The Public Space as a Consequence of Subway Expansion

The Case Study of Lisbon Subway – 1959 through 2009

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Abstract

Up to the mid XXth century the city of Lisbon grew obeying to traditional urban drawing principles. It grew through the fundamentals of the Projected/Planned city, but in both cases it was the public space that defined the structure of the urban lattice. At that time the grandiosity and symbolism of public spaces created attraction points that generated dynamics that made the city prosper. Today this logic is different.

The subway development revolutionizes the way cities grow. The opening of a new subway station potentiates a chain of opportunities in different sectors. The urban economy of that place can progress and also can progress the public space and the architecture around a new station.

Cities drawn in a pure grid system are easy to navigate since they provide multiple routes between any pair of locations and therefore minimize the number of navigation instructions. Although this morphology minimizes descriptions, it doesn't differentiate the main urban spaces. Alternatively if cities are purely hierarchical systems, they will clearly have a main central place from which others grow and span. This creates a highly segregated system that will have though social consequences. Cities are neither trees, nor perfect lattices, but a combination of structures that emerge from the social and constructive processes. The interplay of the topology of the communication networks (roads, subway, tram, etc...) and the morphology of the urban space create the dynamics necessary to have some local hierarchy and structure and still keep some relation to distant parts of the city.

Through the historic analysis of the subway network evolution, the impact of subway expansion in the city growth is put in evidence. A mathematical graph theory analysis of the historic networks, provided measurements of the relative importance of different subway stations according to different network concepts like closeness, betweenness, average path lengths, etc...

This work qualifies the impact of subway planning in the growth of the city. It shows how a change in the topology of the underlying network affects the dynamics of the urban fabric and shows how different approaches to subway expansion and consolidation will result in changes in the centrality of certain areas of the city.

Introduction

Is it possible that we are seeing the death of the city? Or is it a renewal of its structure? How will transportation, mainly the subway, constrain and change the growth and design of the city?

Through the continuous impact of globalization and information technologies, no place in earth is safe and all kinds of business can be relocated. Will this lead to the cities death as it been announced by Gates and others? Most certainly it wont (Hall, 1999, p. 961).

J. Borja and M. Castells also defend that globalization, with global information and generalized urban diffusion, don't imply the disappearing of the city as a specific

relation between territory and society, allowing even a dynamical and creative relation between the local and the global (Borja, 1997, pp. 12-13).

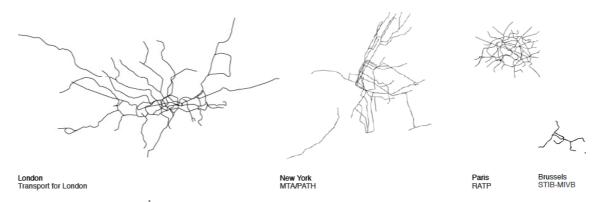
Is in this modern city that mobility and fast transportation gained a greater then everything else relevance. We can say that the evolution of transportation means is responsible, in part, for the diffusion of information and news. The subway network allowed the shortening of the geographical, economical and consequently the socials distances.

It is known that this evolution influenced the development of the urban form. The appearance of the railway, while reducing the time to travel between places, facilitated the dispersion and growth of the metropolitan areas.

We can say that the city image is then associated with the notion of path and time and simultaneously to others places in the territory. The way one perceives the notion of territory changes constantly due to the change in the notion of speed, not only through new and faster transportation means, but also due to new technologies, bypassing the geographical boundaries for this notion of territory.

Fast transportation (be it train or subway) allowed the suppression of the importance of distances, valorising instead the importance of time instead of space, subverting in a certain way the natural rules of territorial organization. It's effects on the territory are perverse, reinforcing its heterogeneity, making it non-continuous, polarizing it and potentiating hierarchies changing the territory image and its underlying social structures.

Subway networks are, in part, responsible for the urban design of the underlying structures and are a reflex of the plans of those cities. In the case of Lisbon, the subway followed the city growth and enriched the areas served by it. The opening of a new station was a driving force of the economical and social development of that area.



[fig. 1] – Several subway networks at scale.

Analysing Lisbon's subway network, and its evolution through time, we can observe small changes in the economical and social dynamics of the areas near each station. The subway acts as an attractor and potentiates different city uses, with respect to the station localization. We then observe areas that are more prone to commerce, office buildings, residential, etc... The subway infrastructure conditions and promotes at the same time the development of the urban fabric.

This attractiveness (relative to the city functions) of the subway, will constantly change the way the city works as a social structure and the city architectonic/urban image.

Although affected by the subway, architecture and urbanism – as agents of spaces transformation – are the instruments capable of planning (and re-planning) the subway areas through interventions at different scales (SAMPAYO, 2003):

In the design of the new city; In the design of the periphery city; In the design of the city in the urban voids; In the design of the city in consolidated urban fabric.

In the design of the city in consolidated urban fabric (process of city regeneration) through the implementation of the subway network, one saw several improvements in Lisbon at the level of the public space (facades renovation, for example). The subway positively contributes to the society, to the public space and to the city in a general perspective, through the increase in mobility and urban regeneration, as it is the case of "Baixa" (Downtown) in Lisbon.

The Lisbon Subway

The story of the Lisbon subway goes back to 1885. By that date, in the reign of D. Luís, the engineers Costa Lima and Benjamim Cabral suggested the construction of a subway for the city of Lisbon. The subject was being discussed through out Europe. London was the first to inaugurate its subway in 1863, New York in 1968, in 1896 it was Budapest turn and in 1897 Glasgow inaugurated its subway. The city of Paris started the construction of its subway in the year 1898. (ROLLO, Novembro/Dezembro 2005).

The old railway system, with its stations, is responsible for the creation of urban centralities, but also for the fractioning of the territory, in the sense of generator of barriers and wals. The subway changes this, eliminating those fractures. With the ability to elevate the tracks or hide them under the earth, the subway solves the fractures and crossings that the traditional railway implied.

In 1888 the military Engineer Henrique de Lima e Cunha, presented a project to the Portuguese Civil Engineering Association called "Sketch of a plan for a Lisbon Subway" (CUNHA, Julho e Agosto de 1888). This project didn't have any continuity as there where many other proposal, more or less ambitious, some even naïf, or without viability that never left the drawing boards, because in practice the country didn't had the financial conditions for the concretization of such project (ROLLO, Novembro/Dezembro 2005).

Only in 1949 was constituted a company that would build and explore, in exclusive terms, a transportation system based in the subsoil of the city of Lisbon (ROLLO, Novembro/Dezembro 2005). Ten years later in 1959, the first phase of the Lisbon subway was finally ready and the subway opened its doors with 11 stations and 6,5km length.

¹ Translated: "Esboço de traçado de um Caminho de Ferro Metropolitano em Lisboa" in the original.



[fig. 2] – Lisbon Mayor visitng the subway tunnels in 1958 (Serôdio, 1958)

The initial stations (Restauradores, Avenida, Rotunda, Parque, S. Sebastião, Palhavã, Sete Rios, Picoas, Saldanha, C. Pequeno and Entre Campos) had a fundamental role in the development of the city, although with the subsequent subway expansions their roles changed.

One can say that the subway expansion in Lisbon is somehow short of others subway systems of the main capitals of Europe. The expansion was slow and only had great improvements when big international events occurred in Lisbon. From the different phases, one can state those relatives to the years of 1959, 1998 and 2004, which are respectively the start of the infrastructure, the world exhibition of Lisbon in 1998 and the soccer championship in 2004 (UEFA Euro2004).

In 1998, the subway had 27,7 Km and 40 stations. Its connection with the 1998 exhibition was very determinant in the urban success of that area. It allowed the urban integration of all the Expo area. The urban success of the post exhibition of 98 when compared with the previous world exibition in Sevilha 92, can be attributed in part to the existence of the subway and the interface at Gare do Oriente (train, subway, bus, taxi).

In 2004, with the soccer championship, Lisbon had two soccer stadiums in the outskirts of the city. The subway expansion at this time expanded those lines that would benefit the areas near these two stadiums (Luz and Alvalade). The stations of Alfornelos, Amadora Este, Ameixoeira, Lumiar, Odivelas, Quinta das Conchas and Senhor Roubado where built. These stations where localized in the periphery of the historical city, many of which resulted from the unordered urban sprawl. With these stations the land value increased and new business opportunities arose.

One can't say that the small expansion of the Lisbon subway is due to the morphology and history of the city, as the example of Oporto subway in the north seems to contradict this, showing great advances in a short time. The present Lisbon subway might be justified by political and economical reasons. For the future the Lisbon subway faces two challenges. One is the increase in the network density; the other is to gain a regional dimension (Pereira, 2001).

Graph Theory Fundamentals

One can study the city at different levels and using different tools. Graph theory, had it's first application in the solving of a urban problem: the problem of the Königsberg

bridges was solved by Euler in 1735 (Euler, 1741). During the 1980-1990s, Space Syntax has taken a new revitalized approach of graph theory to measuring city features (Hillier & Hanson, 1989). One aspect of this theory of particular interest is that of defining the volumes of space seen from a point in the city, called losvist (Benedikt, 1979). More recently Agent-Based simulation has gained particular interest, as some non-linear features are not possible to account with traditional reductionist approaches (Batty, 2007). The non-linearity of social aspects of life systems is also manifested in the cities and the mathematical analysis of urban spatial networks as been given a particular attention with the work on random walks by Blanchard and Volchenkov (Ph Blanchard & D. Volchenkov, 2008; Philippe Blanchard & Dimitri Volchenkov, 2008).

In particular the subway system by its nature, seems particularly appropriate to be studied under the graph theory framework. The network of lines can be mapped to a topological space where one can abstract the relations between stations without taking in consideration the effective geographical distribution of such stations. In this topological space one can determine certain properties that are independent of the semantic content and still hold important information about the underlying reality they map (Rodrigues, 2009).

The Graph Analysis

For this work we draw the networks of the several stages of the Lisbon subway expansion and measured (for each of the resulting networks) some properties of interest in terms o networks. Interested mainly in the notion of centrality and the role of each subway station in the global dynamics of the network, we analyzed the network for Closeness and Betweenness.

Closeness

Closeness is a centrality measure of the vertices of a graph that gives an insight on the distance a node is from the rest of the network. It is defined in terms of the geodesic distance – the number of hops it is necessary to take in order to go from one vertex to another through the shortest path – summed over all the nodes of the network.

$$C_{i} = \frac{1}{\sum_{j=1; j \neq i}^{n} GP(i,j)}$$

$$N-1$$
(1)

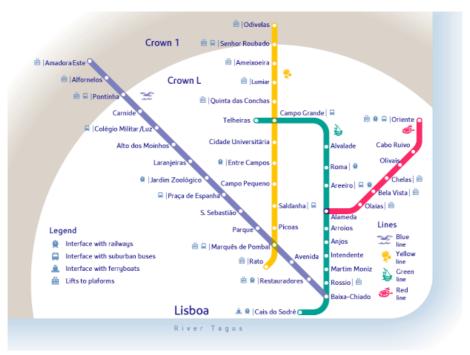
In the previous equation GP(i,j) is the geodesic distance and N is the total number of nodes of the network (number of subway stations).

Betweenness

The betweenness centrality measure (Anthonisse, 1971; Freeman, 1977) accounts for the role of a certain node in the flux of information through the network. In the subway case the betweenness centrality measure gives the importance of a subway station in terms of the flow of passengers that have to go through it in order to connect two other stations. Mathematically it is given in terms of the fraction of geodesic paths that go through a particular vertex:

$$B_i = \frac{\sum GP(i)}{\sum GP_N} \tag{2}$$

Results



[fig. 3] - Lisbon Subway Network in 2007.

We calculated the values of Closeness and Betweenness for all stations in the network at different dates: 59/12/01; 63/01/01; 66/09/01; 72/06/01; 88/10/01; 93/04/01; 97/10/01; 98/11/01; 02/11/01; 04/05/01; 07/12/01 and 09/12/01². From the results we present the top 3 stations at 4 particular times: 1959, 1998, 2004 and 2009. This is shown in [fig. 4] for Closeness and [fig. 5] for Betweenness and in Table 1 and Table 2. From the results it is observed that there's a change in the most central stations of the network with the subway expansion.

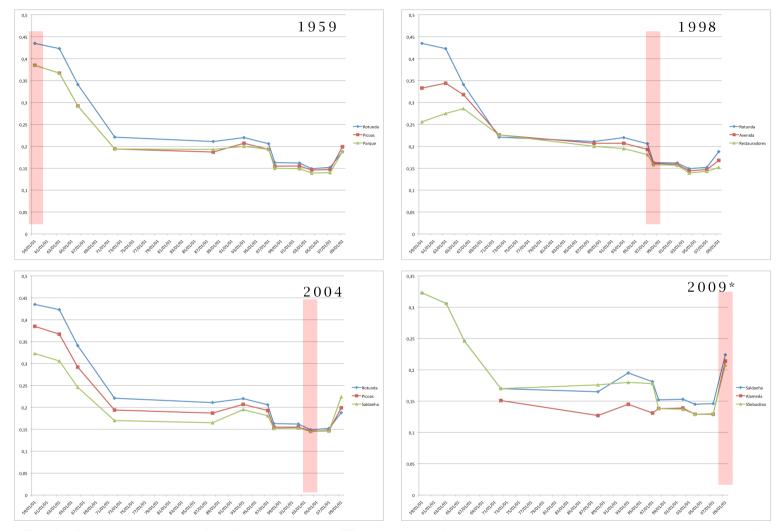
Table 1 – Closeness Top 3 Stations

1959	1998	2004	2009
Rotunda	Rotunda	Rotunda	Saldanha
Picoas	Avenida	Picoas	Alameda
Parque	Restauradores	Saldanha	S. Sebastião

Table 2 – Betweenness Top 3 Stations

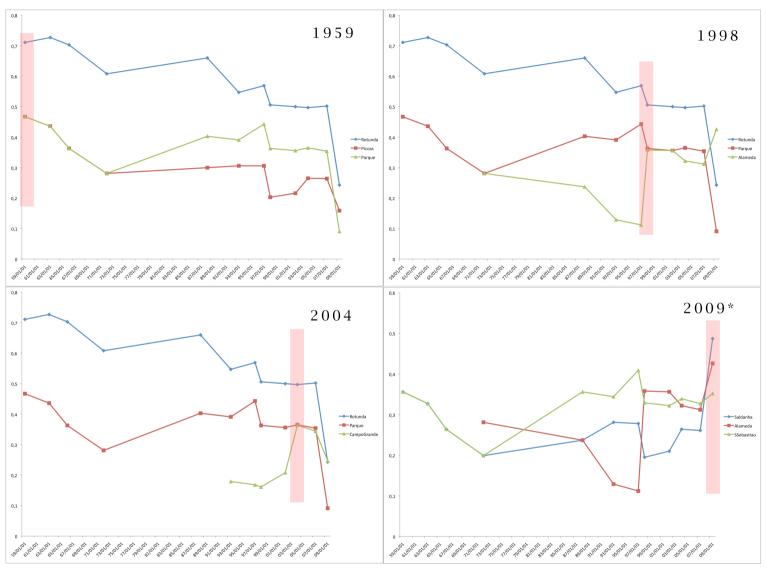
1959	1998	2004	2009	
Rotunda	Rotunda	Rotunda	Saldanha	
Picoas	Parque	Parque	Alameda	
Parque	Alameda	Campo Grande	S. Sebastião	

² The network is presently undergoing the final states to connect the stations of Alameda and Saldanha and S. Sebastião, with the opening of this line scheduled to the end of August 2009. This date was chosen to reflect this change.



[fig. 4] – Closeness evolution of the Top 3 stations at different phases of the subway expansion (1959, 1998, 2004 and 2009*).

* - Projected plan for the end of year



[fig. 5] - Betweenness evolution of the Top 3 stations at different phases of the subway expansion (1959, 1998, 2004 and 2009*).

* - Projected plan for the end of year

Conclusions

In the present work we showed the evolution of two centrality measures (Closeness and Betweeness) in the expansion of the Lisbon subway network. We shown that in both cases changes in the network topology affect the importance of different areas of the city in terms of centrality.

It was shown that in 1998 and 2004, with the world exhibition (Expo 98) and euro soccer championship (Euro 2004), when the network suffered great expansions in terms of new stations being added to the network, the most central areas, both in terms of Closeness and Betweenness, basically remained the same. This is due to the fact that this expansion didn't increase the density of the network expanding it to connect to remote areas of the city and neighbourhood populations. On the other hand, in 2009, the change in the network is simply a change in the configuration, increasing the density of the network. This makes a big impact in the centrality of the different stations as can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2. Saldanha, Alameda and S. Sebastião are now the most central stations of the network, be it in terms of proximity to all other stations (Closeness), be it terms of the traffic that goes through them (Betweenness). These 3 stations correspond to an younger layer of the city while the pre-2009 top 3 stations correspond to a inner and older layer of the city fabric. This shows a shift in centrality and importance of the city areas. The downtown "Baixa" isn't now the most important and central part of the city. Gradually it is losing it's place in favour of a new centrality in "Avenidas Novas".

The observed results allow us to identify the two different approaches to the subway expansion proposed by Pereira (2001): The expansion to the periphery (1998 and 2004) of the city and the densification of the exiting network (2009). With the periphery expansion reaching it's limits, the subway network development is entering the consolidation phase. This phase will have a predominant role in the change of the urban fabric as it will be the most responsible in changing the centrality of the city, as shown in the paper.

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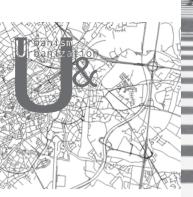
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The international U&U seminar invites PhD work which addresses the discipline of urbanism, and encourages contributions that highlight its trans-disciplinary nature. Urbanism is grounded in various practices, discourses and realities with respect to the city. The seminar will focus on multiple approaches – from historic enquiry to project-led analysis – and cover a wide range of spaces and scales – from territories to neighborhoods, from landscapes to cityscapes. The seminar seeks contributions that address innovative practices or research and [re]define urbanism as a trans-disciplinary field.

The increasing importance of territorial urbanization processes has added new analytical techniques to the vocabulary of urbanism, including a [re]new[ed] focus on landscape. Likewise, infrastructure has reappeared as a primary dimension of urbanism, due to the increasing importance of networks in structuring the territory. Nodes in the network are strategic locations for urban projects. Both dimensions, landscape and infrastructure, continue to gain importance. World-wide, recent socio-economic and ecological transformations bring sustainability and environmental concerns to the fore. Such issues as the management of natural resources and water, new patterns and modes of mobility all necessitate the trans-disciplinary repositioning of urbanism.

Furthermore, urbanism requires a [re]positioning vis-à-vis its historical Western biases. Urbanism is more and more informed by anthropological or sociological approaches in general and by postcolonial theory in particular. As many parts of the world are presently embroiled in the process of urbanization and modernization, the discipline needs to think through alternative modes of urbanization and non-western paths of modernization.

This plurality of the process of modernization is not limited to the non-western context. New narratives make visible 'other modern traditions' within which infrastructure, housing, real estate development, business location, agriculture, governance, material culture, technology, rather than architecture or urbanism per se, are the leading agents in the urbanization process. Models and concepts used in these disciplines convey alternative views on urbanity, urban form or regional development that further [re]define urbanisms trans-disciplinary character.

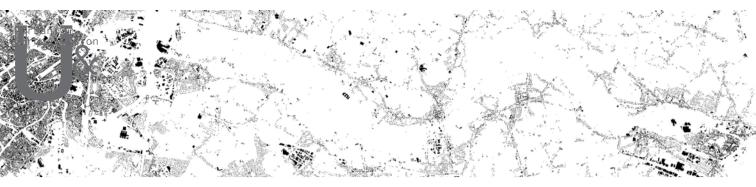
The importance of landscape and infrastructure and the impact of 'other' traditions and contexts on urbanism and urbanization are but a few examples of how urbanism as a discipline continuously acts as a receptor of new practices and discourses, adapting to ever-changing urban realities. This edition of the U&U seminar aims to draw the contours of this trans-disciplinary repositioning of urbanism, transcending accepted definitions.



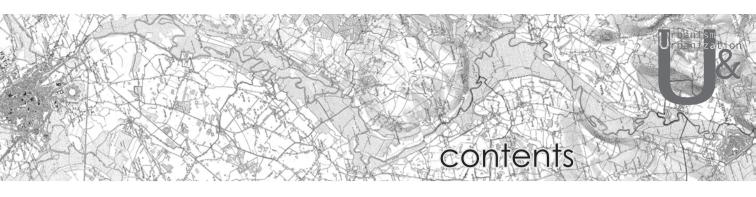


Short papers

Infrastructure and Landscapes
Complementarities between the hydrological aspects of water management and urban design 3
7
Re-thinking Borders The conflict between "generic" and "possible" space of infrastructure 11
The post-rural territory in Beauce, France 17
Water Urbanism in Hanoi, Vietnam An investigation into possible interplays of infrastructure, urbanism and landscape of the city's dyke system 21
History and representation
Anarchism and Economy Regionalization in the light of the ideas of Regional Planning Association of America 25
Re-envisioning Everyday Spaces Photorealist Painting in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1960-Present 29
Representing movements and mutations of the city Video as an enquiry and planning tool Claudia Faraone
Brussels'urbanism institutes Reconstructing the project of institutionalisation of urbanism as a trans-disciplinary science of action
39
Postcards and Conversant Fragments An Approach to Writing Between Cities **Robyn Creagh**
Alternative public spaces and notions
Urban Exclusion and City Making: Nairobi Eastern Extension 1962–1988 Methodological and Analytical Reflections 47



Jrbanization and Settlement Pattern A case of Dhaka City Kishwar Habib
Metropolis Project Developing New Strategies for The Urbanized Delta Area in Bangladesh Martin Zettel
The Squatted New Town nformality and the Planned New Town, Venezuelan Cases Simone Rots
Mega events as a laboratory for new planning theories and new forms of construction of the contemporary city Alexia De Stefani
The Public Space as a Consequence of Subway Expansion The Case Study of Lisbon Subway, 1959 through 2007 David Rodrigues
The need for new notions Changing urban form, changing language Maarten Jan Hoekstra



Long papers

Territory, infrastructure and networks

Replicant urbanism The Architecture of Hadid's Central Building at BMW Leipzig 89
Constructed Wilderness The Canadian Pacific Railway and the Making of the Canadian Rockies, 1885-1928 103
Re-Assembling the Territory. The (Implicit) Spatial Project of Belgian Engineers during the Interwar Period 115
Planning infrastructure in the city, missed occasion for a multidisciplinary approach Some hypothesis to understand why the Italian debate on the theme of the infrastructure for mobility always advocated an integration of disciplines that never reached 125
From flux to frame The infrastructural project as regional armature of urbanization in Belgium since early 19th century 131
Urbanism, industrialism and industrialization in Italy, preparing the <i>boom</i> years IV National steel plant in Taranto: a project for the transformation
The Geographical Footprint of Urbanism The Trans-Arabian Pipeline and its Hydrocarbon Territory 151
The metropolis
The Crisis of the Modern Cosmopolis Paul Otlet (1868-1944) and the Utopia of the World Capital City 161 Wouter Van Acker
Revisiting the modern project for Brussels An observatory for metropolisation 173. Leloutre Gery
Mapping (r)urban landscapes
Exploring and expanding the urbanist potential of Atlas' format An introduction into 'cartographic referencing' 193
Challenging urbanism The rurban reality of the Brussels metropolitan area 201. Elke Vanempten

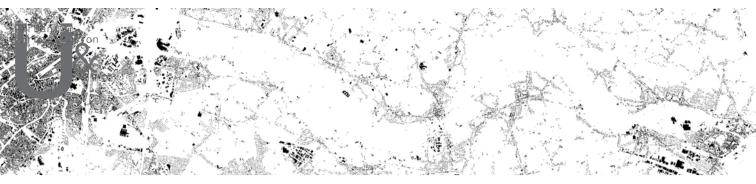


Capacity and performative antilogy Periurban settlement dynamics in territorial extension in northern spanish context Florian Plajer
Metro Food A metropolitan vision of food autarchy based on rural-urban reconfiguration Joerg Schroeder
Representing City / Life Fieldwork, Mapping and a Reinterpretation of Parc Roi Baudouin, Brussels Matthew Neville
Navigating in Urban Landscapes Design-oriented Cartography as a Navigation Instrument for Large-scale Landscape Design Sigrun Langner
Analyzing the Discourse on the Zwischenstadt Vera Vicenzotti
Narratives, perception and representation
Privation and Privatization The American landscape between Robert Frank and Ed Ruscha Chris Balashak
Playtime space Deconstructing the concept of corridor trough disciplines and scales Irene Guida
Roadtown: Re-plan Architecture Architectural discipline against the roadside urbanization phenomenon in the USA in the first half of the twentieth century: toward a necessary opening of the architectural field and a resituation of the project Marie Sterenn Bernard
Urbanisation, Aurality and Identity: Listen to Britain (1942) Michael McCluskey
Public domains
The (un-) Intended City Unravelling the development of new public and collective spaces in post-war Flanders (1958-1978) Janina Gosseye
The Internet and the City Blogging and Gentrification on New York's Lower East Side Lara Belkind
"A labour of love and community spirit" The socio-spatial history of Playground Afrikaanderplein in Rotterdam (1948-2009) Lianne Verstrate

Х



Understanding Gendered Boundaries of Modern Urban Planning 333
Underground Barcelona The relevance of underground space in a contemporary city 341
Identity, culture and space
Divided Nicosia – Bridging Memory and History Formal and Informal Urban Initiatives in the Walled City 355
Other Urbanisms Space-making Processes within the Spanish Community in Rotterdam (1961-1974) 365
Cultural Resistance in Urban Environment An analytic study of Urban built identity transformations (Case Study: part of Mosul City) 381
Dynamics of the Production of Vacancy within the Development of the City of Amman 391
Living on edge Urbanism and the local population, in and around Paris during the 1960s 405
Permanence and the evolution in the hidden city The conditions of the 'Islands' in Porto urban strucrure and their alternatives 415. Luis Miguel Soares Guimaraes
A Theoretical Framework for Place-Making in the Public Arena Mixed methods comparative study of Iranian and British cities 431
Three types of project approaches for the (re)development of "Village in the City" in Guangzhou, China 447
Territories of rapid urbanization
Balearization Majorca, the laboratory of experimentation in tourism and its coastal manifestations 455
Dubai Archipelago from Above The Aerial Vision-Based Model of Urbanism 467. El Hadi Jazairy
Good fences make good neighbours Redefining Chinese Superblock Urbanism 75



П	 	 - 4.	rar	 	

Developing Urbanism[s] in Development: the case of Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela Viviana D'Auria	. 483
Una generaliza inquietud The role given to the city in the development, Chile 1964-70 Emanuel Giannotti	493
The Public Residential Urban Project in São Paulo Three moments · three projects (1942-1967-2004) Christine Van Sluys	. 503
The mobility of urban models Global flows of ideas and neo-traditional forms in the town centre of Val d'Europe Blaise Dupuis	. 517



Infrastructure and Landscapes

History and representation

Alternative public spaces and notions