

THE SOCIO-AGORAPHOBIC CITY. BETWEEN INTEGRATION AND CONFLICT IN CITIES

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I. INTRODUCTION

A reflection on the effects of the unstoppable urban trends leading to conflict brings us, first and foremost, to an order of explanatory categories, such as fear in the city or the subjective perception of insecurity in a “public arena”, specifically a “social arena”, to which the socio-agoraphobic reaction is what models social practices and their spaces. And, secondly, to the protagonism of privatisation and design expressed in the proliferation of new emerging spaces – conceived within the batch of “mega-projects” in the style of Augé’s non-places” (Augé, 2004). Obviously, its effect on the city as a whole, and perhaps even more forcefully, on the peripheral spaces with particular emphasis in the metropolitan areas, makes this a transverse subject, which is not at all removed from the current remodelling being experienced by the historic areas (Low, 2005). Thus, it is becoming common practice for the current city to recompose all components of its fabric, both social and physically woven, with interventions cloned from “clichéd” landscapes, both in the metropolitan suburbs and in the oldest parts of the city, thus worsening the selective and accelerated loss of fragments of the social memory (Hayden, 1995 in Verdaguer, 1997).

These new landscapes show how the aggressiveness of contemporary interventions in the physical space become specific to the physical space in which there is a construction of the “invented/ targeted/ controlled” area to make a city and although they have been more

voluntarily and technically open in relation to the traditional codes, in the end, they have led to a real and progressive loss of vitality in the city. The generalisation of simulation and design in actions on the terrain verify its major causal meaning in explaining the recent transformations, both the most visible in the emerging and spectacular nodal mega-projects, and in the established city and particularly the old city centres. The challenge of preparing the urban territory for the future while conserving the past is common to both the dense centre and the lax outskirts. Nonetheless, the way in which streets, squares and parks are perceived as a resource to integrally and harmoniously develop the urban centres is, undoubtedly, the result of social codes aimed at fostering the associated type of living (Pesci, 2003, 111) currently in disuse. The city, built according to the know-how of myriad decisions, precisely and subtly sold, is today conceived through a vision that falls explicitly short in its objectives, which limits the wealth and potential of the same, thus making the generalisation of “the public” crisis manifest. The co-responsibility of the public players, due to voluntary permissiveness – as argued by Allègre (2007) - or induced by the fear of politicians settled in the management of predictable crises, together with the lack of a group will, are understood to be explanatory factors and have been dealt with previously. Therefore, the city becomes privatised through the gentrification of its valuable neighbourhoods and the trivialisation of its landscapes.

The challenge faced by current society is to identify and classify its inherited heritage with the expressions of new emerging trends: ways of inhabiting that demand new study parameters in which the innovative solutions of each territory are necessarily the result of its insertion into the wealth of local tradition.

II. URBAN SOCIO-AGORAPHOBIA

Fear, consumption and simulation are categories that explain the gentrification and division of the centres and the privatisation, exclusion and fragmentation of the outskirts (Rodríguez, 2006 and 2007). The language of the place modelled by history and culture is making it difficult to integrate spatial designs, the normalisation of which has limited the right to err even further, homogenising the resultant landscapes. (Delfante, 2006, 459). It is a record of the progressive remoteness of managers and their interventions which continuously obviate and forget that there is no heritage without social practices based on solidarity (Choay, 2006), and their vision (Lindón, 2003 and Silva, 2004), which are the creators of the urban composition, ever incomplete and flexible by definition.

Fear is the old mantle under which the most pressing issues, such as those questioned herein, hide. In today's world, fear has reappeared in one of its historic intermittencies to cannibalise the changes in the man-environment relations (Gutiérrez, 2004)¹.

Among the most weighty changes dependent on the new elements imposed by spatial-time conditions that have modified – with new parameters- the urbanisation phases, and in general, the city, are those triggered by the dispersion that characterises occupation of the territory.

The odds at stake in the new spatial-time conditions, of any local scenario, clarify the new general urban trends of the city, the organisation and distribution of which leave its limits open with the aim of dispersing confining landscapes in the territory. The recent study in the Mexican border cities has served to compare the theoretical approximation (Rodríguez, 2006 and Méndez, 2007) to the tendency to design and offer a closed urbanism of interrupted sociability. It represents the exacerbation of the hybrid and complex model of current urban landscapes, mainly in the peripheral areas of the cities, but above all in those which combine metropolitan spaces and border cities, such as Ceuta and Melilla, where the marks of exclusion are of a more veteran nature, are more explicit and unquestionably constitute the expression of the ambivalence and conflict that continue to entangle them.

Various landscapes demonstrate the complexity that riddles the urban enclosure, from the disproportionate and isolated growths operating as the elements responsible for future organisation of the peripheral terrain, to restructuring the consolidated fabric and, in particular, the most valuable areas constituted by the historic frameworks which are renewed following the closed urbanism model, so expressive of the contemporary city. This is justified through discourses rooted in the unbreakable chain of fear, joining the links of poverty, immigration and linking up both with criminality, simulation and consumption (Baudrillard, 2002, 1998 y Bauman, 2004), emphasising one or the other according to the enclosure or construction pattern, thus also demonstrating the versatility of the mould the current city is submitted to in its continuous process of adapting to the interests and values of the society of its times.

¹ In September 2004, the biennial encounter of the urban geographers from the Asociación de Geógrafos Españoles (Association of Spanish Geographers) under the banner "The City and Fear" to celebrate its VIII Coloquio del Grupo de Geografía Urbana (8TH Urban Geography Group Talk). See the studies and presentations on the materialisation of fear in the city.

The arguments in vogue have converged to form a specific demand for social exclusion which epitomises the private practice of producing and organising the new spaces in a fragmented way, by projects. The city pocketed into projects of the strategic culture which replaces a sustained urban government in one city project. (López, 2004, Nel.lo, 2004 and López de Lucio, 2006).

II.1. The conflicts and transformations of the centre

At present, the forgotten language of place, or far more commonly, the ignorance and lack of social evaluation of its urban landscapes means that results of the urban recovery cycle begun in Spain in the early eighties is questioned.

The problem of the urban centre has rarely been tackled from a global approach and therefore significant imbalances between the physical and the socio-functional realities have taken place. Thus, the processes of tertiarisation of the urban economies, particularly reinforcement of the management tertiary and the massive invasion of the car, have given rise to radical physical, social and functional transformations which are determining the current cycle, characterised by a contradiction between discourses and reality.

And the fact is that the longest lasting eventuality, and therefore, not an eventuality at all but rather a very broad-reaching structural process, is tertiarisation. This process has gradually been taking over axes and sectors of the old centres, though at an uneven pace and through more or less extreme actions, since the 19th century. The very extension of the city itself has fed this continuous process of concentrating tertiary activities in the central areas, following different interests at different times which have been juxtaposed in the mosaic of partial tertiarisations of specific areas and sectors of the historic part of the city. Financial and institutional axes and squares have coexisted with shopping streets and leisure, restaurant and hostelry areas. The majority have consolidated new, more or less speculative, landscapes of urban renewal in the old centres and very few have become integrated into the traditional landscape and structure (Low, 2005). When they have done so, irrespectively of whether the establishments in question was were traditional neighbourhood shops or more resistant personal services businesses or restaurants, they have been submitted to the decadent routes of a large part of the old centre affected by obsolescence, traffic jams and the strong internal differentiation according to uses and

population presently experienced by many of the sectors into which the old centre has been broken up, irrespectively of their very heterogeneous sizes.

The processes of physical, social and functional deterioration interact in juxtaposition to the urban recovery programmes which, in general, seek to maintain multi-functionality as a mechanism that allows for a balance between the physical, social and functional realities resulting from a long series of transformations in society, reflected in the historic landscapes. These, complete and genuine creations of the urban culture, rich and diversified cultural heritage the interpretation of which requires broader approaches than those currently in existence, have gone from being merely architectonic to being banally “cultural”. The revaluation of history and the creation of myths around the past transform these historic landscapes into symbols of contemporary society’s collective memory and, therefore, into powerful fonts of tourist and cultural attraction, promoters of an extraordinarily ambivalent real estate re-activation.

A prudent strategy with the heritage and its landscapes must encompass a broad conception of the patrimony in the course of the 21st century. The weak results of some urban recovery policies need to be explained given the imprudent decision to emphasise only some dimensions of the city’s reality. From a conservationist point of view, the defensive concepts that has guided the interventions have extraordinarily damaged other evaluations of the functionality of the recovered space. Thus, the challenge posed by the old centres and their social issues (Álvarez, 1978) since the eighties has not been overcome in terms of being operative, the political opportunity or the out and out defence of programmes and partial designs for its physical or social space. Objectives are set solely in tourism and culture, thus limiting the future opportunities of the city, constricted within a physical recovery of the urban heritage aimed at reinforcing a genetic multi-functionality which, however, has been progressively lost since the 19th century, becoming specialised in central functions. The historic heritage policies continue to be predominantly passive and arrhythmic characters in relation to the speed of the territorial transformations and their interdependencies, within the city and territory project they belong to.

II. 2. Limits in the operative space

The generally expounded solution is that of limits. At present, the ongoing social practice consists of the extension and application of the closed patterns (Méndez, 2005 y 2007):

closed spatial responses, already tried and tested, which are creating new urban landscapes. The relationship between elements of the territory, mainly permanent, spread out, closed and private determines the need to cross these, defining a continuous circulation in a new operative space that reduces times and distances. The relationship between the premises and the spatial responses to the requirements of social relations have built very powerful patterns on a different scale to the one they had been created for. Therefore, the public space is suddenly experiencing a crisis as we understood it within the parameters of the European and Latin city scales.

The progressive reduction of distances in the continuous adaptation of the territory to mobility and the resultant disappearance of limits is leading to a communion in the social relations which triggers uncertainty and, therefore, vulnerability. For the aforementioned reasons, the public space due to the particular circumstance of a reduction of distances experiences changes in understanding, and therefore, also in function and shape. The desire, doubt and weakness of the individual-citizen submerged in a “socio-agoraphobic” frenzy is expressed, acting among the new conditions in place due to the construction of this public space. He acts as modelling factor of the territory in order to offset the distance reduction in the new space by constructing and justifying the need to set limits in the permanent, closed and private elements. The perception of the limited nature of the planet has led to an exacerbation of separation in order to guarantee the private. Thus, the wall shows the juxtaposition between the inside and the outside, and it is precisely because this does not exist that it needs to be made explicit, materialised, the point of concretion constituted in order to make the limit natural and familiarise society with the lack of communication, or the difference, the distinction, the other.

The territorial organisation translates these new relations, through spatial fragmentation, into a duality that is novel due to the specialisation of the space on all scales and in different conditions (private-public). The resulting landscape of these closed models is a new type of urban horizon which though it has stereotyped the closed response (specialised) thanks to its globalisation, can only be understood according to the spatial patterns it acts on. Its resistance depends on whether the irruption of the limit is more or less powerful and, therefore its transformation more or less easy, early or profound.

The public and the private in the new spatial responses constitute old skirting boards which probably hide a new list of key factors such as the variations which human artifice has

succeeded in developing within these. Thus, the over-specialisation of the functions of territories and spaces has surpassed the ownership and scales of events, and their concentration, amplifying or minimising the distribution of the polarisation.

All of this must necessarily bring us up against a new territorial system. The inevitable consequence of the pace of man in this era, ultimately, destroys the idea of place (García Márquez, 2007, 55-74). The private space is territorially concentrated while at the same time unified per socio-economic categories and the public space tends to be solely an operative area which is simplified and specialised, losing its role of sole fixed and permanent space in the social interrelation. A deregulated, decentralized and dematerialised space which demolishes the local laws, which puts a halt to the expansion of the global economic space, which spreads economic activities throughout the planet. On the one hand, the appearance of private and closed spaces, where the “public space” is defined as private community property, is being developed at the same time as the collective public space and the rest of the urban services and infrastructures of the city maintain strong conservation defects or, quite simply, do not exist. On the other hand, on top of this, the physical continuity and connectivity which constitutes the *raison d’être* of the public space has been interrupted and its functions have become specialised in an ephemeral use, just on the way between the places. A public space which, in this way, loses one of its basic aims which is that of common and traditional space, that is, its role is relegated to being that of simply fixed and permanent space of social interrelation.

To sum up, its transmitting nature has been sacrificed to other qualities and, as a result, its structure and artifice have been adapted to that of a transitory space. The category has been enclosed from various different sides, and it has been the trigger of specific forms of transitory appropriation (Delgado, 2007, 141), the main pillar of practices that imply mobility, principally from home, a still central node, and which stamp a rapid image on the landscape to subsequently disappear immediately (Hiernaux, 2002), but particularly to define the explosive growth as is the case in border cities which, typically, acquire the morphology of a transitory city marked by the speed of the formal substitutions and the superimposing of unfinished buildings and sites which renew the hybrid and deterritorialised nature of the architecture and the urbanism (Méndez, 2002).

The appearance of a hybrid landscape resulting from the continuous crossing of the subjects interacting in the mobility of the territory conditions as an operative space for an

effective and fast appropriation. This fleetingness is a new quality of the landscape, the dominant form of consumption of spaces and activities which over-specialises the public space and endows it with an important role in the configuration of a new type of expansion of the territory. There exist, therefore, new, ephemeral and fleeting time-space processes in the territory which should be analysed. (Buxó, 2007, 15).

III. TERRITORIES AND LANDSCAPES OF EXCLUSION

III.1. The image and face of the city centre

In the old city centres, the attributes of the public space have changed and this changing landscape which expresses the ephemeral and operative nature of the public space is gaining ground, as is the case in any other part of the city and indeed in any city, one would say, as Bégout does on referring to the antipodes of the old Spanish city centres, that a veil of advertising screens had grown on the buildings, and footpaths and car parks exist side by side without much connection, replete with pot holes and broken tar, coexisting alongside the splendour of the architectural opulence or poorly lit wastelands, half-finished or abandoned buildings that immediately evoke a city devastated by war (Bégout, 2007, 53 and 54). In fact, light has replaced the public space: “once the intoxicating effect of the neon lights and the nocturnal bustle has passed, a deplorable decoration appears that strips the glorious image that Las Vegas aims to transmit of some of its splendour” (Bégout, 2007, 55 and 56). The grandiloquence of tertiarisation is expressed in the same way whether it revolves around finance, shopping or leisure, and whether all combined or individually, they function as a specialised district. And pedestrian movement through scene-districts of tourists-visitors-buyers en route, is also the result of the speed of movement in the spatial relations and the tourist-cultural functions which are leading to the creation of “unique” districts in the historic-tourist recreation areas. The parts of the old city centres affected tend to become or already are impact districts.

Bégouts says: “the mass of unaccustomed pedestrians go on their way without complaint. They stop at each casino, almost surprised to be able to move on foot” demonstrating on any scale the “transitions destitute of shine which transform the very city itself into a bastard born of the illicit affair between the illustrious and the trivial” (2007, 56); -adding- “The tired eye hurts from having to manage so much nervous information in such a short period of time, in such a limited space”, and at the same time the conviction that less things

happen is more intense, “no street vendors or stalls or squares (...) one would think they were in a shopping mall in which, apart from the commercial articles, none of the city were on display” (Bégout, 2007, 57). They are conditions of the operative space and its fleeting landscapes of brief impacts and reduced spaces lacking events.

On the face of it, the city’s image ages in time. In all of its expressions and intensities, the tertiarisation of the space repeats its pattern which consists of staging its *raison d’être*, this other space for this specific function which does not occupy more than a part of life if not interwoven with each step of the everyday existence that makes up the face of the city. If, on the contrary, as is increasingly the case, this space has been concentrated and specialised, then the social landscape is remade into a landscape of fiction which does not take any of the special features into account. It eliminates anthropogenetic time, which creates solidarity between time and space, through constant maintenance and repairs that impede any transformation as a constructed space and a space under construction (Choay, 2007).

There are many cases which in different moments of their urban evolution demonstrate the death of the city. Historic and general processes that live on, such as the abandonment of public and private spaces which denote death, obviously because there are players that work to create dead cities (Davis, 2006). The old city centre is no more than a small and fundamental part of the unique planetary model, sustained by a prosthesis of technical networks that ensure its planetary dissemination. It is dissociated and freed from the ancestral time-space determinants and is de-institutionalised from societies in favour of individual arbitrariness (Choay, 2007).

The new urban trends mentioned above allow us to state that the objective of finding a solution to the disconnection between functional problems and the urban or architectural intervention –as part of a more mature conservationist culture–, forms part of the social control mechanisms of the old city centres. Even when the decision is made to truly implement complete recovery, isolation of the old city centre’s problem, and individualised treatment of the same independently of the changes in the urban structure in its almost insurmountable whole, it is very probably one of the most convincing limitations in the success of old city centre protection and recovery policies developed in recent years and which are still characterised by a strong degree of inertia in their current approaches.

At present, to intervene in the old centre of the Spanish city implies an obligatory modification of the categories of analysis of the complexity of its space submerged in the urbanised territory of a socio-agoraphobic society and to finally make use of the much called for pan-disciplinary approach, proven in research and academic praxis (Forum UNESCO, 2004) but which has not yet taken root in the political sphere apart from within the diagnostic teams. Without going into specific examples in the present article from among the various political responses to the current problems suffered by the old centres, these call for the most unusual mix of specialists, in the words of Manuel Delgado, “the techniques used to record and describe social facts which take place in urban spaces should express qualitative and quantitative strategies, macroscopic and microscopic approximations, which implies the joint application of ethnographic observation techniques on the ground and of quantitative measurements aimed at creating mathematical models” (2007, 141) contributing to more correct diagnoses of the malaises and cures which inevitably appear to follow the only possible path of living in community. As Storper (2007) suggested, attention must be paid to the relations between community and society in terms of his questioning which social capital is most beneficial, whether that of the former (the communities), basically informal structures which today reflect the enclosure of individuals, groups and communities, or that of the latter, the social capital which builds bridges and creates links. Or the emergence of new forms of power and policy on the sub-national level, whose spaces must analyse a political geography which verifies whether the contemporary big city emerges as a strategic place for these operations (Sassen, 2002, 47 y 48).

III.2. Landscapes and architecture of exclusion

Among the classification possibilities of current landscapes, that which triggers the reduction of distances as the end effect of the progressive and generalised decrease of time should be dealt with. The hypothesis put forward is that the progressive and resultant shrinking of space leads to the disappearance of the distance that causes a communion in the space between social relations that generates existential uncertainty.

Among the most readily recognisable spatial responses to this existential vertigo in the face of the transformations of the urban world in unpredictable directions that shake the foundations of existential security (Davis, 2004 and Rodríguez, 2005), guidelines for the dissemination and enclosure have been introduced one after the other and today overlap

each other. The combination of these spatial guidelines has created a new type of expansion and territorial re-composition with diffuse forms of occupying the land and in general, new forms of consuming it; thus, a new landscape is recognised with morphological solutions and spatial patterns fitting with the uses of land that translate the problems and needs arising from the emerging spatial-time relations of modern-day existence, leading to the creation of new closed forms of habituating the land, constituting security guarantees. Dubbini develops new methodological concepts for the study of the modern-day city by introducing the speed factor and/ or that of the multiple perspectives in order to reinforce the generalised image of an unpredictable and conflictive city, in short, another aspect of the complexity where “the reality that the photographic lens reveals to the eye is different” (Dubbini, 2007, 259 y 261).

Today, the need to set limits is justified and new frontiers are constructed in the space while other limits are fortified even further. Nonetheless, does not the city and the urban context as a constructed space –architecture, and the network of the communication system that links them – simply trigger a further interaction in the space of pre-existences (the natural and historic memory), a fusion of nature and culture in their various technological states, common to other techniques used to transform the environment which Menéndez calls the contextual condition (2005, 339). The difference lies in the fact that this is the most intense phase of this continuous appropriation and formation of operative space which obviates the main events and players of each historical moment. Which is why frontiers, disciplines and the territory under construction need to be surpassed with a common and integrating language in order to eliminate the segregating procedure used to respond to the current processes: that of the territory, although neither the legal actions nor the techniques have yet understood their mutual integration within it.

These are the reasons for proposing the systematisation of the games in play. This text aims to argue in favour of considering the social tendency towards enclosures and the discourses of the other, as combined lines of explanation deserving of their territorial expression and integration. Society itself, “socio-agoraphobic”, has already opted to clarify its own rules of play, logically supporting those most promising through a strategy that, in first place, is anticipating defence by enclosing itself and, in second place, pre-empting future attacks by identifying enemies. It is constructing a defensive city in territories of passage by creating ephemeral landscapes of exclusion.

And the spatial fractures created by the very roads themselves as barriers that segregate the territory by reaffirming the strength of the limit factor which has been infinitely expanded, forgetting about bridges, materials and symbols which connect through transversal interrelations is commonplace. In the territory, the transversal character is still in a highly rudimentary phase, it is the bottleneck which could strangle the citizen movements to come and cause them to explode. The balance is unpredictable given that as yet it is unknown whether antidotes will be required in the shape of an unstoppable growth of the segregation and simplification process or, its annihilation, because they have broken the continuity of the networks and the fragmented spaces, some metropolitan, some meta-metropolitan (rural), the latter being the most abundant and protected (natural). The introduction of new parameters for dicing up the territory for use has transformed the entire landscape heritage by attacking the core of its organisation and therefore, the previous exploitation system which configured it. And not only does it detract from the vitality and deconfigure the agrarian and natural spaces, but also eliminates the whole context of local traditions according to which the spaces were constructed, creating differentiated landscapes, which are thus obviated and substituted.

Right now, the contextual insertion of the urban into territories undergoing a metamorphosis, in predominantly urbanised settings necessarily re-formulates the terms of analysis.

IV. TERRITORIAL HERITAGES FOR INTEGRATION

To identify the signs that render territory permanent by reading its landscapes has been a common task of territory specialists. The approximation to the complexity of the territory through the study of spatial forms, such as a methodological support (Vilagrassa, 1991), allows for an interdisciplinary dialogue that goes beyond boundaries through a common language used to emphasise the cultural and qualitative aspects (Menéndez, 2005, 338). In the language of the Alexander patterns (Méndez, 2007) or in the language of territorial construction (Menéndez, 2005) it could be interpreted that this same goal is present, seeking to give coherence to the understanding of the world and also this methodology of the territory, reading the permanencies which structure it over time. Signs of persistence such as the different limits, fossils proving the death and birth of the episodes of appropriation expressive of the control of the territory, which have been expressed through

varied arguments always leading to suffocating regularisations in an attempt to progressively reduce the natural complexity, original to the medium.

Today, far from an understanding of the territorial system, the protagonism of company logic in the social responses to the challenges of the contemporary city is observed.

IV.1. The territory, social and cultural heritage

The great home of the community (Menéndez, 2005, 336) is built around a continuous segregation that progressively splits successive differentiated spaces, constructing territories based on a continuous and juxtaposed stratification of actions which have clarified the empty homogeneity of the initial space, to transform it into a qualitatively differentiated space (2005, 333). It is a long series of acts of segregation that also gradually break any communication universality, unless there are bridges in place guaranteeing the understanding of any neighbouring system, all the more so those of communication between the cultures. Without the keys and cods of translation, the environment is distant, unknown, dangerous, and as a result of all of this, senseless.

Nonetheless, the search for a homogenous geometric net, for the ideal plan of the flat surface, a simplifying ideal that even goes so far as to eliminate the topography, a method, in short, like the Cartesian method which erases the past of any historic or cultural precedence, and in which there is a rejection of the whole spatial, social or time context, has been as frequently shown to fail as it has been proposed. This method of imposed territorial ordinance, incessantly applied on different scales and at different latitudes throughout time, constitutes the most finished consequence of the understanding of a closed territorial ordinance and planning. The common procedure of submitting the decisive elements of the primary structures to patterns of basic regularities, stripping the territory of its place determinants, and transforming it into an abstract space, solely a simple extension, means annulling the meaning of time, of the physical distance and of the past. This means creating a specialised time far from the experience that determines a future reduced to simplified patterns (2005, 334).

A time and space which, nonetheless, are what change places with meanings that are explained in a territory which, in turn, is not uniform and disintegrates in landscapes. And which, to date, has translated into more or less simplifying patterns which have

territorialized the natural setting to the point in which it is, ultimately, urbanised. In spite of the fact that the physical and symbolic limit provided by city walls has been lots, in the medieval city a separation from the natural setting was maintained which was less rigid than the current separation, because though apparently self-sufficient it scorned it. Urban expansion has created a far greater separation which it has been attempting to alleviate since the mid 19th century through a strategy of “compensation” by introducing green spaces. Ultimately, no attempt at recovery of the relations with nature has succeeded in changing the final balance of an unstoppable spreading of the city throughout all of the exterior.

The transformation into metropolis, seen as such, pertains to the theses that the large urban parks represent an insufficient strategy which forms part of the progressive attempts to integrate the city into the country, while containing the city limits. Radial or transversal limits which have not stopped the expansion of the city, but rather have served to enhance it, but which furthermore, provide proof of the current crisis because the imposition of mobility with its diffuse circuits has spread its flows in an unstoppable expansion. Thus, pressure is put into action on all of the territory, confirming the certainty that the science which separates time and space needs to be replaced with qualitative explanations that revalue the perspective of territory as a system of high complexity of the whole. Such is the voracity of man’s work on the territory that globalisation has made it explicit, as well as accelerating this conquest. All that remains to the territorial system is a progressive differentiation per densification, a great concern about the environmental sustainability as a Utopia and a project to face up to as being unsustainable to preserve the biodiversity.

Obviously, the complexity of such challenging territorial construction set adrift questions the analysis models that dissect and facilitate knowledge by treating the elements individually. Territory constitutes the protagonist, it is complex and cannot be understood by simplifying it in an explanation of the disciplines and the administrative organisation whose disciplinary boundaries render the verifications in question inoperative. In fact, what the territory indicates is that an explicit duality in the social polarisation of landscapes of exclusion which distinguish the devalued neutral spaces (an “off catalogue”) which are not the object of human or natural landscape protection catalogues. The result of cost cutting by urbanising more extensively and countering the effects of this is through the protection of closed nature reserves.

IV.2. Catalogues of urban landscapes

The alternative is made up of the formal options most in line with the local resources, whether in the shape of natural inputs or cultural capital or the heritage strategy of the territory, and inserted into the historic process of territorial construction. To decipher its language cannot exclusively mean to continue describing and continue classifying, to become immobile for such a complex patrimony that is so disproportionate in memories.

It is of urgent importance to comb the territory and collect all its heritage, identify and recognise the patterns. The intensity and type of patterns related to nature constitute a methodology of spatial analysis which promises great results given that it is appropriate to the classification of urban landscapes thanks to its use of transversality to filter globalisation.

However, to thoroughly analyse the territorial system, the ideas ground of the geographers (Vilagrassa, 1991), requires a more detailed method of analysis, and it is here that the method of relating the space to the event, the language of the Alexander patterns skilfully handled by a specialist towards transversality, gains a fundamental value for the classification of urban landscapes in continuous transformation. The scale and human condition of society set the parameters of solutions and appropriation of nature. There is a certain know-how, a language of patterns already written that needs to be identified in each territory and which is imposed on the progressive domestication of the territories in their future histories. To identify the timeless patterns which thanks to their efficiency in the multitime-man-environment relationship have remained and borne the gales of time. The search for common components that integrate these patterns into the whole, the intensity and type of constructive patterns, but above all, the relationship between them, constitute the signs of identity of those territories that survive the image, the discourse adapted to suit the interests of the man who constantly attacks their survival.

The power of these spatial patterns in the territories creates more or less easily transformable landscapes, sooner and more profoundly replaced by the new contexts, problems and specific problems. Thus, new landscapes are being born that convincingly express the response of environmental unsustainability and dominating banality with which territories and societies are currently homogenised.

In the case of the Spanish city, it is rapidly advancing along this not at all promising path of a socio-agoraphobic territorial construction which unfolds among fear, consumption and simulation. Nonetheless, the future is not written anywhere, as All  gre (2007, 16) states, it very decisively depends on the collective will which will probably start to move quite soon. The slightness of human actions on the environment (Pesci, 2003, 106) rethought in the new culture of the territory is already recognised in the legal and advisory sectors of society.

The changes in the territorial and urban model render a rethinking of the city in new terms necessary, giving priority to the social and cultural perspective by dealing with the major issues which constitute its recent evolution, preservation –protection against renovation, concentration (European city model) as opposed to dispersion (North American city model), multi-functionality as opposed to specialisation, and segregation as opposed to integration. In this context, it is necessary to move close to the city using a different perspective that welds together a single vision of the territory. A culture of the territory for the whole territory, old, mature and emerging sectors.

In modern-day cities the need to contemplate the social and cultural perspectives is emphasised in order to face the territorial changes generated by modern-day existence and which today are explicit in the increased protagonism of the environmental conflicts of a more exclusive social organisation, even in spaces in which relations are forged par excellence such as the Mediterranean. Current society’s challenge lies in identifying and classifying its inherited patrimony, including the expressions of new emerging trends, as forms of inhabiting which in current times require new parameters of study, where the insertion of the wealth of local tradition which in each territory responds to innovative solutions should take place.

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