The contemporary spatial explorer needs “attentive eyes and ears, a head, and a memory and a heart” (2004, p.36). In other words, the restoration of the body in the current spatial exploration should make use equally of the sensorial and of the mental including the unconscious and the poetic imagination.

*Remembering the modernisms of the nineteenth century can give us  
the vision and courage to create the modernisms of the twenty-first.*

Marshall Berman 1982



## INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSES

Public spaces are those urban open areas designed for public access and use, which provide for common temporary ownership. Historically urban open space was renegotiated and redefined, and changed its shape together with the built up space. There is a mutual relationship between these two spatial elements. Urban open space is not the negative space of the built up. I argue that the open space in the city is the materialization of the planning culture, of the principles that shaped the form of the city. As a result, the urban open space is a dynamic space that provides spatial coherence and insures the city's function and meaning as a whole. In other words, the institutional realm is capable to invest urban space with meaning. Yet the physical manifestation of the boundaries between different domains of property ownership could be softened by design.

Nowadays the structural relationship between *the public* and *the private* is in transformation. Moreover, peoples' preferences relatively change over time. Preferences play a significant role in the institutional setting, altering the incentives of individuals engaged in interaction. The new institutionalism in social sciences aims to solve the tension between the multiplicity of strategic choices made by rational individuals and the emergence of collective decisions. Institutionalism also stresses on the distinction between practices generated by modern forms of bureaucracy and cultural influences on action, which confer social legitimacy to organizations.

I propose an institutional approach to urban design processes as a method to analyze the quality of places. That means to examine, on the one hand, the values at stake in social experience, including the influence of culture and beliefs in the political outcomes. On the other hand, institutions are as well the mechanisms -- such as norms, rules, or customs -- to embody these values into physical form. From a new institutionalism perspective, Patsy Healey defines the place by means of Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* (1990). Place is "a material and social space, a *habitus*, infused with meanings and transected by relations through which particular "cultural capitals" are formed and transformed" (Healey 1999, p.45). Moreover, understanding the quality of places refers to the internalization of structure and agency (Giddens 1984), "moving beyond just the actors, and incorporating the networks of social relations within which systems of meanings and ways of acting are constituted" (idem).

The understanding of institutions varies within a broad range that considers the values at stake in social experience, including the influence of culture and beliefs on the political outcomes, stressing on particularities, contextual specificity, and identities. Sociological institutionalists include in the definition "the symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates that provide the frame of meaning guiding human action," as a redefinition of culture as institutions (Hall and Taylor 1996). The cultural turn marks a shift from the modern rational way of thinking by including cultural studies in the field of social sciences. "Institutional

transformations are simultaneously material and symbolic transformations of the world. They involve not only shifts in the structure of power and interests, but in the definition of power and interest” (Friedland and Alford 1992, p.246). According to North, for instance, besides wealth maximizing behavior, there are other values, ideologies and self-imposed constraints such as trust, reputation, or altruism that shape people’s choices. Douglass North uses the theory of human behavior and the theory of the cost of transaction to formulate the theory of institutions. I embrace March and Olsen’s definition of the new institutionalism as “a search for alternative ideas that simplify the subtleties of empirical wisdom in a theoretically useful way” (1984). Within this context my research reflects on the interdependence of theoretical endeavors and practical experience, as I look at tangible and intangible characteristics of space.

The opposition between rational choice and cultural approaches goes back to the idea of empirical social science in the early nineteenth century (August Comte, *The Positive Philosophy*). Cultural specificity was viewed as residual due to the prevalence of humane progress and secular culture. One reason for that belief is that the reductionist triumphs of scientific knowledge give rigor and power to the rational choice theory. Another reason is that the emphasis on deduction seems stronger and definitely more compelling in comparison with the inductive explanations that culturalist approaches imply. Moreover, rational choice theory utilizes game theory and institutional economics. Due to limited availability of

information, monitoring, and enforcement, urban actors agreed to constrain their freedom of action in order to reduce the transaction costs (e.g. political exchange). Competition and scarcity were considered the main characteristics of the urban system. New institutionalist approaches from a cultural and historical perspective do not deny the significance of competition, but emphasize “the historical and intersocietal variability of competitive regimes and the role of institutions in constituting these regimes” (Powell & DiMaggio 1991, p.32). New institutionalists recognize that institutions do not actually reflect, but shape preferences or controlling power. This is a “more process-oriented view, institutions constitute actors as well as constrain them, and interest emerge within particular normative and historical context” (idem, p.7).

According to Eliade, a key difference between the modern society and the traditional societies is that the former connects only with history, while the latter feels a strong connection with the cosmos and the cosmic rhythms that shape a “sacred history.” In other words, over time, human beings repeat the primordial act “to organize the chaos by giving it forms and norms. [...] The divine act of Creation transforms the chaos into cosmos” (Eliade 1991 [1958]: xiii). As a consequence, I argue that inquiry into “forms and norms” leads us to understanding the essence of creation that is capable to remove the conceptual tensions brought about by modernity.

## **RHYTHMANALYSES OF THE TWO PLACES**

During field research on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica and in the CentrO shopping mall in Neue Mitte Oberhausen, I performed rhythm analyses that pertain to two sets of criteria. One set of criteria refers to the events that take place and describe the history of this public space. The activities of users define the other set of criteria. Examples of differences within the occurrence of the organized events are the yearly celebrations of the Christmas Market / New Year and of the Earth Day, the biweekly Farmers' Market in Santa Monica, the daily street performing activities on the Promenade that intensify during the weekends etc. A seldom-occurring event is, for instance, the Celebration of Polish Culture on the Promenade on Sunday, April 30, 2006. Examples of a one-time event is the location of the *StoryCorps* on the Promenade in January 2006, and the Venice Beach ball games organized at CentrO in August 2003.

Besides the organized retail and entertainment activities, there are different types of changes in the public space like the dislocation or relocation of stores and commercial activities. An example is the displacement from the Third Street Promenade of the two local bookstores *Midnight Special* and *Hennessey and Ingalls*, and their relocation on the adjacent streets in 2003.

In terms of field analyses of the activities of public space users, I consider the criteria that the work of William H. Whyte inspired the Project for Public Spaces (PPS). The PPS publication *How to Turn a Place Around: A Handbook for*

*Creating Successful Public Spaces* explains in detail these criteria namely sociability, comfort and image, types of uses and activities, and access and linkages. Also Amer Moustafa's doctoral dissertation analyses in detail the uses and activities performed in public spaces (1999).

In 2003 I spent nine months in the Ruhrgebiet in order to research the role of flagship projects in urban and regional development. I took the opportunity to survey the CentrO in Neue Mitte Oberhausen in three different seasons. First survey was on Sunday March 16, 2003, two years after I performed sensorial analyses as a first time visitor (Saturday March 17, 2001). The second field research happened four months later, during the summer, on Thursday July 31, 2003. The third and last survey of CentrO was four months later on Wednesday November 26, 2003 during Christmas Market and New Year celebrations.

Consequently, in the year 2006 I surveyed the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica in three research sessions that I scheduled at four months interval similarly to the experience in Oberhausen. The research session of December 2005 - January 2006 is illustrated here mostly in the photographs taken on Saturday, January 7, 2006. The second session of April 2006 is illustrated in the photographs taken on Sunday, April 30, 2006, after the Earth Day celebration. I undertook the last survey session during the pick summer season and these photographs are taken on Wednesday, August 30, 2006. In the following pages I present the visuals and descriptive narratives of the field research in the two places.

**FIGURE 5.1 ONE-TIME EVENTS AND CYCLICAL SEASONAL RHYTHMS**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade, on the block between Wilshire Boulevard and Arizona Avenue in Santa Monica, California. It is a street level view of the Wilshire entrance to the Promenade, showing the fountain, dinosaur greenery, seating place and art display area that is located in front of the *Barnes and Noble* bookstore. I took the photograph on January 7, 2006 at 11am. The image shows at least two temporalities of the place. First, a one-time event is the presence of the *StoryCorps* on the Promenade. *StoryCorps* is a public radio project that records people's personal stories. "The largest oral history project since the Great Depression, StoryCorps is recording stories of everyday people who make up the kaleidoscopic American landscape." For a month this itinerant project was present on the Third Street Promenade. Their silver *Airstream* trailer is located at the vanishing point of this perspective. Second, the presence of the Christmas tree decoration is a reminder of the recent New Year's celebration on the Promenade, and of the seasonal changes and cosmic rhythms.

**FIGURE 5.2 RHYTHM AND DANCE ON THE 3<sup>RD</sup> STREET PROMENADE**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade, on the block between Wilshire Boulevard and Arizona Avenue in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on July 29, 2007 at 6pm. At the northern end of the Promenade, close to Wilshire Boulevard, a tango dance club occasionally hosts its activities (contact person Pablo Daniel Rojas, club online address <<http://www.makelatango.com/>>). Makela Brizuela is the instructor, and a tango dancer from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Spontaneous crowds used to join the tango dancers, and over time the spot developed into an outdoor location of public dancing activities. The dance animates the northern end of the Promenade that lacked a commercial anchor, and that did not draw large visiting crowds as the southern end next to the Santa Monica Place indoor mall. The movement, music, and intense rhythm of this street performance attract large audiences. Moreover, the combination of everyday life and spectacle present in this non-staged street performance adds to the cathartic characteristics of the public space.



**FIGURE 5.3 CYCLICAL RHYTHMS BY MEANS OF STREET PERFORMANCES**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade, on the block between Arizona Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on January 7, 2006 at 3pm. The image shows the crowds that gather to watch a street performance. Throughout the three blocks of the Promenade, on the basis of a license, street performers are allowed to practice their artistic activity for maximum two hours in one location. To watch the performers, also passers-by stop besides tourists and visitors that come to the Promenade for entertainment. For the audience the performers play a role in triangulation (Whyte 1980) as they provide a stimulus for establishing relationships between strangers. As a result, the spectacle that takes place in an everyday urban setting has cathartic potential, on the one hand due to the message conveyed through the performance, and on the other hand, due to the spectators exposure to the other crowds that are present in the public space.

**FIGURE 5.4 CYCLICAL WEEKLY RHYTHMS AT THE FARMERS' MARKET**



This photograph illustrates a scene from the Farmers' Market at the crossing of the Third Street Promenade and Arizona Avenue in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on January 7, 2006 at 11:30 am. The image shows another temporality of the place through the biweekly organization of the Farmers' Market, on the two blocks of Arizona Avenue between Second Street and Forth Street. The market activity takes place every Wednesday between 9am and 2pm, and every Saturday between 8:30am and 1pm. The crowds gathering in the market vary from tourists and occasional visitors from the Los Angeles region up to local inhabitants, and lunch crowds like employees in the nearby businesses and offices (mostly on Wednesdays). Due to the diversity of people attending this repetitive organized happening, the Farmers' Market acquires qualities of a public life catalyst, besides commercial purposes. The exchanges of tacit and explicit knowledge that take place during the market potentially work in triangulation (Whyte 1980). Moreover, the simplicity of these exchanges could work towards reducing Heiner's CD gap.

**FIGURE 5.5 OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC SPACES**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade, on the block between Wilshire Boulevard and Arizona Avenue in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on August 31, 2000 at 11am. The image shows the change of the over-the-street banners, which is a cyclical maintenance activity on the Promenade.



**FIGURE 5.6 NOISE MEASUREMENT IN THE OPERATION OF PUBLIC SPACES**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade, on the block between Arizona Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on July 22, 2005 at 9pm. The image shows the officers hired by the managing agency, the Bayside District Corporation, to measure the noise level of the street performances. The “noise ordinance” in Santa Monica requires noise measurements to be taken at the receptor property (at least 25 feet back from the parcel line of the source of the noise). More importantly, the ordinance includes a transition zone concept, which means that an average of the maximum allowable levels shall apply where noise zones with different allowable decibel levels are in the immediate proximity. In the case of public spaces that do not include residential buildings like the Promenade, the noise measurement insures the harmonious operation of the space in terms of co-functioning of simultaneous businesses and entertainment activities.

**FIGURE 5.7 GARBAGE COLLECTION AS MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC SPACES**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade, on the block between Arizona Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on July 22, 2005 at 10pm. The image shows the collection of garbage that happened simultaneously while the crowds were watching the street performances at the end of the evening. According to the managing agency of the Third Street Promenade, the Bayside District Corporation, the efficient garbage collection has been always among the unresolved shortages of maintenance and operation of this public space and business improvement district. Despite various complaints regarding the cleanness of this public space, I appreciate the place as relatively well-maintained considering the large number of visitors that the Promenade attracts.

**FIGURE 5.8 PERFORMING AND CLEANING AS SIMULTANEOUS ACTIVITIES**



This photograph illustrates a scene on the Third Street Promenade, on the block between Wilshire Boulevard and Arizona Avenue in Santa Monica, California. I took the photograph on July 29, 2007 at 6pm. The image shows concurrent activities such as garbage collection at the same time while a street performance was unfolding. The simultaneity of use, operation and maintenance activities is capable to develop the public awareness that could lead to the appropriation of place.



**FIGURE 5.9 PUBLIC TRANSPORT STATION NEUE MITTE OBERHAUSEN**



This photograph illustrates a view from the public transportation station at Neue Mitte Oberhausen, North Rhine – Westphalia. I took the photograph on November 26, 2003 at 10:00am. The image shows the different public transport modes that make the off-center shopping and entertainment center accessible to large crowds. Buses use the same street lanes that are provided with tracks for tramways. These buses and tramways connect Neue Mitte to the regional network system of transportation that includes buses, tramways, and local and regional trains. Coordinating the various public transportation means entail the overlapping of personal natural rhythms with certain abstract rhythms that the social organization imposes through the modern measured time of watches and clocks. I present this rhythmic typology of the public transport schedule in contrast with the body rhythms manifested in the yearly, seasonal, weekly and daily cyclical rhythms illustrated on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, California.

**FIGURE 5.10 TRANSPORT NETWORKS IN NEUE MITTE OBERHAUSEN**



This photograph illustrates a view from the Gasometer rooftop in Neue Mitte Oberhausen, North Rhine – Westphalia. I took the photograph on July 14, 2003 at 5:00pm. This aerial image shows different transportation networks that exist in the immediate proximity of the CentrO shopping and entertainment center. Note on the right side of the image the theme park, which is circled on the left by a regional industrial rail track. The road at the bottom of the image is the exit from *Emscherschnellweg* A42 freeway that runs along the Emscher canal, both in the upper left corner.



**FIGURE 5.11 CHRISTMAS MARKET AT THE CENTRO OBERHAUSEN**



This photograph illustrates a scene from the Christmas Market organized at the Centro in Neue Mitte Oberhausen, North Rhine – Westphalia. I took the photograph on November 28, 2003 at 7:00pm. As in most of the contemporary public spaces, regardless of their private or public ownership, the agencies responsible for the management and operation of the space organize events that gather crowds from the region. In this case the annual event is the Christmas Market, *Weihnachtsmarkt*, which has a long tradition in Germany. It is celebrated by local residents, visitors from the region and tourists.

**FIGURE 5.12 SPECTATORS ON THE PROMENADE AT CENTRO**



This photograph illustrates a scene from the Christmas Market organized at the CentrO in Neue Mitte Oberhausen, North Rhine – Westphalia. I took the photograph on November 28, 2003 at 5:00pm. The controlled spaces of the private developments in Neue Mitte Oberhausen do not allow for spontaneous interaction with the space. The users are mainly spectators of the previously planned and managed events and activities. The traditional *Weihnachtsmarkt* is celebrated by local residents, visitors from the region and tourists.

**FIGURE 5.13 STREET PERFORMERS IN THE CITY CORE OF OBERHAUSEN**



This photograph illustrates a scene from the pedestrian area, *Fußgängerzone*, in the city core Stadtmitte (Mitte) Oberhausen, North Rhine-Westphalia. I took the photograph on November 14, 2003 at 3:00pm. The downtown pedestrian street gathers diverse crowds, including street performers that use this opportunity to earn some cash, and also to display their talents. However, they mainly create a pleasant and particularized atmosphere to the place. In this publicly owned public space, there is room for a more flexible uses, and diverse activities. At the same time spontaneous interaction of the pedestrians with the street performers, in contrast to the controlled spaces of the private developments in Neue Mitte Oberhausen.



**FIGURE 5.14 CHRISTMAS MARKET IN THE CITY CORE OF OBERHAUSEN**



This photograph illustrates a scene from the Christmas Market organized in the city core (Mitte) Oberhausen, North Rhine – Westphalia. I took the photograph on November 14, 2003 at 3:00pm. *Weihnachtsmarkt* is celebrated in the old town, Mitte, as well as in the new reinvented center Neue Mitte by local residents, visitors from the region and tourists.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSES OF TWO SPACES FOR PUBLIC LIFE

As presented in the theoretical section, the representational spaces shape the lived experience of a place. Tridib Banerjee developed the following categories that we used for the comparative evaluation of our two public space projects. We presented this evaluative structure in the conference paper “Ironies of Contemporary Public Spaces: An Institutional Analysis of the Los Angeles Region and the Ruhrgebiet” in July 2002 at the XVI AESOP Congress in Volos, Greece (refer to Table 5.1).

On the one hand, the representation ability of space depends upon the institutional framework of the spatial product. Among the criteria to evaluate the institutional framework of the spatial product are a) the basis of organization in terms of rights, ownership, use and exchange, b) the transition between *the public* and *the private*, and c) territoriality. On the other hand, the experience of the place could be evaluated in terms of a) functions, b) events and activities, c) order and control, and d) rhythms. The definition of space as representational is outlined in the synthesis of the spatial product’s institutional framework and the experience of space. In the following text I present each aspect in the comparison of the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica and the CentrO in Neue Mitte Oberhausen.

In terms of the institutional framework of the spatial product, the first criterion taken into consideration is the basis of organization. In Santa Monica, similarly to the model of the market square or main street, the space of the

Promenade is organized around uses and exchanges. However, the public space is controlled by means of design, written rules and regulations, and private enforcement managed by the Bayside District Corporation. In Oberhausen, like in other privately owned public spaces, the space of the CentrO shopping mall is a space of rights and ownership, and highly controlled. The P&O management enforces the rules and regulations. As a result of these institutional arrangements, the transition between *the public* and *the private* is blurred in the case of the Promenade in comparison to the sharp transition within the mall development. The transitory semipublic spaces, which are publicly owned and privately used, contribute to the manifestation of blurred boundaries between *the public* and *the private*. A consequence of the basis of organization is the territoriality of the spatial product. It manifests as strong territoriality of the CentrO shopping mall, and as weak territoriality of the open air Promenade in Santa Monica that is integrated within the city street grid and the urban fabric of residential neighborhoods.

As for the experience of space, I compare the two spaces for public life according to a set of four evaluation criteria. In terms of functions, the mall is specialized compared to the more diversified functions of the shopping street. For instance, at Janss Court the mixed use project incorporates retail, entertainment, office space and residential units within the same building. The events and activities are episodic and scripted in the case of the private mall, in contrast to the continuous and unscripted activities that could take place spontaneously in a

publicly owned public space. The order and control which is strictly managed and secured in a private development like the CentrO does not leave room for users' interaction with the space. On the Promenade in Santa Monica, the more flexible and permissive order allows for degrees of disorder that potentially could provide the appropriation of space. The appropriation of space depends as well on the perception of the spatial rhythms, which are discrete and disjunctive in a privately owned development in comparison to the seamless and conjunctive rhythms of the public development. An example of that is the overlapping of modern linear rhythms with natural cyclical rhythms, as well the fluency of the rhythms of various activities such as the street cleaning and the street performances.

These analyses of the institutional framework and of the spatial experience lead the definition of the representational space. The Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, as a descendent from the market square and the main street models, is a Dionysian space. The Dionysian ordering of nature presupposes a cathartic transformation of desires into a creative humanized reality. The CentrO shopping mall appears to be an Apollonian space that respects the abstract ordering of nature and space. Initially though the understanding of Apollonian abstraction implied the intervention of the divine intelligence.

**TABLE 5.1 COMPARISON OF TWO SPATIAL PRODUCTS FOR PUBLIC LIFE**

<b>EVALUATIVE CRITERIA</b>	<b>CORPORATE PUBLIC SPACE: CENTRO SHOPPING MALL</b>	<b>CORPORATE PUBLIC SPACE: THIRD STREET PROMENADE</b>
<b>EXAMPLES</b>	Shopping mall, reinvented street, themed public space	Market square, main street, agora-type 'public square'
<b>PRODUCT: BASIS OF ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>Spaces of rights &amp; ownership</b> Highly controlled space by means of design, written rules, regulations, private enforcement	<b>Spaces of use &amp; exchange</b> Controlled space by means of design, written rules and regulations, private enforcement
<b>PRODUCT: PRIVATE-PUBLIC TRANSITION</b>	<b>Sharp</b> Clear delimitation between the different types of ownership	<b>Blurred</b> Publicly owned and (semi-) privately used transitory spaces
<b>PRODUCT: TERRITORIALITY</b>	<b>Strong</b> Space as a product of immovable materiality	<b>Weak</b> Space as an ongoing flow of changes and exchanges
<b>EXPERIENCE: FUNCTIONS</b>	<b>Specialized</b> Clear delimitation between different uses and functions	<b>Unspecialized</b> Mixed uses and opportunities for shared function, co-functioning
<b>EXPERIENCE: EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Episodic and scripted</b> Scheduled and pre-packaged events and activities	<b>Continuous and unscripted</b> Coexistence of organized events and spontaneous happenings
<b>EXPERIENCE: ORDER AND CONTROL</b>	<b>Managed and secured</b> No interaction w/ users, visitors	<b>Flexible and permissive</b> Potential appropriation of space
<b>EXPERIENCE: RHYTHMS</b>	<b>Discrete and disjunctive</b> Mostly abstract rhythms of clocks and watches	<b>Seamless and conjunctive</b> Fluency and overlapping of natural and abstract rhythms
<b>DEFINITION OF REPRES. SPACES</b>	<b>Apollonian</b> Abstract ordering of nature (initially by divine intelligence)	<b>Dionysian</b> Cathartic transformation of desires into a creative humanized reality



## NOTES ON PEDAGOGY

At the California State Polytechnic University in Pomona I experimented with rhythm analyses in the first assignment of the introductory design studio in the master's in planning program. The purpose of this initial assignment is to introduce to the master's in planning students a dialectical take on urban design reasoning. Students receive a brief introduction to dialectics as a method of reasoning. They learn that dialectics aims to understand things dynamically in their transience through the on-going changes and exchanges, and through ways in which things connect to each other. In contrast to formal thinking, for dialectics things could be contradictory in appearance as well as in essence. Dialectics considers all the opposite sides in unity. Inspired by pre-Socratic philosophers like Heraclitus, Aristotle considered the principle of unity of opposites as a law of thought.

It is not necessary to ask whether soul and body are one, just as it is not necessary to ask whether the wax and its shape are one, nor generally whether the matter of each thing and that of which it is the matter are one. For even if one and being are spoken of in several ways, what is properly so spoken of is the actuality (Aristotle, *De Anima* ii1, 412b6-9).

A dialectical understanding of design aims to obtain unity in all the contradictory sides within the process of design. The design process is not a value-free process, so we “assume that the good lies in the very creative act of synthesis from the alternative possibilities presented in the dialectic” (Banerjee 1994, p.141). In this context the dialectics of design are the dynamic understanding of a life cycle of a place across the moments of the following spatial triad: a sense of a place, the

conception of a place, and the life and enduring civic presence of a place. Making the distinction between these three moments of the spatial triad does not imply that they are totally separated from each other within the spatial production process. Hence I propose in this assignment to adopt in practice a dynamic perspective on the spatial analysis across the three dialectical moments.

The purpose of that is to familiarize future practitioners with a critical approach to the design reasoning and practice, in order to be able to choose between different paradigms of practice. The design process is not a series of activities that can be dealt with one after another, but rather it is a process of forming judgments about the problems. In presenting the process of design as a counterplay of raising issues and dealing with them, Rittel argues that:

You cannot understand the problem without having a concept of the solution in mind; and that you cannot gather information meaningfully unless you have understood the problem but that you cannot understand the problem without information about it (Rittel 1984, p.321).

As a result at the beginning of this spatial exploration the students had to examine a sense of a place by means of sensorial analyses. Sensorial analyses refer to the outside observer's perception of the spatial appearance through the senses. In an Aristotelian understanding, besides the five senses (smell, touch, taste, hearing and seeing), we take into consideration also the emotional perceptions of the life of a place. Moreover, the life of a place is manifested in the social practice. According to the theories of spatial production that interpret space as a result of the conflicts

and contradictions existent within the society, the spatial practice of a society is decoded through the deciphering of space. Moreover, according to Lefebvre, the social practice presupposes the use of the body like “the use of the hands, members and sensory organs, and the gestures of work as of activity unrelated to work” (1991, p.40). The body knowledge, which is beyond the explicit knowledge, is the practical basis of our outside perception of the world.

The sensorial analyses could be recorded during participant observations or after the field research by means of recollections. Some of the recording methods suggested in class are: a) sound recording and musical descriptions by means of suggestions and comparisons, b) visual recording and graphic representations through sketches, photographs, diagrams, maps, aerial views, plans, sections, perspective and axonometric drawings etc, and c) taste, smell, touch recording through suggestions by means of models and art installations.

In this assignment students experiment also with rhythm analyses of a place, which is in addition to performing sensorial analyses. Henri Lefebvre thought of rhythm as a unifying concept of space and time, and as a tool for spatial analysis. Rhythm analysis refers to the understanding of spatial rhythms and their practical consequences. Rhythms could be defined as forms of repetition, or movements and differences within repetition. Every rhythm implies “the relation of a time to a space, a localised time, or, if one prefers, a temporalised space” (2004, p.89). Rhythms are temporal measures that bring with them “a differentiated time, a

qualified duration” (Lefebvre 2004, p.78). There are private rhythms of the self and public rhythms of the other. However, rhythms always reveal a tension between an intimate and natural time, and a measured and imposed exterior time like the modern, rational, industrial time. In the city the rhythmanalyst must ‘listen’ to a multitude of rhythms and their interactions while using all of her senses.

The objectives of this assignment are a) to introduce to the class a dialectical take on spatial exploration, b) to experiment with basic field analysis, recording, interpretation and presentation, c) to perform sensorial analyses of a place, d) to explain a place through its rhythm analyses, d) to configure the biography of a place through sensorial and rhythm analyses, e) to combine verbal communication (symbolic representations) with other forms of communication like iconic and enactive representations (e.g. graphic, sound, installations), and f) to prepare for the next assignment that regards the urban design of a place.

The final integrated project includes information about the place that was presented in the intermediate class assignments. This synthesis configures the place’s biography according to a sense, and the life of place. The project is presented in an electronic format (PowerPoint presentation, video montage) and includes analogies to the sensorial installations like recording of the class installations and the like. The students have to bring references to the readings of the class with respect to undertaking field research, as well as urban design and social sciences theory.

## SUMMARY

In this chapter I illustrate the lived experience of a place through theoretical writings, examples of rhythmanalysis of the two public spaces, and suggestions for planning and design pedagogy. Similarly to Lefebvre's dialectical moments I call this moment of the spatial production "representational spaces". This dialectical moment reveals the lived spaces. David Harvey identifies the lived space as a third meaning for space, next to the experienced and conceptualized space that he derived from Lefebvre (2006a). In the "lived spaces" dialectical moment of spatial production, the spatial explorer is a rhythmanalyst. Instead of having as a subject of study the materiality of space, the rhythmanalyst is more concerned with the rhythms and temporalities of a place. The rhythmanalyst explores space in interaction. Rhythmanalysis is mainly enactive, in contrast with the other two ways of spatial exploration, which make use of the symbolic and iconic knowledge. The lived space is an appropriated space, and is regarded in direct connection with the spatial and social practice of the place.

To prepare the rhythmanalysis of the two public spaces, I introduce the theoretical background of this chapter. A succinct overview of Lefebvre's proposal for rhythmanalysis introduces the profile of the rhythmanalyst. I exemplify the rhythmanalyst with the profile of the nineteenth century flâneur, and of the contemporary flâneur in the off-line and on-line space. This account is a synthesis of a phenomenological viewpoint on spatial analysis. In addition I discuss the role

of the intuitive knowledge, poetic imagination and of the unconscious in the understanding and the appropriation of places.

Besides rhythmanalysis this chapter introduces the institutional analysis in social sciences, as a means to understand the social organization of places. I inquire into the new institutional theory in social sciences that is interested in the institutional effects on human action. The new institutionalism takes into consideration the role of values and beliefs in shaping the rules of the game in social practice. In cultural studies, the new institutionalism redefines culture as institutions. In that I draw knowledge from Plessner's early contribution to the theory of institutions by means of philosophical anthropology. Particularly relevant for this study is the idea of flexible institutional rules and the use of diplomacy in mediations within the design process. Moreover, I claim that the contextualization of institutional theory by means of field exploration like rhythmanalysis leads to the understanding of the social and spatial practice of a society. By extension this method of combined rhythmanalysis with institutional analysis is capable to bring forth an optimal understanding of the production of spaces for public life.

I exemplify a comparative analysis of the rhythm, and institutional analyses of the two cases of public spaces in Santa Monica and Oberhausen. The framework constructed through this comparison serves as a starting point for a theoretical structure for cross-cultural spatial analyses. This structure could be used to determine the quality of public spaces in terms of provision for public life.

In terms of pedagogy in this chapter I suggest the design of transdisciplinary studio-type planning courses that combine in their structure characteristics of lecture-type courses and studio-type activities. Such courses make use of qualitative analyses of spatial and social practice in order to understand the connection of places and culture. These teaching suggestions are a means to transform the boundaries between *the public* and *the private* by means of introducing a phenomenological viewpoint that employs tacit knowledge within the professional explicit knowledge, in order to convey the content synthesis to diverse audiences.

## **DISCUSSION: DESIGN DIALECTICS AND PEDAGOGY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This research on the production of spaces for public life is placed within the contemporary context of the globalization process. The process of globalization is “at once transitional and transcendental” (Pizarro et al. 2003, p.113), and impacts the spatial production on various levels from the organizational structure and political intentions to the political economy of everyday life. More than three decades ago Lefebvre raised some important questions regarding the spatial production, as:

whether the state will eventually produce its own space, an absolute political space. Or whether, alternatively, the nation states will one day see their absolute political space disappearing into (and thanks to) the world market. Will this last eventuality occur through self-destruction? Will the state be transcended or will it wither away? And must it be one or the other, and not, perhaps, both? (1991 [1974], p. 220).

The globalization process promotes the worldwide expansion of the global marketplace. As a result of the business activities in the global marketplace, the process of globalization affects all urban areas in general. The flows of capital and the movement of people throughout the world change the urban environment.

Our societies are constructed around flows: flows of capital, flows of information, flows of technology, flows of organizational interactions, flows of images, sounds and symbols. The space of flows is the network society, the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows (Castells 2000, p.412).



According to Pizarro et al. (2003), there are four agencies of globalization that carry within some effects that serve the transformations of the urban environment. These four agencies are the agency of capital, the agency of people, the agency of information and technology and the agency of culture.

I consider that currently the spatial production manifests in an excess of fluidity that challenges the capacity of planning and design practitioners to adapt to the pace of change. In order to find out about the condition of the planning and design practice in the context of globalization I propose in this study the exploration of one of the extreme cases. Looking at the extreme cases helps us discover what obstacles exist within the process of globalization, and what suggestions to these obstacles should be raised. From the urban studies literature, one extreme case is described in the narratives of loss, which lament the disappearance of public spaces in the contemporary city.

At present due to new technologies the world is connected on many levels. On the one hand, within the current spatial production there is intensified social interaction and dependence among the different actors involved in the production process. “New technologies of communication have increasingly made it possible for news and information, as well as money, goods and services, to be exchanged without close contact” (Madanipour 2001, p.155). Transformations of the urban environment manifest in terms of the spatial order and physical form of cities as well as in replacement of the local culture with the culture of capitalism (i.e. the

credit card and wireless card versus the life in the urban core). Culture implies language, lifestyles, entertainment, local economies and local aesthetics. The ideology of mass consumerism is embodied within the elements of the agency of culture. These elements range from the global flows of popular music, movies, TV shows or video games to fashion and tourism (Pizarro 2003, p.121). Seriously involved in this agency of globalization is the media. “A dominant culture no longer exists, because only global media have the power to send dominant messages” (Castells 2005, p.52). This condition has a strong impact on the urban living and challenges the capacity of people to acquire a sense of place in the contemporary city.

One of the assumptions of this study is that space is socially constructed. The formation of a new society, precisely the network society, generates a new type of space and a new social type of spatial explorer. That is similar to the early modernity that encouraged the appearance of the stranger and the flâneur as social and spatial explorers. As a consequence I propose to understand the role of planning and design practitioners as spatial explorers. The purpose of this attitude towards the field of planning and design is to help us understand “how societies generate their (social) space and time – their representational spaces and their representations of space” and “to foresee the future, but to bring relevant factors to bear in prospect – on the project, in other words, of another space and another time in another (possible or impossible) society” (Lefebvre 1991, pp. 91-92). In this

study I suggest that at the confluence of the space of places and the space of flows, space is produced by means of images and representations. Moreover, as I propose in this dissertation, space is a result of a dialectical understanding of a) spaces of representation that generate external images of places, b) representations of spaces that generate professional images of places, and c) representational spaces that reveal the lived experience of places.

### **COMPOSITE URBAN SPACES FOR PUBLIC LIFE**

In this research study I propose to experiment with a dialectical take on the process of design similar to Hegel's understanding of the dialectical triad in terms of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. In design reasoning the dialectical method aims to offer a synthesis that brings in unity the contradictions present within the design process. A Hegelian understanding of the design process as an ongoing dialectic (Banerjee 1994) assumes that each moment of synthesis is provisional, and becomes the new thesis within the dialectical process.

The flow of dialectical reasoning does target an ideal. In the case of urban design processes, the ideal refers to the definition of urban spaces as the ultimate design outcome. In this study I describe the proposed ideal of urban spaces for public life by means of diversity, civility and conviviality. In this concluding discussion I compare the two public spaces in Santa Monica and in Oberhausen from the perspective of these three characteristics.

## **The Diversity of the Ideal Spaces for Public Life**

As mentioned in the *Introduction* of this dissertation, the *narratives of loss* lament the disappearance of any ‘truly democratic’ public spaces from the contemporary city (Davis 1992). One aspect that confers a democratic character to public spaces is diversity (Sennett 1992). To describe the characteristic of diversity regarding the ideal of spaces for public life I draw on Richard Sennett’s concept of civilizing “publicity” in public spaces (1992) that actually refers to the publicness of urban space, or to the openness of open spaces (Lynch 1965).

Sennett’s ideal of spatial diversity imagines the process of design as a process of ordering and disordering urban space. In such places people could recognize conflicts and confront differences around them (1992). I claim that Sennett’s ideal to transform “the concept of order in the planning of the city” (1992, p.139) could become reality through transformations in the planning and design culture. To strive for the diversity of spaces for public life, the urban studies literature contributes with recommendations on “insurgent citizenship” (Holston 1998) as well as on “the deliberative practitioner” (Forester 1999). These attitudes of citizens and professionals towards the future of spaces for public life in the city are capable to transform the current culture of spatial production.

The CentrO shopping mall in Oberhausen is a commercial space for public life that is developed, owned and managed privately. Through the sensorial and institutional analyses presented in this study, I showed that the spatial experience inside CentrO is highly controlled and delivered as a pre-packaged product (Table 3.1. and Table 5.1). The product design and the institutional structure control the lived experience of space (Table 4.1). Ironically, CentrO is at the center of the new city core Neue Mitte Oberhausen. Moreover, the professional image of the new city core's space is technology oriented rather than community oriented. Instead of targeting the local community, this image shapes a local identity capable to address the global marketplace. Yet through the abstract ordering of space, such spaces produce homogenous external images. For these reasons the ideal of diversity could not be fulfilled in Apollonian spaces like the CentrO shopping mall.

In Santa Monica, the Third Street Promenade is a commercial space for public life that is publicly owned and developed and managed in a public-private partnership. The sensorial and institutional analyses present this place as being creatively controlled by design and regulations (Table 4.1). The creativity resides in ways that leave room for inclusiveness, and are permeable to external contributions to the spatial production (Table 3.1. and Table 5.1). The professional image of the space is community oriented. The space of the Third Street Promenade could be defined as Dionysian, which allows cathartic transformations of diverse individual preferences into a creative collective reality. At present, the Third Street

Promenade in Santa Monica is targeting the ideal for diversity of spaces for public life.

### **The Civility of the Ideal Spaces for Public Life**

The ideal of diversity in public spaces presented in the previous section leads the argument into the challenges that increasing diversity of spaces for public life brings into their management and operation. Benjamin Barber's concept of "civility" in public spaces refers to a moderate understanding of social life in public spaces. This moderate understanding of public life is different than engagement in politics or in commercial activities. Barber's ideal of "civility" considers the everyday life activities of socializing and people watching in spaces that are "neither radically individualistic nor suffocatingly communitarian" (1998, p. 48). The literature in urban studies describes as "third places" (Oldenburg 1989) these urban spaces where people go for social contact, leisure and relaxation. "Today, it is the appropriate mix of *flânerie* and third places that dictates the script for a successful public life. [...] The success of the[se] invented streets and reinvented places demonstrates [...] a shift of emphasis from form to function – that being *flânerie*" (Banerjee 2001, pp. 14-15). These studies suggest the focus on public life rather than public spaces (Banerjee 2001) and the consideration of the civil society as a mediator between radical libertarian and communitarian ideologies (Barber 1998).

The purpose of the spatial experience at the CentrO in Oberhausen is oriented towards commerce, leisure, and entertainment. Mostly youth uses the space for hanging out and having a good time. Yet there are organized tours of senior citizens that visit the retail and entertainment center of Neue Mitte Oberhausen. This space for public life provides for third places where the ideal of civility is achieved. Similarly in downtown Santa Monica the Third Street Promenade provides an environment for civility at any time of day and during any season. In comparison with the CentrO the openness of the open space allows for a continuous rhythm of everyday life in the city (Table 5.1).

### **The Conviviality of the Ideal Spaces for Public Life**

Besides the everyday time for leisure and relaxation within civility, in this study I propose another dimension to the ideal of public life. This is the concept of “conviviality” in the spaces for public life. Lisa Peattie’s ideal of democratic conviviality takes into consideration the material consequences of public actions. Illich’s definition of conviviality is “autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment” (Illich 1973, p.11). Peattie describes democratic conviviality as “small-group rituals and social bonding in serious collective action, from barn raisings and neighborhood cleanups to civil disobedience that blocks the streets or invades the missile site” (1998, p.246 cited in Banerjee 2001, p.15). As civility and diversity, the ideal of conviviality depends

upon the ideology present in the production process that is reflected in the institutional organization of space. What type of space does induce such collective actions that confer public life as convivial?

On the one hand, I argue that the explicit Apollonian spaces, the spaces of rights and ownership, which are produced through abstract ordering, do not ascertain the necessary spatial appropriation that could stimulate social bonding (refer to *Chapter Five*). Yet the romantic Dionysian spaces, the spaces of use and exchange, contribute to the formation of the necessary social bonds that could bring about conviviality in the spaces of the contemporary city. From this perspective, the space of the CentrO shopping mall in comparison with the space of the Third Street Promenade is less conducive to “creative intercourse” neither between persons nor with the environment.

On the other hand, one premise of this study is that modifications of the boundaries between *the public* and *the private* stimulate the potential of public spaces to impact the social structure through transformations of the social relations. This premise suggests that spatial products are capable to adjust to the ideal of conviviality if their physical boundaries are more flexible and porous, and if the transition between *the public* and *the private* is more blurred. The implication of this suggestion for our comparative case study is that the pedestrian space of the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica better fulfills the ideal of conviviality than the indoor space of the CentrO shopping mall in Neue Mitte Oberhausen.



### **From Composite Public Spaces to the Ideal of Spaces for Public Life**

This study assumes that the production of the above-described ideal of spaces for public life depends upon the degree of harmony amongst the moments of the spatial triad. The highly controlled space of the CentrO shopping mall in Neue Mitte Oberhausen provides for civility, but not for diversity and conviviality. Its conceptualization as a representation of space is predominant, and is shaped according to the professional image of space. There is disequilibrium between the dialectical moments of the spatial triad. The conception of the place is prime to the other two dialectical moments of the spatial production namely the sense and lived experience of space. Moreover, if public life in the city core is a measure for the vitality of the city, the CentrO as the center of the new city core of Oberhausen is incapable to create a vital image of the place. In comparison, the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica provides for different degrees of diversity, civility and conviviality. Although the main purpose of this public space is undertaking commercial activities, the space provides the environment for conviviality. The public life that one experiences on the Third Street Promenade could also create the bonds necessary for a cohesive community.

This comparative case study refers to the analysis of a European style pedestrian shopping street in Santa Monica, and an American suburban mall in Oberhausen. A general perspective on the planning practices in Santa Monica versus Oberhausen reveals many differences in the culture of planning in the United

States and Germany: short-term versus long-term solutions, efficiency versus spatial equity planning, incremental planning at local scale versus regional approach, bottom-up versus top-down control, emphasis on private property versus common ownership. But these two examples show that there are particular trends at the global level that impact local tradition and transform local decision-making processes. Global challenges influence people's preferences, the construction of political interest, and the system of choices. The selection of these two case studies is based on their similarities. First, I considered their uniqueness in each specific urban context, being located in prosperous growing regions. Second, I selected them due to their relative public success, considering their physical configuration, activities, and the symbolic meaning conferred by the local community. Both of them are the result of public initiatives within redevelopment programs, as CentrO was developed within the regeneration of brownfields and the Third Street Promenade within the downtown revitalization program. I consider them, however, as hybrid products using imported models of public space that have been adapted to fit the preferences of local users. Therefore, they become suggestive of the structural transformations in the economic and governance systems as a result of globalization. One of the main differences between the two spaces for public life comes from the project's impact on the city core, whose identity is essential for the vitality of city's image projected to the world.

## **DIVERSITY OF KNOWLEDGE**

At the beginning of this research on the production of spaces for public life, I identify a series of questions with respect to the role of practitioners in the process of spatial production. These questions lead to John Friedmann's links between knowledge and action that address the transfer of planning knowledge into mostly "rational" practice (1987). Friedmann explains the meaning of the word "rational" in the case of planning as implying approval based on presumptive universal validity, and adhering to a formal criterion like economic efficiency for instance. Due to the fact that planning seeks to achieve rational ends, professionals employ in the spatial production explicit scientific and technical knowledge that is self-explanatory.

Personal and experiential knowledge (Polanyi 1962) that includes also the "unconscious" is left within an ambiguous realm. Other forms of knowledge could be expressed through the intuitive knowledge (Myers 2002), inspiration and poetic imagination (Bachelard 1994), sensorial perceptions (Howes 2003, El Guindi 2004, Lynch in Banerjee and Southworth 1995), and also experiential interaction (Baudelaire 1869, Benjamin 1991, Lefebvre 2004). These different types of knowledge manifest as symbolic verbal representations and iconic visual representations. Besides language and graphic spatial representations there is also the enactive representation that takes place in movement and action (Bruner 1962).

However, the exclusion of these types of knowledge from the formal thinking process does not mean that they do not contribute to the production of space.

What might be the necessary transformations within the professional practice with respect to the roles played by planners and designers? In this research study I suggest that a phenomenological view on the spatial production is capable to take account of the “unconscious” aspects of spatial experience as part of the complex of consciousness. Planning and design professionals would be able to reveal information through phenomenological viewpoint, if they would adopt an explorative as well as introspective attitude towards the spatial production. I claim that this is a first step in creating the framework of a reflective and inclusive planning and design practice that exposes the diversity of knowledge. The next step in revealing information is to draw knowledge from communities, and from local informants trained in spatial exploration. Such methods of spatial research that are similar to methods in anthropology (El Guindi 1994) have been explained in detail in Kevin Lynch’s urban design studies (Banerjee and Southworth 1995). Nevertheless, this aspect is beyond the purpose of this study. Yet I mention it briefly in the last section of this chapter on *Directions for Future Research*.

The acquired knowledge explains the practitioners’ capacity to understand the environment of the spatial production. Nevertheless, in addition to knowledge, there are questions regarding the practitioners’ power in influencing spatial outcomes, and their capability to act as mediators of conflicting interests. In a

broader context, referring to Sanyal's definition of the planning culture (2005), the "collective ethos and dominant attitudes" of planning and design practitioners are essential in defining the culture of the field in terms of understanding the relationship between the market, the state and the civil society. In conclusion, the knowledge, skills, abilities and interests that inform professionals' actions are important in understanding their roles in the current processes of spatial production. This research aims to understand what roles planners and designers might play in the production process of spaces for public life, if conviviality, diversity, and civility are the characteristics of the proposed ideal of spaces for public life. I recommend a flexible understanding of the role of the professional producers of space under the umbrella of spatial exploration. In order to derive particular information about places, practitioners should alternate social roles to perform various analyses such as sensorial, conceptual, institutional and rhythmanalyses of places.

At the same time, the questions regarding the role of planners led to an inquiry into teaching practices within the planning and design pedagogy. One aspect of this inquiry refers to the inclusion into practice of the everyday life that does not obey the rules of predictability and control. How would planning and design education build a different understanding of spatial research, in order to prepare practitioners for reflective alternatives to the rational comprehensive models? Another aspect of the research on pedagogy is the current context of the

globalization process that generates fast changing environments that lead to unprecedented professional circumstances. What knowledge, skills and abilities should future planning and design practitioners acquire through school education, in order to adapt to the pace of change within the contemporary process of spatial production?

### **PLANNING AND DESIGN PEDAGOGY**

In this study I illustrate the current process of spatial production through two contemporary spaces for public life across the Atlantic. The choice to study comparatively two spaces in Germany and the U.S.A. leads into a comparative inquiry of the practices in the two planning education systems. Currently in Europe there is pressure to focus planning pedagogy mainly on practical education, to separate planning practice from theory, and to replicate in Europe the Anglo-American neo-liberal model of higher education. This condition brings about tensions between technical rationality and reflection-in-action (Schön 1983), between tasks of problem solving and inherent wicked problems (Rittel & Webber 1973). Within a global context, the theory-practice relationship becomes even more relevant in fast changing environments that lead to unprecedented professional circumstances.

If we look at the past to draw lessons for the future, two decades ago at the 1987 meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Schön opened

his presentation, “We are in the midst of, in our cyclical American way, we are in the midst of a new wave of school reform, and as usual we are blaming the schools for issues that properly belong to the society as a whole” (p.1). If societal issues are reflected in pedagogy, probably the European education’s shift toward the neo-liberal model is a reflection of the change occurring in the European society as a whole. However, I am interested to find out how the current European education reform is different than the American reform that Schön addressed two decades ago.

The Bologna declaration for the European Higher Education Area intended to create a “Europe of Knowledge” that would bring to reality various and contradictory goals such as European citizens’ “awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space” (p.1), as well as “a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions” (pp.2-3). There is an irony in the way the Bologna declaration appreciates the European cultural diversity, and yet promotes the mainstream Anglo-American system of higher education “embedded in a neo-liberal market environment [...] which has proven its excellence and superiority, at least when measured in economic terms, attractivity to students, Nobel prizes etc” (Kunzmann, 2004; pp.2 & 4). Nevertheless, Kunzmann advises, a bureaucratic adoption of the American model of planning education would hamper the progress of the planning field as a whole, due to constraints with respect to language and institutional cultures, for

instance, as well as professional interdisciplinarity, time span of university planning programs and so forth. Considering the inevitability of the globalization process, he hopes for fulfillment of “the dream of cultural regionalism in a globalised world” (p.8).

The European aim to preserve cultural regionalism or certain connectivity between place and culture is an important difference between the educational reforms in the United States and Europe. It is not surprising that the significance of the relationship between culture and place (i.e. neighborhood, physical city, urban region) arises within the context of spatial determinism in the European planning culture. Contrarily the place-culture relationship is neither an apparent concern in the multicultural American society, and nor within the context of institutional determinism in the American planning culture. So could the place-culture relationship be a European contribution to the Anglo-American model in planning and design pedagogy? If so, how could we train practitioners to understand the ties between place and culture? How would such planning course look like? In light of the similarities and differences between the two educational environments, this study proposes a dialectic perspective on spatial research deferent to cultural and individual particularities, and that approaches planning practice as reflection-in-action.

In Chapter Two I look at the history of planning education and practice from the beginning of the twentieth century. Transformations of the agreed upon



role of planning pedagogy gives insights into the transformations of practice over time and vice versa. This exploration brings to light the current state of the planning field, as Rittel's premise discusses that "the occurrence of interest in methodology in a certain field is usually a sign of a crisis within that field" (1984; p.317). So I argue that a dialectical attitude toward planning, design, and spatial research with reflective and dynamic alternatives to research methods that are based on recurrence and predictability can resolve the field crisis.

To experiment with a dialectical Hegelian approach in pedagogy in 2007 I structured an urban design studio class, and a lecture course on "Qualitative Methods of Spatial Research" based on the triad: thesis, antithesis and synthesis. These three ideas speak to a life cycle of urban space: the conception of a place, a sense of a place and the enduring civic presence of a place. Henri Lefebvre's understanding of space as a social product, which is produced by the conflicts and contradictions within the social order, guide the teaching process (1991). I established a reflective contract with the students through regular inquiry on the results of the teaching process. By understanding student expectations, I aim to create "natural critical environments" (Bain 2004) that contain real-time feedback in a reflective process. The course structure establishes a framework for action in which future practitioners would be able to choose between "different paradigms of practice" (Schön 1983). My findings are that this teaching structure balances the dichotomy between "soft" and "hard" knowledge. In other words the structure can

negotiate the tensions between poetic imagination, intuition, technical rationality and the difficulty of moving from analysis or planning into design. A dialectic structure in teaching spatial research methods can incorporate reflection-in-action within the evolving design and planning practice.

The final project required students to integrate qualitative methods of spatial analysis to describe a place. A presentation at the beginning of the course gave students an example on this method type. Students used places they were familiar with so they could revisit previous coursework, and compare their new analytical methods against earlier scientific analyses. Students had to answer questions like: Why do you choose that place? What is the story that brings the analysis together? What is your position as researcher relative to the place of study? Why is it interesting to understand, and for others to know about the place you chose? How do the readings enlighten your analysis? What are the qualitative methods used for research? Within this project students combined theory and practice, synthesizing the literature reviews and sensorial analyses learned during the course. In terms of research methods this group of students used visual and sound recording, interviews, field observation, mapping and storytelling.

Places selected for analysis fall into three categories corresponding to the researcher's position relative to each case study. One category is a place that acquires the appellative of 'home' by way of comparison. Its researcher is knowledgeable of the place's cultural background, and can perform comparative

analyses of the place and its 'authentic' analogue. A second category is a 'familiar' place. The border researcher selected a place that s/he experienced frequently and during a sufficiently long time span to bring up memories and develop emotional ties to it. A third category is a place that is 'different' or 'unique' within its immediate surroundings. Researchers described themselves as outsiders in relation to their place of analysis. Within final presentations students addressed the connection between their position as researchers and their relative role within the group, defined at the beginning of the course.

Based upon feedback, the students found the experimental course on "Qualitative Methods of Spatial Research" to be useful and interesting. Students' closing comments relative to course's benefits relate to a multitude of aspects. They mentioned interdisciplinarity as an effective method of learning for problem solving and spatial understanding. They appreciated the attention stressed on the individual and cultural diversity. Even though the course syllabus explained the organization of readings, activities and assignments, in the beginning student feedback mentioned 'the lack of course structure'. I interpret that as resistance to a new type of course structure due to the uniformity and linearity of mainstream teaching. The limitations of this type of course could be identified in the class size, as it is difficult to invest attention to each individual within a large class. In teaching a phenomenological viewpoint I could see the risk of superficial analyses, if not closely monitored. But all students embraced this approach to spatial

understanding. While they enjoyed the course activities, some of the students still expressed confusion about this reflective process. However, most of the students understood how they could use these methods in future projects. All students mentioned the benefits of combining theory and practice within the course.

Is this course on spatial research able to prepare planners and designers to practice with alternatives to the rational comprehensive models? I expect that experimenting with the dialectics of design within the teaching process may put students in contact with intimate ways to understand spatial problems. I base my expectations on students' reactions to this course. Those students who resisted the reflection-in-action training delivered good final presentations. I appreciate this as a measure of understanding through skeptical inquiry and postponement of judgment. Questioning is a first step in becoming reflective within the practice, and is beneficial in learning how to create opportunities for reflection-in-action.

Overall, I evaluate the course as being effective. The dialectical structure accommodates "hard" and "soft" knowledge (Schön 1983). This structure consciously incorporates intuitive and sensorial knowledge within the process of building spatial understanding. Students relying on intuition benefited from incorporating their insights within a body of literature, joining conversation through their research. At the same time students who relied on scholarly and/or scientific knowledge acquired the confidence to distinguish their feelings and intuitions, and integrated them within the process of forming judgments. In conclusion I expect

that, as future practitioners, these students can choose between “different paradigms of practice” (Schön 1983). Unveiling of the ties between place and culture depends upon practitioners’ capacity to include pre-linguistic and linguistic analyses in the exploration of the life and the enduring civic presence of a place.

When operating within a dialectical attitude towards planning and design, the relationship between theory and practice is essential to spatial understanding. Theory and practice mingle within dynamic views across the different moments of the dialectical triad. Certainly the European planning traditions could inspire a dialectical alternative to previous methods of planning pedagogy and practice, an alternative that values the senses, the inner being, and the individual and cultural particularities of places.

## DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In the brief overview presented in the *Introduction* of this dissertation, I described the relationship between *the public* and *the private* during the time of the city-state *polis* and of the nation-state. In this research study I aim to structure a framework for understanding the production of urban spaces for public life that could be applied to the spatial production within the process of globalization. One direction for future research is to explore in detail this relationship in the Information Age, within the coexistence of the space of places and of the space of flows. How does the network society manifest in the relationship between *the public* and *the private* in a globalized world?

In this study I also propose to consider the production of an ideal of spaces for public life that are diverse, civil and convivial. The definition of this ideal is relational. It combines a cross-cultural understanding of *the public* according to the Latin (and so English) meaning of *publicus* as pertaining to people, and to the German meaning of *öffentlich* as the quality of space to be open, which is similar to Lynch's "openness of open space". A relational understanding of the conceptual meanings, which practitioners employ in design reasoning, entails the connection of theory in social sciences with the wisdom of design practice. In light of this example I suggest as a direction for future research the integration of social sciences theory with urban design studies within planning and design pedagogy.

This research takes into consideration a phenomenological viewpoint on spatial exploration. On the one hand, this approach is a reaction to the alienation brought about by modernity to the everyday life. This alternative aims to restore the sensual and enactive representations, as the alternative to language and visual representations. On the other hand, rather than offering answers, such point of view offers a method of raising questions. Bringing forth questions helps in developing judgments within design reasoning that approaches spatial understanding through exploration. I argue that the professionals' phenomenological experience within the process of spatial production comes into spatial understanding in addition to methods that elicit information about places from the local community. Kevin Lynch's visual surveys and sensorial analyses, and William H. Whyte's observations of social life of urban spaces are examples of such methods. As for future research I imagine directions in developing various models to elicit phenomenological insights in the interaction with places similar to *flânerie*. What is on-line *flânerie* and how is different from off-line *flânerie*? How should the e-*flâneur* cooperate with the traditional *flâneur* in revealing information about contemporary spaces for public life?

Furthermore, this dissertation contributes to the literature on public spaces with a dialectical take on the design processes. The dialectics of design means a dynamic perspective across a life cycle of a place. The three dialectical moments that I propose to take into consideration are a) a sense of a place, b) the conception

of a place, and c) life and the enduring civic presence of place. Each dialectical moment corresponds to a mode of representation, which manifests as a particular image of the place respectively a) external image, b) professional image and c) the lived experience. While there are well-established methods to reveal information about the first two moments by means of sensorial and conceptual analyses, this dissertation considers institutional analyses and rhythm analyses in exploring the lived experience of places. Future research should focus on developing these methods and add other ways to observe, analyze, interpret and present the life of places.

In conclusion, I suggest in this study that there are three main steps to be taken in blurring the boundaries between *the public* and *the private* towards the production of spaces for public life. One step is to build an understanding of places through spatial exploration from a phenomenological point of view. Another step is a dialectical take within the design reasoning that considers a dynamic perspective across the above-mentioned three moments of spatial production. Yet these two methods present in practice serious limitations in terms of time and financial budgets. Hence I suggest that a third step in achieving the ideal of spaces for public life is to acquaint practitioners with the processes of phenomenological exploration and design dialectics, in order to turn them into the habit of reflection in action, by including this knowledge within the planning and design pedagogy.



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