PAPER TITLE

Urban Porosity Patterns for Exchange in the City: the case of Europan

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Abstract

The author of this article develops an Urban Porosity Pattern Matrix through which he studies how urban design projects relate Public Agents (catalysts for public flows) with Urban Interfaces (multiscalar perimeters-edges of urban patches and enclaves), through an urban actors' filter, to envision a porous connective urban environment. In fact, the analysis focuses on the passage from the Europan ideas competition stage to that of implementation. (European Urban Design/Architecture Competition for young professionals). More precisely, the Urban Porosity Pattern Matrix establishes a reading of Europan winning projects under implementation and demonstrates through their mutation, the tolerance of the projects' actors to urban porosity. The author participated in several Europan activities regarding the concept of urban porosity: working on the actual sub-theme of the competition (member of Europan Scientific Committee), writing an article for the catalogue of Europan implementations, ("Welcome back in my back yard: an exploration of urban porosity", 2012) and animating a debate in the Europan 11 Forum of Results in May 2012 in Vienna, ("Creating Urban Fluidity through a porous urban fabric"). Through this article, he links the Europan urban design processes with the problematics in regards to Urban Design Quality and its Social Dimension, mainly how urban design could overcome the fragmentary social pressures and the withdrawal from public space.

Key words: Europan, Urban porosity, Project Actors

1. Introduction

In this article the author argues for the collective character of urban design practices that establish urban porosity "friendliness" among the project actors, resisting the fragmentary social pressures such as privatization and withdrawal from public spaces. Urban porosity emerges through an exchange between public flows (Public Agents) and urban patches or enclaves (bound by Urban Interfaces) (Shane, 2005). Urban porosities may have spatial manifestation however, they emerge through an "actorial" filter created by diverse actors' agendas during the formulation of urban design projects.

The author demonstrates how the Europan platform (European architectural competition for the city of young professionals), is a pertinent research area since part of its activities evolve around implicit and explicit processes of acculturation of urban actors with urban porosity agendas.

The author has developed an Urban Porosity Pattern Matrix through which he studies how urban design projects relate Public Agents (catalysateurs for public flows) with Urban Interfaces (multiscalar edges of urban patches and enclaves), through an urban actors' filter, to envision a porous connective urban environment. In fact, the analysis focuses on the passage from the Europan ideas competition stage to that of implementation.

As a matter of fact, the Urban Porosity Pattern Matrix emerged gradually through the involvement of the author in Europan activities (Stratis 2005). More precisely, he studied the process of implementation of some Europan projects to write an article on urban porosities for the Europan Implementations publication (Stratis, 2012). Plus, he co-animated a debate based on the same theme, with Pascal Amphoux (the author and Amphoux are both members of the Europan Europe Scientific Committee), in the Forum of Europan Results in Vienna, 2012.

Firstly, the author introduces, through three stories, the tension between enclaving dynamics and urban porosity practices demonstrating the challenges of urban design towards a less fragmented urban environment.

Then, the author refers to the tensions between Public Agents and Urban Interfaces that take place in the stories, yielding to either practices of enclaving or to those of "knitting" urban patchworks. By doing so, he gradually formulates the Urban Porosity Pattern Matrix.

Further on, the author justifies the relevance of the Europan context to urban porosity challenges especially, that of the transformation of public agents and interfaces during the passage from an ideas stage competition to that of implementation.

Then, the author employs the Urban Porosity Pattern Matrix to unfold some of the findings through the study of a selection of Europan winning projects during the rite from the ideas competition stage to that of implementation.

Finally, he concludes with the implications on processes of collective urban design practices and their relation to the Urban Porosity Pattern Matrix. In fact, the author addresses how the Urban

Porosity Pattern matrix could be both analytical and conceptual tool to support the urban porosity friendly nature of urban design practices.

2. Urban design challenges in fragmented urban environments

2.1 Urban design as hybrid patchwork making

Urban design lies in fact, in a crack between architecture and planning (Shane, 2005 & 2011, Sorkin, 2001). Urban Design which emerged in the 1940s and is actually gaining popularity (Mandipour, 2006) is a field which by definition has a fragmented character vis-à-vis overall planning development plans. It emerged with the realization of the impossibility to have control over entire cities because of a shift in the social, political and economic contexts. Urban design has become a legitimate tool to city authorities which have gained importance over national planning. In the case of Europe the cities have an important say in their urban transformation, (Stratis, 2012, 2014). The public sector still plays a decisive role in North European cities, contrary to the most of South European and North American ones. Even so, we are witnessing a decreasing influence of the European welfare state on city making, which may increase urban fragmentation. Opposing to the fragmented logic of projects coming out of urban design practices, Sorkin reintroduces the concept of Master Plan stressing its importance for its unifying characteristics.

Shane approaches the urban environment as *"a variety of patches, or enclaves that are interconnected by an ecology of armatures – transportation and communication networks – set in landscape and crucially complicated by a wide variety of embedded heterotopias"* (Shane, 2005, pp 14,15).

His approach aims to strengthen urban design as an emerging field of inquiry for new strategies and tactics to deal with a hybrid patchwork, (Shane, 2005, p.11). In addition, he emphasizes the urban actors' role, in activating a transformative recombinant system of urban elements. Such activation takes place by a sort of urban splicing analogous to genetic recombination, involving sorting, layering, overlapping, and combining (Shane 2005, p. 6). In fact, Shane revisits Urban Design as an agent to help the urban actors operate in a complex and recombinant world with nobody in charge of the overall system. In other words, no actor dominates.

The importance of actors in urban design has been put forward by a recombinant urbanism approach (Shane 2005), where the city is considered to be made of actions taken place by a perpetual re-alliance of all sorts of actors, (Vlay, Stratis, 2010). Shane reminds us of Kevin Lynch's theories but also those of the recombinant approach of Kriers' brothers and of the Urban Design Agency (UDA) kit-of-parts aiming to make accessible design decisions to the broader public. However, such approaches have led to the New Urbanism movement with problematic

modes of participation (Sorkin, 2001). Madanipour brings forward the multi-actor environment of urban design through his approach with three kinds of actors those of regulators, producers and users (Madanipour, 2006).

The actual challenge is to reintroduce unifying characteristics through urban design practices beyond the master plan itself. A sort of acupuncture approach seems to be more appropriate, aiming gradually in a nonlinear manner to a coherent whole by readjusting initial common visions.

2.2 Three stories of challenging urban design

Each of the three stories mentioned below, brings forward a different challenge for urban design regarding its posture vis-a-vis fragmentary social pressures and segregation tendencies. The stories build on the relevant urban design references, setting the grounds for the article's problematics.

The first story is about a rather isolated gated community, such as an elderly village in Orlando USA and its political influence for the new US president back in 2012. The second story is about the opening up of a ghetto area in Hooglviet, Netherlands through redefined State urban politics called WIMBY (Provoost, 2008). The third story comes from Europan itself and is about the urban dimension of new housing in Vienna, Austria. Urban connectivities are established between the housing site and the city by a complex alliance of urban actors who participate in the transgression of an ideas competition winning project to its implementation.

Story One: beware of the intolerance incubated in isolated enclaves: An article in the French newspaper Le Monde back in May 15th 2012, was commenting on the likely decisive influence of the USA presidential elections outcome by the elderly community of the "Villages" in Orlando, USA. As a matter of fact, the Obama's policies on national health care were against the exclusive character of such gated communities, endangering the established balance of their protected lives and healthcare services. The article went on interrogating on the possibility of a third age populated enclave in Orlando to influence the whole world by tipping on one US presidential candidate over the other, blocking Obama to run for his second presidential period. We all know the outcome of this debate; however, we are aware of the increasing segregating practices supported by the neoliberal globalized economies guessing that such overturn may take place in the near future.

The spatial organization logic of the "Villages" in Orlando is based on the "New Urbanism" ideals which promote the quality of the proximity scale, human scale and mixed uses. However, the homogeneity of the "Villages" inhabitants in regards to age group and income class, transforms such urban patches into introverted enclaves, intolerant to any social changes that may affect their serenity. The neoliberal market forces zealously, promote such enclaving processes and their spatial products (Easterling, 2005) that thrive in the globalized economy. The art of

enclaving eloquently described by Banham (1971), regarding Los Angeles is upscaled to a globalized context.

The point of this story is the increasing intolerance of such enclaves' populations that eminently could affect the rest of the world with their priorities in keeping their status quo. We are witnessing a generalized NIMBY phenomenon where, what counts is not any more what goes to their back yard, but how the outside world should be changed so that their back yard stays intact.

Story Two: Use WIMBY politics for rebranding segregated urban areas: Hoogvliet is the name of a failed modernist housing project in the Netherlands. A spatial product of the Dutch modernist Welfare State policies, that failed to adjust to the contemporary Dutch residents' demands thus, gradually abandoned, becoming a stigmatized urban area. A State initiative promoted the urban porosity as the vehicle to reverse the stigmatized identity of Hoogvliet. WIMBY is the name of the project, in other words a "Welcome In My Back Yard" project, (Provoost, 2008). Through an acupuncture approach, an explicit welcoming of the rest of the city into the housing project site takes place, with new mobility networks, public program both for the residents and for all city inhabitants, with the ground getting reshaped to filter such flows. The engagement of the architects' community as well as that of the housing project allowed another level of connection to take place in regards to the actors involved. However, the crisis of the welfare state has hit even the Dutch door, forcing the cities' actors to rethink their actual urban design practices, such as that of master planning that generated between other things, a considerable amount of vacant housing (Rietveld R. & Rietveld E., 2014).

We keep in mind the role of the State in WIMBY politics and we should start wondering what could be alternative actors' alliances to keep up such politics in the context of a weakening State across Europe.

Story three: Give an urban strategy to a housing project: "Oasis 22" is the name of a recently built housing project in Vienna. It is in fact, the result of a Europan 9 competition winning project by the studio UEK. The articles in the monograph publication entitled "An urban strategy for a housing project", explicitly address the cross-scale challenge for any debate on urban connectivity. "From the very beginning the team focused on interdisciplinary methods which brought new focus of cooperation to the project". The team explicitly mentions that "by involving new actors into the project, extra ideas, like the participative activation process could pursue" (from Europan Austria website)

In fact, this project's implementation process mobilized at least fifteen different actors to assist the passage from the ideas competition to the implementation phase. The Europan collective urban design platform, a generative ideas device, has gone hand-in-hand with the Viennese welfare culture of city making, to produce a porous, well connected housing project.

The Vienna Europan project is one of many winning projects in the Europan sessions that undergo the passage from the ideas to the implementation stage. Some of them are more

successful than others. A few get built and others become master plans for future development. Most of them struggle with urban porosity challenges. The winning project teams state initially their images of the possible on porosity matters. Their projects become vehicles for re-allying urban actors around challenges of connectivity.

The question raised in regards to the third story, is as a matter of fact, the main problematic of the article: What alternative urban design practices to support such actors' alliances beyond private driven NIMBY politics and State driven WIMBY ones?

2.3 Cross-bordering practices for urban porosity

Considering the urban environment as a "patchwork", could the art of urban "knitting" oppose.to that of enclaving? Building on this metaphor, we could refer to Sennett who introduces two kinds of limits of the patches, where the knitting may need to take place. In his short article in the Venice Biennale of Architecture Catalogue 2006, he distinguishes the borders from the boundaries. He sees borders, on the one hand, as devices which allow infiltrations that generate all sorts of urban dynamics between parts of the contemporary city, enhancing the possibilities of coexistence. Boundaries, on the other hand, are impenetrable urban features that segregate entire areas within the city.

The porous nature of borders attributes them a paradoxical interface character since borders could both channel and block urban flows. The cross-bordering practice may have a multiscalar dimension involving a multiplicity of public agents.

We will focus on three public agents such as mobility networks, public program and that of public ground. We will examine the multiscalar dimension of cross-bordering practice at the urban interfaces of the Urban Design project perimeter, that of the urban block, that of the building perimeter and that of the housing unit, (fig 01)

The aim is to go beyond simplistic assumptions of a generalized need of physical connectivity to resist segregation and to introduce a complex association of urban porosities in physical, temporal and pragmatic contexts (Stratis 2001), demonstrating the need for collective urban design practices.

We will see further on, the pertinence of Europan to the urban porosity debate. How the objectives of this article profit from the Europan context and from the author's engagement into such European Urban Design platform from an architectural approach.

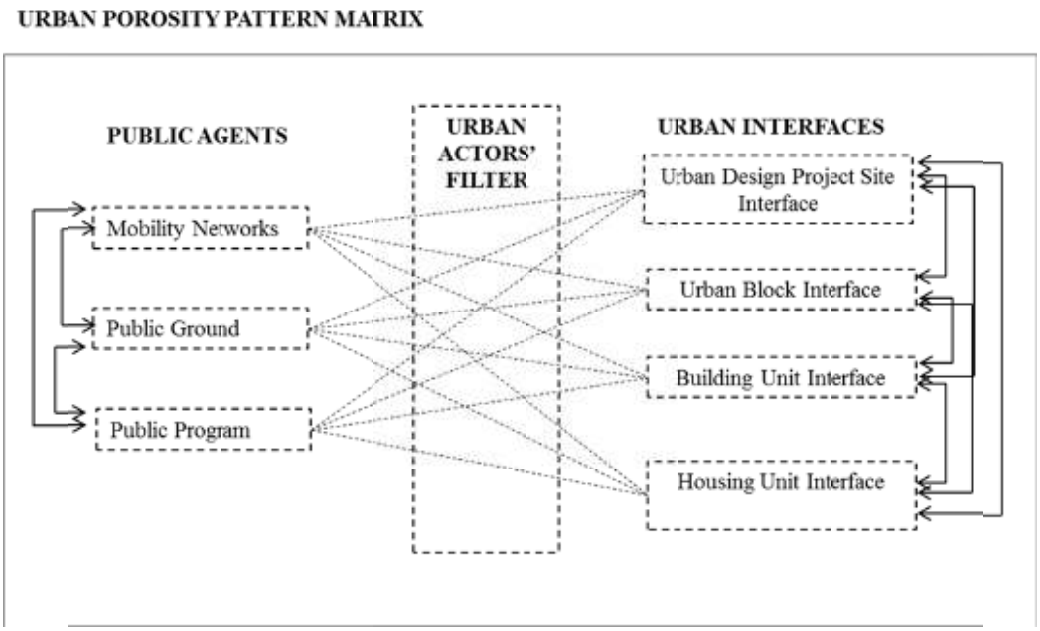

Fig 01

3. Europan's relevance to the urban porosity debate.

In this part, we will address the relevance of Europan to a broader aspect of urban porosity, emphasizing its passage through "actorial" filters. We will firstly introduce the reader to Europan and its activities. We will then refer to the literature produced by Europan in regards to urban porosity. Further on, we will allude to two kinds of fuzziness that make Europan even more relevant to the article's problematics.

3.1. **About Europan**

Europan is actually a European network of urban design competitions open to young professionals (architects, landscape architects, planners), under 40 years old. It takes place every two years approximately with 45-60 European cities participating in each session.

Looking back to the 25 years of Europan activities, we could see a diversity of agents and interfaces through which an exchange between urban actors takes place in regards to the role of architecture in the city. As a matter of fact, issues of urban porosity have been in the heart of the

Europan project both on physical and temporal contexts as well as on pragmatic ones (Stratis 2001).

It's true that the challenges for urban design have changed considerably since the 1980s when Europan emerged from the French PAN (Progressive Architectures Nouvelles). Following the winning projects over the various sessions we could as a matter of fact, witness the shift on both the definition of porosity by the teams as well as by the Europan literature itself. We could sense in fact, a similar shift like the one taking place in the architectural discourse outside Europan, that from the object oriented proposals where the built form was offered by the architects for all urban problems, to process oriented projects, where multidisciplinary teams enriched with landscape architects and planners, acknowledge the limitations of the built form vis-à-vis urban porosity challenges by employing much more sophisticated tools to address challenges of connectivity in much larger competition sites.

3.2. Europan's practice as part of urban porosity strategies

The practice of Europan reveals all sorts of strategies relating to patterns of urban porosity, not only with regard to the physical space of the city, but also in relation to "cross-bordering" practices amongst the actors involved. Such strategies are reflected in the winning projects and extensively described in the Europan Results and Implementation catalogues. For example, the 1999 Catalogue, "From Ideas to Realization", introduced the notion of the open block (schotsen in Dutch) in a discussion between Didier Rebois and the S333 team for the Groningen project. Further on, Chris Younès referred to the crucial role of nature in the in-between spaces of the built environment in the 2004 Catalogue "Europan 1-6 Negotiated Projects". In the Europan 10 Catalogue of Results alone, there are three articles by Bonzani, Franco and Amphoux about agents of urban porosity, such as ground treatment, building morphologies or walking practice. In addition, there is an article on actors' "cross-bordering" practices by Vlay and the author, (Vlay, Stratis, 2010).

3.3. Mobilizing ideas for porosity: a hybrid urban design practice between network and centralized Europan's character.

The paradoxal aspects of the pan-european urban design practice platform create a diversity of additional porosities in regards to the processes of formulation of the urban design projects.

Firstly, we are talking about its fuzziness between ideas and implementation competition. Ideas are devices that mobilize urban politics. Consequently, the innovative approaches of the winning projects reassemble the projects actors by facilitating collective visions. Their processes of implementation become platforms for negotiating potential urban connectivities, and they attribute value to the public dimension of Urban Design practice. Both, target to increase the habitat alternatives for inhabitants who may be willing to abandon the comfort of neoliberal enclaving habitats.

The second paradox lies in the simultaneous networked and centralized nature of Europan organization. Thematic concepts are introduced thanks to the Europan's centralized nature supported by a Scientific Committee. Then, those concepts are challenged through the organization's feedback network consisting of urban actors across Europe. The three forums of each session (forum of sites, of cities & juries and that of results) assure physical contact between the network members, both old ones and newcomers. Consequently, the participating urban actors find themselves quite often in unlikely associations across Europe, with cities, sites and projects inscribed in similar conditions as their project site.

We will focus on the recent Europan sessions, profiting from the Europan Forum of Results of May 2012 in Vienna where some of the sessions were devoted to the processes of the Europan winning projects' implementations. One of the sessions explicitly addressed the challenge of "creating urban fluidity through a porous urban fabric". The author wrote a relevant article for the Europan Implementations Publication (Stratis, 2012), used as food for thought for a debate he co-animated with Pascal Amphoux. The session consisted of two circles of participants. The first one included the clients and architectural teams of the Europan projects under implementation in Gembloux, Belgium and Saintes, France. The second circle consisted of sites representatives, winning teams from the following session, that of Europan 11. The winners who came to the Forum of Results to celebrate their victory, found themselves in working sessions, getting insights from colleagues of former Europan practices. In this case, the theme itself of porous urban connectivities operated as a common concern of the project actors coming from 17 cities from 10 European countries. As a matter of fact, the participants' contribution to the theme enriched the debate on the role of collective urban design practices in regards to urban porosity.

4. Methodological Approach

The author studies the transition from competition to implementation of 12 winning projects, located on 10 Europan sites from Europan 7 to Europan 10 in 7 countries. The study in fact, explores the tolerance of project actors involved in this transition, to urban porosity. The existing sites are mostly urban voids either enclosed between urban development and transport infrastructures (Vienna (AT), Villeurbanne (FR), Montreux (CH), Halle (DE), Dietikon (CH) or situated mostly at urban peripheries between urban land and agricultural or common land (Córdoba (ES), Isle d'Abeaux (FR), Carouge-Bachet (CH). In the case of Gembloux (BE) and Augustenborg (DK), the sites are potential interfaces between existing urban fabric and public spaces.

The author has combined several qualitative methods to study the urban porosity aspect of the selected Europan projects: a careful study of drawings, images and texts of the projects, a series of questionnaires filled-in by the winning teams and the Europan national secretariats, and participation in a debate with some of the Europan actors discussing about the same issues. The

combination of these methods reduces the risk of false observations. However, we have to admit that the very small number of sampling does not allow us to make any generalizations. Nevertheless, some important specific remarks emerged regarding the "urban porosity friendliness" of the projects' actors under study.

4.1 Mapping the filtering performance of urban interfaces

The first part of the study refers to the paradoxical performance of urban porosity: that of simultaneously opening-up and closing-down in regards to public flows (Public Agents). The author studied the drawings, images and texts of the 12 selected projects in terms of four performative elements: a. The opening-up agent that connects the project site to the rest of the city, b. the closing-down agent that promotes privacy for the site's inhabitants, c. the smallest urban unit whose interface manages urban porosity, d. the mode of multiplication of such unit into the project's site.

4.2 Questionnaires about the change of the projects' actors' "urban porosity friendliness" during the implementation process

The questionnaires were divided in two parts. In the first one, the project teams were invited to name the actors involved in their projects and their "urban porosity friendliness" in regards to regulations, priorities and mentalities. Then, they had to explain how their "urban porosity friendliness" changed between the ideas competition stage and that of implementation. Which urban actors had disappeared and who had appeared during the implementation process.

The second part of the questionnaire consists of three questions. The first one is about the specific kinds of urban porosity in their projects. The second one is about the change of such urban porosities during the implementation process. Finally, the third question was about the kinds of negotiation employed to sustain the projects' urban porosities into the implementation stage.

The author processed the findings into a "cloud" of urban porosities arranging them in a spectrum ranging from translocal interfaces (regional) to very local ones (collective). In fact, the urban porosities were produced by the three Public Agents of mobility networks, of public program and of public ground. The next step was to overlay on the "cloud", some implementation factors such as safety, market feasibility, financial priorities that challenged as a matter of fact, the degree of urban porosity.

5. Findings regarding the Europan's Urban Porosity Patterns and their transformation through the projects' implementation stage

The findings are divided in two parts. The first one relates to the specific examples of Urban Porosity Patterns emerging from the studied projects. The second one is about the change of such patterns through the implementation stage.

5.1. Selected Europan projects' Urban Porosity Patterns

We mentioned already the emergence of urban porosity patterns through an interrelationship of Public Agents and Urban Interfaces through an "actorial" filter. The public agents that manage public flows are: the mobility networks, the public ground, and the public program. The Urban Interfaces where the Public Agents are manipulated consist of: the urban design competition project site interface, the urban block interface, the building unit and that of the individual housing unit. The "actorial" filter is formulated by the urban actors with their specific policy making and the embedded urban culture of the city in which the urban design project is proposed for, (see figure 01). We will firstly present the findings regarding the Public Agents and then those regarding the Urban Interfaces.

-Public Agents.

Mobility Networks: they create translocal porosities and their WIMBY opportunities depend on their type. Secondary car roads selectively infiltrate most of the project sites, creating access to the building blocks or buildings. In other cases they serve the project peripherally (Isle d'Abeau, E10; Vienna, E9, Montreux, E10). Pedestrian and bike networks are more welcome where high-speed transport such as rail and highways are distanced by parks (Córdoba, E8; Dietikon, E10) or topographic interventions (Carouge-Bachet, E9).

Public Ground: it infiltrates the project's site in the form of parks with set geometries (Villeurbanne, Isle d'Abeau) or in the form of landscaped fields (CarougeBachet, Montreux, Dietikon, Halle). Its 24hr accessibility is a challenge during the implementation process.

Public Programme: ground floor public services in fact, activate in-between open spaces. They attract the rest of the city into the project site via networks. In most of the projects, such programmes either shrink during the implementation phase because of market restrictions (Montreaux, E10; Vienna, E9) or they are displaced to the project site's periphery (Córdoba, E8; Carouge-Bachet, E9). Sometimes the attractiveness of the proposed public programme creates additional centralities in the project's site (e.g. a new municipal hall in Gembloux, E10; an urban centre in Augustenborg, E10).

-Urban Interfaces

Borders/interfaces have qualities of both infiltration and resistance. In order to establish urban-porosity acceptable for site developers, the project teams embody strategies for opening up the site to public flows and simultaneously strategies for enclosing it to protect the privacy of residents. Most of the projects become a matrix of multiscalar processes for filtering urban flows, using as their interfaces the perimeter of the project site or those of the urban or the building blocks or even that of the housing unit, but usually most of them. Each project chooses the interface to "fight" for the most. Creating a thick threshold between public and private, becomes the challenge of the projects' teams. They in fact, keep a critical spread between public and collective spaces to allow fuzziness in the use of open spaces.

Fig 2

Fig 3

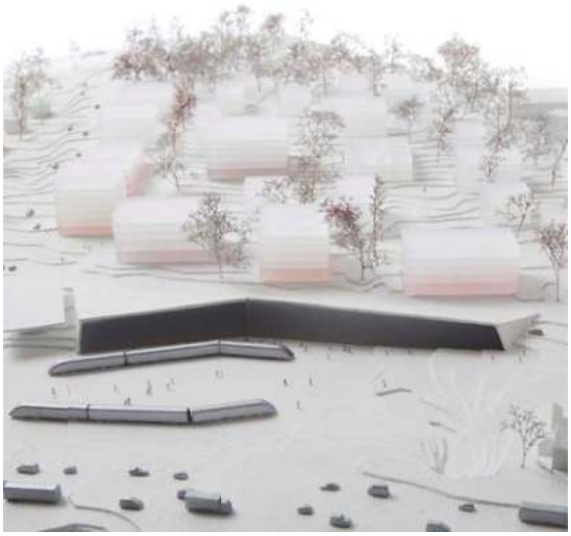

Fig 4

Fig 5

Project Site Interface. Since many of the sites are close to transport infrastructures such as highways and railways, the first thing to do is to block the noise. This is sometimes done with buffer vegetation (Córdoba, E8, fig. 2) combined with building features such as window gardens (Dietikon E10, fig. 3). In other cases, a noise barrier is created with topographic formations occupied by a public programme (shops and offices – Geneva, Carouge-Bachet E9, fig. 4).

Situating a public programme on the edge of the project site, encourages connections with the adjacent neighborhoods. Nevertheless, the tendency at the implementation phase is to displace any kind of public programme to the periphery, creating homogeneous residential areas in the rest of the site (Córdoba, E8; Geneva, Carouge Bachet, E9).

Urban Block Interface. Choosing the urban block as the main urban porosity interface, allows for connections with the adjacent context. The three projects at the implementation phase in Villeurbanne, E7 show how, on the one hand, public networks and grounds infiltrate the project site within the framework of a joint masterplan. On the other hand, the treatment of the urban block interface varies in each case. The Muoto team project (fig. 5) achieves the most openness by establishing the relevant urban porosity interface at the level of the building unit and at the same time elevating the collective open spaces. The Nakache-Orihuela team's urban blocks (fig. 6) complement the existing fabric, introducing a sort of a 3D striation of public passages, private and open built collective spaces. The W14 team's urban blocks (fig. 7) are more introverted, relying on the diversity of residential and collective spaces. In the case of Córdoba, E8 (fig. 2), the interface of the superblocks, made of 6 smaller residential blocks, resists the intrusion of the main car network, allowing public spaces for pedestrians and plantings to thrive. In the case of Dietikon E10 (fig. 3), the loose definition and mosaic like character of the heterogeneous urban blocks, accentuates the qualities of urban porosity in the in-between spaces and the ground in the form of a publicly activated field. A "multicheck" strategy sets the long-term framework for staged operations. In the case of Vienna, E9 (fig. 8), a loose block opens up to the rest of the city by creating public spaces at its perimeter with part of the block set back. In addition, the introduction of public services at ground level by elevating the residential programme, allows for connections with the neighboring sites. At the same time, the block operates as an agent to protect communal life within it. During the implementation process, the public programme on the ground was reduced. However, a legal framework was created for "cross-border" use of shared spaces.

Fig 6

Fig 7

Fig 8

Fig 9

Building Unit Interface. Pushing the interface for generating urban porosity down to the level of the building unit creates all sorts of complex building types that incorporate both the private enclosed and the collective open space. In Gembloux, E10 (fig. 9), a fragmented municipal programme allowed public passages in the competition phase, but for functional reasons accepted only porosity of a visual kind at implementation. As regards programmes, the "Uhouse" explicitly mentioned by the Muoto team in Villeurbanne, E7 (fig. 5) is one example. As already mentioned, the "U-house" (U-section) becomes an agent that protects communal life by means of elevation.

Fig 10

Fig 11

Fig 12

Fig 13

The Isle d'Abeau, E10 (fig. 10) project takes a similar approach, but in this case there is more blurring between collective and public space along the planted open backyard spaces. In Augustenborg, E10 (fig. 11), the elevated residential collective spaces form the roof of a 3D programmatic base, allowing public flows to dominate the city level. In the case of the Montreux project, E10 (fig. 12), it is the grouping of three-armed buildings in a shared landscaped space that filters urban porosity. The shrinking of the public programme at ground level during the implementation phase will probably reduce the project's "urban porosity friendliness". This also seems to be the case for the project at Carouge-Bachet, E9 (fig.4). However, the proximity to the new multimodal train station creates a translocal programmatic porosity for this project site, since the catchment area for potential residents will increase significantly. In the project in Halle, E7 (fig.13), it is the ground as sort of a park that infiltrates between the individual houses, with the hedges providing the only interface between public and private. The question by the authors, who seem to have no control over how the project involves, of how public these planting areas really are, is legitimate.

5.2 From ideas to implementation: a rite of passage to re-ally project actors

The implementation stage has a sort of a liminal character, a rite of passage from one condition to another. The initial condition, the competition phase, is the construction of "images of the possible", a sort of imaginative enrichment of perceptions of urban living amongst the stakeholders concerned. The final condition, the post-rite stage, is the transformation of the built environment, here in 10 sites across Europe. What we have from the 12 teams are "blueprints" for such a transformation. Both the above conditions actually operate as devices for reshuffling the project actors, adjusting their relations, shifting them a little and for a while from their everyday routine. Such liminal rituals require support, and in this case it is the existing urban institutions behind city making that play this role. There is undoubtedly an extensive mobilization of actors arising from the project-for-implementation. As we know, European cities are Europan's most important clients and make the implementation of the winning Europan projects part of their modus operandi (municipal urban and planning agencies that are in contact with higher scale territorial administrations). At the scale of the developing site, it is the property developers and building promoters, municipal and/or private. When a residential programme is involved, you get subsidized housing agencies and cooperatives, as well as neighborhood associations.

The case of the Vienna, E9 project (fig.8) is an example, with at least 15 urban agencies involved in the implementation of the UEK studio project (Europan jury, City Real Estate Management, NGO-social services provider). It is quite evident that there is a whole embedded landscape of urban porosity policies are associated with people involved in projects for the Europan cities we are talking about. It seems that "urban porosity friendliness" decreases as the territorial scale from which the project actors come gets smaller.

5.3 Manipulate the tolerance of project actors to open up the project site to the city

Establishing urban porosities means increasing the degree of coexistence in open spaces and the degree of sharing of infrastructures such as mobility networks, parks, public services. So how tolerant are site developers and future users /inhabitants of such an opening up process? "The constitution and sustainment of a community and its network relations to a larger territory demand a critical mass of future users that enjoy the diverse possibilities the project offers to them…"(studio UEK, Vienna, E9). In some interviews, it emerges that the majority of the project actors on these 12 projects were public bodies with a commercial interest in selling their project. Here are some sample views by project actors cited by Bernd Vlay (Europan Austria).

"… if porosity helps to sell the site, fine; if we need to shut it in – that's fine too"; "Porosity as a politically correct quality, but depending on what conflicts actually happen "

"… accepts porosity which does not affect the privacy of the living units. Depending on typological intelligence: if the type offers porosity without annoying the residents: FINE"

In other words the urban players, protagonists in the implementation of winning Europan projects, are "urban porosity friendly" provided that it increases the market value of the projects. And provided that incoming translocal flows do not negatively affect the living conditions of the residents. Otherwise, they are ready to shut off any undesirable connections with the surrounding city… This suggests that space has active agent characteristics. So the teams behind the winning Europan projects are very valuable in that they keep proving that such "urban porosity-value-for-money" is possible and the built environment can handle it because of the way it is designed. In addition, such practices bring us to examine the design of the fine grain of the contemporary city, as Thomas Sieverts mentions in his book "Cities without cities: an interpretation of Zwischenstadt" (2001). If we look at all the projects under consideration, the proposed ideas are indeed based on the multiplication of a sort of a fine-grained urban environment, rather than the choice of a one-off mega gesture to make their mark.

6. Conclusion: from intolerant enclaves to porosity friendly urban patches

The concluding remarks are divided in three parts. The first one is in regards to urban design references that may produce alternatives to intolerant urban enclaves. The second part is about the Urban Porosity Pattern Matrix from Europan practices and the third part is about using such matrix to resist to the dominance of intolerant enclaves onto the contemporary urban environment

6.1 An "actorial" dimension of urban design to establish urban porosity

The art of urban enclaving seems to be gaining over other kinds of arts for urban active coexistence, due to its backing up by the globalized neoliberal economies. We should keep in mind the increasing intolerance of such enclaves' populations that eminently could affect our everydayness. The author referred to specific "actorial" urban design approaches that may engender new actors' alliances to support sharing in a complex urban environment, in other words to adhere into "urban porosity friendly" postures when the welfare State is weakening across Europe. The challenge would be to sustain such actors' alliances within the actual globalized neoliberal context by challenging the disciplinary limits of urban design.

Issues of urban connectivity as a reflection of social cohesion are as diverse as the contexts in which the Europan urban design projects are embedded. Privatized forces backed up by the neoliberal global economy may be on the doorstep of all European countries. However, the peripheral countries with weaker heritage of a welfare state urban culture (southern Mediterranean countries), or in state of denial of their State past, (former eastern European countries), seem to be much more exposed to social segregation, thus urban fragmentation.

6.2 From envisioned Urban Porosity Patterns to implemented ones

Europan still operates within a western welfare state heritage. The porous urban practice of the French PAN and in continuation that of EuroPAN has enabled a considerable number of young talented groups, usually architects, to become part of the best European practices. This is true of course, where Europan goes hand-in-hand with other urban apparatus inherited from the welfare state, usually in the Northern Western European countries. This is not true in countries such as the UK, or Eastern and South European countries.

The "cloud" of urban porosities produced by the author, through the study of the selected Europan projects, showed an arrangement of urban porosities in a spectrum ranging from translocal interfaces (regional) and very local ones (collective). In fact, the urban porosities were instigated by the Public Agents (those of mobility networks, of public program and of public ground) and were managed by the Urban Interfaces. The overlay on the "cloud" with the implementation factors that challenge the degree of the urban porosities, showed how the actors' urban porosity friendliness changed due to safety, market feasibility, financial priorities etc.

We may conclude that in spite of the decreasing degree of urban porosity from the competition to the implementation phase, urban porosity is still clearly present and multifaceted. Such process may increase the critical mass of users who would prefer to live in such urban conditions rather than in "safe", gated environments. It is true that post-occupancy evaluation of the completed projects will show whether such objectives are met.

6.3 Europan as a fertile ground for research on Urban Porosity practices

The author has developed an Urban Porosity Pattern Matrix through which he studied how urban design projects relate Public Agents (catalysateurs for public flows) with Urban Interfaces (multiscalar edges of urban patches and enclaves), through an urban actors' filter, to envision a porous connective urban environment. In fact, the analysis has focused on the passage from the Europan ideas competition stage to that of implementation and it showed the transformation of the project actors' degree of tolerance.

Further on, the author proposes to use the Urban Porosity Pattern matrix as facilitator in reframing the relationship of collective urban design practice to urban politics. It could become in other words, a negotiating framework as an alternative to the art of enclaving that is backed up by the overwhelming capacities of the neoliberal global economy through its spatial products (Easterling, 2005).

The Europan platform could be very useful for such endeavor, by reconnecting practiced based theory with the practice itself. Despite the fact that the research on Europan as a collective urban design network platform has remained limited within national boundaries, there is a substantial archive of best practices of collective urban design that could help us to establish an international research on "urban porosity friendliness".

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