II.Proximity. Private and public use of space.

1. Studies about proximity. Redefining territory.

i. Public-private distinctions: sets of distances

The concept of depth and its correspondent models of proximity and accessibility are undoubtedly related to the use of space in a more public or private way. As mentioned before, depth was originally defined as the amount of boundary crossings needed to move from the outer space to the innermost territory. Outer space can often be related to public realm while the innermost territory often refers to private use of space. However, we might need to study these theoretical connotations: the configurational understanding of depth as a complex system of relations, requires a profound study on what is understood as public and private and what are the relations in between: this refers to models of proximity. Proximity depends on individual or collective **spacing mechanisms** that define a certain model of space production and space organisation. Territorial depth as an access configuration, can possess different recipes of proximity: each configuration is defined by a **set of distances** at different scales.

As part of a research on depth as a more qualitative parameter, proximity and other conditions of the use of space will be studied in this chapter, understood as complementary notions to the earlier mentioned concepts of territorial access configuration.
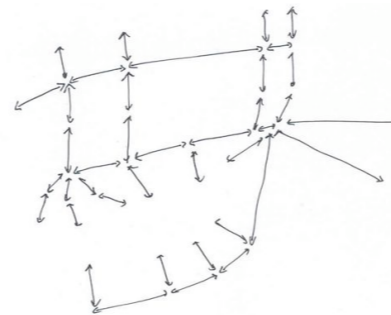

Figure II.1: conceptual diagram of sets of distances within a territorial configuration

Ali Madanipour presents a coherent investigation on "*Public and Private Spaces of the City*"[1] that situates the discourse on proximity on three different levels: the spatial scale, the degree of exclusivity and openness and finally, the modes of social encounter and association with space. "*From the intimate space of the home to the interpersonal space of the busy city streets, we are located in different environments at each moment*"[2] This study is not limited to physical reading, but contains social reflections, as A. Madanipour sees the division of public and private parts as the "*key part of the social life of human beings and is embedded in, and contributes to, the way people live together in societies*". As a result, physical structure is studied, together with functional organisation or form of activity. Simultaneously, patterns of social or cultural differentiation are studied and tested with economic models, all being part of a more integrated research.

According to the author, the public/private distinction is the base of city and culture, the way we divide is a mirror for our social life: "(...)*How a society divides its space into public and private spheres, and how this division controls movement from one place to*

1 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 1-3

2 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 1

another and access to place and activities." Public-private distinction is recognised as a key organising principle, shaping the physical space of the cities and the social life of their citizens.

A. Madanipour starts with a definition and a distinction of public space and public realm: the first concept defines a "*physical environment, associated with public meanings and functions*"[3], while public sphere or public realm is seen as a broader concept, as it involves places and people. As a result of this definition, public space could be understood as a part of the public realm.

ii. Successive increase of distance

Starting with Cartesian dualism of mind and body, going through Freud's description of different kinds of (un)consciousness, till Heidegger's phenomenology, A. Madanipour tries to construct an elementary theoretical framework for the first set of distances that defines our movement through space and our daily perception. He refers to the idea of **personal space**, that is invisible and mobile, defined as "*a space that a person and the others observe around his/her body, as the extension of the body. It is a space that is emotionally charged and keeps the spacing of individuals. (...) it refers to spaces that are personalised by people who inhabit them and the process through which this personalisation occurs*"[4].

He refers to Edward Hall's study of "*personal distance*"[5] as part of a study that classified interpersonal relationships according to observed distances: respectively, intimate distances, personal distances, social distances and public distances. **Intimate distance** has to do with intimate movements and perceptions of space, like two people sitting next to each other, holding hands. The next set of distances, according to E. Hall, is the idea of **personal distance**. To explain this concept he refers on his turn to Heidegger who used the term for the first time, and quotes: "*personal distance is a small protective sphere or bubble that an organism maintains between itself and the others*" The close phase of personal distance is defined by a distance between 45 and 75 cm, while the far phase is defined by arms' length (75-120cm), like the example of family eating together, people in a meeting room sitting next to each other etc.. The third category is the set of **social distances**: "*The boundary line between the far phase of personal distance and the close phase of social distance marks (...) the limit of domination. Intimate visual detail in the face is not perceived, and nobody touches or expects to touch another person (...)*"[6] We can imagine a receptionist attending a client, greeting a neighbour in the hall of your apartment building etc. The last set of distances has a **public dimension**: "*Several important sensory shifts occur in the transition from the personal and social distances to public distances, which is well outside the circle of involvement*"[7] Strangers sharing part of a square or a park, recognising people from a large distance etc. can be put within this most public category of distances. E.Hall refers to **distance regulation** and animal **spacing mechanisms** to set up the different categories and detection of different spatial behaviour. Animal's space requirements are influenced by its very environment: to defend their territory they apply certain rules of distance regulation. Spacing mechanisms can be flight distance or critical distance, that is when the animals meet and define a primitive defence zone or project the minimum distance the other animal is supposed to maintain before it attacks. Personal distances and social distances are established without meeting other animals: the first one is the invisible and moveable bubble to regulate aggression by create spatial hierarchies or by spacing, which is the most primitive tactic. The last one possesses a more psychological dimension and refers to group dynamics, varying from species and changing in time.

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3 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 4

4 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 22

5 E.T. Hall, "The Hidden Dimension" Doubleday/Anchor Books New York 1966, p 119

6 E.T. Hall, "The Hidden Dimension" Doubleday/Anchor Books New York 1966, p 121

7 E.T. Hall, "The Hidden Dimension" Doubleday/Anchor Books New York 1966, p 123

Another reference for this concept of personal space is Irwin Altman: "*The desired level of privacy is achieved through mechanisms of personal space and territorial behaviour*"[8] He suggests that crowding and social isolation are the causes and symptoms of failing to achieve a desired level of privacy. He continues: "*Privacy is defined as an interpersonal boundary-control process, which paces and regulates interaction with others*"[9] In other words, the author sees a direct link between the permeability of this boundary and the levels of privacy that can be achieved. R. Sommer[10] defines personal space as "*portable territory, being the space in which individuals perform their social acts, where they feel safer and in control of their bodies*". Important is following distinction: personal space is less private than mental space. Personal space is flexible and operates at different scales, it possesses different complexities, showing many areas of overlap: it exists out of many protective layers and tactics, readable and recognisable within the same culture, as A. Madanipour mentions[11].

The author argues that the very dimensions of personal space depend on two functions: protection and communication and that its consequences are **divisions**, based on sets of distances.

Individual and cultural differences influence the dimension and appearance of personal space: personal space seems to grow with the age and its growth is parallel to an increasing social status. This finding explains some contemporary phenomena of excessive fencing or the obsession for marking territory that not only responds to a basic human need.

A. Madanipour mentions that several people can **share personal spaces** to establish a shared private space in the middle of public space. This obviously effects reading or perception of **depth** in urban space and adds a level of complexity to the discourse on territorial configurations . We could refer this to N. J. Habraken' s concept of included territories, but extract it from the discourse of the built environment and place it on the level of human behaviour. Indeed, personal space is always related to other people and constructs social configurations at different scales. A. Madanipour adds: "*the position of the individual in social space is marginal or precarious which makes the result often a situation of social exclusion, where access to resources, to decision making, and to shared experiences is limited. All forms of private and public distinction are directly related to the fundamental distinction between the inner self and the outer world.*"[12] Personal space con not be seen as an absolute territory, it embodies an individual territory with definition of several group spaces, creating a certain tension in urban space.

To back-up this idea, A. Madanipour mentions Oscar Newman, and the formulation of "*defensible space and protective role*" to stress the importance of more **personal spatial experience** "*(...) a surrogate term for the range of mechanisms, real and symbolic barriers, strongly defined areas of influence, and improved opportunities for surveillance, that combine to bring an environment under the control of its residents.*"[13]

The experience of depth in urban space is highly conditioned and defined by personal space and various distance mechanisms, being shared ones or based on more individual behaviour.

Recently, new communication technologies show a rather drastic change in the definition of personal distance and changes the nature of collectiveness at all scales. However, this only stresses the importance of personal space.

iii. Privacy and community: hierarchy of spaces

In "*Anatomy of Urbanism*"[14], S. Chermayeff and C. Alexander describe a successive hierarchy of spaces. According to their theory, the urban fabric should be organised at two levels: first, the numberless kinds of experience need to be translated into distinctively articulated and appropriately structured physical zones: they refer to **separation of traffic and**

8 I. Altman, "The Environment and Social Behaviour" Brooks/Cole Monterey 1975, p 3

9 I. Altman, "The Environment and Social Behaviour" Brooks/Cole Monterey 1975, p 10

10 R. Sommer, "Personal Space: the Behavioural Basis of Design", Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1969, p 27

11 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 25

12 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 35

13 O. Newman, "Defensible Space", Macmillan, New York, 1972

14 S. Chermayeff, C. Alexander, "Community and Privacy" Doubleday & Co Inc. USA 1963, p 117

activities, a very modern principle to be questioned in later chapters. On the second level, these separate zones must be organised in relation with their intensity of effect on each other, in hierarchies, according to their magnitude and quality: this means a **hierarchical organisation**. The authors define a hierarchy of spaces and realms for community and privacy: starting from the **urban-public**, referring to roads and parks, to **urban semi-public** areas, that we can relate to city halls or service stations for example. The third category is the **group-public** one, thinking of mail delivery areas, while the fourth one is called **group-private**, like a community garden. The next level is defined by **family-private**, with the example of the living room and the final degree is called **individual-private**, with the individual room as the main example. The authors claim that in some cultures a clear physical expression of need for varying degrees of privacy and integrity of domains correspond to these six mentioned levels. They further describe cases in Cameroon with a carefully contrived sequence of increasing privacy from the entry to the chief's domain and woman's quarters that followed these restricting sequence from public to private. They mention as well the case of a Budhist monastery in Peking with a sequence of variations on the themes of circle and square, differing in arrangements and dimensions to distinguish levels of privacy and community.

The need for privacy can be seen as a basic motor of territorial organisation and stresses the importance of the nature and kind of use of territories and coherent (successive) boundary crossings.

iv. Changing bodily projection

Françoise Choay[15] mentioned a historical mutation in the scale of urban space as part of proximity: in medieval times, the city was conceived and constructed taking the very dimensions of the human body as the main reference. The dimensions and conceptual lay-out of streets, alleys or building entrances followed the principle of **contact space**, as the author mentions. All spaces were designed and constructed based on contact between human beings, on bodily contact, besides religious references. These absolute bodily dimensions were taken over by a more scenographic approach during Reanissance, as all built environment had to provide the city a decor, a space apt for the urban spectacle: well defined axial and long perspectives combined theatrical scenery for the city's inhabitants. The author mentions that **spectacle space** did co-exist with contact space, only showing its supremacy. Later, in modern times, traffic took over all previous design tactics and transformed urban space into **circulation space**: all dimensions and locations were decided according to traffic solution systems. The streets and squares, even the residential projects, were re-designed, using the dimensions of the (moving) car as the basic condition. Within the successive change of scale in urban projects, the importance of contact space, based on bodily experience, diminished systematically.   F. Choay mentions the end of this series of mutations, seen as progressive deconstruction of the city, and names a double process of simultaneously increasing concentration and dispersion. These processes create urbanity, synonym for the "discrete city". She quotes Melvin Webber that proclaimed the end of urban local weight, reducing the importance of proximity as global forces occupy important positions.

However, maybe the cycle of scale mutations of urban space did not end, as technologies complement bodily experience, scenographic set-ups, or projects (over)defined by circulation diagrams. We might introduce **technology space** as the latest set of dimensions defining settlement patterns and urban growth. Strategical antenna positions, possible coverage radius and distances in between cellphone antennas or access to internet now seem to guarantee urban success. Technological space has become partly invisible but does still define a set of distances, part of a new model of proximity.

15 F. Choay, "Le Règne de l'Urbain et la Mort de la Ville", article published in "La Ville: Art et Architecture en Europe, 1870-1993", Éditions du Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1994, p 26-35

Figure II.2: Jewish colonies in Yitzar (800 inhabitants) since 1983: the antenna at the background as first colonisation.
(original photo published in El Pais 12/09/09 foto by Miguel Yuste)

Anthony Vidler[16] pronounces a similar theory as he mentions a long tradition of bodily reference (referring to Vitrivius, Alberti, Filarete, Leonardo da Vinci etc) to buildings and streets. In other words, these classic examples show the idea of the architectural monument as embodiment. Modern sensibility embraced a more rational sheltering of the body while later we could notice a return to bodily analogy in post-modern approaches (Himmelblau, Tschumi, Libeskind etc). However, in this episode the body is fragmented and no longer serves to centre, fix or stabilise, as the author argues. He concludes there has been an evolution of **progressive distancing of the body** from the built environment, a gradual extension of the anthropomorphic analogy into other domains.

These more conceptual shifts in understanding urban space in Western history help to frame A. Madanipour's theory, where he reads successive changes of scale, related with various spacing mechanisms. The notion of depth should be placed within this complex theoretical and historical framework: the previous statements help to understand the increasing importance of distances within territorial configurations at different scales.

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16 A. Vidler, "The building in Pain: the Body and Architecture in Post-Modern Culture," AA Files 19, 1990, p 3-10

2. Proximity, changing distances and depth in urban models: spacing mechanisms

The previously defined framework of proximity at different scales, introduces a possible reading of changing distances in urban project, creating different models of accessibility. Because of the application of a certain set of distance, an area, building or a room can be more accessible or less accessible.

Proximity models can be studied at different scales: territorial transitions, overlap scenarios, sequential gaps, sequence variations or rhythms are readable in configurations at the scale of the individual home, of collective spaces in urban clusters and streets, till the experiment of big-scale cuts or imaginary movements through wider planned areas. The following chapter offers a reading of various concepts of proximity and depth as they were implicitly laid out in some historical urban planning projects and proposes a critical use of **spacing mechanisms** to control accessibility at an urban scale.

i. Rhythm and variations in urban and rural sequences

The West-European pre-industrial urban fabric embodied a relatively stable conglomerate of people and activities that functionally and morphologically evolved within clearly defined margins: urban was synonym for centre, rural for periphery. It is possible to reconstruct an almost static spatio/temporal image of space occupation, as every activity attached to a certain place could be measured more easily, as the notion of time was more monochromatic, as mobility was less multiple defined as in contemporary scenarios.

This model was the result of a relatively high mixture of activities within morphologically well defined recipients. Movements within this very dense and urban fabric meant small-scale variations in use or in sense of belonging. The urban sequences were dense series of small changes of scale, of different activities and of public awareness. Urban experiences within these movements had to be placed within a more continuous but functionally heterogeneous fabric. As part of a bipolar model of space occupation, the rural experience, as opposed to the urban one, was characterised by another scale model and a slower rhythm of activity and morphological differences.
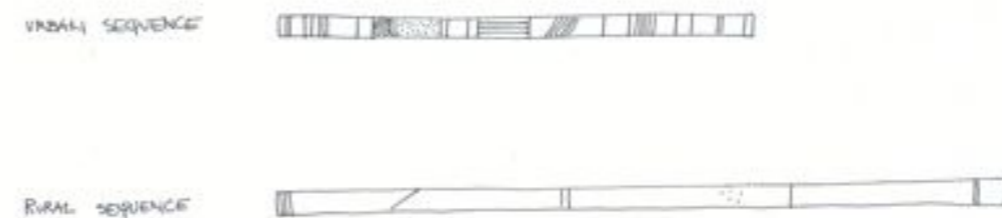

Figure II.3: territorial depth: urban versus rural sequence

The industrial revolution has been one of the first elements to destabilise this model and to transform it into a more dynamic system while physical mobility accelerated and mechanisation determined different production systems. New sociological ideas and radical planning rules provoked functional segregation. This process coincides with the disappearance of former military fortifications that had conditioned the West-European cities for ages and suddenly initiates an urban growth on a different scale.

From the end of the 19th century until modernism, architects and urban planners start emphasising other parameters like space occupation, centralisation or decentralisation, or a distinguished separation of functions, trying to give an answer to

the condition of cities. Cities were synonym for high concentration of people, a low efficiency and high expenses because of the unorganised urban growth. As a result, density control became an extreme and rationalised issue, even if absolute amounts of people or activities became less relevant as mobility increased and absolute localisation became less possible. The reason for searching new urban forms was indeed the high-density condition and urban congestion of existing cities.

ii. Distances and depth in Garden Cities

"*Town: closing out of nature, isolation of crowds, distance from work, high rents and prices, excessive hours, fogs and droughts, foul air, dirty sky, slums...*"[17] Ebenezer Howard's argument begins with a protest against urban overcrowding. According to R. T. Legates and F. Stout, his ideas of urban decentralisation, zoning for different uses, the integration of nature into cities, greenbelting, and the development of self-contained '*New Town*' communities outside crowded central cities have laid the groundwork for the entire tradition of modern city planning.

In "*To-morrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform*" (1898), E. Howard describes a pioneer method of urban decentralisation. The Garden City was conceived as a valid equivalent for the "*magnet of the city*" or the "*magnet of the country*" and meant a certain relocation of activities and people within the urban fabric: 32.000 people would move into the Garden-City (1.000acres), surrounded by agricultural land (5000acres).
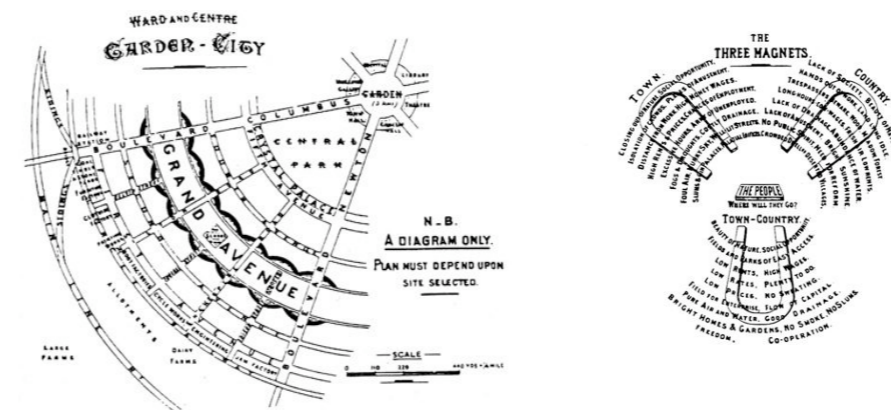

Figure II.4: Ebenezer Howard. Diagrams for the Garden City, 1898. (image from in 'The City Reader': Legates, T. and Stout, F., London, Routledge Publ., 1996, pag. 350)

The Garden City was structured concentrically by railways, avenues, boulevards and streets and separated all urban functions in an almost simplistic way. Density was an important parameter: the Garden City had a lower density than the existing city at that moment: this had to be one of the major points of attraction for people to start inhabiting.

Before, the city had become too complex and impossible to control. The existing congestion in the centre had to be eliminated. As a consequence, urban planners had to tear apart the urban jungle of functions and movements to recreate a morphological and social order.

Figure II.5: Territorial depth within the garden city model.

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17 R.T., Legates, F. Stout,"The City Reader":, F., London, Routledge Publ., 1996, pag. 346-353.

With Howard's proposal for the Garden City, the previous model of interrelated activities and sequences criscrossing collective or individual territories, changes in structure. The separation and stretching of urban activities implies different configuration of activities and a new distribution of collective spaces. To move from the centrifuged industrial zone, passing by the Grand Avenue and get into the residences at both sides, pass further on to the centrally located theatre, offers a **well orchestrated regular depth sequence** in relation with previous models. The well studied gradual change of more collectively used spaces and its attached activities to areas with more individual character, is less dense, less spontaneous and less chaotic than in the traditional pre-industrial dense city.

iii. Distances and depth in Broadacre City

The completely decentralised approach of Frank Lloyd Wright in "*Broadacre City: a New Community Plan*"[18], contrasts with the ideas of E. Howard because it lacks a centre-oriented space occupation. Every citizen of the United States had to be given a minimum of one acre of land per person, with the family homestead being the basis of the civilisation as a whole and with government reduced to nothing more than a county architect.
"*Wright believed that two inventions -the telephone and the automobile- made the old cities no longer modern, and he fervently looked forward to the day when dense, crowded conglomerations like New York and Chicago would wither and decay. In their place, Americans would re-inhabit the rural landscape (and reacquire the rural virtues of individual freedom and self-reliance) with a 'city' of independent homesteads in which people would be isolated enough from one another to insure family stability but connected enough, through modern telecommunications and transportation, to achieve sense of community.*"[19]
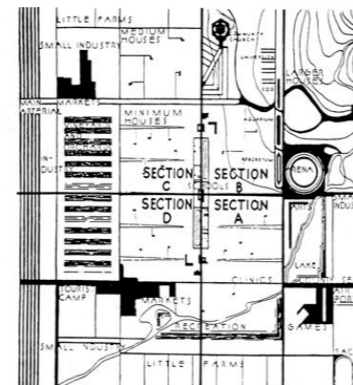

Figure II.6: Frank Lloyd Wright. Broadacre City 1935 (image from in 'The City Reader': Legates, T. and Stout, F., London, Routledge Publ., 1996, pag. 380)

Broadacre City represents another way of dealing with space: a strong social vision is connected with a low-density urban planning. The basic principles are the rights of man, the freedom to decentralise, redistribute and correlate the properties of the life of man on earth to his birthright, the ground itself.
The general mobilisation of the human being, the increasing electrical intercommunication and a standardised machine-shop production generates a new space use and makes it possible to structure urbanity in another way.
As Le Corbusier, Wright considers technology as an opportunity for urban transformation although his answer is completely different. According to Wright, the basis of the whole is general decentralisation as an applied principle and

18 F. L. Wright, "Broadacre City" in Architectural Record, vol 77, april 1935

19 R. T. Legates, F. Stout, "The City Reader", London, Routledge Publ., 1996, pag.376-381.

architectural reintegration of all units into one fabric, free use of the ground held only by use and improvements, public utilities and government itself owned by the people of Broadacre City.
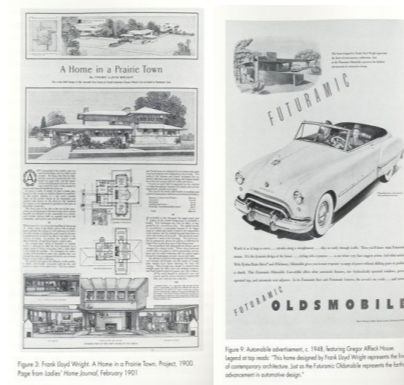
Figures II.7:. Frank Lloyd Wright. A Home in a Prairie Town 1900
(page from Ladies' Home Journal, feb 1901 and Automobile advertisement 1948 feat. Gregor Affleck House p90)

Broadacre City proved to be prophetic as sprawling suburban regions started transforming many Western landscapes during the second half of the twentieth century. The post-war period was influenced by a belief in prosperity and development, sometimes materialised as large scale projects with prefabrication and industrial construction as a basic principle. Simultaneously, cities were completed by zones of apartment blocks, ignoring the urban fabric, while increasing individualism and belief in a capitalistic consumption society catalysed urban sprawl.

The interesting part of Wright's proposal lies in the combination of radical individualism with the American democratic spirit: each individual lot was seen within a general system with collective dimensions. Let us say that each family would have been given what they really wanted: an individual piece of land with a relatively big and comfortable house, together with an accessible package of leisure activities or local industry which was not completely segregated from the residential neighbourhoods.

Figure II.8: Frank Lloyd Wright. Model Broadacre City 1935. (image from in 'The City Reader': Legates, T. and Stout, F., London, Routledge Publ., 1996, pag. 381)

The proposal can be seen as a change of scale of the same territorial depth the pre-industrial city had. The highly sequence variation of different activities and gradation of sharing space is similar to the model we saw in dense and morphological conditioned before industrial revolution. As Wright puts it himself, it is a "*diversity in unity where small is good*"[20].

20 F.L. Wright, "Broadacre City" in Architectural Record, vol 77, april 1935

Figure II.9: Territorial depth within the Broadacre City model.

However, Kenneth Frampton[21] sees Broad Acre City as the "*destruction of the traditional main street by the suburban supermarket*" and criticises the loss of complexity within the urban fabric.

More critics and architects question the proposal focused on ideal suburban enclaves with an absolute sovereignty of each private dwelling because of its apparent anti-collectivist attitude.

At Wright's defence, others have a more constructive critique on the proposal. As Gwendolyn Wright[22] mentions, it could be seen "*as a cohesive plan of suburban dispersal, regulating the patterns of expansion on the points of concentration to prevent monotonous sprawl*". Indeed, even if the model creates lots of domains with sparse and rather uniform collective interaction, the advantages should be seen within a different reference. The model focuses high accessibility and variation of housing typologies and tries to provide an individual freedom of movement.

"*There are millions of individual building sites, large and small, now easy of access and available owing to our great continually developing road system (…) the highway is the horizontal line of freedom.*"

Gwendolyn Wright adds that, as he predicted, roadside development eventually replaced the traditional public realm of the traditional city.

From the perspective of depth in its broader understanding, low proportion of shared spaces in suburban residential settlements remained a constant characteristic as social control is almost only guaranteed by sophisticated vigilance systems and its inhabitants feel more disconnected and isolated than ever. Recent intents of improving the complexity of single family based suburban neighbourhoods always build on the premise of densifying projects, mixing activities and create morphological irregularity. All this may be denying the very nature and initial objective of its potential inhabitants.

As said before, the problem might not be about questioning the amount of houses built but about how we do this and what is the interrelation with other groups of activities: what is the collective structure of the project? What matters is the configurational understanding of sometimes more mono-functional packages at a bigger scale. Forcing the transformation of residential zones with a repeating low territorial depth profile into high complex, mix-used neighbourhoods with many deep territorial sequences, relating it far too much with traditional urban fabrics, might need critical review. The issue of depth needs to be studied at different scales simultaneously.

Broadacre City helps questioning this hypothesis and extrapolate its contents into contemporary conditions at a functional and morphological level, taking multiple movements within the urban fabric as a guideline.

When using proximity, accessibility and depth models as an alternative way of analysing and proposing urban interventions, an important factor indeed is the idea of sequence, of movement within a field of individual and collective territories.

21 K. Frampton, 'Modernisation and mediation: the Input of Technology', essay in 'Frank Lloyd Wright', catalogue of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1994

22 G. Wright, 'Frank Lloyd Wright and the Domestic Landscape', essay in 'Frank Lloyd Wright', catalogue of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1994

iv. Spacing mechanisms

The previous theoretical models point out the importance of **spacing tactics**: using sets of distances to define accessibility on all levels of the urban fabric. Douglas McWrenn[23] mentioned that, for urban waterfront developments, the most important planning parameter consists out of carefully designing a set of physical and visual distances to control accessibility and depth. He explains the urban growth models of waterfront projects by relating them to proximity to the sea or a river, to infrastructures or to affordable housing areas. The review of the successive changes most harbours or maritime areas went through in terms of proximity offers an additional level for the discourse on depth sequences, especially for urban projects on a bigger scale.
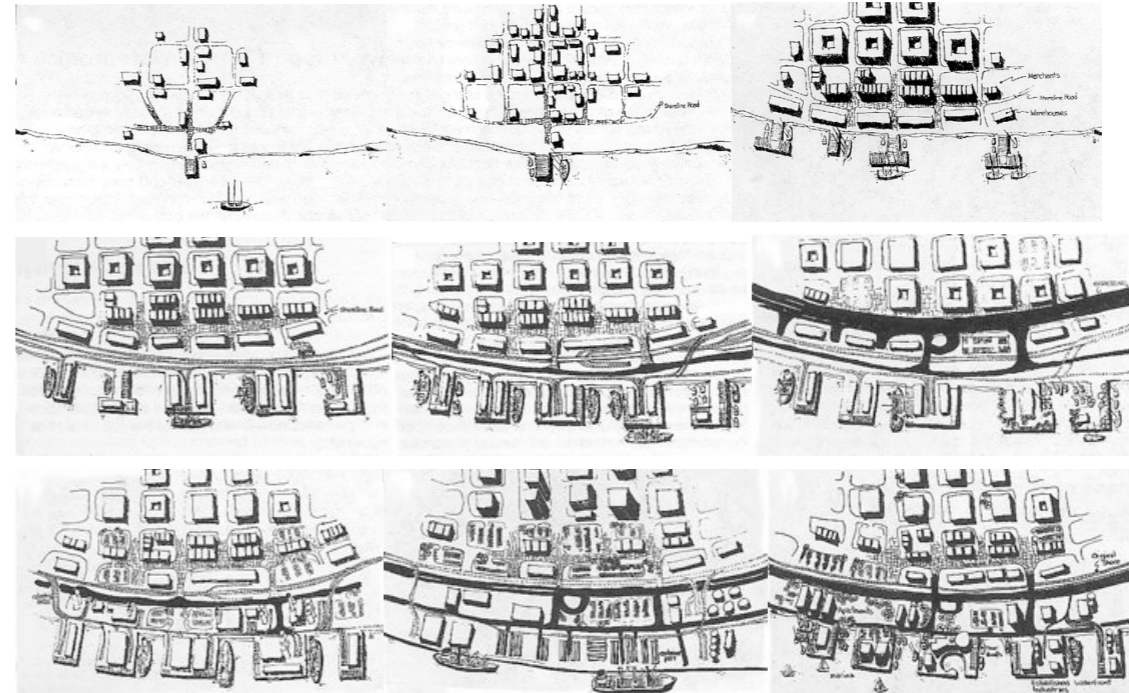

Figure II.10: Douglas McWrenn's review of urban growth in waterfront projects and the importance of spacing mechanisms: explaining the importance of proximity to the shoreline for initial development, describing functional segregation with increasing distances between housing and productive areas by program intensification, traffic infrastructures creating a barrier and higher depth from residential neighbourhoods till the waterfront, functional specialisation (containerisation as well as leisure waterfront programming) creating more distances between the original neighbourhood and the sea as a natural resource.

According to the author, the success of this kind of project depends on knowing how to deal with changing distances: models of proximity define models of depth.

Similar conclusions were formulated by André Corboz[24] when he describes the case of the Rhône waterfront development in Génève during the 19th century that changed drastically the proximity between different neighbourhoods and the river, creating new depth models for the area. In 1825, with the "L'Opération des Berges", engineer G.H. Dufour prepared a large urban operation that would convert the former harbour area into a high class bourgeois neighbourhood, taking the river as *file rouge*. The project started with the construction of the first public passerelle, realised by the first state development company in the city to introduce the building of houses and hotels on "Le Grand Quai", the Rhône riverside. The key to success had to be a maximum occupation of lots, a better circulation system and the creation of new quarters in an existing environment.

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23 D. McWrenn, "Urban Waterfront Development", The Urban Land Institute, Washington D.C, 1983, p. 2-71

24 A. Corboz Corboz, "Le Territoire Comme Palimpseste et Autres Essais", Paris, Les Editions de L'Imprimeurs, Collection Tranches de Villes, 2001.
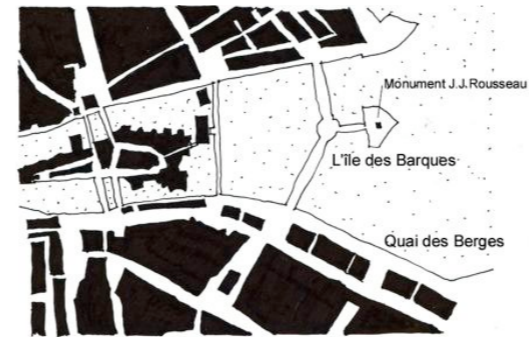
Figure II.11: L'Opérations des Berges, Génève 1825

The project consisted mainly out of a redistribution and displacement of activities, leaving original functions as fishing and port activity outside the city. After finishing the project, the ground floor existed out of commercial activities, bars and restaurants instead of warehouses and working class housing. Direct result was the creation of a functional barrier between the water and the authentic neighbourhood, as the new boulevard was meant for the rich to *flaneur* in the port. The project had to displace the centre of the city, to attract tourists and population to the site and push away textile manufacturing.
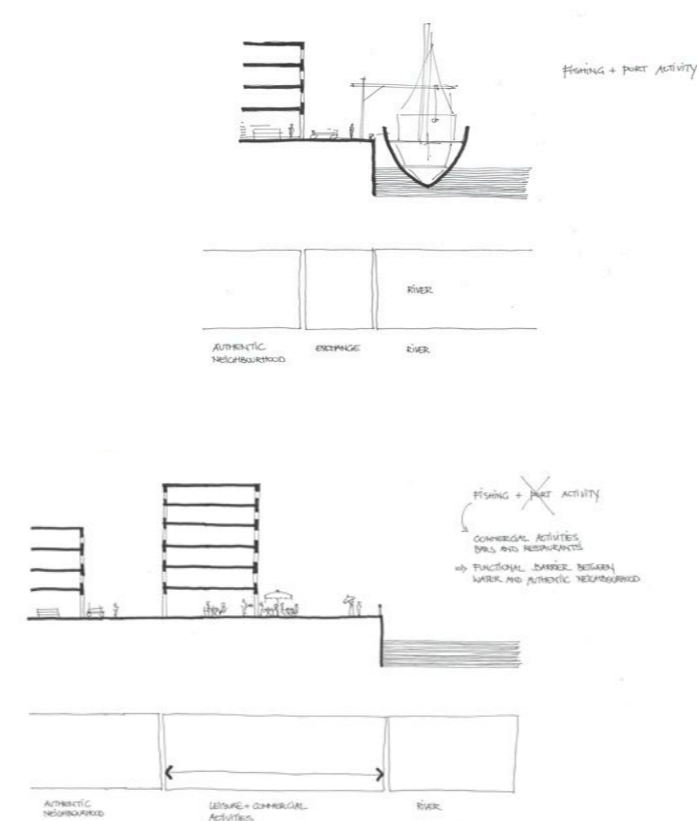

Figure II.12: Grand Quai des Berges, original situation and later functional barrier

However, the project could not count on many support of local population. That is why two small artificial islands were projected to give extra signification to the site: L'île Rousseau and L'île des Barques were connected to the Grand Quai for pedestrians, containing each of them a monument for J.J. Rousseau. Fact is that they needed a popular event to promote and force a "*collective appropriation*" of the waterfront. As a fact, this was the real motor of the project, besides detailed economic calculations and the existence of private initiatives. Urbanism was seen within a popular framework of homogeneity, uniformity and continuity, that is for the rich and tourists. After that, an addition of identical blocks assured a spatial isomorphism: "*new urbanity as a Newtonian absolute space: transparent, open and accessible*", as Corboz mentions.

The importance of the project is the change of proximity between existing parts of the urban fabric, explicitly displaced to allow or deny access to certain population groups. The social consequences of spacing dynamics and depth scenarios will be discussed later.

The mentioned authors point out the possibility of intentionally planned as well as derived spacing mechanisms, changing models of proximity and depth when crossing territories.

Most urban growth schemes of regions or cities can be seen as the direct result of dealing with proximity, implicitly or explicitly. However, in some cases all urban qualities of a city or a neighbourhood are consequence of specific models of accessibility and proximity.

v. Valparaiso: high depth as a result of natural spacing mechanisms

Valparaiso is a city with a strong spatial presence as a result of its appropriation of an emphatic topography. It is a city with a complex structure and configuration for its discordant way of placing in the steep talus. Conformed by forty-five hills, a vernacular or spontaneous architecture is to be found, adapted to the topography with sudden stairs, narrow alleys, and abrupt folds, forming an amphitheatre in front of the sea.

Figure II.13: City of Valparaiso, Chile, satellite image

The built city appears in a bay that faces the Pacific Ocean at the Parallel 33 South. It occupies a small portion of flat land with a grid running parallel-perpendicular to the sea. In this flat land the commercial and institutional programs are concentrated, disperse in a web of longitudinal axes that articulate plazas and streets, spatially conformed by an infinite continuity in which buildings model public space. The higher situated "*cerros*", enclaves or included territories have specific qualities: each one is physically segregated by strongly pronounced topography and is only accessible with hundreds of stairs or inclined elevators. Each neighbourhood has its own centre, its specific atmosphere, social and cultural status and accessibility.

Valparaiso is a city of fragments, in which its spatial unity exists as an internal construction of its parts, so the pieces of this urban puzzle join and acquire sense. This landscape and urban quality, in which the vernacular mixes up with contemporary planned projects, was recognised by UNESCO in 1998 to be a candidate as Cultural Patrimony. The historic quarters and different squares and "*miradores*" are being enhanced and evaluated to define the area to preserve.
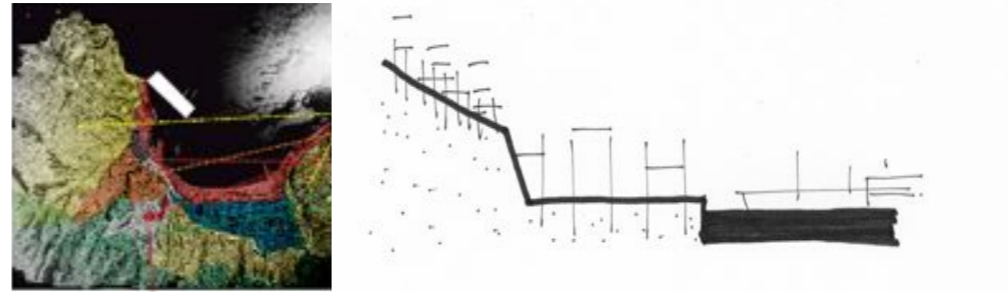
Figure II.14:. Valparasio. Urban growth. Topographical condition of territory.
(Plan originally published by Soto, M., Barla, B., Aguyo, G., in "Ideas y Proyectos", Ed. Universidad Católica de Valparaiso, Valparaiso, 2002.)

Figure II.15: Valparaiso. Structure of urban territory.25
(Sketch originally published by Soto, M., Barla, B., Aguyo, G., in "Ideas y Proyectos", Ed. Universidad Católica de Valparaiso, Valparaiso, 2002.)

Topography and the way it conditioned proximity and accessibility is what makes the city of Valparaiso an interesting case study. Here, depth is caused first by an irregular topography and not planned in an intended way by architects or urban planners. Through the whole city, from the flat open land behind the seacoast and its harbour till the higher situated "*cerros*", different sequences of accessibility are defining an extremely interesting urban and heterogeneous fabric. This structure is the result of a long history of adapting and appropriating the city's difficult topography without much transformation of it. The history of urban growth shows a constant positive attitude towards the singularity and difference of every ambit. With every intervention or extension of the urban fabric, differences rise above elements of continuity defining the city's functioning, as there is its former dependence on the harbour activities. Never a project was presented or executed to erase the barriers between different parts of the city, never a substantial intervention was thought to improve continuity and accessibility between its various parts. It looks as if the visual and physical (even socio-cultural) barriers were accepted, incorporated and even reinforced within the global system. When moving from the "*cerros*" to the lower part of the city, by walking and going down in one of the many elevators, or going by car and driving along the lateral curbs, the experience of high territorial depth with a continuous change of scale, of activity and sense of belonging, feels part of a natural coherence. At the contrary, the sequence of different atmospheres makes moving around an enriched urban experience.

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25 Sketches are taken from publication of M. Soto, B. Barla, G. Aguyo, "Ideas y Proyectos", Ed. Universidad Católica de Valparaiso, Valparaiso, 2002.

1. Pie de Cerros Segunda Bahía
La línea conformadora de la ciudad.

2. Singularidad Litoral
Alternancia fractal entre expuesto y abrigo

3. Plan y Cerros
Situación geomorfológica de áreas privilegiadas.

4. Trazados Ortogonales Dispersos
Yacimientos estructurales para la consolidación de los cerros.

5. Supuestos Accesos al Mar
Principales ejes de contacto entre cerros y puerto.

6. La Ciudad de los Cerros
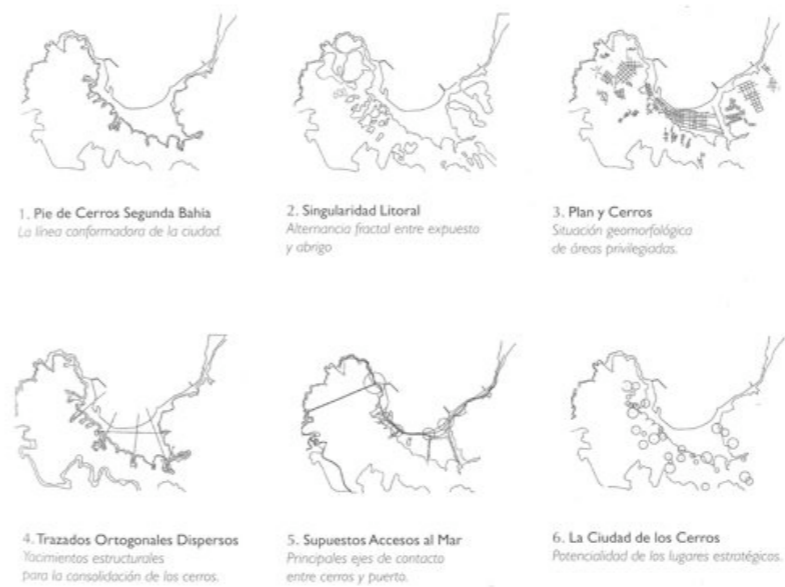*Potencialidad de los lugares estratégicos.*

Figure II.16: Valparaiso. Study of 6 structural elements.
(Sketches originally published by Soto, M., Barla, B., Aguyo, G., in "Ideas y Proyectos", Ed. Universidad Católica de Valparaiso, Valparaiso, 2002.)

Another atypical characteristic in the urban growth of the city is the relation between the city and the waterfront. Coming from the city and walking in the direction of the harbour, one senses a strong alteration in atmosphere, morphology and in type and intensity of activity. The coastline is almost completely inaccessible besides the visual appropriation one can have from the higher situated "*miradores*" or through the windows of high buildings. Territorial depth, seen from the Central Business District situated in the flat strip towards the sea and its activities, is extremely strong defined and has a deep structure. The specialised transport infrastructures, constantly feeding the harbour industry, accentuate this experience even more.
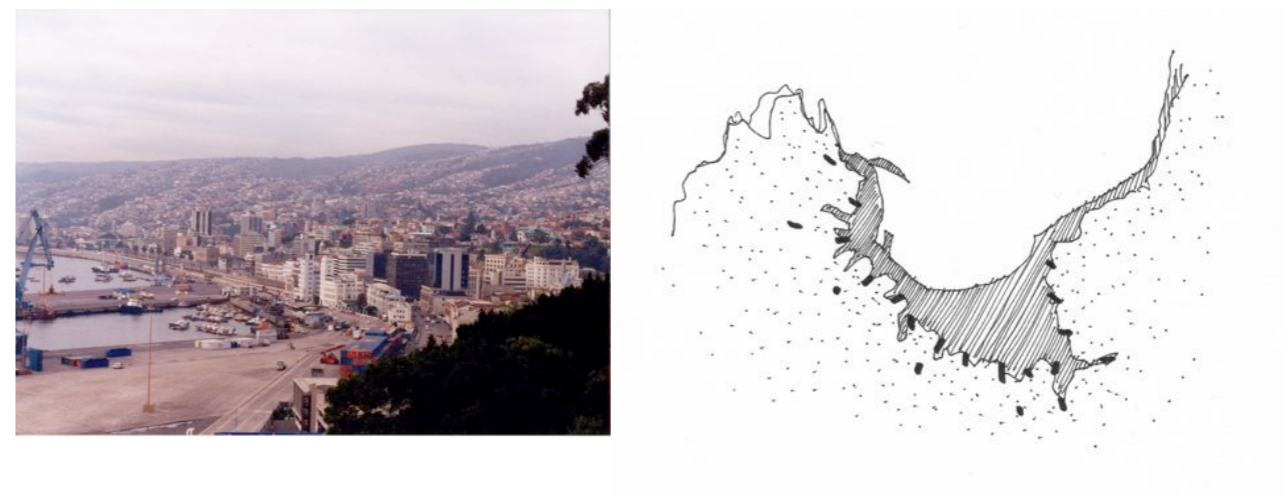

Figure II.17: Valparaiso. (Left) View of the city: harbour versus city. (Right) Valparaiso. Territorial structure

Some neighbourhoods, especially the southern higher situated residential zones, seem to have a chaotic structure because of the systematic absence of traditional urban planning regulations and because of popular auto-construction on the hills. As a result, various neighbourhoods show the co-existence of different models of territorial configuration.
In the images below we can recognise the appearance of simple family houses, built, transformed and extended by different generations and as a result constructed a shared linear structure of open space next to the main corps. Space occupation is based upon sharing space with other family members and a direct relation the public street. Territorial

depth is high. Next to this occupied lot we can find a completely different model of space occupation based on individual patterns and shutting down every relation to the street: fences and walls reduce the relation with more public zones to the gate entrance, protected by high tech vigilance systems.

As a result, territorial depth is varied within the urban fabric as a result of spontaneous processes of appropriation.

A similar case where topography or the absence of rational planning regulations caused an increase of territorial depth, is in the neighbourhood shown in the image below. The attached houses in this particular street were built before mobility needs obliged to cut through the neighbourhoods and trace wider streets. Obviously, the position of each house is in a specific relation to topography. To have access to one of the houses situated in the middle, one has to climb the stairs and pass by the neighbour's windows and front doors to enter the house. In a way, the proportion of shared space within this sequence is getting higher by this configuration. The chance you meet a neighbour or a visitor on a smaller distance is relatively higher than when the houses would be built on a flat surface, creating in that case a more direct relationship between private and public zones.
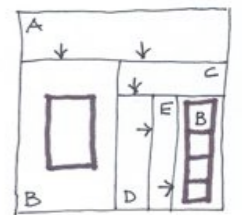

Figure II.18: Valparaiso. Adjacency of different models of territorial depth as basic characteristic of urban fabric.

The mixture of different types of territorial depth within the urban fabric, generating an extremely heterogeneous model of space occupation, has in the case of Valparaiso another dimension. Territorial depth is not planned or forced but only exists as a result of irregular topography and the way the inhabitants of Valparaiso dealt with it in a particular way. We could call it derived territorial depth. The long and often physically difficult sequences when moving from the "*cerros*" to the lower CBD or to the harbour, define a highly differentiated urban experience.

We could even say that the very characteristics of the different city parts get preserved because of a higher depth level: until recently, the micro-climates of the "*cerros*" got well protected from menacing real estate investments. The impossibility of a continuous system of accessibility only reinforced the qualities of the neighbourhoods. Hard contrasts have saved the city's integrity and singularity until now. The contrast of the hard industrial harbour and the cute small urban enclaves with in between the more neutral and generic commercial district, could be seen as an interesting atypical waterfront model where productive zones are still combined with commercial or residential neighbourhoods.

The predictable future transformation of the city's waterfront into leisure zone with the pushing away of the industrial harbour threatens this equilibrium without offering qualities for its inhabitants in the long run. This intervention would mean a shortening of physical and territorial depth, creating a more continuous fabric and producing an accessible sea-line. A similar attitude is seen within recent plans to insert big scale commercial or cultural activities within the "*cerros*", generating as well a different sequence between functions and many patterns of possible appropriation.
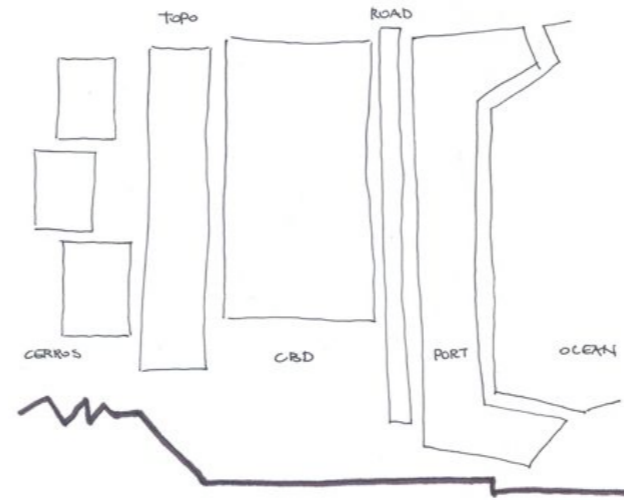
Figure II.19: depth between higher situated cerros and the ocean area

"*Valparaiso is a city of impossibilities: it is impossible to live in a containerised harbour, it is impossible to build thousands of houses on too steep plots. Its chaotic configuration of activities does not seem logical, it looks too strange to be true. (…)*
The horizontal stroke of land, close to the see, is ugly, noisy, inaccessible and uninspiring. It has no visual or physical relation with the sea. By its inhabitants, it is often seen as empty, an urban necessary evil. However, its negative characteristics could be seen as extremely helpful and constructive: this grey piece of land saved the higher situated "cerros" from too much accessibility, continuity or homogeneity, processes that often generate too polished and too clean sight-seeing districts, from which Valparaiso was saved until now."[26]
The city of Valparaíso is a good example of a city where spacing mechanisms were an important issue in the city's urban growth, from the small scale of the private property till the more urban set-up of the huge specialised areas within the city.

vi. System of distances

In "*Territory without a model*" Manuel de Solà-Morales describes a different meaning of places, unlike the traditional "*genius loci*" concept: "*the expected sensation of voids and the indifference of its constructions*" [27]. He refers to the rising importance of periphery that is no more based on tactics of repetition and differences but on a **system of relative distances**. As the dialogue between the building and the urban surrounding system became an individual one, distances loose their absolute value: they seem to belong to a more complex urban matrix. The author argues that the distance between areas or autonomous packages defines the very law that constructs peripheries: the notion of distance obtained an abstract dimension. However, the importance of this concept gets even more obvious by looking at it at the scale of the urban project: our daily experiences are now defined by sets of minimal or maximum distances. Important became the distance between properties, between properties and natural resources, between properties and infrastructures, between properties and high employment areas. Instead of defining density, we ended up defining sets of rules of relative distances, that in suburban conditions might be different than in downtown areas. In a way, we define and measure time and distance, comparing systematically with other configurations.

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26 Report Shelter expedition, exhibition SHELTER, Gent 2002, text by Kris Scheerlinck

27 M. de Solà-Morales, "Territoris Sense Model" article in Papers, Regió Metropolitana de Barcelona, n° 26, Barcelona, 1997, p 21-27

A similar approach can be read in "*The Long Distance Gaze*" by Eduard Bru, in which the author detects new landscapes and new territories. He argues that "*decisive changes come about when we change the way we look at things*"[28]. In other words, the new way of looking at our environment can provide new solutions or methods. E. Bru detects an increasing artificiality of the physical environment and a parallel increasing trivialisation of the notion of interiority and exteriority, implying a set of relative distances. "*Cities have swamped their original geographical frameworks: (we see) differing moments within the same city and similar ones in different cities*" The author suggests alternatives means: acknowledging new relations of use, scale and movement. According to E. Bru, real discussion should be **about things and between things**, variability and change, action and awareness of the project between scales.

"*The space in between things, between objects and subjects next to one another, between my house and my neighbour's, between their office and mine, is traversed by many strangers, and it is not a meeting place; it has become empty because it plays no recognisable role; this space is only required to be permeable, and should be traversed with a s little friction as possible*"[29] Bernardo Secchi sees a similar change in the nature of the built environment: continuity, together with centrality or urban equilibrium, is obtained by recognising urban **fragments** and **spaces-in-between**. He refers to the "*inverse-city*", where the traditional centre occupies periphery and vice versa, where big-scale depth sequences might be turned inside-out.

The idea of **in-between-spaces as part of a set of relative distances** reinforces the importance of depth and proximity, more than morphological approaches of single urban artefacts. However, the understanding of depth within a configuration is affected by the way we take into account public, private or collective space, and the reading of distances as a relative notion. Proximity that is seen as a set of universal absolute spacing mechanisms does no longer fulfil our recent social or functional needs or desires for privacy. Absolute distances have no urban meaning unless we put them in a tempo-spatial framework: a 5m distance in between some single-family houses does not have the same meaning or effectiveness when these are located in one neighbourhood or another. Apart from that, the mentioned 5m belong to a much longer and much more complex configuration of other distances that according to the social or cultural profile of its users, changes drastically. It might seem that, according to those time and spatial references, the 5m are not enough or too much or that those judgements change rapidly in time, as different users occupy the mentioned territorial configurations.

vii. Voids, in-between spaces and sequential gaps

Peter Rowe describes in "The Middle Landscape" the very characteristics of contemporary landscape. "*The most disconcerting physical characteristic of the middle landscape is the desolate and inhospitable space left between many buildings and building complexes. Commercial strips extend out in the surrounding countryside without any suggestion of a centre or of termination. Bland residential subdivisions and office parks leapfrog over one another, leaving vacant land and unfinished developments in their wake. Many buildings have a temporary quality, suggesting that they might be here today and gone tomorrow. The surrounding landscape is pervaded by parking lots that offer little definition of their primary function, let alone an inviting environment. Entirely absent are characteristics of traditional city streets that graciously provide for public life*"[30] He recognises the appearance of **voids** and **gaps** within the middle landscape as a problematic but characterising element: he misses the continuous overlap-based complex urban set-ups, that "*graciously provided*" real public life. Indeed, contemporary landscapes might be defined by continuous movement patterns, as we leave our house to go to work in the early morning, drop off the kids at school, pass by the nearest gas station to fill up the tank and buy the newspaper, go to work, come back in the evening, pick up some groceries on the way back, before dropping a colleague off at home. Contemporary landscape may seem more continuous as a result of overall possibilities

28 E. Bru, "The Long Distance Gaze" in "New Landscapes, New Territories", Actar, Barcelona, 1998

29 B. Secchi, "For a Town-Planning of Open Spaces," in Casabella 597-598, January/February 1993, p 116

30 P. G. Rowe, "Making The Middle Landscape", MIT press, Cambridge, 1991, p249

of movement, as a smooth succession of activities, all of them related to mobility. However, this pattern of non-stop movements results in a physically highly fragmented and discontinuous landscape, as P. Rowe described.

Voids or gaps, seen as a structural elements within processes of spatial and social specialisation and segregation, gain importance within urban projects and theories. Rem Koolhaas[31] saw a loss of identity of physical substance, history and context accompany a loss of centrality as the "*Generic City*" advances. He detects different phenomena, changing the nature of urban fabric: houses turning into offices, warehouses into lofts, utilitarian space into public space, increasing pedestrialisation, constructing tangential macro infrastructures while emphasising on historicity as a tourist marketing tool. According to the author, the Generic City has no centre, no own identity, no real history and evacuated the public realm. Real streets are dead, only big roads and pedestrian promenades are left over. R. Koolhaas argues that voids became essential elements within the contemporary city.

Contrasting this with the territorial vision of N.J. Habraken, we might conclude that the traditional system of territorial hierarchies is brought to another level: we now seem to deal with sets of nominal order without the presence of a locational order: territorial logic has partly changed or is taken over by economic-efficiency-driven logic. Since modern city planning, overlap territories are increasingly avoided and partly substituted by clearly segregated and divided **territories of aggregation**. The systematic detection of voids or gaps within territorial systems, apart from overlap scenarios creating certain complexity, seems to be very important: **sequential gaps** seem to have become an important planning device in urban projects. These sequential gaps now appear at different scales within territorial configurations and are linked with various spacing mechanisms, as a part of new contemporary models of proximity.
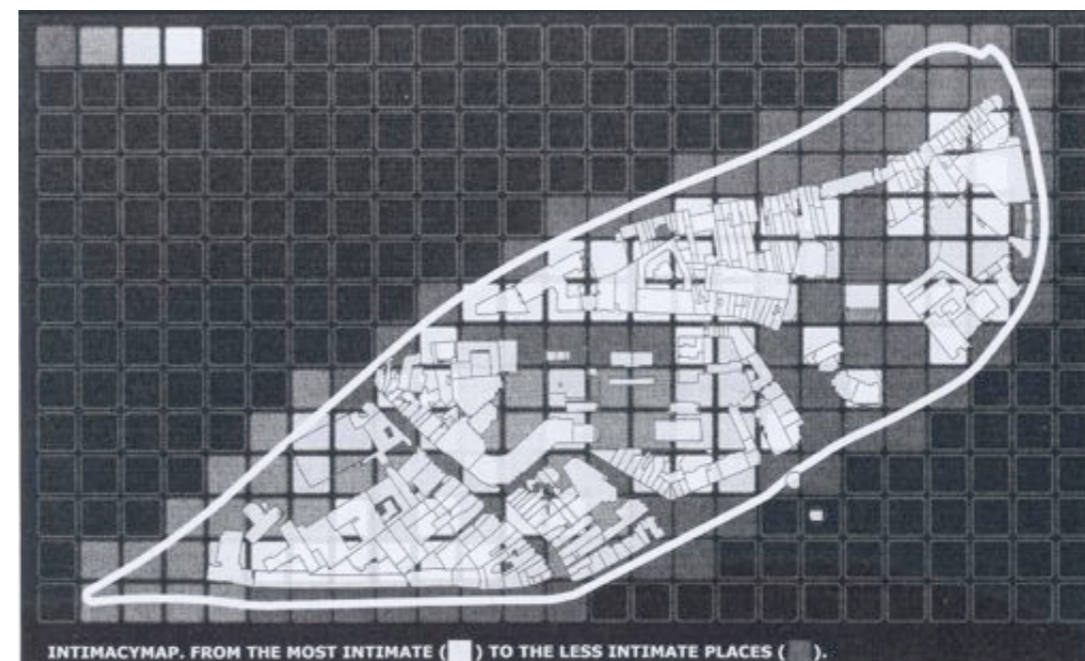

INTIMACYMAP. FROM THE MOST INTIMATE ( ) TO THE LESS INTIMATE PLACES ( ).

Figure II.20: Intimacymap: OSA, Atlas Southwest Flanders, 2004: Buda intimacy/exposure-public-private

(originally published in B., De Meulder, "Old Dispersions and scenes for the Production of Public Space" in Architectural Design, Cities of Dispersal (edited by Els Verbakel/Raf Segal), 2008, p 29)

Bruno De Meulder describes in "*Old Dispersions and Scenes for the Production of Public Space: the Constructive margins of Secondarity*" the underlying logic of an "unbroken urbanscape" in Belgium.

An isotropic universal accessibility model defined one of the densest area in Europe, an area based on home ownership. "*Conventional wisdom condemns (the) "secondarity" as a burden, as it does not allow economies of scale, and nor does it generate the synergies*

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31 R. Koolhaas, "The Generic City",essay of lecture on November 25th at 'Doelen' in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 1995

(also in : "S, M, L, XL", 010 Publishers, Rotterdam, 1995)

that concentration and accumulation allow. Because it remains dispersed, incremental and unconsolidated, it does not create any significant public space, nor an established (hegemonic) order. (...) The absence of rules and norms, generates an ambiguous space. It creates an open city, an embryonic territorial constellation that always remains receptive. Its continuously reproduced undefinedness renders permanent its character of wasteland, a terrain whose potentiality is not consumed" [32]

The author proposes re-editing and re-inserting informal social spaces in areas of wasted land, like sequential gaps, trying to redefine residual spaces, to see urban voids as acceptable and structural elements of territorial organisation. The notion of *"secondarity"* refers to a traditional hierarchical set up of territories while the *modus operandi* seems to be responding to contemporary characteristics of the urban environment. The presented study looks for the new relationships between open public or collective spaces and more dense areas at a regional scale. B. De Meulder concludes that urban fabric, a result of rather *ad hoc* and unconsidered infill, construction, demolition and reconstruction, leads to a large variety of open spaces or sequential gaps with very different relationships to the private constructions. Apparently, he argues, this unordered, chaotic juxtaposition of open spaces offers on the one hand all conceivable gradients between public and private space, and on the other hand opens up a register of spaces ranging from extremely exposed to intimate. The author continues by stating that re-editing would allow the articulation and exploitation of this richness of open-space qualities as what is conventionally only seen as residual space. In other words, this statement means a full acknowledgement of voids, in-between-spaces and sequential gaps as structural and not residual parts of urban configurations.

" (Question:) What's a metaphoric void?
(Answer:) Metaphoric in the sense that their interest or value wasn't in their possible use...
(...) For example, the places where you stop to tie your shoe-laces, places that are just interruptions in your own daily movements. These places are also perceptually significant because they make a reference to movement space.
(...) When I bought those properties (...) the description of them that always excited me the most was "inaccessible" (...) What I basically wanted to do was to designate spaces that wouldn't be seen and certainly not occupied. Buying them was my own take on the strangeness of existing property demarcation lines. Property is so all-pervasive. Everyone's notion of ownership is determined by the use factor " [33]
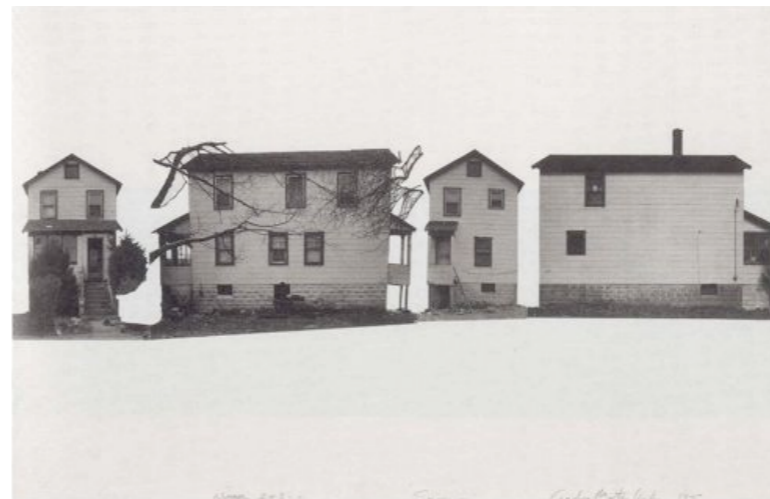

Figure II.21: G. Matta-Clark, "Working with Abandoned Structures", 1973.
(Originally published in Catalogue of Gordon Matta-Clark Exhibition, Museo Nacional, Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2006, p161, Gabriel Gabroni Collection, New York, Courtesy David Zwirner, New York)

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32 B. De Meulder,"Old Dispersions and scenes for the Production of Public Space" in Architectural Design, Cities of Dispersal (edited by Els Verbakel/Raf Segal), 2008, p 29

33 G. Matta-Clark, "Splitting the Humphrey Street Building", interview by Liza Bear, May, 1974, published in Catalogue of Gordon Matta-Clark Exhibition, Museo Naciona, , Cetro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2006, p165-180, quote p. 166)

3. From public and private spaces to collective spaces

i. Private space

A. Madanipour studies the visible and stationary space of the private sphere: the exclusive space of the private property. To define better the relationship between individual use and physical space, the author tries to redefine the very notion of private space: "*privus*" (cfr. Latin) refers to "*single, individual*". According to A. Madanipour, "*Private space is a part of space that belongs to, or is controlled by, an individual, for that individual's exclusive use, keeping the public out. (...) Sometimes private life is played out in a public place (eg. a library)*"[34] Obviously, the link is made with the concept of privacy, by quoting David Gavison who called privacy "*limited accessibility*"[35] determined by three main conditions: secrecy, anonymity and solitude.

A. Madanipour tries to frame the concept of privacy into a historical framework: during the 19th and 20th century's fear of overcrowding, privacy became a major concern as it was also related to crime. Modernist planning tried to reduce overcrowding, sometimes by decentralisation as we saw in post-war London Regional Planning. Suburbanisation became a new pattern of consuming space: middle class households located their large families into suburban, but above all, more "personal and intimate" territories. A. Madanipour mentions how today's modern technology changes the way privacy and publicity are practised and protected. However, he mentions that traditional spatial distinctions did not become obsolete: "*private sphere continues to be mainly defined in spatial terms and protected by spatial means*"[36]. It is in this framework of privacy versus public life that the author seeks to redefine the idea of **territory**: "*The continuous exertion of control over a particular part of physical space by an individual or a group results in the establishment of a territory*"[37] As N. J. Habraken, territory is seen as a system of control of accessibility. A. Madanipour continues by quoting P. Bell[38], "*Territoriality is a set of behaviour and cognitions a person or a group exhibits, based on perceived ownership of physical space*" Here, the author mentions the link between ownership and control, accepting a hierarchy of power and control. He continues defining territory as "*an organisation of activities that provides a feeling of distinctiveness, privacy and personal identity*". In a way, this definition of territory offers, besides the structural vision of systems of accessibility, as defined by N. J. Habraken, a more cognitive, personal and sometimes even socio-functional understanding. A. Madanipour then refers to I. Altman[39] who describes 3 forms of territory: the first category being a primary territory that is personalised and where the owner has complete control over space. Examples of this primary territory can be the home or the office. The second territory shows a rather moderate level of control, as seen in a classroom, while the third form of territory obtains a very low level of control, where it is difficult to assert, as the example of people on a beach. Irwin Altman mentions territoriality being instinctive and defined by a learning curve.

A. Madanipour concludes with a definition saying that private space is an individuated portion of social space, a part of social space that individuals enclose to control for their exclusive use. Interesting in this definition is the mentioning of social space, as we refer to including or excluding individuals or groups from a certain space, allowing or denying access. The understanding of the public-private distinction, based on the amount of controlled exercised upon a territory, leaves behind the limited understanding of private or public spaces as areas privately or publicly owned.

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34 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 41

35 D. Gavison, "Introduction" in R. Wacks, ed., Privacy, volume 1, The International Library of Essays in Law and Legal Theory, Dartmouth, Aldershot, p xi-xx

36 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 49

37 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 50

38 P. Bell, J. Fisher, T. Green, A. Baum, "Environmental Psychology" 4th edition, Harcourt Brace College Publ., Fort Worth, 1996

39 I. Altman, "The Environment and Social Behaviour" Brooks/Cole Monterey 1975

ii. Public space, publicness and strangeness: human behaviour

After studying the internal world of the mind, the personal space of the body, the exclusive space of the property and the intimate space of the home, A. Madanipour moves on and reaches the next conceptual level in the study of the relationship between private and public spaces: the interpersonal space of sociability. He mentions the Latin origins of "public", being "*populus*", meaning "*people*". He follows up with a definition: "*A space is public when it is controlled by public authorities, concerns to people as a whole, is open or available to them, and is used or shared by all the members of a community (...) (Public spaces are) places outside the boundaries of individual or small group control, mediating between private spaces and used for a variety of often overlapping functional and symbolic purposes*"[40]

We emphasise again the notion of control, as N.J Habraken would agree, but with this last definition we also stress **openness** and **availability**, as a notion of urban capacity. Besides that, A. Madanipour refers to maybe the most important condition of public space: the idea of **overlapping boundaries** and even a **symbolic value** of that very space for its inhabitants. Again, this theory allows a broadening of the structural understanding of territory and opens perspectives of cultural and social understanding of space. The ambiguity of reading a certain space indeed depends on overlapping territories, a phenomenon more recently often avoided to stress the property structure in an explicit way.

A. Madanipour refers to the idea of strangeness: after increasing industrial capitalism and urban growth limited to cities, one observed a change in the nature and foundation of social relations going from kinship and clan to contracts and exchange. A new society was created, with each time more impartial spectators and almost no interference: "*an individuated society*", as A. Madanipour calls it. The city in a way became a place of strangers. This observation can help to explain the **increased obsession for differentiating properties**, marking territorial boundaries explicitly or trying to **avoid situations of overlap and territorial ambiguity**. Contracts and laws only help to define these divisions in a clearer way. As a consequence, territorial depth configurations change and its very nature becomes more harsh, with stronger and more violent indications of breakpoints within an urban depth sequence.

These sociological changes not only effect physical reading of the environment, people changed habits or behaviour: "*When moving from the private sphere to the public space, (the routines of the people) change, from changing clothes to shaving or putting make-up, to changing the vocabulary, accent and forms of expression, and adapting more polite, careful manners.(...) The gaps between the actual and ideal individual seems to be covered by staging a performance*"[41] A. Madanipour refers to mask operations: "*a mask is the boundary between the public and the private in an individual*", offering a boundary that is constantly changing, adjusting to the public scenes and the private moods. He refers to R. Sennett[42] who used a dramaturgical model to investigate historical changes in public roles and shifting relationship between public and private life. The mentioned author related modern period with a general decline of public life and the appearance of a capitalist secular urban culture. Public life got reduced to "*dry formal obligations*" and "*codes of impersonal meaning*" and the emphasis on more intimate relations. R. Sennett mentions the spatial equivalents of change as entrances to public buildings get re-oriented, courtyard housing structures turned inside-out, new boundaries for public spaces are defined. According to Sennett, "*Performance and the presentation and exchange of symbols lies at the heart of social life*". The Western tradition of "*teatrum mundi*" shows three main purposes: it introduces illusion and disillusion, it detaches human nature and it recognises roleplay: "*where a strong public life exists, there exists an affinity between stage and street*". However, the dramaturgical model of public space and related behaviour might be too limited to understand its real functioning and value.

Madanipour concludes: "*interpersonal exchange relations among strangers became the dominant form of social relations in emerging cities of post-medieval Europe. The cultural framework that enabled this exchange (...) found a new significance*"[43] Indeed, the understanding of public space in a contemporary context affects the concept of depth and proximity. The measured, designed or

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40 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 113

41 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 119-120

42 R. Sennett, "The Fall of Public Man" Faber and Faber, London 1974

43 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 134

experienced depth, as a result of a systematic crossing of territorial boundaries, going through a set of distances, changes as we rethink its main constituting elements: private space and public space.

iii. Historical re-reading of public space in depth configurations

Madanipour describes the importance and the difference in understanding public space, from ancient agora to medieval marketplaces, and detects a diminishing importance of traditional public space as a result of decentralisation of cities and de-spatialisation of the public sphere. He explains that the ancient Greek agora were seen as meeting places, as marketplaces that constituted an integrative platform for social life. It was organised in a way to concentrate all civic activities and to segregate those from residential use. A. Madanipour claims that ancient Greek spatial organisation was based on human cognition as "*each building was on and in itself*".

Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander mention a similar idea: "*(ancient) cities possess physical clarity because their forms emerged in direct response to relatively simple limited pressures, (they) possess visible physical evidence of its individual origin, growth, and purpose*"[44]

The Roman culture however, subordinated their streets and marketplaces to dominant buildings and axial planning as this represented more power for the state and less importance to democratic practices. Long vistas, mechanical symmetry went together with efforts to centralise all activities in a more monumental way. He explains that later in Middle Ages, planners *avant-la-letre* went back to ancient Greek models of public space while Renaissance design took the Roman model as a main reference. Both models however, obtained a high integration of secular and spiritual activity and meaning while in the Middle Ages that integration disappeared: the market and the cathedral were related to two different activities. A. Madanipour argues that a certain tension started to exist between private and public space: "*the entire medieval city was a market*"[45] which had put continuous pressure on private use of space. On the other hand, to allow free movement and interchange of goods and persons, besides the meeting places, public spaces were needed as well. The author quotes: " *There was (...) a fluid balance between infinitely expanding public space and the eternally encroaching buildings*"[46]. The European medieval urban fabric presented a very deep territorial structure where shared in-between spaces defined the main core. Territorial overlap was very common and the irregular (that is without the existence of an over-all planning) but spontaneous urban growth model showed a wide range of solutions with a high capacity to absorb problems of territorial boundaries.

Figure II.22: Medieval map of the city of Brugge, Belgium, 1563
(image from http://i58.photobucket.com)

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44 S. Chermayeff, C. Alexander, "Community and Privacy" Doubleday & Co Inc. USA 1963, p 51

45 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 196

46 H. Saalman, "Medieval Cities", Studio Vista, London, 1968, p 35

During the Renaissance the notions of symmetry and harmony were rescued: public space depended on perfect proportions while many open spaces were variations on the theme of the crossroad. Public buildings obtained more ornaments than other buildings. Very often the principle of central composition was used, sometimes then applied to city plans, as it was the case of the Sforzinda plan during the 15th century.

This more formal understanding of public space had less consequences for the reading of depth within the urban fabric: all movements were defined by planned sequences within a more flat hierarchical territorial structure: overlap territories or cases of dual or multiple orientation were mostly avoided within this symmetrical urban lay-outs.
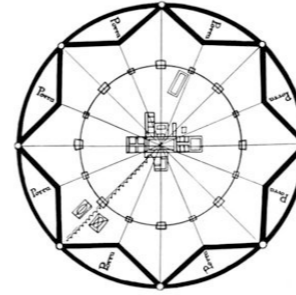

Figure II.23: Sforzinda plan by Filarete, 15th century.

(image from Kostof, Spiro. The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd. 1991)

A. Madanipour continues the historical reading of public space as he describes the 19th century's romantic ideas. Symmetry and harmonic proportions became less important as Gothic and classic styles saw a nostalgic revival, with the added value of new technology and industry. However, public space was not according to pure medieval models of public space: the main idea was to create a display. Architects like Camillo Sitte[47] defined their main requirements for the success of public space: closed vistas, as a result of physical **enclosures**, were created on squares ideally following a "turbine-like" shape, leaving open the centre of the square. C. Sitte encouraged a very strong morphological relationship between public space and the surrounding buildings. In a way, we could read the desire to re-establish a deeper territorial structure as a reaction to former shallow territorial hierarchies, introducing irregularity, based on medieval or classic examples.

This preoccupation for deeper and **irregular territorial models** disappeared with the invention of the car which became the first preoccupation on the list of urban design issues. Pedestrian sequences as well as the conceptual idea of urban display lost all interest as the cars invaded urban fabric. Modern architecture later even claimed there was no more need for streets or traditional squares. Places of assembly were now designed inside the huge buildings, seen as *machines-à-habiter* with no need for ornaments. A. Madanipour sees this as the abolition of public space. He describes a changing figure/ ground relationship that started with modern architecture movements: pre-industrial cities saw public space as a void, surrounded by a mass of private buildings.

The industrial modern city used "*form follows function*" to segregate activities, to erase the "*corridor streets*" and, according to A. Madanipour, erode all public spaces by considering them nothing more than residues of buildings. Later post-modern approaches rescued the idea of spatial enclosures as Gordon Cullen, Kevin Lynch, Rob Krier or Jane Jacobs pronounced a passionate desire to award traditional streets and squares in urban design strategies. Post-modern urban theories dedicated lost of energy to the meaning of territorial boundaries and acknowledged the importance of **overlap territories** in their projects. Entrances of buildings or properties were stressed through the design of real gates or planned gateways, while spaces in between sidewalks and buildings regained meaning. In-between-spaces were upgraded to open-air-theatres while all successive transitions between public and private space were carefully planned and designed as complex and varied urban sequences.

47 C. Sitte, "Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen", Viena 1889.

iv. Non-Western references for private-public distinction

Leaving the Western-European tradition of public space, A. Madanipour describes how public space in Eastern cities got a different treatment: he describes the axial, geometrical patterns of public space design of Merv or Herat, where those spaces were synonym for meeting place, market, festival area or gathering place for political meetings. He mentions the sophisticated case of Meydan-e-Naqsh-e Jahan in Isfahan, Iran (also called Shah Square or Imam Square) where polo was played and some trade took place. "*It was surrounded by the royal palace, the central mosque, the main bazar entrance, a music pavilion and religious schools. This was the integrated heart of the capital city in the sixteenth century. (...) Whoever controlled these urban spaces, controlled the city and society. While the kings used them as displays of their power, the revolutionary masses used them as their meeting points and places of challenging authority*"[48]

The importance of this example lies in the integration of private and public activities, the combination of commercial and religious activities within public space. The morphologically simple set-up of the square contrasted with the complex and layered functioning of the public space: various buildings attracted different people on different moments, generating a regular overlap of activities and areas of influence of its main buildings, like the mosque promoting social integration and solidarity.

Figure II.24: the square of Meydan-e-Naqsh-e Jahan in Isfahan, Iran
(above image google earth, below image originally published in Isfahan X. Monuments, Center for Iranian Studies Newsletter, Vol. 19, No. 1 SIPA-Columbia University-New York Spring 2007)

48 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 206-207

However, A. Madanipour mentions that the public-private mix on the level of the square did not share the same model on the scale of the city. He describes how during 4 centuries the Eastern concept of public space was characterised by transitions and evolutions till the 11th century and then remained unchanged till the 19th century: "*(...) the city was at a functional level clearly divided into public and private realms. The public realm, (...) contained all the common activities of the town, such as trade and commerce, religion, education, administration and other public facilities. On the other hand, the house, were extended families lived, constituted the private realm. One of the main dividing lines between the two realms of the town was the distinction between spheres, temporal routines, and patterns of activities of men and women.*"[49] The public and private relations inside the introverted courtyard houses were organised along the lines of family-versus-stranger, family-versus-member-guest and male-female relations. A. Madanipour mentions that in these houses, the private and semi-private spaces formed the inner core of the house. There was a semi-public space closely associated with the entrance, the domain of men where the guests were received and the public affairs conducted. The internal space of the house had public and private parts, with emphasis on a clear but **gradual transition** between both domains, within the house itself. We could relate this to what N.J. Habraken mentioned when comparing deep territorial structure of the Middle-Eastern urban fabric and the flat version of the North-European cities.

A. Madanipour continues: "*Residential areas were formed as neighbourhoods, which would be walled and gated, with their own small local market and, at times, workshops. (...) They were geographical entities as well as homogeneous communities that were closely knit, forming basic units of society*"[50] He adds that the local mosque and market were often frequented by local people and that these were potentially exclusive spaces, which strengthened the quarter's social and spatial cohesion. Nowadays, public space is under threat of privatisation, being part of a global phenomenon.

v. Integration, fragmentation and privatisation of space

From the previous examples we can extract that a whole territorial system works with the idea of exclusive use of certain spaces, of restricted or denial of access as a constructive design parameter. This statement is very important to the reading of depth: it defines a model in which accessibility has no isotropic value but that is defined by strong contrasts between high accessibility and highly exclusive enclaves. The experience of depth, as a crossing of several boundaries between public and private spaces can be multiple: as a long and smooth transition of spaces or as a short and extreme definition of territorial boundaries, hence other combinations of these parameters. The **crossing, overlap and combination** of those different possibilities is what defines the complex reading of a **multiple territorial structure**. Again, we can refer to the **integration** qualities of space, defining territorial configurations.

A. Madanipour argues that in the modern era the functional urban integration got lost as the size of the city, the speed of movement and the territorial specialisation increased. At the same time, symbolic and functional coherence diminished, **despatialising the public sphere** with a general **avoidance of overlap territories**. "*Public spaces of the city have become either residual spaces, used for parking cars, or at best associated with particular, limited functions, such as tourism or retail.(...) The modern city has therefore gone through a spatial and temporal dispersion of its functions and a despatialisation of some of its activities, which have created multiple, non-converging networks against the cohesive, nodal role which the urban public space could play in the past*"[51] The author mentions that the public sphere no longer is equated with public space, but obtained a metaspatial dimension: "*the sum total of many arenas of communication*". This causes an increasing social polarisation and **privatisation of space**. "As space is stripped of its emotional and cultural value, which is only developed through people's use through time, it is treated as a mere commodity" Adding the obsession for security, a fear of crime, models of urban growth have to be put in a new social framework.

49 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 210

50 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 212-213

51 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 215

vi. Changing value of public life

As mentioned before, Richard Sennett[52] also describes the changing balance between public and private life and agrees with an erosion of the public realm and an increasing interest for the private realm. He reviews treatment of public life at the end of the Roman empire that was considered a formal obligation while private life meant a new focus for emotional energies, almost a principle against public. He sees a similar pattern in contemporary use of space, an attitude of "going along" when referred to public life, "*res publica*" however the private now embodies an end in itself, a privatised psyche, a reflection of what psyches are. R. Sennett argues that now private life is treated as if it has an inner life, an areas seen as precarious and fragile, to be protected and isolated from the public realm. He mentions problematic consequences of this attitude: "*the more privatised the psyche, the less stimulated it will be*" According to R. Sennett, there is "*the modern code of private meaning*": the relations between impersonal and intimate experience seem to have no more clarity. Masses of people are concerned with their single life and with an "*intimate vision of society*" People seem to be working out in terms of personal feeling public matters which properly can be dealt with only through codes of impersonal meaning. People started to measure all social life in terms of personal feelings. R. Sennett calls this "*the erosion of public life*", as behaviour and moral issues only have passion when treated as (falsely) matters of personality. Participation with strangers for social ends has diminished: the author calls it "*greater psychic absorption and lessened social participation*". Public domains became voids and private properties become fortresses, changing contemporary models of territorial configurations. R. Sennett mentions: "*isolation in the midst of public visibility and overemphasis on psychological transactions complement each other*". Another element to take into account is the following: he mentions that public and private space are the molecules of our society. However, "public" can be understood as a **human creation** while "private" is defined by a **human condition**.

This more conceptual or socio-ideological approach does have practical implications: these detected social changes affect the way people try to control space in a territorial way: different spatial phenomena appear: extreme fencing tactics, spacing mechanisms based on exaggerated physical distances, obsessing about well planned territorial transitions, avoiding more spontaneous overlap scenarios or restricting gaps in depth sequences.

vii. Private and public interrelated

Madanipour mentions that the most fundamental distinction between the private and the public is the distinction between the human subject's inner "*space of consciousness*" and the "*outer space of the world*". "*Rather than a pure, disconnected and disembodied private sphere, human subjectivity is located at the intersection of biological and social forces and is constantly changing them and being shaped by them*"[53] He concludes that the inner private space of the body and the public space of the world are **interpenetrating** and **interdependent**. He refers to the growing of a child during which we can see space, associated with the self, finding different spatial layers. The personal space has no physical boundaries but is defined by gestures, language and behaviour. The private property defines exclusive access to space for known individuals and can be seen as part of life that is under the control of the individual in a personal capacity, outside public observation and knowledge or state and official control. In other words, private properties want to be defined by fixed boundaries and are stationary. Again, extreme interest in fencing and differentiating properties can be explained taking this notion into account. "*Territoriality controls aggression in constructing directions, clarifies relations of power and reduces tensions and conflicts*"[54]

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52 R. Sennett, "The Fall of Public Man" Faber and Faber, London 1974

53 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 229

54 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 230

On the other hand, *"public spaces are places outside the boundaries of individual or small group control, mediating between private spaces and used for a variety of often overlapping functional and symbolic purposes. (...) Public spaces have been multi-purpose accessible spaces distinguishable from, and mediating between, demarcated exclusive territories of households and individuals."*[55]

Indeed, there has been a change of understanding and use of public space: before, public was related to kinship and clan, while now it is associated with contract and exchange among strangers, conditioned by an increasing complexity of urban society and rising complexity of abstract relationships. Often, as A. Madanipour argues, public life has become a performance, where symbols are represented and exchanged, where masks are displayed, composed and reshaped: the city as a stage. There seems to be a need for a certain neutrality and flexibility. These conceptual remarks have direct consequences for the way we design the environments we inhabit: all configurations, containing public and private areas, are pre-programmed and combined to create the perfect scenography for this urban performances: leisure waterfronts, privatised interior streets in shopping malls, event-related urban squares or theme-based gated communities define our contemporary growth models as never before. Crossing boundaries is controlled and pre-programmed, overlap zones erased from the sequences, where possible, gaps or voids avoided to guarantee economic success.

In a way, A. Madanipour's theory proves private and public space to be **relative notions**, just as N.J. Habraken did in the previous case by redefining territory as an access control mechanism. The presented definitions of successive spatial references, starting from the subject's space of consciousness till territories of multiple shared scenarios, allow a more accurate reading of depth configurations, proximity and permeability. However, traditional public-private distinction should now be redefined critically to stress real qualitative characteristics of depth configurations.

viii.A new condition for public space: collective space

Contemporary urban phenomena invite profound rephrasing of the theory about private and public space: traditional bipolar private-private distinctions might not explain contemporary ways of territorial functioning.

Manuel de Solà-Morales[56] mentioned that, since the end of the 19th centur,y public space was systematically reinforced in urban projects: urban extension plans or big scale parks responded to coherent design mechanisms that saw public space as something more important than private space. However, during the 20th century, design tactics, as well as the nature of the environments' operating agents, have changed drastically. The dominance of car traffic, the appearance of production models based on consume and less on production, the increased use of telecommunication technologies, the speed of change and intervention and, above all, the **change of scale** of the latest urban projects have changed the way we design, build and experience our environment. Manuel de Solà-Morales mentioned 3 main theoretical approaches on private-public tension that during the 1970's and 1980's appeared as a result of the first changes. The first one the author describes, is an urban theory based on a monographic studies of cities, taking classic street-wall locations as defining instrument for streets, parks and squares. The second method consisted out of studies of the architectural object, emphasising architectural landmarks within the city. Another approach saw public space as a system of interconnected open spaces, like for example F. L. Olmsted's *"emerald necklace park system"* in Boston. Even so, these theories no longer respond to recent changes at urban scale.

55 A. Madanipour, "Public and Private Spaces of the City" Routledge London 2003, p 233

56 M. de Solà-Morales, "Public and Collective Space: The Urbanisation of the Private Domain as a New Challenge", in La Vanguardia, May 12th, Barcelona 1992, reprinted in "A Matter of Things", Nai Publishers, Rotterdam 2008
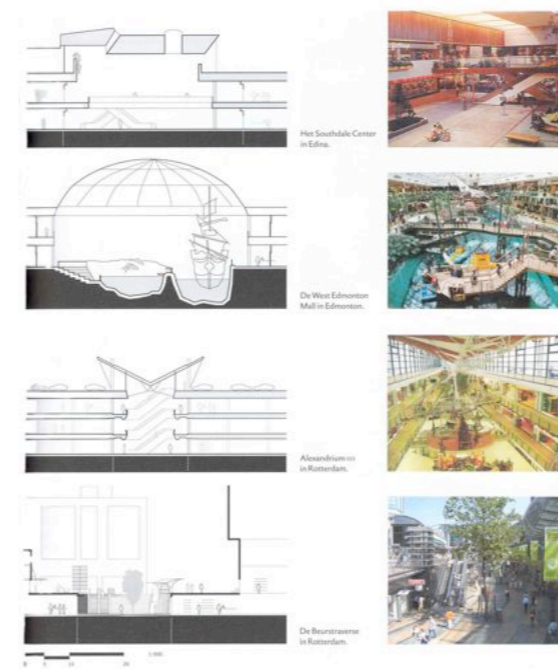
Figure II.25: examples of collective spaces: contemporary shopping malls
(originally published in Meyer, F. de Josselin de Jong, M.J. Hoekstra, "Het Ontwerp van de Openbare Ruimte. De kern van de Stedenbouw in het Perspectief van de Eenentwintigste Eeuw" SUN, Amsterdam, 2006, p 129)

As said before, processes of spatial specialisation and socio-functional segregation go together with increasing thematisation and extreme systematisation of the built environment. The traditional dual mechanism of public versus private looses strength as new models of space use and production arise. However, the recent mentioned spatial phenomena ask for a new understanding that is no more based on a division between private or public space but deals with **collective use of space**. In a way, Manuel de Solà-Morales questioned two aspects of the traditional definition of public space: that it should be publicly owned to have a collective dimension, and that it should be freely accessible by everyone. The author argues: "*It is a fact that the city is the very place where the private domain can be, and often is, a social domain- just as much as or indeed even more than the public domain.(...) Private buildings as public elements, radiating social meaning and value that extend beyond the actual buildings embody their urban character*"[57]. Tom Avermaete and Hans Teerds, who make a comparative study on "*Architectural Positions on the Public Sphere*", quote: "*(...) to de Solà-Morales, both these attributes were becoming obsolete, and he argued that even in the most traditional European cities, much public life was developing elsewhere.*"[58] The very nature of the property, that is who owns the piece of land or the building, becomes less important than the way we use space. They continue saying that, as a response, Manuel de Solà-Morales suggested extending the notion of public space to encompass new spaces such as "*parking lots, shopping malls, vacation centres and cinema complexes.*" He called these **collective spaces** and argued that architects should seek broader responsibility for their design. They should not concede their design to commercial logic and developer standards, but rather seek to transform them into challenging new fields of architectural investigation. M. De Solà-Morales described this task as "*the urbanisation of the collective territory.*" The author continues: "*the civic, architectural, urban and morphological richness of a contemporary city resides in the collective spaces that are not strictly public or private, but both simultaneously. These are public spaces that are used for private activities, or private spaces that allow for collective use, and they include the whole spectrum in between. Moreover, in the past decades the design of these collective spaces seems to have become an important modus operandi to intervene in the contemporary city. At the intersection between an architectural and an urban scale, architects and urban planners*

57 M. de Solà-Morales, "Public and Collective Space: The Urbanization of the Private Domain as a New Challenge," in Oase, n° 33, 1992, p3-8

58 T. Avermaete, H. Teerds, "Architectural Positions on the Public Sphere", The 2007 Delft Lecture Series, Places 19.2, 2007

design projects that, through their character and hybridisation of privacy and publicity, contribute to the civic, typological and morphological richness of the city."[59]

The author suggests **interconnecting private, enclosed spaces,** to upgrade and turn them into parts of collective realm: to include the particular into the sphere of the influence of the public.
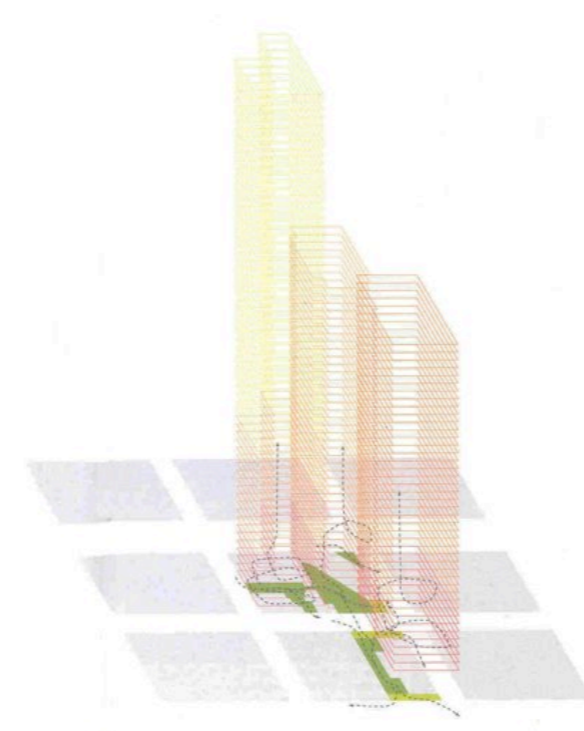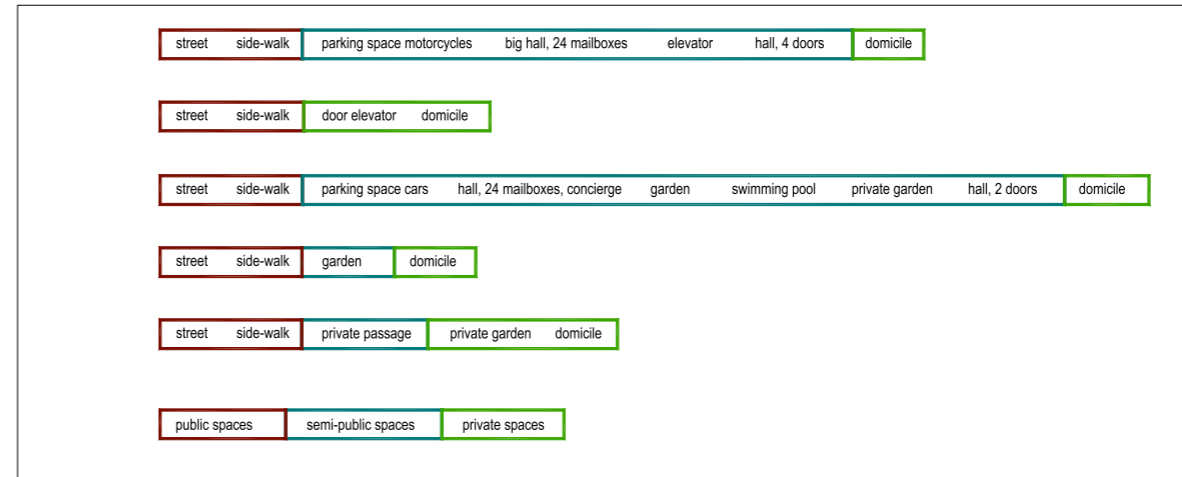

figure II.26: Privately Owned Public Spaces, Manhattan, NYC. Various Authors.
(originally published in "Crossover", ed. A. Graafland, L. Jaye Kavanaugh, 010 Publishers, Rotterdam, 2006, p 511)

This new understanding of the private-public relationship changes the character of depth configurations and proximity: it no more depends on public/private distinction but **on the amount, quality and nature of collective spaces**. Depth understood as a successive crossing of territorial boundaries from public realm to private one, or vice versa, gets a different meaning if we apply it to the idea of collective spaces. The simple, clear and linear understanding of an urban sequence of approach shifts to a multiple, more ambiguous reading of depth in urban projects. If we take into account the collective use of space, independently of the public or private ownership, the successive boundary crossing is very different from a traditional bipolar model. We can no more count in an objective way the amount of boundaries we challenge: it now depends on the **way we use space within the urban configuration** and the personal relative space of the user, within an urban matrix of relative distances.

TRADITIONAL SCHEME OF APPROPRIATION

| street | side-walk | parking space motorcycles | big hall, 24 mailboxes | elevator | hall, 4 doors | domicile |

| street | side-walk | door elevator | domicile |

| street | side-walk | parking space cars | hall, 24 mailboxes, concierge | garden | swimming pool | private garden | hall, 2 doors | domicile |

| street | side-walk | garden | domicile |

| street | side-walk | private passage | private garden | domicile |

| public spaces | semi-public spaces | private spaces |

TERRITORIAL DEPTH

TD: 7 | street | side-walk | parking space motorcycles | big hall, 24 mailboxes | elevator | hall, 4 doors | domicile |

TD: 4 | street | side-walk | door elevator | domicile |

TD: 9 | street | side-walk | parking space cars | hall, 24 mailboxes, concierge | garden | swimming pool | private garden | hall, 2 doors | domicile |

TD: 4 | street | side-walk | garden | domicile |

TD: 5 | street | side-walk | private passage | private garden | domicile |

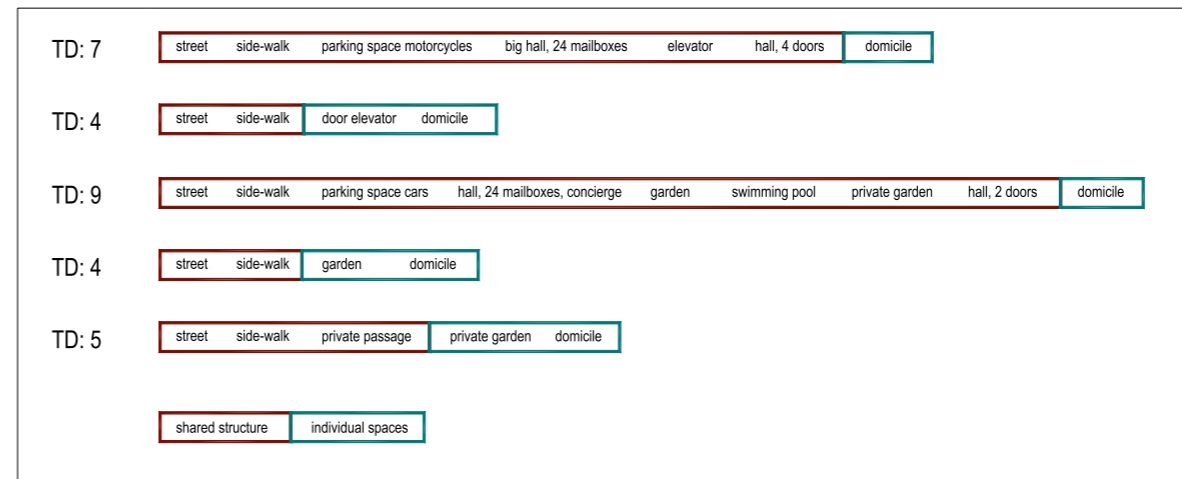| shared structure | individual spaces |

Figure II.27: Comparison of depth configurations in different housing typologies: (above) according to the traditional public-private distinction, (below) according to the level of collective use of space.