



## **INTERNATIONAL DOCTORATE in ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING**

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**IDAUP Coordinator Prof. Prof. Roberto Di Giulio**

**Thesis Title**

**Unintended Landscapes.**

**Reevaluating the Potential of Residual Landscapes in Tirana's Future Urban Development Strategies**

**Curriculum Design theories and methods and sustainable constructions/**

**Landscape architecture (SSD ICAR/15)**

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## ***Unintended Landscapes***

Reevaluating the Potential of Residual Landscapes in Tirana's Future Urban Development Strategies.

**KEYWORDS:** Residual Landscapes, Ruderal landscapes, Tiers Paysage, Third space, Terrain Vague, Feral landscapes, Urban Voids, Urban wilderness, Participatory Design, Urban Resilience, Landscape architecture theory.



## **Title explanation**

“Unintended” refers to people’s informal, temporary and unregulated engagement with abandoned spaces. The use of the word “Landscapes” (not sites or land) implies that there is a point of view of a subject, a perspective on the landscape and a relationship between man and nature.

In the context of my research, the term “Residual Landscapes” indicates leftover places, landscapes resulting from the abandonment of areas originally exploited by man, where wild plants, animals and insects are free to colonize the space (almost) undisturbed.



## **Dedication**

*To my family, for their unconditional love and support.*

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## **Abstract / Summary**

The research is centered on observation, analysis and representation of landscape conditions, processes over time and change, particularly in transitioning countries where cities are subject to fast urban growth and the proliferation of residual spaces<sup>1</sup>, which result in antagonistic and confused landscapes, **landscapes of mutation and crisis**. Through a study of language and space, the dissertation highlights that what is central, and what is “residual”, is primarily a mechanism of thought, and not solely a mechanism of “space”. Although residual spaces are a result of the rational organization of the urban territory, they have become the opposite of the organized world. Analyzing these landscapes at the micro scale we can learn from the natural order that shapes them and from the way the urbanized territory influences their existence; whilst at the macro scale they appear as scale less fragments, interruptions of the urban fabric that reveal a new urban geography. Their temporary suspension and availability to transformation – but also their unstable, dynamic, heterogeneous and chaotic character - generates an opportunity for designers to reframe the urban design discourse, acknowledging the **value of indeterminacy and open-endedness**.

In substance, the research intends to offer an extended perspective on the discourse about overlooked residual spaces in contemporary cities, establishing the importance of observation as a fundamental operational tool to approach complex urban phenomena, like the one taking place in Tirana, where Residual Landscapes escape the mechanisms of thought and premeditation. By observing residual space spontaneous occupation strategies, considering the potential of people’s informal approaches to their management, and the possible influence on the urban ecosystem, the research hypothesizes a future **open-ended operational mode of urban development**. Residual spaces have the potential to become test sites for experimenting new urban landscape management strategies aimed at guaranteeing people’s comfort and health, responding to social needs, and contributing to the restoration of degraded urban ecosystems and the preservation of the environment.

A closer observation of abandoned and indefinite spaces under a renewed value system and the definition of new analytical processes, can lead to the reassessment of the role of such spaces within the urban context, considering them as a potential ground for future urban development. **Residual spaces can become the genesis for possible futures**.

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<sup>1</sup> Residual spaces are spaces resulting from the abandonment of areas originally exploited by men. Since they are abandoned, these spaces derive from the principle of rational organization of the territory, as the latter always produces residual space. They can be produced both by cities, industry, tourism, and by agriculture and farming. After being abandoned they evolve naturally towards a secondary landscape. They are dynamic spaces, heterogeneous, instable and chaotic, and the species that inhabit it change rapidly until they reach a balance (CLÉMENT, 2005).



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## Glossary

"Naming is essential to defining problems, for both generalists and specialists". (HYDEN & WARK, 2004)

In 2004 Professor of Architecture and Urbanism and of American Studies Dolores Hayden compiled "a dictionary of bad building practices", describing the evolution of suburban growth and design and then delving into the importance of creating a language to describe bad building practices found in suburbia. In her book "A Field Guide to Sprawl" she invented a new vocabulary and nicknamed the everyday spaces generated by sprawl, using slang phrases such as "edge nodes", "boomburb", "leapfrog", "mall glut". She believes that the use of a less specialized jargon sharpens observation and stimulates discussion. As noted by Professor Hayden, "naming is critical to identification" and "Identification is crucial to action (HYDEN & WARK, 2004). Following this principle, this dissertation is an attempt to shed some clarity on the topic of urban **Residual Landscapes**, and this glossary represents a first step towards the definition of such spaces and the organization of the research.

The mechanisms of language to identify and articulate the "residual" are closely related to the spatial and economic mechanisms of residual spaces themselves; hence, a research on the "residual" requires also a study of language and the underlying mechanisms of thought. The multiplicity of terms used when referring to what is the object of this dissertation, expresses the difficulty in describing them or agreeing on a single definition. Although there are several key researches concerned with residual spaces in the field of Visual and Performing Arts, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Planning and Social studies, they consider such spaces from very different perspectives and this condition makes the common elements of the researches less obvious. Nevertheless, under close examination, shared characteristics and threads can be identified and this glossary attempts to collect and record the words that have been used thus far, and help the reader navigate the related theories. This way, as the reader proceeds in the reading of the dissertation, he/she can always come back to the glossary and find the synthetic description of a word or a theory about Residual Landscapes. Each word is listed alphabetically, and for each entry the definition/etymology, the related key research/s references, and authors are recorded. Moreover, to allow for analysis and confrontation of the different theories, for each entry the underlying system of values related to Residual Landscapes is deduced.

For each term, the following information is recorded:

- Who used the term to identify Residual Landscapes and in what year.
- Underlying assumption/s (system of values): **S**=Social; **A**= Aesthetic; **E**= Ecological.
- Word definition and etymology (given by the researcher/writer).
- References.

Given the above considerations, the preset glossary is considered a standalone form of classification.

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**Accidental Landscapes (S) (A) (E) – (2017) Author.** From the Latin *accident* (“happening”). The primary meaning of the adjective in English is, “happening by chance, unintentionally, or unexpectedly”. Therefore accidental is the opposite of the deliberate. In the context of this research and referring to the urban environment, “accidental landscapes” are landscapes that develop spontaneously with no intentional, predetermined plan, and no thought of poetic design. They can be manmade elements that are no longer used or needed – industrial buildings, debris, rubbish, abandoned machinery, communication masts, shipping crates, bunkers, chimneys, energy plants – and start interacting with the landscape, accidentally. They can be generated by the fact that men imposed order and use to an area, but as soon as they stopped managing it, a new accidental, unplanned, landscape started developing. (8.1 Incoherence & Disorder: Tirana’s landscape, p. 159)

References: Oxford Online Dictionary

**Actual Territories (S) – (1900’s)** In the mid 1900’s the Italian collective of activist architects/artists “**Stalker**” use this combination of worlds to define the “built city’s negative”, the interstitial and the marginal; spaces forgotten and abandoned; spaces “in becoming”, in the process of transformation. The term “actual” indicates the “process in which space comes into being” and therefore the potential of such spaces. (4.1 A new gaze on Residual Landscapes. The role of artists, p. 57)

References:(STALKER, 2002)

**Ambivalent Landscapes (S) (A) - (2007) Anna Jorgensen & Marian Tylecote** use the term “ambivalent” associated to landscapes, in their paper “Ambivalent Landscapes—Wilderness in the Urban Interstices”, referring to the nature and origins of the ambivalent feelings we experience in relation to urban woodland and other wilder urban landscapes, such as derelict sites that have been re-colonized with vegetation as a result of natural succession. (4.2 Contemporary aesthetics of ruderal landscapes, p. 72)

References: (JORGENSEN & TULECOTE, 2007)

**Apocryphal Landscapes/Geographic Apocrypha (S) – (2017) Author.** Refers to “Hidden spaces of urban ecology”, landscapes that are kept from use. Also referring to, “unofficial landscapes”, landscapes that are not included in the officially recognized and classified urban spaces. A clarification on the meaning of the word Apocryphal ought to be made. The Adjective and the noun tend to have slightly different meanings in the English language. First of all the word’s origin is the Medieval Latin adjective *apocryphus*, “secret, or non-canonical”, from the Greek adjective *ἀπόκρυφος* (*apokryphos*), “obscure”, from the verb *ἀποκρύπτειν* (*apokryptein*), “to hide away”. The noun came to be used to indicate, “(books) of unknown authorship”, from *ἀπό* (apó, “from”) + *κρύπτω* (krúptō, “I hide”).

The adjective “apocryphal” is commonly used in modern English to refer to any text or story considered to be of dubious veracity or authority, although it may contain some moral truth. “Apocryphal” meaning “of doubtful authenticity”, is first attested in English in 1590. Therefore, the adjective has inherited the Doctrinal meaning of the word imposed by the Christian religious contexts.

The noun “apocrypha” - properly plural (the singular would be *apocryphon*), but commonly treated as a collective singular – on the contrary, has also kept the meaning derived from the Latin and Greek origin. Apocrypha were early Christian writings not included in the New Testament (not included in the holy writings’ list of the Bible). In contemporary English “Apocrypha” commonly refers to works, usually written, of unknown authorship or of doubtful origin (The Oxford Universal Dictionary).

Moreover, in the Italian language the adjective (*apocrifo*) still indicates something hidden, something that is kept away from use. In the context of my research on Residual Landscapes I will use the adjective “apocryphal” associated to landscapes, with its Italian meaning, to indicate landscapes “which are not included in the officially classified spaces in the city”, urban landscapes which are kept away from use (therefore moving away from the English ordinary meaning referring to the “authenticity” or “genuineness” of a text or a story). While, I will use “apocrypha” as a noun associated to the adjectives “geographic” or “territorial” to indicate “unmapped and uncharted spaces”. (8.3 Geographic Apocrypha, p. 177)

References: The Oxford Universal Dictionary (Oxford University Press. 1955); Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

See also: “Apocryphal landscapes II” painting by myfuckart (<http://myfuckart.deviantart.com/art/Apocryphal-landscapes-II-270457132>); Boring “Machines - Apocrypha”, music track from the digital album Rella the Woodcutter “I Know When it's Time to Get the Fuck Away”, by Boring Machines (<https://boringmachines.bandcamp.com/track/apocryphal>); “Apocrifa”, Art magazine (<http://www.apocrifa.com.mx/author/apocrifa/>); “Variaciones de un paisaje apócrifo”, painting by Cuban Artist, Gabriel Sanchez Toledo (<http://www.gabrielsancheztoledo.com/shows/>); “La letteratura come testo apocrifo del paesaggio vitivinicolo di Langhe, Roero e Monferrato: proposte per una valorizzazione culturale”, Thesis by Villata, Maurizio. Corso di laurea magistrale in Architettura costruzione citta' Politecnico di Torino (<http://webthesis.biblio.polito.it/4797/>).

**Bastard Countryside (A) (E) – (1861)** In a passage he added to the 1861 edition to his novel “Les Misérables”, **Victor Hugo** used the term “bastard countryside” referring to the ground between town and country, what the Parisians called *Le banlieue, or vague terrain*. He wrote: “To wander in a kind of reverie, to take a stroll as they call it, is a good way for a philosopher to spend his time: bastard countryside somewhat ugly but bizarre, made up of two different natures, which surrounds certain great cities, notably Paris. To observe the *banlieue* is to observe an amphibian. End of trees, beginning of roofs, end of grass, beginning of paving stones [...] All of this holds an extraordinary interest. And thus, in these unattractive places, forever marked by the passer-by with the epithet *sad*, the promenades, apparently aimless, of the dreamer”.

References: (SCHWARTZ & PRZYBLYSKI, 2004, pp. 179-80);

**Brownfield (S) (E)** – a tract of land that has been developed for industrial purposes, polluted, and then abandoned. Or more in general, a site that has been previously used and

is especially associated with traces of industrial contamination. This noun stands in contrast with the verdant connotation of “greenfield” sites at or beyond the urban fringe.

References: The Oxford Universal Dictionary (Oxford University Press. 1955); Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

**Dead Spots (A) (E) - (1970) Robert Smithson** used this term in his first notebook essay during his trip to Passaic to define one of the five types of “monuments” - what he considered the “equivalent of the monuments of antiquity” - he encounters during his trip. While traveling on a bus from New York to New Jersey - a journey he himself defined as a journey from the urban to the “suburban consciousness” - he explored landscapes altered and destroyed by the incessant action of men. “Dead spots” are empty sites such as dry swimming pools, parking lots, and degraded land masses, which Smithson claims “seem to exist for a limited duration of time”. (4.1 A new gaze on Residual Landscapes. The role of artists, p. 57)

References: (SMITHSON, 1967); (REYNOLDS, 2003)

**Dead Zone (S) - (2000 ca.) Gil M. Doron** used the term “dead zone” (translated from Hebrew) to define what planners and architects refer to as voids or wastelands. The term was taken from planners’ jargon, more specifically from the planners presenting a regeneration plan in Tel Aviv in 1996 and portraying the area of the project as a void. It indicates all the public and private areas inside and around the city that are temporarily external to the urban system, as they are not usable from planners and architects (because inaccessible, too small or irregularly shaped, with unclear ownership rights, not lucrative), or spaces that were formerly used and are now abandoned. According to Doron “Dead Zones” are “spaces of transgression” where unplanned, “transgressive activities” can take place almost undisturbed. Doron’s main consideration is that there is a potential behind their lack of formal regulation and the fact that they are considered by the authorities as “non-utilitarian spaces”. These alleged “voids” are examined mainly from a political, social and economic standpoint. Doron believes that they are considered “empty” as a result of speculative interests (the word “zone” links back to “zoning”, therefore these areas are seen from the land-use and administrative perspective). Moreover, according to Doron, the fact that planners and architects decide to refer to them as “dead” implies that they wish to reuse them, and they are a construct produced for political, social and economic ends. On the other hand, the negative terms used to label them denotes a sense of fear for the uncontrolled and unplanned. (3.2 Terrain Vague. A space for freedom, p. 27; 6.1 Character and behavior of Residual Landscapes, p. 114)

References: (DORON, 2008) (DORON, 2000)

**(Le) Délaissé (S) (A) (E) – (2005)** English translation: “abandoned”, “neglected”. According to Landscape Architect **Gilles Clément** Le *délaissé* are residues, leftover places colonized by wild plants. Spaces resulting from the abandonment of areas originally exploited by men. These spaces derive from the principle of rational organization of the territory as the latter always produces residual space. They can be produced both by cities, industry, tourism, and by agriculture and farming. After being abandoned, they evolve



naturally towards a secondary landscape. They are dynamic spaces, heterogeneous, instable and chaotic, and the species that inhabit it change rapidly until they reach a balance. (5.2 *Le Tiers Paysage: an emerging new order*, p. 102; 8.3 Geographic Apocrypha, p. 177)

References: (CLÉMENT, 2011);(CLÉMENT, 2005); (CLÉMENT & RAHM, 2006)

**Derelict land (S) (E)** - In the **National Land Use Database (NLUD)** in the UK derelict land is identified as “Land so damaged by previous industrial or other development that it is incapable of beneficial use without treatment”.

References: Harrison, A. R. (2006) *National Land Use Database: Land Use and Land Cover Classification version 4.4*, London: Queen’s Printer and Controller of Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, p. 42.

**Disabitato (S) – (1300 c.)** (in English “uninhabited”). The Italian word *disabitato* was used since the 14th century to indicate abandoned urban land. The *disabitato* was a mixture between “wilderness, ancient ruins and agricultural lands” and it was located in the urban, formerly inhabited, areas of the city. In Rome, such area had become abandoned due to the depopulation of the city, which started after the crisis of the Roman Empire, and continued well into the Middle Ages. In the 16th century Rome, it came to serve as a specific place-name, indicating the formerly urban territory between the urbanized centre of Rome and the ancient Aurelian wall. (Chapter 2. Phenomenological nature of Residual Landscapes, p. 13)

References: (WALDHEIM, 2016)

**Drosscape (S) (E) - (2006)** According to **Alan Berger**, Drosscapes are the inevitable wasted landscapes within urbanized areas. They are landscapes created as a result of industrial, economic, and consumption processes. As Alan Berger explains, the term Drosscape implies that dross, or waste, is “scaped”: or resurfaced, and reprogrammed for adaptive reuse. The term refers to waste landscapes (actual waste, such as municipal solid waste, sewage, scrap metal, etc.), wasted places (abandoned areas like contaminated sites), or wasteful places (such as huge parking lots or retail malls). Moving away from the modernist approach to planning, Berger suggests creative ways to recover these landscapes and redesign them, advocating for the environmental recovery, productive integration and reuse of waste landscapes in urban settlements. (3.1 The Triangles of Spatiality - Talking in ‘triples’ p. 19; 3.2 Terrain Vague. A space for freedom, p. 27)

References: (BERGER, 2006)

**Edgelands (S) (A) (E) – (2002)** The word was first used by Environmentalist **Marion Shoard** to define “the interfacial interzone between urban and rural”; “the debatable space where city and countryside fuse into one another”. This newfound terrain was christened “the edgelands” in Marion Shoard’s homonymous essay, published in the book “Remaking the Landscape: The Changing Face of Britain”, edited by Jennifer Jenkins. According to Shoard, “edgelands” comprise brownfield sites and utilities infrastructure, crackling substations and pallet depots, transit hubs and sewage farms, scrub forests and sluggish

canals, allotments and retail parks, slackened regulatory frameworks and guerilla ecologies. In 2011 in their book entitled “Edgelands. Journeys into England's True Wilderness”, the two English poets Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts approached the subject from a rather different angle. For them “edgelands” are the great “unnamed” and “ignored” landscapes of modern England: places where “our slipstream has created a zone of inattention”, in which all manner of interest and beauty thrive. As these poets smell and listen to the landscape, as well as look at it, they find everywhere man and nature intertwined. Both our urban and rural landscapes may be intensively managed, but between them a strange no-man's-land subjected to ceaseless change has grown up. Vast in total area, but somehow unnoticed, it is a mess of scattered wasteland, unkempt shrub and frayed grassland, randomly littered with the unloved infrastructural organs of our frantic society. They believe many of the “edgeland” features are as-yet unnamed and unacknowledged, but they are of great value because a “self-seeded dreamscape has emerged within them”. Wildlife diversity in “edgelands” is often far greater than in the surrounding countryside and many of the structures are more fascinating than those of nearby towns and cities. The authors’ aim is to overcome the aesthetic “routine prejudices” that we hold with regard to these landscapes, and conserve these wild spaces, as we conserve the best of rural environments. On the other hand, they wonder if any attempt to regulate these spaces would destroy the wildness that makes them special.

References: (FARLEY & ROBERTS, 2011); (JENKINS, 2002)  
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/mar/06/edgelands-england-farley-roberts-review>;  
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/feb/19/edgelands-farley-symmons-roberts-review>

**Fake Estates (S) (A)** (see also “Odd lots”) – (1973) Project by the artist **Gordon Matta-Clark** officially known today as “Reality Properties: Fake Estates”. The work consisted in a catalogue of bits of land in the suburbs of New York (Queens and Staten Island) resulting from surveying errors or zoning oddities (the “micro parcels” of land in NY City were a symptom of the vicissitudes of property and capital in a city like NY where every patch of land counts). The artist purchased fourteen of these “non-productive”, “unusable” and in most cases, “inaccessible” bits of land, and assembled their photographic and bureaucratic documentation to question the meaning and value of land property, using these anomalies in the map to reveal its contradictions. Although the work was left incomplete during the lifetime of the artist, the material collected - composed by a set of collages and property deeds – was found after his death in a cardboard box and became the base for several researches and exhibitions. (4.1 A new gaze on Residual Landscapes. The role of artists, p. 57; 7.2 San Francisco - Local code, p. 135)

References: (MATTA-CLARK, et al., 2005); (LEE, 2000) (DE MONCHAUX, 2016)

**Feral landscape (S) (E)** – (2015) According to artist and educator **Ellie Irons**, Feral landscape is “domesticated landscape” that “has gone a bit wild”. The word “feral” is commonly used to define animals that are in a wild state, especially after escape from captivity or domestication. Therefore “Feral landscapes” are formerly productive or occupied landscapes where nature reverts, becomes threatening, becomes dangerous, mysterious and out of control. The artist started researching these wild landscapes because

she was fascinated by the plant communities that pop up in abandoned urban lots only “vacant-at-the-moment” and disappear as those lots become buildings, parking lots, or community gardens again. (5.1 A Brave new Ecology, p. 95; Chapter 9 Residual Landscapes as canvas to stage the future, p. 199)

References: <https://ellieirons.com/#/projects/>; <http://nextepochseedlibrary.com/>

**Fourth Nature (E) – (1991) Kowarik Ingo.** The Fourth Nature, or “Nature of the fourth kind”, encompasses Woodland succession (the natural plant development) that occurs independently on typical urban-industrial sites, without horticultural planning or design. This succession is defined more by the effects of natural processes than by cultural influence. The basic idea of the “four natures approach” proposed by Ecologist Ingo Kowarik is to reduce the existing diversity of very different, culturally varying forms of nature that are found within the impact area of cities down to four types, and emphasize their characteristic. “Nature of the first kind” is the “original” nature. This includes ecosystem types or landscapes that are remnants of pristine ecosystems (forests, rivers and rock formations, etc.). “Nature of the second kind” includes elements of the landscape that arose through traditional or modern agriculture and forestry practices (meadows and pastures, crop fields, intensively managed forests, etc.). “Nature of the third kind” comprises the greenery that has emerged through horticultural plantings, maintenance and upkeep (gardens, parks, and other urban greenery). The “Nature of the fourth kind”, a “new wilderness”, relates to woodlands that have evolved spontaneously on urban-industrial sites. (Chapter 4 Aesthetics of the indeterminate, p. 39)

References: (KOWARIK & KORNER, 2005), (DESIMINI, 2014)

**Heterotopias (S) – (1967)** A concept in human geography elaborated by philosopher **Michel Foucault** to describe places and spaces that function in non-hegemonic conditions. Etymology: *hetero-* is from Ancient Greek ἕτερος (*héteros*, "other, another, different") and is combined with the Greek *morpheme* τόπος ("place") and means "other place". Heterotopia is where things are different. In his essay “Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias” Michel Foucault introduces this concept contrasting it to the inviolable oppositions (pertaining physical and cultural space) that the institutions and practices of his time had not “yet dared to break down”. His interest lied mostly in “counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and invented”. Heterotopias are spaces that do exist by contrast to utopias – they are “different”, “other” places. Among other things, Foucault identified a specific kind of heterotopias he called “heterotopias of deviation”: those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm, are placed (rest homes, psychiatric hospitals, prisons, cemeteries). (3.1 The Trialectics of Spatiality - Talking in ‘triples’, p. 19; 3.2 Terrain Vague. A space for freedom, p. 27)

References: (FOUCAULT, 1984, orig. 1967)

**Imbricated Spaces (S) – (2016 c.)** Term used by Sociologist **Kevin Loughran** to indicate the sites of city-nature intersections such as vacant lots, sidewalks, and abandoned

buildings where wild grasses, flowers and trees grow spontaneously. The term “Imbrication” suggests the blending or layering of multiple components. Loughran believes that “city” and “nature” are active agents in the creation of such spaces through the decay of the built environment, and the growth of the natural environment. In his conception of these spaces, nature is seen as “insurgent”, “claiming spaces that humans had once conquered”. The concept of “imbricated space” includes examples such as New York’s High Line, where architects replicated the original hybridity (the abandoned railway overgrown with spontaneous vegetation), and transformed the space into a public park. (4.2 Contemporary aesthetics of ruderal landscapes, p. 72)

References: (LOUGHRAN, 2016)

**In-between spaces (S) – (2001) Hajer and Reijndorp** used the term in-between spaces in 2001 and claimed that these urban spaces could be used to bring together “disparate activities and character in a manner that creates valuable exchanges and connections”.

References: (Carmona, 2010).

**Interim Spaces (S) – (2016)** The term refers to a nonprofit organization that takes over vacant buildings in London and transform them into living, breathing spaces, turning them into workable spaces again. The group is formed by arts management and meanwhile use professionals, occupying otherwise disused buildings to relieve hardship and create opportunity for financially disadvantaged citizens.

References: <https://www.interimspaces.co.uk/about>

**Intermediate landscape (A) (E) – (2003 ca.)** According to the French landscape architect **Michel Desvigne**, an “intermediate landscape” is a “living landscape texture flexible enough to be integrated into a future urban context. His process appears to be comparable to the reconstruction of a natural landscape, but his starting point is explicitly artificial.” The concept of “intermediate landscape” is connected to Desvigne’s concept of “widened city edges”, where the agricultural and peri-urban worlds surrounding the edges of the city can both enter, creating a space of fruitful exchange, while respecting and preserving the essential character of both worlds. (4.2 Contemporary aesthetics of ruderal landscapes, p. 72)

References: (MOSTAFAVI, 2003, p. 83)(DESVIGNE & AA.VV., 2009)

**Intermediate Natures (A) (E) – (2003 ca.)** According to **Michel Desvigne** “intermediate natures” can occupy areas in which prefiguration would be premature, marking the territory with the elements with which it will be more fully composed later on. They are architectural, summary, and provisional, continually in gestation. Since “intermediate natures” give the land an immediate status, maintaining it, and accepting its transformation, they fall in the category of management and maintenance, even though the qualities and uses are only temporary. (4.2 Contemporary aesthetics of ruderal landscapes, p. 72)

References: (MOSTAFAVI, 2003, p. 83)(DESVIGNE & AA.VV., 2009)

**Interstitial Spaces (S) (A) (E) – (2002)** The term is used by **Luc Lévesque** in his article “The ‘terrain vague’ as material – some observations”, to expand the perspective on vacant spaces. “Shifting from factual observation of the vacant lot to the more abstract concept of interstitial space”, he includes the dimension of time and change as intrinsic qualities of vacant spaces. He explains how in addition to defining something found “in between”, the word interstitial refers to the notion of time “interval”, and therefore it also means “a space of time”. “Thus the interstitial embraces not only such notions as openness, porosity, breach and relationship, but also those of process, transformation and location.” According to Lévesque, the term “interstitial” reflects transformation processes expressed at the material level on the vacant spaces. (See also the concept of *terrain vague* and the interpretation of the etymology of the word “vague” as condition of “fluctuation” and “instability” and “oscillation”, by De SOLÀ-MORALES). (3.2 Terrain Vague. A space for freedom, p. 27)

References: (LÉVESQUE, 2002);(RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 107); (De SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995)

**Lag-scapes (S) (E) - (2016-17) Sean Burkholder** assistant professor of Landscape and Urban Design at University of Buffalo (NY), rejects the idea of vacancy or abandonment and instead describes vacant lots and post-industrial brownfields as “transitional urban landscapes”, or “emergent urban landscapes”. He advocates for doing the absolute least, proposing minimally invasive landscape features — what he calls “wedges” (boardwalks and bird blinds, trails and lake overlooks) — that let the public in, while giving agency to ecological forces by basically “leaving the land alone”. The overall strategy is to “buy time”; time to see what the site does on its own, and how people access, use and enjoy it. Burkholder intends to, “create a “lag”, of both time and space, in which to engage, understand and ultimately sustain a highly dynamic and fragile system.” (5.1 A Brave new Ecology, p. 95)

References: Web article - “When doing nothing is doing something: Sean Burkholder, assistant professor of landscape and Urban Design”(https://ap.buffalo.edu/news-events/alumni-magazine/alumni-magazine-1617/research-spotlight/burkholder-doing-something.html)

**Landscapes of contempt (A) (E)** (see also the definition of “Nouvelle Nature”) – (2005) **Christophe Girot**. Etymology and Definition of “Contempt”: the feeling that a person or a thing is beneath consideration, worthless, or deserving scorn. Synonyms: scorn, disdain, disrespect, scornfulness, contemptuousness, derision. In his essay entitled “Vers une nouvelle nature”, Christophe Girot uses the word “contempt” to describe the realm of nature we find in contemporary cities made of “vast zones of conspicuous neglect where residual nature is mixed with industry, waste and infrastructure”. According to Girot, the other elements of the trilogy representing the relationship of city and nature since the early Industrial Revolution are mythical wilderness (the realm of exploration), and the tamed nature of designed urban landscapes (the realm of admiration). (Chapter 4 Aesthetics of the indeterminate, p. 39)

References: (ARMSTRONG, 2006), (GIROT, 2005)

**Junkspace (S) (A) – (2001)** “Junkspace” is the title of the essay published by Rem Koolhaas in the Office for Metropolitan Architecture publication “Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping”, describing malls and the “mollification” of cities and space in general. In the essay, Koolhaas describes a new kind of space that is advancing over the face of the planet, uniting the shopping mall, the airport, the convention centre, the hotel, and the art gallery. Junkspace is the “residue mankind leaves on the planet”, it is a direct inversion of space junk, which is the debris humans leave in space. Junkspace, rather than modern architecture, is the true product of modernization; what is left behind after modernization has taken its course.

References: (KOOLHAAS, 2001)

**Marginal Landscapes (S) (A) (E) – (2006)** Helen Beatrice Armstrong adopts this term to indicate all “unkempt landscapes” and “untidy places” in the over-programmed cities of consumption. She is interested in revealing the buried treasures in these landscapes and in rediscovering beauty, empathy and even “enchantment” in them. Armstrong sees “Marginal Landscapes” as “transitional places that can provide unusual alternatives” to the current ordered city. Rather than repressing the unease, she believes in accepting their “otherness” and acknowledging the value of these indeterminate places as part of the city’s fabric. In her book entitled “Marginal Landscapes”, by observing the urban wastelands - particularly the industrial ruins in Australian spectacle cities - she follows a set of gradual steps to redefine their role in contemporary cities. Firstly, by pointing out the opportunity for adventure they offer and “remembering” the important role left-over spaces play in the life of children. Secondly, identifying the causes of the current “fear of the uncanny”, the sense of unease they confer, and the desire to forget them. Thirdly, rediscovering and accepting the “sensual aesthetics” in abandoned sites and the “ecological treasures” they hold; ultimately promoting a “Re-Enchantment” of “Marginal Landscapes”, namely, finding ways to re-engage with them. (4.2 Contemporary aesthetics of ruderal landscapes, p. 72)

References: (ARMSTRONG, 2016)(ARMSTRONG, 2006)

**Non-places (S) – (1995)** Term introduced by Marc Augé. “Non-places”, or “empirical non-places” are “the opposite of the sociological notion of place”, and therefore of “anthropological place” (a space in which inscriptions of the social bond or collective history can be seen). “Non-places” are spaces of circulation, consumption and communication: they are both the infrastructures needed for the movement of people and goods and the means of transport themselves. While “Anthropological place” is formed by “individual identities”, non-place creates the “shared identity” of passengers. The space of non-place creates neither singular identity nor relations, only solitude, and similitude. (3.1

The Triangles of Spatiality - Talking in ‘triples’, p. 19; 4.1 A new gaze on Residual Landscapes. The role of artists, p. 57)

References: (AUGÉ, 2006)

**Non-sites (A) - (1967 ca.)** Robert Smithson used the term “non-sites” in his writings (A Provisional Theory of Non-Sites) and it was referred to a series of art works that Smithson

executed in the Sixties, but it was later used also to describe territories of the outskirts of cities. The series of “Non-Sites” artworks resulted from the installation in the gallery of gravel, rocks, salt materials collected from specific mines, excavations or quarries, usually contained in boxes of galvanized steel or situated within mirrors formations. Whereas a “Site” is scattered information, a place you can visit, experience, travel-to, a “Non-Site” is a container, an abstract work about contained information. A “Non-Site” is also a “three dimensional map of the site” (Smithson, “Discussions with Heizer, Oppenheim, Smithson”, 54, in Holt, *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, 172, and Flam, *Robert Smithson*, 244.). In fact, referring to Smithson’s artworks, Sébastien Marot defines a *non-site* as a three dimensional logical picture representing an actual site. A three-dimensional metaphor – which later became logical representation of abandoned sites in situ. (4.1 A new gaze on Residual Landscapes. The role of artists, p. 57)

References: (MAROT, 2003); (SMITHSON, 1967); (REYNOLDS, 2003)

**Nouvelle Nature (A) (E) – (2005)** The theory advanced by Landscape Architect, **Cristophe Girot**, fuses the conception of nature with design in a new model of practice. Girot’s “nouvelle nature” is a new form of nature based on three main factors affecting landscape mutation today: time, anthropology of nature, and physical reinstatement of natural structures in the existing urban fabric. Girot believes that this new nature can arise from the realm of “contempt”, which consists in vast zone of conspicuous neglect where residual nature is mixed with industry, waste and infrastructure. According to Girot, this “nouvelle nature” has the potential to shape future urban growth and reestablish a balance between man and nature. (Chapter 4 Aesthetics of the indeterminate, p. 39)

References: (GIROT, 2005), (DESIMINI, 2014)

**Odd lots (S) (A)** (see also “Fake Estates”) – **(1973)** Another term used to define **Gordon Matta Clark**’s “Fake Estates” - “micro parcels” of land resulting from surveying errors or zoning oddities that were publicly auctioned by the city of NY – in the 2005 catalogue published by the Magazine “Cabinet” entitled “Odd lots : revisiting Gordon Matta-Clark’s “fake estates””. In the catalogue, the editors explain how quite often the dynamics that generated these slivers of land appear accidental or even unjustifiable, so that they gain the definition of “odd lots”. (4.1 A new gaze on Residual Landscapes. The role of artists, p. 57; 7.2 San Francisco - Local code, p. 135)

References: (MATTA-CLARK, et al., 2005); (LEE, 2000) (DE MONCHAUX, 2016)

**Residual Landscapes (S) (A) (E) – (2017) Author.** The adjective “residual” [residue + -al], comes from Old French *residu* (Modern *résidu*), from Latin *residuum* (“a remainder”), the neuter inflection of *residuus* (“remaining, left over”), perfect participle of *resideō* (“I remain behind”) (from *re-* (“back, again”) + *sedeō* (“I sit, I reside”). The residue is what is left behind, left over, from operations and processes. In the urban research field, Residual Landscapes are therefore spaces in a condition of temporal suspension, awaiting something. The evolutionary processes that govern such spaces are no longer determined by the urban and planning dynamics, but rather by natural processes.

References: Oxford Online Dictionary

**Ruderal sites (E) – (1800 c.)** Term based on the Latin word for rubble (*rudus*), referred to sites studied since the 19<sup>th</sup> century by botanists interested in the composition of local flora and the invasion of “alien” plants. Typically, they were found on farms, along streets, or railway tracks. After the Second World War, and the destruction of many European cities, ruderal sites became very common in cities where the post-war reconstruction was delayed. Ecologists considered the vegetation of these sites as a special type, the “ruderal vegetation” and the wastelands themselves were later called “ruderal areas” or “ruderal biotopes”.

References: (LACHMUND, 2013)

**Ruderal Landscapes (A) (E) – (2010)** used by American Botanist **Peter Del Tredici** to identify “adaptive” landscapes in the urban environment. According to Del Tredici, abandoned ruderal landscapes are made up of marginal or degraded urban land that receives little or no maintenance, and is dominated by spontaneous vegetation. Ruderal landscapes are typically associated with the margins of transportation infrastructure, abandoned or vacant residential, commercial, and industrial property, and the interstitial spaces that separate one land-use function from another. They are characterized by a “cosmopolitan mix of species that grows and reproduces without human care or intent”. (4.2 Contemporary aesthetics of ruderal landscapes, p. 72; 5.1 A Brave new Ecology, p.95)

References: (DEL TREDICI, 2014); (DEL TREDICI, 2010); (DEL TREDICI, 2014); (DEL TREDICI, 2010)

**Terra Incognita (S) – (2004)** In their homonymous book **Bowman and Pagano** use this term to describe what has, until now, been the lack of substantial information about the amount and the diversity of urban vacant land in U.S. Cities. The vacant land they refer to includes everything from brownfields, through trashed lots, and abandoned buildings to parks, and community gardens. The authors believe these spaces can be considered the ultimate urban resource. They explore how these areas are affected by the decisions of local governments, and then show how vacant land can be a valuable strategic asset for localities.

Reference: (PAGANO & BOWMAN, 2004)

**Terra Nullius (S)** (see also “Vacuum Domicilium”) - **(1800)** “No Man's Land”. The word is a Latin expression literally meaning “land belonging to no one”; from *terra* “earth” and *nullius*, genitive of *nullus* “no one”. In the mid-nineteenth century, it started being used to indicate land that is legally deemed to be unoccupied or uninhabited and is a principle still used in international law to describe territory that has never been subject to the sovereignty of any state, or over which any prior sovereign has expressly or implicitly relinquished sovereignty. There is considerable debate among historians about how and when the “terra nullius” concept was used. The debate has been especially prevalent in Australia in relation to the Mabo case (1992). The history wars caused Australian historians to reevaluate the country's history, in particular the question whether the British colonizers had regarded the continent as “terra nullius” at the time of the original settlement and therefore “settled” in



the new country, or they simply “conquered” the land, by dispossessing it from the Aborigines. In fact, some theories claim that “terra nullius” as a concept was used by England and other European powers to justify territorial conquest.

Reference: Oxford online Dictionary (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>); (FITZMAURICE, 2007).

**Terrain Vague (S) (A) – (1995)** The term was coined by **Ignasi de Solà-Morales Rubió** to define a condition of absence in the contemporary metropolis. “Terrain Vague” is referred to abandoned areas, on obsolete and unproductive spaces and buildings, often undefined and without specific limits, but nevertheless representing an anonymous reality of Twentieth century metropolis. Solà-Morales adopted a French term to define such spaces because it holds multiple meanings that express simultaneously the character and the potential they constitute for cities. This becomes obvious analyzing the etymology of the word *vague*. The root of the French word has, in fact, Latin and Germanic origins. The German *Woge* alludes to “movement, oscillation, instability, and fluctuation”. The two Latin roots - the Latin *vacuus*, (“vacant” and “vacuum” in English), “empty, unoccupied,” but also “free, available, unengaged”; and the Latin *vagus*, (“vague” in English), in the sense of “indeterminate, imprecise, blurred, uncertain.” Solà-Morales insists on the value of the state of ruin and lack of productivity of these places as, only in this way, they can constitute a real alternative to the lucrative reality prevailing in the late capitalist city, and manifest themselves as spaces of freedom. (Chapter 2 Phenomenological nature of Residual Landscapes, p. 13; 3.2 Terrain Vague. A space for freedom, p. 27; Chapter 4 Aesthetics of the indeterminate, p. 39; 7.3 Detroit - Shrinking city, p. 144)

References: (De SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995); (LÉVESQUE, 2002); (MARIANI & BARRON, 2014)

**Third Place (S) - (1989)** in his book “The Great Good Place. Cafés, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community”, **Ray Oldenburg** (urban sociologist), points out the need for a “neutral ground upon which people may gather” in American cities, where individuals “may come and go as they please”, and in which “all feel at home and comfortable”. He claims that in order to live a relaxed and fulfilling life, a balance must be found between the **three realms of experience**: the first one being the domestic one (home, a place for family, dedicated to rest and retreat), the second one being gainful or productive (work, a productive, structured, and competitive place), and the third one, inclusively sociable. Ultimately he arrives to the definition of “Thirds places”, as “informal gathering places in which people gather between home and work”. (3.1 The Trialectics of Spatiality - Talking in ‘triples’, p. 19)

References: (OLDENBURG, 1996-97) (OLDENBURG, 1999, orig. 1989)

**Third Landscape (A) (E) – (2005)** From the French “**Tiers Paysage**”. According to Landscape Architect **Gilles Clément** the Third Landscape is composed by forgotten spaces, “in between”, “at the end”, “on the border”, spaces in transition, abandoned urban or rural areas. Clément uses the term to designate all “places that man has abandoned”,

parks and nature reserves, large uninhabited areas of the globe, “les friches” (brownfield sites, swamps, moors, as well as roadsides, shores and riverbanks, railway embankments, displaced industrial zones covered by bushes, weeds that grow in the seedbeds of traffic islands); as well as those more widespread, smaller, nearly invisible spaces within the centre of cities (see also “les délaissés”). These spaces can be produced by cities, industry, tourism, agriculture and farming. (5.2 *Le Tiers Paysage: an emerging new order*, p. 102)

References: (CLÉMENT, 2011);(CLÉMENT, 2005); (CLÉMENT & RAHM, 2006)

**Third Space (S) – (1996) SOJA, Edward W** (postmodern political geographer and urban theorist). In “THIRDSPACE. Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places”, Soja updated Lefebvre's concept of the “spatial triad” with his own concept of “spatial trialectics” which includes “thirdspace”, or spaces that are “both real and imagined”. According to Soja, “thirdspace can be described as a creative recombination and extension, that builds on a ‘Firstspace’ perspective that is focused on the “real” material world and a ‘Secondspace’ perspective that interprets this reality through “imagined” representations of spatiality.” The “Third Space” theory is actually attributed to Homi K. Bhabha (Professor of English and American Literature and Language, expert in contemporary post-colonial studies), but the conceptualization of the term within the social sciences and from a critical urban theory perspective is attributed to Soja. (3.1 The Trialectics of Spatiality - Talking in ‘triples’, p. 19)

References: (SOJA, 1996)

**Third Wilderness (S) (E) – (2009) The Cultural Ecologist Sabine Hofmeister** uses this term to indicate landscapes (formerly industrial sites, but also wild urban woodlands) characteristic of the Post-Modern era, that form “nature-culture hybrids”, where wilderness is a cultural value rather than a physical condition. These landscapes are self-reproductive and do not need human maintenance. With the “first wilderness” being primeval and primordial wilderness (self-sustaining and reproductive); and the “second wilderness” referring to simulated and constructed wilderness (national parks, wild gardens and conservation areas), the “third wilderness” refers to the basic type of future social relations to nature, of which the proliferation, multiplication, and increasing wildness of nature-culture hybrids are typical. (Chapter 4 Aesthetics of the indeterminate, p. 39; 4.2 Contemporary aesthetics of ruderal landscapes, p. 72)

References: (HOFMEISTER, Winter 2009) (DESIMINI, 2014)

**TOAD** acronym for **temporary, obsolete, abandoned, or derelict site (S) (E) – (1990)** Another descriptive label for vacant land. Term was coined by **POPPER, Frank J.; GREENBERG, Michael R.; WEST, Bernadette M.**, two planners and a Public Health researcher, who identified it as “A New American Urban Epidemic”. TOADs are of three varieties: formerly productive and valued sites abandoned by owners (like empty warehouses, abandoned shopping malls, or closed industrial sites) formerly productive but unwanted sites that housed less desirable activities; and unused parcels of overgrown land that, for various reasons, have not been developed. A TOAD might also be the site for

“ground cover”—developers’ slang for cheap, easily bulldozed architecture (such as storage units, or a model-home sales center), that temporarily occupies a site until the owner finds a more profitable use for the land.

References: (POPPER, et al., 1990); (PAGANO & BOWMAN, 2004)

**Topography of Trauma (S) (A) - (2013) Laura Cantarella and Lucia Giuliano.** The name is referred to a research project begun in 2008 dealing with European landscapes affected and modified by different types of trauma, which then took the form of a more detailed study on the Belice Valley in Sicily. The research deals also with residual landscapes as, they too, are often a result of traumatic events that initiate dynamic transformation of places. Such transformations are not only physical, but also social, political, and administrative. (3.2 Terrain Vague. A space for freedom, p. 27)

References: (CANTARELLA & GIULIANO, 2013)

**Unintended Landscapes (S) (A) (E) – (2016) Author.** “Unintended” refers to people’s informal, temporary and unregulated use that people make of the sites. The use of the word *Landscapes* (not sites or land) implies that there is a point of view of a subject, a perspective on the landscape and a relationship between man and nature. (5.2 *Le Tiers Paysage: an emerging new order*, p. 102; Chapter 8 UNINTENDED LANDSCAPES (*observing the evolution of R.L. in Tirana*))

**Unintentional Landscapes (S) (A) (E) - (2010).** Geographer and Urbanist **Matthew Gandy**, who writes about cities, landscape and nature, used this term in an article to indicate marginal or interstitial urban spaces inhabited by ruderal and post-industrial biotopes, that are not ordinarily regarded as landscapes. According to Gandy these alternative spaces might include a “flower-rich vacant lot or an overgrown roadside verge [...]”, or “[...] an abandoned industrial installation”. In his article Gandy first defines Unintentional landscapes by what they are not: “The unintentional landscape is not a primal landscape in the sense of wild nature serving as an object of aesthetic contemplation, it is not an idealized landscape that conforms to some pre-existing conception of the innate relations between nature and culture, and it is not a designed landscape allied to particular social or political goals. It is a landscape in spite of itself; a focus of intrigue or pleasure that has emerged irrespective of its anomalous or redundant characteristics.” According to Gandy, unintentional landscapes in the urban context might include a variety of spontaneous spaces of nature, which “hold cultural or scientific interest as part of an explicitly counter-utilitarian discourse, even if such spaces can be designated a putative role in terms of ‘ecological services’ or as a vernacular form of public space.”

In this case, the association of the adjective “unintentional” to the noun “landscape” introduces an “unsettling of the association between landscape and specific vantage points. There is a degree of detachment from pre-existing aesthetic or cultural expectations.” An unintentional landscape can be defined as an “aesthetic encounter with nature that has *not* been purposively created”. (Chapter 5 Ecological benefits of residual spaces, p. 87)

References: (GANDY, 2016), (GANDY, 2013)

**Urban Voids (S) (A) (E) - (2009) Rahmann and Jonas.** The term is used in the context of the research on residual spaces in Tokyo “Tokyo Void. Possibilities in absence” (2009-2013). “Urban voids” are temporary vacant spaces, defined as, “spaces in transition from one stage of development to another”; “ruptures in the surface” of cities generated by processes of growth, restructuring, or decline. They are not just mere gaps in the urban landscape, but also leftover buffer zones without clearly defined functions or boundaries. The term “void” is referred to the “full neglect of potential, not the spaces themselves”. The “voids”, their form and location unsuitable for development, leave these places outside of any consideration of formal uses, but offer room for spontaneous, and creative appropriation and informal uses.(7.1 Tokyo Void, P. 119)

References: (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1)) (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2))

**Urban woodlands & Wild Urban woodlands, also “Ruderal woodlands” (E) – (2005). Kowarik and Korner** differentiate between two kinds of wilderness: “old wilderness”, the traditional one, may return slowly to woodland areas when forestry use has been abandoned, the second kind of wilderness, which they call “new wilderness”, arises on heavily altered urban-industrial areas where abandonment of use makes such change possible. Forest stands within an urban-forestry context have come to be referred to as “urban woodlands” in order to make a distinction with the overall urban-forest concept (e.g. Bell et al. in press; Konijnendijk 2003). “Wild urban woodlands” resulting from natural succession on man-made sites have created a new component in the urban forest mix whose significance will grow in areas that are subjected to great structural transformation. These include many former industrial areas, but also, more generally, shrinking cities. A particular feature of the new urban wilderness is its position in the middle of urban agglomerations. Urban wild woodlands are a component of the urban forest matrix. They are stands of woody plants, within the impact area of cities, whose form is characterized by trees and in which a large leeway for natural processes makes possible a convergence toward wilderness. The wilderness character of these urban woodlands can vary greatly. (Chapter 4 Aesthetics of the indeterminate, p. 39)

References: (KOWARIK & KORNER, 2005)

**Vacant Lots (S) (E) –** “A vacant lot is a small area of land in a city or town that is not occupied or not being used” (Collins Dictionary). “An area of land that is not built on, usually in a town or city, sometimes one that is available to buy or rent” (Cambridge Dictionary). In the US, vacant lots are a byproduct of building-boom-and-bust cycles in a capitalistic society. EPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency) gives the following definition for vacant lots: “neglected parcel of property that has no buildings on it. In many cases, houses were on these lots, but as they fell into disrepair they were burned or demolished”. According to EPA, vacant lots are an issue of concern because they tend to attract or be subjected to illegal dumping of litter and other solid wastes. Moreover, EPA argues that vacant lots in urban communities are often contaminated with hazardous wastes such as lead, cadmium, arsenic and asbestos, which result in unsafe conditions for children and adults. These vacant lots are not just “unsightly blights” on the urban landscape, and breeding grounds for rats, they are a wasted resource. They disrupt a neighborhood's sense of community and “lower property values”. Vacant lots are also an “environmental justice

issue” since there are significantly more vacant lots in the city's poorer neighborhoods. The approach EPA adopts consists in reclaiming these lots and moving them into productive use, by developing projects and policies. The above definition, rooted in the US culture, takes into consideration social, aesthetic and ecological aspects of vacancy, but it concentrates on the negative aspects and consequences of vacancy, rather than their intrinsic potential if they are left vacant. According to this attitude, the reclamations and the return to a productive function seems to be the only way to value them.

References: Collins online Dictionary; Cambridge Dictionary; EPA (<https://www.epa.gov/>)

**Vacuum (S) – (2003)** Term “vacuum” was used in the context of contemporary Albanian urban studies by Prof. **Bensik Aliaj**, referring to the lack of vision and development policies by local authorities in allocating the financial means of private entrepreneurs during Albania’s socio-economic transitioning period. He brings as an example the considerable economic losses involved in the demolition process that started after 1998, which show the lack of vision and incapacity to keep up with actual needs of a growing urban population on one hand, and the tendency to offer posthumous expensive solutions to the problem, on the other. Aliaj, Dhamo and Shutina later used the word “vacuum” in the title of the publication “Between Energy and the Vacuum!”. This time the word is used to define the gap between the official planning system and actual social reality in Albania. According to the authors, the vacuum is generated by the institutional gap between the traditional authoritarian (socialist) planning instruments and the actual conditions of the city; by the difference between those who prepare the plans, and those who are supposed to implement them. The authors believe that a vacuum in the planning procedures - i.e. its incapacity to responds to the needs of all the population and not just certain categories of income - leaves room for the establishment corruptive development procedures and forces people to take things in their own hands. Therefore, the “energy” to take action exists, but it still needs to be guided. In the context of the research on residual spaces object of this dissertation, the “vacuum” can also be referred to as the state of suspension of abandoned urban spaces, and to the unsolved issues that generate them. In substance, the “condition of vacuum” (the state of suspension) produced by the “institutional vacuum” (unsuitable planning system) led to the citizen’s informal appropriation of residual spaces. (8.1 Incoherence & Disorder: Tirana’s landscape, p. 159)

References: (ALIAJ, et al., 2003, p. 71), (ALIAJ, et al., 2010)

**Vacuum domicilium (S)** (see also, “Terra Nullius”) – (c. 1500) The combination of terms comes from Latin “*vacuum*” (“an empty space, void”); and “*domicilium*”, from *domus* (“home, house”) + *colō* (“inhabit, dwell”), a noun that indicates “habitation”, “dwelling”, “domicile”, “home”. **John Winthrop** (1630), English Puritan lawyer who led the first large wave of immigrants from England to the Americas in 1630, used the term refereeing to the land that had not been put under cultivation, and thus free for the taking from the Indians. According to historian **Alfred Cave**, the colonists that arrived in the New World generally considered land that was not under some sort of active use as “vacuum domicilium”, and therefore free for the taking. This meant that lands which were only used seasonally by the Indians (e.g., for fishing or hunting) and were empty otherwise could be claimed. According to Cave, Winthrop claimed that this appropriation was justified by the

fact that the rights of “more advanced” peoples superseded the rights of the Indians. (CAVE, 1996, pp. 35-36)

Reference: (CAVE, 1996);

**Wasteland** – The word wasteland is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as an “empty or barren area of land”, and it originates from the Latin *vastus*, meaning “unoccupied” or “uncultivated.”

References: Oxford English Dictionary

# INTRODUCTION

## Chapter 1. Residual Landscapes

In the last two decades, newly emerging areas of academic research in landscape architecture are beginning to redefine the applied research field, legitimizing it as an autonomous discipline with its specialized body of knowledge. Compound themes like Landscape Urbanism, and Landscape Ecology, are but two of the topics discussed at national and international Landscape Architecture conferences around the world. Apart from introducing a new paradigm and approach toward the Landscape Architecture theory and practice, they raise a new set of related conditions and values that ought to be observed and reconsidered, suggesting new threads of inquiry. The topic of urban Residual Landscapes<sup>1</sup> is one of the potentially fertile areas of knowledge that ought to be reconsidered in light of all the body of research, directly or indirectly related to the topic<sup>2</sup>, produced since the second half of the past century. This dissertation is guided by an intellectual motivation to determine the principles, the key works, and the contributions in the topic area of urban Residual Landscapes.

### 1.1 Transitioning cities and the emergence of Residual Landscapes

While the presence of residual spaces has largely been studied by Western culture in both Western and Eastern consolidated urban environments - considering the social, political and economic processes that influence their existence - the value of such spaces as potential platforms for the preservation of biodiversity, and the re-introduction of some level of spontaneity in the development of cities has yet to be fully explored. Residual Landscapes are generated in all transitioning cities: in expanding cities, where increase in population is driving urban densification or sprawl; and in shrinking cities, which have become oversized and under-maintained for the decimated population. By conducting preliminary research in an expanding city such as Tirana, in Albania, observing the consequences brought by fast social and economic mutations on the urban landscape in terms of proliferation and evolution of residual spaces, and comparing the research results to three cities and related researches - respectively Tokyo (JP), which represents a dense and dynamic urban condition, characterized by a *progressive subdivision & fluctuation* of Residual Landscapes; San Francisco (US), a saturated city, where residual spaces appear *static* and *stagnant*; and Detroit (US), a city characterized by the postindustrial shrinkage of population, where Residual Landscapes continue to *multiply* and tend to evolve into a “new wilderness” (KOWARIK & KORNER, 2005) – the present research intends to reassess the value of such spaces within urban environments.

### 1.2 Rethinking the social and ecological future of cities

There is a substantial body of literature that expresses a common interest about the presence and the role of residual spaces in urban environments. The motivation for

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<sup>1</sup> “Residual Landscapes”, the main object of the enquiry, will also be abbreviated with the acronym RL.

<sup>2</sup> Multiple studies of the phenomena in different nuances have been undertaken and published, but not under a common understanding or scope; or at least with the conscious will to contribute to the definition of a new typological classification of landscapes.

conducting the present study is to revise and reconsider such theories in light of the evolving nature of contemporary cities. The fast evolution of social and environmental concerns in the world is suggesting that, while rethinking the social and ecological future of cities, we should take into consideration also Residual Landscapes; not as mere left over space, but rather as an opportunity to identify new grounds for a sustainable urban development. As larger portions of the parent's surface become anthropized, the presence of spontaneous and unmanaged landscapes becomes all the more important, if not vital, for the physical and psychological health of the population. We need to reconsider and value the spontaneity of these spaces because they constitute an ecological and social asset for the future of cities.

So far, Residual Landscapes have been analyzed and considered from individualistic and fragmented viewpoints, while this ethically motivated research intends to offer a holistic vision that includes economics, politics, ecologies and public realm. Moreover, the research intends to add to the existing body of knowledge the observation of the phenomena in a region of the western world, which has been largely overlooked in the past, due to its political isolation and a late economical development. In this framework, the city of Tirana, in Albania, may serve as a demonstration that residual spaces need to be further studied and valued from a new perspective.

### 1.3 Purpose of the study

#### Aim

The main aim of the research is to offer a new perspective on urban Residual Landscapes, reframing their role in the social and ecological future of cities, and ultimately promoting the acquisition of a new conscience about their ecological, social and aesthetic value.

From a theoretical point of view, the goal of this dissertation is to examine and compare existing theories and scholarship on Residual Landscapes, with the intention of finding common grounds, and defining new environments in which to observe the topic.

From a practical point of view, the goal of the dissertation is to set up an analytical framework and define a set of recommendations for Residual Landscape monitoring and management strategies in the transitioning city of Tirana.

#### Objectives

- a) Give an overview and comparison of relevant studies and theories on the topic. Enquire about the cultural meaning of Residual Landscapes in urban environments. Examine their ecological, social and aesthetic value, through the analysis of theoretical **positions**, the **exploration** of the context of enquiry, and the **projection** of findings.
- b) Identify existing researches and related methods to analyze urban Residual Landscapes and monitor their evolution. Gain an insight on processes that influence urban vacancy in different cultural and social contexts.
- c) Analyze the processes that generate and shape Residual Landscapes in Tirana through documentation, observation and analysis. Define a method to identify, classify and analyze previously managed, and presently abandoned, areas in Tirana's urban context



(macro scale) and, in parallel, observe their peculiar character by recording information about the sites' materiality and context (micro scale).

- d) Evaluate the potential ecological and social performance of Residual Landscapes and determine their aesthetic qualities. Observe the interaction of people with residual spaces and the spontaneous appropriation strategies adopted in the abandoned or neglected spaces in Tirana. Define a set of recommendations for residual urban space management in Tirana, offering best practice examples of how to preserve the environmental and social quality of in between and abandoned spaces in the city, by operating temporary or semi-permanent interventions that benefit the community (observation of already adopted strategies for the temporary or semi-permanent requalification).

## **Research question/s**

### Main Question

*What is the potential benefit of Residual Landscapes in contemporary cities?*

### Specific Research Questions

**a) *What are Residual Landscapes?***

*What are the existing theories and claims of knowledge on R.L.? Are there any gaps or flaws in the available knowledge?*

*What is their meaning for urban cultures?*

*What determines the value of urban R.L.?*

**b) *How do urban Residual Landscapes come to be?***

*What generates them and how can we observe their evolution?*

*Are there existing methods to observe and analyze them?*

*What kinds of intervention can take place in residual spaces, and how do we define the scope of site appropriation?*

**c) *How do Residual Landscapes come to be in Tirana?***

*What are the processes that generate and shape them?*

*What is their spatial distribution in Tirana?*

*How can we observe their evolution?*

*What are their qualities? (how do they perform ecologically and socially? What are their visual and aesthetic qualities?)*

*What do these spaces mean to people and how do people interact with them?*

*Is there a potential for knowhow acquisition in the spontaneous occupational and spatial solutions adopted in the in between, abandoned or neglected spaces in Tirana?*

*d) What could Residual Landscapes be in the future? (their social, ecological and aesthetic potential)*

*What could inhabit them?*

*To what extent should they be managed?*

#### **1.4 Significance of the study**

In general, the research intends to define a new approach toward abandoned areas characterized by the presence of spontaneous vegetation in cities, re-evaluating their role within the urban context and considering them as a potential ground for future urban development. This implies that landscape is seen as the common ground to address environmental and social needs, but also to solve social conflicts and urban dysfunctions. In a broader perspective, the research will attempt to demonstrate the importance of residual spaces in densely urbanized areas, as they can contribute to slowing down the process of surface imperviousness, and make cities more resilient in terms of response to environmental and social challenges. Residual Landscapes are by nature flexible and dynamic, they have the capacity to adapt to the context and to spontaneously provide ecosystem services.

On a local scale, the results of the research could offer a general strategy for monitoring and managing residual spaces in cities like Tirana subject to fast urban growth, and offer a set of recommendations on how to engage with such spaces, while preserving their ecological and social value. The defined research method could be extended and adapted to other cities in countries outside Albania. On a global scale, the results of the research could offer a set of general indications on how to operate sustainable urban space regeneration in cities where fast urban growth and informal development are generating a large number of residual spaces.

#### **1.5 Beneficiaries**

The underlying objective of the research is to promote sustainable practices and approaches towards abandoned and underutilized urban areas in the city, while encouraging the cooperation between private stakeholders, local government, local community and NGOs.

In synthesis the potential beneficiaries of the research outcomes are:

- Landscape and Architecture academic research community;
- Local authorities.

A part from researchers of the field, the targets of the research are local authorities who can acquire a method for mapping and monitoring these temporary landscapes, benefiting from the possibility to develop new standards and regulations (or improve existing ones) concerning regeneration of intermediate and/or underutilized areas of the city (both private and public abandoned areas). Authorities could test new ideas in the public realm, supporting public initiative projects, private stakeholders' initiatives and individual volunteering initiatives (or a combination of them).

## 1.6 Research outline

The present dissertation is an empirical enquiry that investigates the phenomenon of Residual Landscapes in contemporary cities, through a careful exploration and comparison of existing theories and research on the topic, with the intention of finding common grounds, defining new environments in which to observe the topic – Tirana, in Albania, representing a specific social condition, and a spontaneous attitude that gives new inputs for research on residual spaces - and ultimately seeing such spaces under a revised conceptual framework. To reach this goal the dissertation adopts a combination of strategies.

To move away from individualistic and fragmented viewpoints, and offer a holistic vision that includes economics, politics, ecologies, public realm and aesthetics, the overall approach to the context of enquiry is operated through three main research actions, which determine the research structure and the organization of the book sections and chapters: **POSITIONING** (explores the meaning of Residual Landscapes, how they are understood by architects and urban designers and landscape architects); **EXPLORATION** (documents the context of enquiry, observes how these spaces are manifested and their behavior), and **PROJECTION** (puts Residual Landscapes in perspective, reflecting upon their potential role and usefulness in the future of cities). (Figure 1-1 Research Structure)

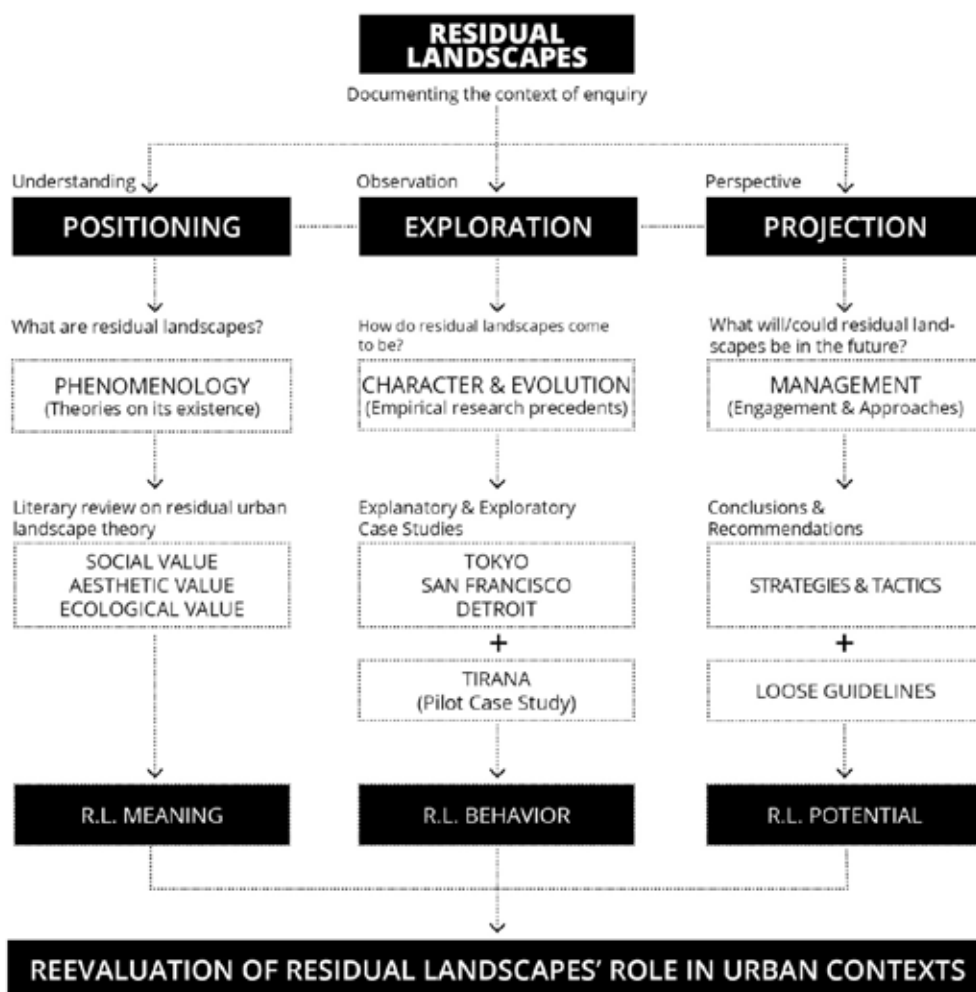
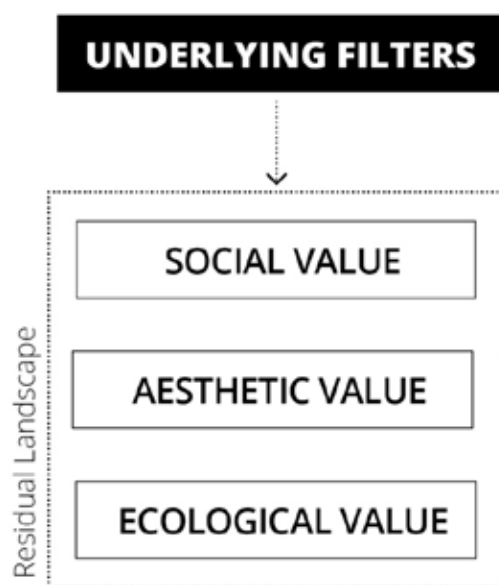


Figure 1-1 Research Structure

The dissertation consists of an introductory chapter and nine chapters (ten chapters in total), thematically divided in the above-mentioned three sections. In Chapter 1, (Residual Landscapes, the research questions are introduced, the theoretical underpinning is established, the research premise is identified, and the related research design is explained. The first chapter is followed by **Section One, POSITIONING** (Chapters 2 – 5) [*Answering the question: What are Residual Landscapes?*]. In this section, the theoretical context of the research on urban Residual Landscapes is defined through a literary review on relevant theory that defines how the context of enquiry is understood by previous chains of knowledge. Such theories are critically reviewed and common grounds are identified. The three chapters in Section One reflect the **ecological, social, and aesthetic** aspects, which constitute the underlying value filters, against which the existing and proposed theories on Residual Landscapes and the physical phenomenon itself are measured. (Figure 1-2. Residual landscape value filters)



**Figure 1-2.** Residual landscape value filters

After a brief introduction to the section in Chapter 2 (Phenomenological nature of Residual Landscapes, Chapter 3 (Space and the politics of Residual Landscapes) discusses the social and cultural value of residual spaces through relevant theoretical perspectives from a variety of disciplines. Analysis of relevant models for understanding “otherness” creates a theoretical position for this dissertation. Chapter 4 (Aesthetics of the indeterminate) discusses the aesthetic value of Residual Landscapes and the dual aspect of the discipline: the representation of the landscape, and the actual lived and experienced territory. Chapter 5 (Ecological benefits of residual spaces) describes the essential ecological qualities and structures of urban Residual Spaces.

In **Section Two, EXPLORATION** (Chapters 6-8) [*Answering the question: How do Residual Landscapes come to be? How do we observe their evolution?*], the research is placed in the context of previous work. This section describes critical empirical research precedents (relevant exploratory and explanatory case studies) to measure and evaluate different dimensions of the phenomena in different transitioning cities. Dissection of these

empirical studies has critical implications for this research, aimed at developing and framing a new analytical method. The acquired best practices and models are in turn applied to the “Tirana Pilot case study”. In Chapter 6 (Observing Residual Landscapes), tools to observe the character, behavior and evolution of Residual Landscapes are discussed. In Chapter 7 (Transitioning cities – Tokyo, San Francisco, Detroit), three main researches are analyzed to understand the Residual Landscape phenomenon in three transitioning cities (Tokyo, San Francisco and Detroit), and define a method to observe and analyze the phenomenon in Tirana, which is presented in Chapter 8 (UNINTENDED LANDSCAPES (*observing the evolution of R.L. in Tirana*)). In this chapter, the methods used to map, classify and analyze residual spaces in Tirana are described, and the results of the documentation project are presented.

In **Section Three, PERSPECTIVE** (Chapters 9-10) [*Answering the question: What will/could Residual Landscapes be in the future?*], general consideration about the character, qualities, and potential of urban residual spaces, and conclusions about the specific way they perform in Tirana, are commented. Through the observation of existing formalized approaches and informal engagement, and considering theories about complexity and resilience related to cities, the potential of people’s informal approaches is identified. Chapter 9 (Residual Landscapes as canvas to stage the future), synthesizes individual tactics and focuses on the interrelationships between the multiple meanings, actions, and forms of engagement with abandoned urban spaces, outlining the possibility for a re-evaluation of Residual Landscapes’ role in the city. Small-scale tactics around the world, and the specific way in which Albanians generate “unintended landscapes”, are considered as applicative examples to inspire and inform future approaches. Chapter 10 (Conclusions and Recommendations), summarizes the findings and generalizes them into broader conclusions concerning management strategies for urban residual spaces, suggesting the possibility of a future open-ended operational mode of urban development. The chapter ends with the definition of recommendations for monitoring and managing residual sits in Tirana. Lastly, possible future developments of the research are suggested. The dissertation proposes possible expansion of the research, outlining the project for an interactive online platform/app for monitoring and managing residual landscapes in Tirana.

The research results consist on one hand, in the theoretical reframing of Residual Landscapes’ role in urban environments, considering their ecological, social and aesthetic value. On the other hand, the outcome can be synthesized is a set of recommendation for the municipality of Tirana. The recommendations include coordinated management strategies and legal tools to set up a network of urban spaces, which can contribute to the physical, psychological, social and ecological wellbeing of citizens.

## **1.7 Methodology**

### **Strategy**

The research is both scholarly and applied and it is structured following three survey fields, aimed at reaching the goal of the research: “Theoretical bases for research”; “Empirical Research Precedents” (Case Studies and Pilot Case Study: Tirana); “Approaches toward Residual Landscapes”. The first two survey fields draw on two major sets of literature: one

makes up the “Theoretical bases for research” and the other set consists of “Empirical research precedents” (discussed in “Section Two, EXPLORATION”). The “Theoretical bases for the research” is in turn divided into 5 main topics (discussed in “Section One, POSITIONING and Section Three, PROJECTION): literature concerning the underlying philosophy and values of residual spaces (1. Theories on Residual Landscape); literature concerning the social and cultural implications of residual spaces (2. Social and cultural value of Residual Landscapes); literature concerning the aesthetic implications of residual spaces. (3. Aesthetics of the indeterminate); literature discussing the environmental functionality and resilience of urban wastelands (4. Ecological benefits of Residual Landscapes); and a set of readings that deal with underlying theories about urban landscape processes which are influenced by, and in turn influence, residual spaces (5. Complexity and the Urban Phenomena).

### Theoretical bases for research

1. Theories on Residual Landscapes
2. Social and cultural value of Residual Landscapes
3. Aesthetic value of Residual Landscapes
4. Ecological value of Residual Landscapes
5. Complexity and the Urban Phenomena

### Empirical Research precedents

1. Tokyo void. Possibilities in Absence (M. Jonas, H. Rahmann) 2014 –
2. Local code (N. de Monchaux) 2016
3. Shrinking cities (Philipp Oswalt) 2002-2006

**Theoretical bases for research** - The investigation on the main topic of enquiry is shaped by key researches and theories on urban landscape processes related to Residual Landscapes (considered in all the different declinations of the terms and the words that have been used to describe this phenomenon) in urban contexts. The Primary Sources of the investigation are key writings and comprehensive research documents and books that investigate the underlying philosophy and values of Residual Landscapes. My research expands upon these theories and concepts, by putting them in relation to each other, identifying a common conceptual framework. Secondary sources are associated with, or used to explain the main theories related to Residual Landscapes. These include also the landscape projects that engage with residual landscapes. Theories are grouped following the three underlying values: Social and cultural value of R.L.; Aesthetic value of R.L.; Ecological benefits of R.L.

**Empirical Research Precedents** - The second component of the research is centered on observing the characteristics and the dynamics that influence the existence and behavior of residual spaces in four different “transitioning cities”<sup>3</sup>, using as reference three research precedents and one pilot case study - which defines one of the applicative components of the dissertation. The examined cities are respectively: Tokyo, San Francisco, Detroit and

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<sup>3</sup> Both, shrinking cities and expanding ones; both, dense and sprawling urban structures(MARIANI & BARRON, 2014, p. 176)

Tirana. These cities have been selected because they represent very different urban conditions and cultural contexts: Tokyo, a densely built and dynamic city dominated by transient spaces; San Francisco a saturated and static city; Detroit a shrinking city; and Tirana a fast growing and expanding city. In the four urban environments in question, residual spaces are seen as a result of specific social, political and economic conditions, which influence the morphology, location and spatial distribution of residues. The dynamic process of residual spaces observed in these cities can be summarized through key words that represent the main generative process of residual spaces: TOKYO / *progressive subdivision & fluctuation*; SAN FRANCISCO / *stagnation*; DETROIT / *multiplication*; TIRANA / *incremental fragmentation*. Whilst the study of the Tokyo, San Francisco and Detroit case studies offer examples of different research approaches, and contribute to the definition of a method to observe and analyze the phenomenon of Residual Landscapes; Tirana represents a pilot case study, where the identified method will be applied.

**Approaches toward Residual Landscapes** - The third aspect of the research concerns the observation of practices of *engagement* with Residual Landscapes, existing *informal* appropriation tactics, formalized design strategies and management possibilities for unutilized or underutilized spaces in urban contexts around the world. The above mentioned examples are observed particularly in terms of their landscape approach, the duration of the occupation, the initiative that drives the intervention, and the adopted implementation process: informal or formal approach; legal or illegal interventions; spontaneous or planned initiatives. In addition, aspects concerning the aesthetic, environmental and social impact of the intervention strategies, in the respective urban environments, will be considered. The attitude towards abandoned urban landscapes observed in Tirana - people's informal, temporary and unregulated use of the sites - is considered as a source of inspiration for the definition of a management approach, which takes advantage of Residual Landscapes' indeterminacy and does not disrupt their spontaneous character.

### **Techniques**

The techniques adopted are desk research; definition of an analytical method; collection of data and data analysis.

- Desk research consists in research on studies and theories about Residual Landscapes in urban contexts.
- The definition of an analytical method for identifying, analyzing, classifying and evaluating the potential of residual spaces in the city concerns the definition of scenarios, rules and general criteria to set an evaluation process for the "Tirana Pilot case study".
- Collection of data and data analysis and elaboration, consists in surveying and compiling analytical sheets for vacant sites in Tirana, and evaluating, summarizing, and representing the findings through maps and diagrams.

### **1.8 Limitations**

The main limitation of this research concerns the ephemeral character of Residual Landscapes. Since they undergo constant mutation, the residual spaces that exist today are

most likely not going to coincide with the ones of the future. Nevertheless, this provisional character is also what makes them suitable tools for dealing with the unpredictability of future urban conditions, in terms of response to environmental needs.

Hence, one of the limitations of the research concerns the mapping of Residual Landscapes. Their instable, dynamic, heterogeneous and chaotic character would require interactive monitoring and mapping in order to understand their evolution over time. Given the time limitation of the research period (three years) the results of the observation in terms of mutation of such areas over time is limited to the extent of the research period. Moreover, the spatial analysis and comparison with other available information about social, economic and environmental dynamics, is limited due to the lack of available and updated information.

Another limitation concerns the theoretical bases for research. Given the time limitations of the investigation period (3 years), although the bibliographic research is extensive and attentive, it is by no means comprehensive. Nevertheless, the glossary is an attempt to start building a systematic collection of references, and offer a holistic approach towards the topic of urban Residual Landscapes.

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## SECTION ONE. POSITIONING (*the meaning of Residual Landscapes*)

Answering the question: *What are Residual Landscapes?*

LITERARY REVIEW (Precedents for empirical research - Review of Relevant Literature). This section reviews existing theories on the presence of abandoned, residual spaces in urban contexts and on related urban landscape processes (processes that are influencing or being activated by residual spaces).

The investigation on the main topic of enquiry is shaped by key researches and theories on Residual Landscapes in urban contexts. The Primary Sources of the investigation are key writings and comprehensive research documents and books which investigate the underlying philosophy and values of Residual Landscapes, such as: “Terrain Vague” (SOLÀ-MORALES, Ignasi), “Dead Zones” (Doron, Gil M.); “Drosscape” (BERGER, Alan), “Novel Emergent Ecosystems” (Del Tredici, Peter); “Tiers Paysage” (Clément, Gilles).

Secondary sources are associated with, or used to explain, the main theories related to Residual Landscapes: “Non-places” (Augé, Mark); “Heterotopias” (Foucault, Michel); “Thirdspace,” (Soja, Edward); “The Production of Space” (Lefebvre, Henri); “The Location of Culture” (Bhabha, Homi K.); “Heterotopia of difference” (Cenatti, Marco); “The ‘terrain vague’ as material” (Lévesque, Luc); “Topography of Trauma” (Cantarella, L.; Giuliano, L.); “Feral landscapes” (Irons, Ellie); “Landscapes of contempt” (Armstrong, Helen); “Lagscapes” (Burkholder, Sean); “Unintentional landscapes” (Gandy, Matthew); “Urban Ecology” (Sukopp, Herbert); “Walkscapes” (Careri, Francesco); “Dead spots” (Smithson, Robert); “Fake Estates” (Matta-Clark, Gordon); “Wild Urban Woodlands” (Kowarik, Ingo); “Nouvelle Nature” (Girod, Christophe); “Second Nature: New Territories for the exiled” (Geuze, Adriaan & Skjonsberg, Matthew); “Ambivalent Landscapes” (Jorgensen, Anna; Tulecote, Marian); “Third Wilderness” (Hofmeister, Sabine); “Fifth Nature” (Desimini, Jill); “Notions of Nature” (Hunt, John D.); “Sub-Urbanism” (Marot, Sebastien); “Subnature” (Gissen, David).

Also the influence of landscape practices that have and are still shaping the landscape architecture panorama are presented in this chapter. Among others: “Jardin en mouvement” (Clément, Gilles); “Intermediate Natures” (Desvigne, Michel); “Shifting Sites” (Descombes, Georges); “Imbricated Spaces” (Loughran, Kevin); “syntactic design” (Latz + Partners); “Wasteland as artifice” (James Corner Field Operations USA & Oudolf, Piet); “Post-Industrial Imaginaries” (Millington, Nate).

Ecological, social and aesthetic implications of Residual Landscapes are examined in this chapter. Theories are grouped following the above-mentioned underlying values: **Social and cultural value of R.L.**; **Aesthetic value of R.L.**; **Ecological benefits of R.L.**

### Theoretical bases for research

1. (Primary Sources) **Main theories on Residual Landscapes** (literature concerning the underlying philosophy and values of R.L.).

- “Terrain Vague” (SOLÀ-MORALES, Ignasi),
  - “Dead Zones” (Doron, Gil M.);
  - “Drosscape” (BERGER, Alan),
  - “Novel Emergent Ecosystems” (Del Tredici, Peter);
  - “Tiers Paysage” (Clément, Gilles).
2. (Secondary sources) **Social and cultural value of Residual Landscapes:**
- “The Production of Space” (Lefebvre, Henri);
  - “Non-places” (Augé, Mark);
  - “Heterotopias” (Foucault, Michel);
  - “Thirdspace,” (Soja, Edward);
  - “The Location of Culture” (Bhabha, Homi K.);
  - “Heterotopia of difference” (Cenatti, Marco);
  - “The ‘terrain vague’ as material” (Lévesque, Luc);
  - “Topography of Trauma” (Cantarella, L.; Giuliano, L.).
3. (Secondary sources) **Aesthetic value of Residual Landscapes**
- Aesthetics of the indeterminate:*
- “Wild Urban Woodlands” (Kowarik, Ingo);
  - “Unintentional landscapes” (Gandy, Matthew);
  - “Landscapes of contempt” (Armstrong, Helen);
  - “Notions of Nature” (Hunt, John D.)
  - “Nouvelle Nature” (Girot, Christophe);
  - “Second Nature: New Territories for the exiled” (Geuze, Adriaan & Skjonsberg, Matthew);
  - “Ambivalent Landscapes” (Jorgensen, Anna; Tulecote, Marian);
  - “Subnature” (Gissen, David).
  - “Third Wilderness” (Hofmeister, Sabine);
  - “Fifth Nature” (Desimini, Jill);
- The role of figurative and performing Arts:*
- “Dead spots” (Smithson, Robert);
  - “Fake Estates” (Matta-Clark, Gordon);
  - “Walkscapes” (Careri, Francesco);
- New aesthetics in Landscape Architecture practice:*
- “Intermediate Natures” (Desvigne, Michel);
  - “Shifting Sites” (Descombes, Georges);
  - “Imbricated Spaces” (Loughran, Kevin);
  - “Jardin en mouvement” (Clément, Gilles)
  - “syntactic design” (Latz + Partners)
  - “Wasteland as artifice” (James Corner Field Operations USA & Oudolf, Piet)
  - “Post-Industrial Imaginaries” (Millington, Nate).
4. (Secondary sources) **Ecological value of Residual Landscapes**

***New Values: open-endedness and spontaneity:***

- “Urban Ecology” (Sukopp, Herbert);
- “Feral landscapes” (Irons, Ellie);
- “Lagscapes” (Burkholder, Sean);
- Biological order
- Entropy
- Resilience

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## **Chapter 2. Phenomenological nature of Residual Landscapes**

There is proof that urban Residual Landscape existed also in Medieval Rome, but it was integrated with agricultural land. Leonardo Bufalini’s map of Rome (“Pianta di Roma”, 1551) shows a vast portion of the urban territory within the Aurelian wall that had become abandoned due to the depopulation of the city initiated after the crisis of the Roman Empire, and continued well into the Middle Ages. (Figure 2-1) This land was commonly known as the *disabitato* (uninhabited). This urban, formerly inhabited area was a mixture between “wilderness, ancient ruins and agricultural lands”. Although the term *disabitato* existed since the fourteenth century, indicating more in general “abandoned urban land”, in the sixteenth century Rome, it came to serve as a specific place-name, indicating the formerly urban territory within the Aurelian walls. According to Charles Waldheim, the new meaning assigned to the word *disabitato* suggests a specific political and intellectual project, in the sense that these abandoned sites were sought to be reinhabited in the future<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, the *disabitato* was indeed urban Residual Landscape, a transitory “lawless wilderness”, that was occupying the “formerly urban interior hinterland” with overgrown vegetation and scattered picturesque ruins. (WALDHEIM, 2016, pp. 94-95). However, this wilderness was also given over to vineyards, gardens and orchards, and therefore the land was not totally abandoned and it was still a productive and at the service of men.

This condition persisted for several centuries, or at least until the city started being repopulated and all the urban land had to be occupied. Nolli’s famous map of Rome (“Nuova Topografia di Roma”, 1748) still showed a “vast area between the urbanized center and the ancient Aurelian wall circuit [...] dominated by ancient ruins and open space”. (TICE, 2005) Although, together with the areas immediately outside the walls, these spaces were thought to be no-man’s land, in reality Giambattista Nolli gave us a careful account of them in his famous map, using specific symbols to indicate both horticultural landscape terms and the social and economic patterns that characterize them. (TICE, 2005) (Figure 2-2)

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<sup>1</sup> Similar to Doron’s observation on the use of the word “dead” or “void” associated to space, as a construct produced for political, social and economic ends. (DORON, 2008, p. 204) . See also theories on modernity about depicting a place as a “void” as a strategy of colonization: Hans van Dijk (Colonizing the void: 1996), Zygmunt Bauman (Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts, 2004), and Homi K. Bhabha (The Location of Culture, 1994).



Figure 2-1. Pianta di Roma Leonardo Bufalini 1551, copied by Giambattista Nolli in 1748.



Figure 2-2. The same area of Rome shown in three different maps of Rome, highlighting the *disabitato*. “Pianta di Roma” Leonardo Bufalini (1551); “Pianta di Roma” re-drawn by Giambattista Nolli (1748); “Nuova Topografia di Roma” Giambattista Nolli (1748).

Residual Landscapes have always existed in cities, they might have been more numerous and incline to proliferation in medieval cities, given the organic character of the urban fabric, but they were certainly not always at the center of attention, nor considered important enough to deserve the attribution of a new term to officially label them. For most of history, Residual landscapes were probably *apophatic*<sup>2</sup>: they existed, but they were not spoken, they were only definable by negation (by describing what they are not). Since they were not categorized by official terms or ownership there was no need for text or graphical symbol on a map to define and/or *re-present* them.

Just as the absence of a term might reflect a conceptual structure that excludes the very existence of a phenomenon, unnamed ideas generally remain unconsidered. It wasn't until the first half of the twentieth century, with the urban explosion, the spatial revolutions

<sup>2</sup> What cannot be explicitly said, or directly described, in the current vocabulary (Etymology: mid 19th century - from Greek *apophatikos* 'negative,' from *apophasis* 'denial,' from *apo-* 'other than' + *phanai* 'speak.')

taking place in cities around the developed world and the appearance of new ways to express Art (Land Art, Environmental Art, Avant Garde), that such fragments of land stated attracting the attention of photographers and artists first, and then architects, planners and social scientists. (Figure 2-3) It was in fact the “eye of the urban photographer” which, according to Ignasi de Solà-Morales Rubió (De SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995), inaugurated a new sensibility in the gaze on cities, making people aware of the built and human reality of the modern metropolis, which also included a large number of abandoned or ecologically compromised sites. It is precisely in those empty, neglected spaces that photographers, performers, sculptors and filmmakers were seeking for refuge: the “un-inhabited, un-safe, un-productive” areas at the margins, where they could escape the homogenization and the control of the city. (De SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995)



**Figure 2-3.** Photography: “La Poterne des Peupliers”, 1934, Paris, Robert Doisneau; “Terrain vague, Porte de Saint-Cloud Porte de Saint-Cloud”, Paris, 1950, Sabine Weiss; Terrain vague sur Botha - Belleville – Ménilmontant, 1954, Willy RONIS]

The new interest drawn to these formerly invisible spaces automatically attracted new words to define them. Until today, numerous terms have been used to define vacant, derelict, abandoned and leftover areas, both in urban and non-urban contexts. In the introduction of the book “Terrain Vague. Interstices at the Edge of the Pale”, Patrick Barron mentions at least fifteen of them in a single paragraph (MARIANI & BARRON, 2014, p. 3):

- “derelict land” (Barr, 1969; Kivell & Hatfield, 1998; Oxenham, 1966);
- “zero panorama,” “empty or abstract settings,” and “dead spots” (Smithson, 1996a/1967; 1996b/1968; 1970, as cited in Reynolds, 2003);
- “vacant land” (Bowman & Pagano, 2004; Northam, 1971);
- “wasteland” (Gemmell, 1977; Nabarro & Richards, 1980);
- “il vuoto” (“the void”) (Borret, 1999; Secchi, 1989/1984);
- “urban wilds” and “urban sinks” (Lynch, 1990);
- “new, nameless places” (Boeri, Lanzani, & Marini, 1993);
- “dross” (Lerup, 1994) and “drosscape” (Berger, 2006);
- “no-man’s land” (Leong, 1998);
- “dead zones” and “transgressive zones” (Doron, 2000);
- “superfluous landscapes” (Nielson, 2002);
- “spaces of uncertainty” (Cupers & Miessen, 2002);
- “le Tiers-Paysage” and “les délaissés” (“the Third Landscape” and, roughly, “leftover lands”) (Clément, 2003).
- “SLOAPs” (Spaces Left Over After Planning) (Doron, 2007)

In 2000, introducing yet another term – “Dead Zones” - to define residual spaces, Gil Doron observes how the multiplicity of names used by architects, planners and theoreticians to indicate the same or similar urban and non-urban spaces denotes a difficulty in defining them. “Some of these terms are: wasteland, derelict area, terrain vague, conceptual Nevada, urban desert, vacant land, space of uncertainty, free space, nameless space, white area, blank space, temporary autonomous zone, ellipsis space, space of indeterminacy, brown fields, liminal space, no man’s land and urban void. [...]”. (DORON, 2008, p. 203)

Other common terms used include “brownfields,” “in-between spaces,” “white areas,” “blank areas”. (MARIANI & BARRON, 2014) But, no matter what they are called, the more we look around with the scope of finding common grounds around residual spaces, the more the names attributed to them multiply and become an unmanageable over complication. There comes a point in such a research when it is no longer possible to recall all these names and identify the microscopic differences that separate them, or the similarities they share<sup>3</sup>. (See Glossary, p. xix)

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<sup>3</sup> The glossary in the first pages of this dissertation is not only giving a record of the words encountered, but it also makes an attempt to determine whether they share some common characters.



**Figure 2-4.** Terms used to define residual landscape. Source: Author.

Nevertheless, as shown by numerous books and articles centered around the topic of residual spaces, the term “*Terrain Vague*” has for long been used as the key, overreaching theoretical term. In fact, Solà-Morales’ essay served as one of the main inspirations to many researchers in the field of Visual and Performing Arts, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Planning and Social studies, who have since approached the topic of abandoned and indeterminate landscapes from very different perspectives, producing a rich body of literature, art, photography and film. I believe that, under close examination, common threads can be identified in these researches on Residual Landscapes. Firstly, the apparent desire to reveal to the world their hidden qualities (not only the aesthetic ones), to offer a rebellion against homologation and an alternative to the monotonous and inflexible modern city: an alternative, a “space for freedom”, an “otherness”.

Before analyzing the main theories and defining common grounds, we need to enquire upon the emergence of such interest: *How do we trace the origin and the evolution of this desire to identify an “otherness”?* In my attempt to place this research in the context of previous work, I have identified three main threads that constitute, in my opinion, the main criticism and knowledge production models which this new interest for Residual Landscapes emerged: **firstly, in the context of theoretical research on space and its cultural and social value; secondly, in the context of artistic and landscape**

architecture research and practice concerned with the aesthetics of indeterminate landscapes and urban wilderness; thirdly, in the theories about the ecological value of urban Residual Landscapes, introduced by studies on urban ecology. (Figure 2-5)

The order of consideration of such points is not hierarchical, or chronological, they are all equally important, as they constitute different aspects directly related to residuality.

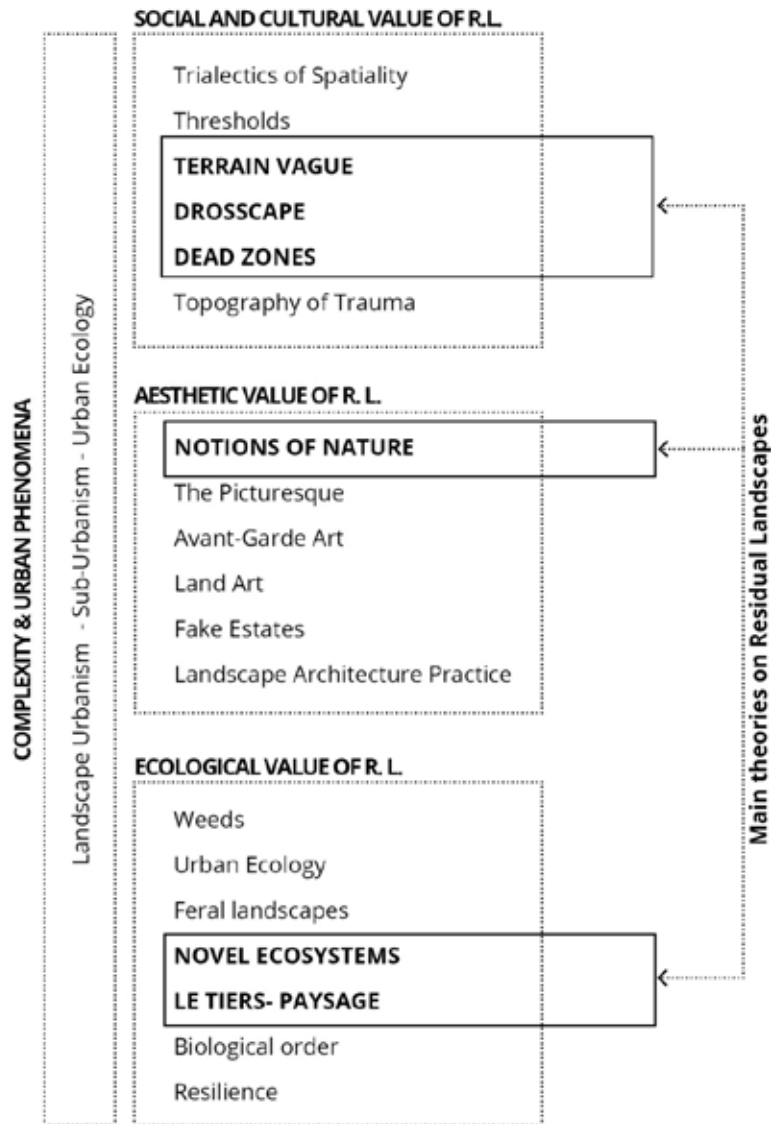


Figure 2-5. Theoretical Framework

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## Chapter 3. Space and the politics of Residual Landscapes

*Social and cultural value of residual spaces.*

### 3.1 The Triad of Spatiality - Talking in ‘triples’

“*Il y a toujours l’Autre*” - there is always an-Other term – Lefebvre used to say, deconstructing the binary logic and the limitations of two opposing terms. “When faced with a choice confined to the either/or, Lefebvre creatively resisted by choosing instead an-Other alternative, marked by the openness of the both/and also ..., with the “also” reverberating back to disrupt the categorical closures implicit in the either/or logic.” (SOJA, 1996, p. 7)

EXTREME I	OTHERNESS III	EXTREME II	Category
black	shades of grey	white	<i>(color)</i>
private	threshold	public	<i>(use)</i>
inside	in between	outside	<i>(space)</i>
here	elsewhere	there	<i>(space)</i>
permanent	evolving	temporary	<i>(time)</i>
natural*	residual*	artificial*	<i>(landscape)</i>
First Estate (clergy)**	Third Estate (peasants & bourgeoisie) **	Second Estate (nobles) **	<i>(social status)</i>

\* Author; \*\* From the French Ancien Régime (Old Regime), a three-estate system used until the French Revolution (1789–1799).

**Figure 3-1.** Table “OTHERNESS, and the tripartite definition of conditions”. Source: author

Today, all things seem to come in triples and just about anything that matters can be mapped or classified into three categories, which for Lefebvre would translate into the “triple dialectic” of the characterization of space (LEFEBVRE, 1991), for Soja into the “Triad of Spatiality” (SOJA, 1996), for Foucault in the “discursive triangle” (FOUCAULT, 1984, orig. 1967), and for Taleb in the “Triad” of fragile - robust – “antifragile” (TALEB, 2013, pp. 20-21). Whenever there are two opposing terms or antinomies, defining a condition and its direct opposite (pairings in opposition to each other) - black/white; private/public; inside/outside; here/there; natural/artificial, and so on, and so forth – at some point men have felt the need to add an alternative that indicates a third, intermediate condition: what Lefebvre would call “*l’Autre*”. This also implies that in a classification we will have three categories sided by a spectrum of varying degrees between them, and items might fall on one of the two extremes, or in the “golden mean”<sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> The “golden mean”, “middle way”, or “golden middle” is a concept often discussed within ethical contexts and considered as a virtue. In ancient Western civilization, the Golden Mean is found in the mythological Cretan tale of Daedalus and Icarus, in the inscription of “Nothing in Excess” at the temple of Delphi, and in the ideas of Greek philosophers such as Socrates and Plato; the Golden Mean was an attribute of beauty. In Western philosophy, Aristotle in particular elaborated the concept in his “Nicomachean Ethics”. The “golden mean” is the desirable middle between two

the neutral position. Consequently we might have: black / **shades of grey** / white; private / **threshold** / public; inside / **in between** / outside; here / **elsewhere** (FOUCAULT, 1984, orig. 1967)/ there; permanent / **evolving** / temporary; natural / **residual** / artificial; First Estate / Third Estate / Second Estate; and so on, and so forth. (Figure 3-1)

First, I will address the theoretical understanding of space and spatiality in the changing contexts of the contemporary world to trace and define where residual landscapes stand in relation to space and the social spatiality. The origin of the contemporary discourse about space can be traced back in the second half of the twentieth century. In the midst of the urban and, more in general, spatial crisis of the late 1960's, another form of spatial awareness begun to emerge, drawing from, and combining, the traditional dualism of material and mental space. Lefebvre and Foucault were the first to attempt to restructure the familiar ways of thinking about space across all disciplines.

### **The "discursive triangle" and the "*dialectique de triplicité*"**

Heterotopias (FOUCAULT, Michel) 1950's; The Production of Space (LEFEBVRE, Henri) 1960-70's.

“The last trait of heterotopias is that they have a function in relation to all the space that remains. This function unfolds between two extreme poles. Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory [like brothels]”. “Or else, on the contrary, their role is to create another space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled [‘Heterotopias of compensation’, like colonies]”. (FOUCAULT, 1984, orig. 1967)

The last principle of “heterotopias” identified by Foucault in his 1967 essay “Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias”, introduces a “discursive triangle” (as defined by Derek Gregory) and it depicts the condition of otherness and, most importantly, its relationship to left over space. Foucault’s theory is based on his initial observations about the “inviolable oppositions” that govern our lives and we take for givens because institutions make us believe that everything is reducible to two opposed spaces: “for example between private space and public space, between family space and social space, between cultural space and useful space, between the space of leisure and that of work.” (FOUCAULT, 1984, orig. 1967) But Foucault’s interest lies in “counter-sites”, “different”, “other” places, and heterotopia’s function lies precisely between two extreme poles: one is creation of “illusory space” and the opposite is creation of “perfect real space”. The ambiguity of the term is further explored by Cenzatti in his essay “Heterotopias of difference”, where he points out how the term, which was coined in medicine to indicate a “condition of growth of normal tissue in unexpected ways and places”, questions the binary division between a healthy/normal and sick/abnormal condition (CENZATTI, 2008, p. 75), introducing an alternate condition that stands between the two opposing ones, but doesn’t deny neither of the two opposing conditions.

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extremes, one of excess and the other of deficiency. (“New World Encyclopedia” online, [www.newworldencyclopedia.org](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org)). See also, (ARISTOTELE, 1999)

Among the two main categories of heterotopias Foucault identifies - one of “crisis” associated to so called “primitive societies, and the other of “deviation” - he believes the ones that characterize the condition of the Modern world are “heterotopias of deviation”: “those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed”. Among them rest homes, psychiatric hospitals, prisons and cemeteries (FOUCAULT, 1984, orig. 1967). The “heterotopias of deviation” must be reconsidered in light of the changes in the social norms from which deviance emerges, which “have become more flexible” in the contemporary society, and consequently “deviance [has become] a more transient concept”. Cenzatti argues that in our current time (the twenty-first century) we should be talking about “heterotopias of difference”. (CENZATTI, 2008, p. 76) The multiplication of social identities, the emergence of multiple social subjects and the economic revolution of the Post-Fordist era, called for a new regulatory mechanism, which had to open up to - but also took advantage of - “difference”. Consequently, the minorities, the interest groups and the fanatics have begun inhabiting “other spaces” of difference, which have become part of everyday life. These spaces are constantly changing, oscillating between visibility and invisibility, but they are most commonly found in the in-between penumbra.(CENZATTI, 2008, p. 79) These “spaces of difference” produced by new identities, interests and needs, “testify to the ephemerality of the space of representation. The same physical location can take on different spatial meanings according to the social groups that occupy it, whether at different times or simultaneously”. (CENZATTI, 2008, p. 83)

Because of their ephemerality residual spaces or, as Lefebvre would say, what “remains when all specialized activities have been eliminated”, tend to be the first to be physically occupied by people who don’t (yet) belong to the existing, officially recognized, and socially accepted social groups. Therefore, if residual spaces are the spaces where no specialized activities are taking place, we might go as far as stating that all “spaces of difference” are residual, in that they welcome people with (temporary) absence of a recognized social identity and without a designated physical space to contain the social group they belong to and its social relations. Consequently, spaces remain residual as long as they are generic and ephemeral, while they stop being residual as soon as they are dedicated to a specific, officially recognized, activity.

“[...] heterotopias are ‘spaces of representation’ and vanish when the social relations that produced them end.” (CENZATTI, 2008, p. 76)

Furthermore, in his essay Cenzatti associates Heterotopias to Lefebvre’s “spaces of representation” and points out that, because “heterotopias [Foucault], as spaces of representation [Lefebvre], are produced by the presence of a set of specific social relations and their space, as soon as “the social relation and the appropriation of physical space end, both space of representation and heterotopia disappear”. (CENZATTI, 2008, p. 81). To understand this conclusion and its implications, we must do as Cenzatti proposes, and interpret heterotopias through Henri Lefebvre’s characterization of space theory. In “The production of Space”(LEFEBVRE, 1991) “Lefebvre does not propose a periodization of space. Rather, he sees spaces as composed of three ‘moments’ that coexist, interact and are produced in relation to one another: *spatial practice*, which, in short, can be defined as the

process of production of physical spaces (the built environment); *representation of space*, that is, a sort of ‘epistemological space’ – the organization of our knowledge of space, as can be found in mental images and maps; and *spaces of representation*, the spaces that are directly lived, occupied and transformed by inhabiting them”. (CENZATTI, 2008, p. 80) Hence, the last one is the one that most overlaps with Foucault’s space of relations and, therefore, with heterotopias.

### **Thirdspace and “critical thirding”**

Edward W. Soja (1996).

Soja’s theory on the “trialectics of spatiality, of spatial thinking, of the spatial imagination echoes from Lefebvre’s interweaving incantation of three different kinds of spaces [...]” (SOJA, 1996, p. 10). According to Soja, Lefebvre’s three moments of spatial conception correspond respectively to: the *perceived* space of materialized Spatial Practice; the *conceived* space of representation; and the *lived* Spaces of Representation (translated into English as "Representational Spaces").

In “THIRDSPACE. Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places”, Soja updated Lefebvre’s concept of the “spatial triad” with his own concept of “spatial trialectics”<sup>2</sup>. The new spatial concept introduces an alternative to the pair composed by “Firstspace” (focused on the *real* material world) and “Secondspace” (that interprets this reality through *imagined* representations of spatiality). He names the alternative “thirdspace” (SOJA, 1996, p. 6). Thirsplaces, or “spaces that are *both real and imagined*”, are a result of a creative recombination of a binomial categorization and an extension of the latter (SOJA, 1996).

“In what I will call a critical strategy of “thirding-as-Othering” I try to open up our spatial imaginaries to ways of thinking and acting politically that respond to all ‘binarisms’, to any attempt to confine thought and political action to only two alternatives, by interjecting an-Other set of choices. In this critical thirding, the original binary choice is not dismissed entirely but is subjected to a creative process of restructuring that draws selectively and strategically from the two opposing categories to open new alternatives.” (SOJA, 1996, p. 5)

By offering “an-Other”<sup>3</sup> set of choices in the discourse about space and social spatiality, Soja is introducing a new critical strategy, what he called “critical thirding” (SOJA, 1996, p. 5), that takes into consideration the “simultaneity and interwoven complexity of the social, the historical, and the spatial, their inseparability and interdependence”, moving away from the compartmentalized (bicameral) way of thinking about space, and entering a new awareness.

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<sup>2</sup> The ‘Thirdspace’ theory is actually attributed to Homi K. Bhabha (Professor of English and American Literature and Language, expert in contemporary post-colonial studies), but the conceptualization of the term within the social sciences and from a critical urban theory perspective is attributed to Soja.

<sup>3</sup> The choice to capitalize the ‘O’ in the word ‘other’ is a direct reference to Lefebvre’s capitalization of the ‘A’ of the word ‘autre’, in his phrase: “*Il y a tou jours l’ Autre*” (which in English translates into “there is always an-Other [term]”). Soja points out that the capitalized ‘Autre’ is used by the philosopher to emphasize the critical importance of “otherness” and, I would add, in the extension of this theory by Soja, it also refers to the importance of “alternatives”. (SOJA, 1996, p. 7)

The “rebalanced trialectics of spatiality-historicity-sociality” Soja proposes are in fact based on the “[...] recognition that the mainstream spatial or geographical imagination has, for at least the past century, revolved primarily around a dual mode of thinking about space; one, which he described as a Firstspace perspective and epistemology, referred to the concrete materiality of spatial forms, on things that can be empirically mapped; and the second, Secondspace, was conceived in ideas about space, in thoughtful re-presentations of human spatiality in mental or cognitive forms. Soja balances this mode of thinking about space with an alternative Thirdspace (or lived space), where the two opposing modes can coexist. (SOJA 1996, 10)

### **Third Place**

Oldenburg Ray (1996).

“‘Third places’ also suggest the stability of the tripod in contrast to the relative instability of the bipod”.(OLDENBURG, 1996-97, p. 7)

“Third places” - not to be confused with the theories about “Thirdspace” by Soja discussed above - are another example of space being organized in two opposing realms, in this case the “realms of human experience”, and the definition of a third, balancing option. According to the urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg, “third places” are “nothing more than informal public gathering places. The definition derives from considering homes to be the “first” places in our lives, and our work places the “second.” (OLDENBURG, 1999, orig. 1989)

Interestingly enough in his 1996 article, to highlight people’s struggle against the anti-community character of the American post war suburban landscape, Oldenburg uses the example of a vacant lot attracting dog owners (OLDENBURG, 1996-97, p. 6) to demonstrate that there is a concrete need for more flexible inclusive “neutral grounds”<sup>4</sup>; spaces where people can fulfill both their individual and collective needs. Just as we saw in Cenzatti’s writings about Foucault and “heterotopias of difference”, this further confirms how the spaces without any clear function or official activity, are the ones that are most likely to welcome these new, ever changing and unplanned activities.

Besides the inconsistency of the unsupported and anecdotal statements, the theories put forward by Oldenburg might be interesting if we transfer some of the concepts to our Residual Landscapes, since they have the potential to become “third places”, as soon as people start inhabiting them. In fact Oldenburg points out how “third places” cannot be designed and defined by planners themselves, but the latter can help foster the conditions in which such spaces might emerge (OLDENBURG, 1996-97, p. 10). Following this reasoning, we could say that instead of discouraging the unofficial use people make of Residual Landscapes, and the transgressive activities that might take place in them, policies could be limited to the definition of loose regulations that allow, if not even encourage, the emergence and endurance of “third places”.

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<sup>4</sup> “It is accessible to the general public and does not set formal criteria of membership and exclusion” (OLDENBURG, 1999, orig. 1989, p. 47)

TRINOMIAL DEFINITION of SPACE	EXTREME I	ALTERNATIVE	EXTREME II
Lefebvre's ' <i>dialectique de triplécité</i> '	the <i>perceived</i> spaces (Spatial Practice)	the <i>lived</i> spaces (Representational Spaces)	the <i>conceived</i> spaces (Representation of Space)
Foucault's ' <i>discursive triangle</i> '	perfect, real space	Heterotopia	Illusory space (perfect/Utopia; imperfect/Dystopia)
Soja's ' <i>spatial trialectics</i> '	Firstspace (concrete space)	Thirdspace (lived space)	Secondspace (idea about space)
Oldenburg ' <i>places of human experience</i> '	First Place (home)	Third Place (public gathering places)	Second Place (work)
Augé's ' <i>Introduction to Supermodernity</i> '	Places (somewhere) (anthropological places)	<i>places in becoming</i> *	Non-places (nowhere)

\*Hypothesized, proposed by Author.

**Figure 3-2.** Table comparing theories about the “Trinomial Definition of Space”. Source: author.

I believe that theories sharing a “trialectic conception of space” are essential for the contemporary understanding and theoretical positioning of residual spaces. In light of the new understanding of space explored by the above mentioned theories, we can begin to reframe the discourse about Residual Landscapes in their spatial and social dimension, using such background as reference against which to measure and evaluate their existence and their role in the world today. A part form dividing problems into thirds and proposing an alternative third, balancing option to a binomial definitions of spatial conditions (Figure 3-2), all the enunciated theories have a very important element in common: they directly or indirectly contemplate the conception of spaces as “composed of three ‘moments’ that coexist, interact and are produced in relation to one another” (LEFEBVRE, 1991). Such counter-sites, as Foucault called them, are “simultaneously represented, contested, and invented” (FOUCAULT, 1984, orig. 1967), and in these places all the real spaces can meet and coexist.

This last observation brings into play the importance that space and temporality acquire in a discussion about the social and cultural conception of space, and introduce another spatial category: “non-places”.

### Non-places

(AUGÉ, Mark) 1980’s.

Marc Augé proposes yet another perspective on the connotation of space, hypothesizing an alternative to the concept of “lived space”. According to Augé the alternative is a new category of spaces that cannot be defined as spaces of relation – as intended by Lefebvre (*lived* Spaces of Representation) and Soja (Thirdspace) – or as what Augé himself calls “anthropological places” (spaces in which inscriptions of the social bond or collective

history can be seen). In fact, referring to the organization of space of “supermodernity” - physically modified thanks to the acceleration of means of transport and the proliferation of imaged and imaginary references - Marc Augé proposes the concept of “non-places”. In this case, the new term comes directly from the need to define the opposite of “anthropological places”. Such “empirical non-places” are *not* “relational, historical and concerned with identity”(AUGÉ, 2006, p. 63). They are spaces of circulation, consumption and communication individuality, where no social relations are created. Places and “non-places” are like opposed polarities. While anthropological places are created by individual identities, non-places generate the shared identity of passengers (airports, train stations) and customers (supermarkets, commercial malls)<sup>5</sup> (AUGÉ, 2006, p. 28). To further stress the opposition pertaining physical and cultural space, Augé defines “non-place” as a space that “exists by contrast to utopias”; “it exists, and it does not contain any organic society” (AUGÉ, 2006, pp. 89, 90).

The last observation would set “non-places” far from Foucault’s Heterotopias, whereby ‘heterotopias’ (counter-sites”, “different”, “other” places) are real sites and constitute an alternative to all inviolable oppositions pertaining physical and cultural space, namely utopias and dystopias<sup>6</sup>. (FOUCAULT, 1984, orig. 1967) As a matter of fact, “non-places” do exist, they are not imaginary places like utopias, and certainly not ideal; nor they are the diametric opposite of utopias (dystopias). “Non-places” are an “other” kind of space, the alternative to all kinds of lived space. Although it seems that the spatial categorization operated by Augé does not contemplate or propose a third option, but exclusively two direct oppositions (places and non-places), in reality it bares the potential for an alternative. To define this alternative we must explore the aspect of temporality and simultaneity implied in Augé’s theory about “non-places”:

“The possibility of non-place is never absent from any place. Place becomes a refuge for the habitué of non-places [...]. ” Non-places and places are opposed (or attracted) like the words and notions that enable us to describe them”<sup>7</sup>. (AUGÉ, 2006, pp. 86,87)

This statement introduces the concept of temporality and, simultaneity and while it contemplates the possibility of a transformation of places into non-places, also the opposite might be true: all the non-spaces of communication and consumption - composed by both the infrastructures needed for the accelerated movement of people and goods and the means of transport themselves - might spontaneously evolve into anthropological places once they are abandoned by the unofficial activity, and start being frequented informally by individual identities. If we accept the possibility of non-places becoming places and vice versa, we might also suggest the definition of a transitory, in between state, adding to the above spatial categories a third one, which balances and fuses the first two. It is precisely in the transitory state between places and non-places that lies the third category

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<sup>5</sup> The shopping mall, for example, is a “non-place” - an architectural fiction but a real place - a “placeless place”, a “fundamentally unreal space”, literally “nowhere”. (MUZZIO & MUZZIO-RENTAS, 2008, p. 148)

<sup>6</sup> Heterotopias are further described by Foucault as: “a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and invented”.(FOUCAULT, 1984, orig. 1967).

<sup>7</sup> As an example of these opposing/contrasting words, Augé mentions the contrasting realities of *transit camps* and *residence or dwelling*; or *interchanges* where paths don’t cross and *crossroads* where they do; the *passenger* of the non-places defined by its destination and the *traveler*, or the *flâneur*, who navigates through places.(AUGÉ, 2006, p. 86)

(the alternative, or “otherness”) of the trialectic re-elaboration of Augé’s theory I suggest. Following this reinterpretation, we can define the new tripod of spatial options composed by the two binomial extremes of place (somewhere) and non-place (nowhere), and a “third”, leveling element: the alternative spatial option offered by “places in becoming”. The latter define one of the main characteristics of the spaces object of this research: Residual Landscapes.

### **The “golden mean”**

The intermediate condition, the alternative, does not necessarily stand ‘in between’ two entities in the spatial/geometrical equidistant center, but it can also stand at the margin in a state of “liminality”. This is the case of wasted landscapes within urbanized areas, of leftover spaces, which are in a state of transition and elude classification. In “Drosscape” Alan Berger, quoting Victor W. Turner (TURNER, 1969, p. 94), explains how: “The in-between landscapes of the horizontal city are liminal because they remain at the margins (or *limen*, which means "threshold" in Latin), awaiting a societal desire to inscribe them with value and status”.(BERGER, 2006, p. 29)

Marginal areas are therefore a threshold space and, in turn, a threshold is a space of transition, protected by the outward-looking god Hermes<sup>8</sup> (AUGÉ, 2006, p. VIII), where material and spiritual exchanges take place (Figure 3-3). The sellers in the old Middle Eastern Bazaars or in the street markets in Naples use the street edge and the side walk as shop window for goods, taking advantage of the undefined space that stands between the strictly private and the openly public realm of the street. Even Nolli, in his “Pianta Grande di Roma” from 1736, identifies such spaces and he represents them by negation. In fact, in his map, he colors porticoes and courtyards in white highlighting them against the black hatch of the private realm. But, most importantly, he presents them as natural prolongations of the streets (Figure 2-2). Even an architectural element or a building façade can acts as a threshold: in the New York gallery “Storefront for Art and Architecture” designed by Steven Holl and Vito Acconci in 1993, the movable façade elements blur the line between the public space of the street and the private interior space, encouraging interrelation and extension towards the street life and vice versa.(HABITAR Research Group, 2010, pp. 313-314) There are also cases in which threshold space, molded into an architectural décor, acquires a symbolic meaning. One of such cases is represented by the plinths in the Italian palaces of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, or “Panche di via”. In the urban spaces of the Renaissance, squares started being surrounded by stone benches which were integral part of the facade, like in Piazza della Signoria in Florence. The benches created an amphitheater for the urban spectacle and symbolically reinforced the new expression of a government, materializing the synthesis between aperture toward the population and exterior space, and the introverted and egocentric power symbolized by the palaces.(JAKOB, 2014, p. 19).

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<sup>8</sup> The house in Classical Greece was watched over by two deities: Hestia, goddess of hearth, at the center of the house; and the outward-looking Hermes, god of the threshold, protector of the exchanges and of the men who monopolized them. (AUGÉ, 2006, p. VIII).





**Figure 3-3.** Painting “The little street”, Johannes Vermeer, c. 1657 - 1661, Delft. A woman sitting in the threshold of a house is sewing, getting fresh air and keeping an eye on the children paying on the sidewalk at the same time.

A threshold separates and links at the same time, but it is also a non-specialized space, which leaves the possibility for more activities and for interaction. Less specialized, less visible and more generic. Urban Residual Landscapes are a “frontier”; a frontier is not a wall, but a threshold, that can be crossed and therefore permeable. (AUGÉ, 2006, p. XIV)

### 3.2 Terrain Vague. A space for freedom

Now that we have started outlining the emergence of interest on Residual Landscapes in the context of theoretical research on space, and before doing the same in the context of research in the artistic and ecologic sphere, we can begin to review existing key theories and secondary, supporting, sources that investigate the cultural and social value of residual spaces.

Ignasi de Solà-Morales’s “Terrain Vague” article, we mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, is pivotal to the research, firstly because it brings attention to the topic of abandoned and marginal spaces in the city; secondly because it starts addressing them as aesthetic objects<sup>9</sup>; and thirdly because, by alerting us of their value, it is considering their potential for a contemporary urban approach.

While the choice of a French expression to entitle the article is believed to be inspired, among other things, by the homonymous 1960’s movie directed by Marcel Carné<sup>10</sup> (Figure 3-4); in his article Ignasi de Solà-Morales Rubió justifies the choice of a combination of French words to identify such spaces, by explaining the impossibility to capture in a single English word or phrase the same meaning of the French word. Let us examine the words singularly: first of all the French term *terrain* connotes an urban quality than the English “land”; moreover the French word also refers to greater and, perhaps, less precisely defined territories. (De SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995)

<sup>9</sup> As we mentioned earlier in the chapter, many photographs of the 1960s-70s, such as those by Cartier-Bresson and Robert Doisneau, conveyed the beauty in abandoned spaces. Through photographs and movies portraying marginal urban spaces, people could start seeing them affectionately. (ARMSTRONG, 2016)

<sup>10</sup> The movie is about a deprived teen-aged gang who occupies an abandoned derelict factory on a barren wasteland at the edge of a low-income Parisian housing project. (Terrain Vague, 1960)



**Figure 3-4.** Terrain Vague film: (left) “Mon Oncle” 1958 (USA), Director: Jacques Tati; (right), “Terrain Vague” (Wasteland), November 9, 1960 (France), Director: Marcel Carné

But it is the root of the word *vague* that we can identify specific characteristics of these spaces and justify the choice of a foreign term. In fact the French word *vague* has both Latin and Germanic origins. The German root *woge*, (“sea swell”, “wave” in English), alludes to movement, oscillation, instability, and fluctuation. The first Latin root is *vacuus*, (“vacant” and “vacuum” in English), empty, unoccupied, but also free, available, unengaged; and the second one is *vagus*, (“vague” in English), in the sense of indeterminate, imprecise, blurred, uncertain. From this “triple signification” of the French word *vague* and the relative meanings the word acquires in German, French and English, we can identify three fundamental connotations of such spaces, combined in a single word (De SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995, pp. 119-120):

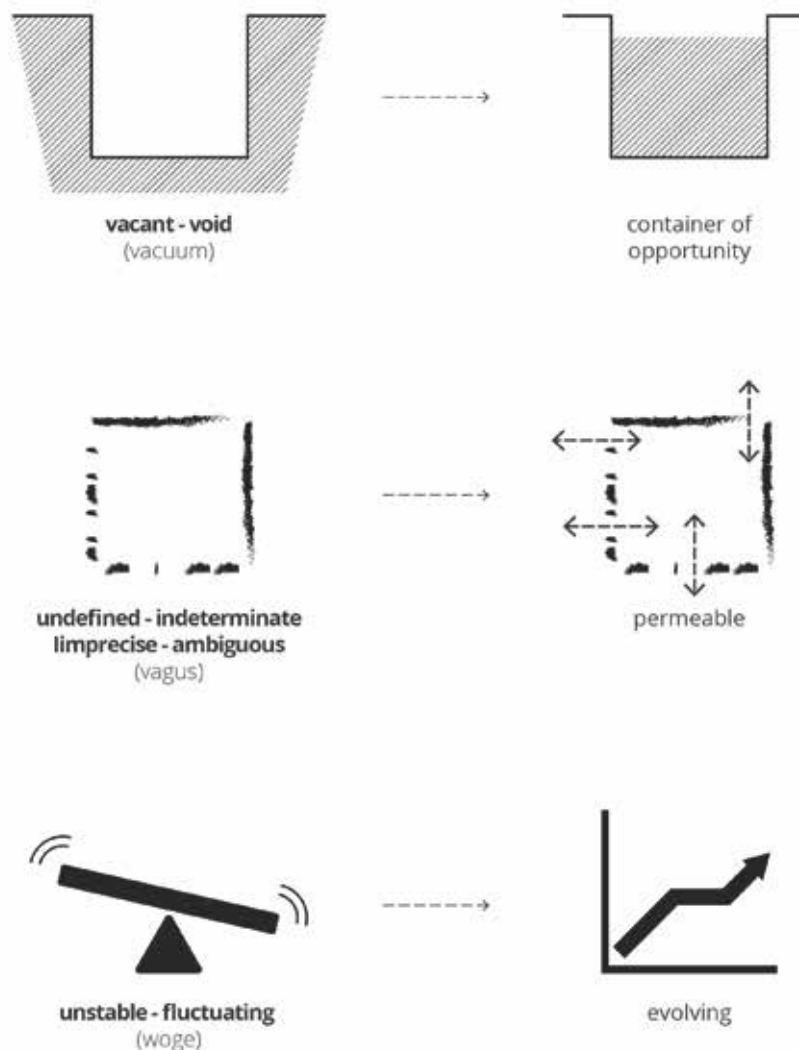
- From the German *Woge*, “unstable, oscillating”, the word inherits the reference to the **instability** of abandoned areas, introducing the aspects of **time** and **succession** in the context of residual spaces.
- In the first French meaning of the word, “empty, available”, there is a more direct connection to the **use** and, therefore, **potential usefulness** of these obsolete and unproductive spaces and buildings.
- From the second French meaning (and primary English connotation), “indeterminate, blurred, imprecise, uncertain”, the term *vague* acquires a connotation that relates to both, the **physical absence of limit** (and therefore to the permeability of residual spaces); and, indirectly, to the **absence of a predetermined aspect** (ambiguity)<sup>11</sup>. The last connotation can be directly related to the **formal aspect of appearance**<sup>12</sup>.

It is precisely in the reading as “absence of limit”, or “absence of use and activity” of the two Latin roots of the word that the Spanish Urbanist Solà-Morales identifies the opportunity for an alternative to the monotonous and inflexible modern city: “a space for

<sup>11</sup> For a further interpretation of Sola Morales’ connotations of “Terrain Vague” see also (FRANK, 2014)

<sup>12</sup> In the formal conception of aesthetics in landscape design, something imprecise can also be seen as something in opposition to formal order.

freedom”. Because of their uncertain qualities, marginal places have transformative potential. But Solà-Morales believed that, instead of trying to “reincorporate” these abandoned spaces into the productive logic of the city, their state of ruin and lack of productivity should be valued and protected.



**Figure 3-5.** “Terrain Vague” triple signification. Source: author.

To expand this perspective on residual spaces, bringing them closer to a contemporary understanding, we will turn to the writings of architect Luc Lévesque. In his article “The ‘terrain vague’ as material – some observations”, referring to Solà-Morales’s “Terrain Vague”, Lévesque points out the limitations of the opposing visions on these spaces: some see them exclusively as a problem to solve and others as potential. The first view considers that vacant lands in cities “represent unacceptable socio-economic deterioration and abandonment”; the second believes “*terrain vague*” offer “room for spontaneous, creative appropriation and informal uses that would otherwise have trouble finding a place in public spaces subjected increasingly to the demands of commerce [...] the ideal place for a certain resistance to emerge, a place potentially open to alternative ways of experiencing the city.” But Lévesque believes that the two antagonistic views of “terrain vague” are limiting the discourse to a factual observation of vacant lots and to an outdated and simplistic “struggle between order and disorder”. Instead he proposes to move beyond these “sterile

arguments”, and consider “the ‘terrain vague’ as material”. (LÉVESQUE, 2002) This brings the issue closer to our time and transforms “*terrain vague*” into a new tool to approach urban intervention today, offering new ways of experiencing and imagining the city, starting from what already exists.

To highlight the potential of “*terrain vague*” as material for a contemporary urban approach, Lévesque seems to draw inspiration from one of the above mentioned meanings embedded in the French word *vague* - namely the notion of instability (but also oscillation and fluctuation)<sup>13</sup> - introducing the aspects of time and succession. “[S]hifting from factual observation of the vacant lot to the more abstract concept of ‘interstitial space’” (something found “in between” things), he aims at embracing “not only such notions as openness, porosity, breach and relationship, but also those of process, transformation and location”.

According to Lévesque, the other key aspect of “*terrain vague*” that makes them “opportunities” for contemporary “urbanity” is their condition of standing at the “confluence of modern brutality (industrial infrastructure, dominance of roads and highways, real estate *tabula rasa*, etc.), ruderal<sup>14</sup> colonization (flora and fauna), and urbanity (collective appropriations, user-friendly, local practices, etc.)”. (LÉVESQUE, 2002) This “urban resurgence of the wild” highlights the emergence of new spontaneous forms of life in the urban environment, which have proven to be resilient to hostile environments, if not even strengthened by them.

### **Dead Zones, voids, wastelands**

“In these apparently forgotten places, the memory of the past seems to predominate over the present”. (De SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995, p. 120)

According to Gil Doron these residual spaces “also present history (rather than represent it), foster creativity and nourish the aesthetics of ruins<sup>15</sup>; they are a habitat for wildlife and plants, places in which the body has to adapt to its environment rather than be cuddly choked by its surroundings. In short, these zones are a space of suspension, of solitude and silence within the bustling cities, sites that are a viable alternative to the heterotopian public space.” (DORON, 2008, p. 204) However, he also specifies that “[t]hese spaces are named ‘dead zones’ when the hegemony wishes to reuse them and confront the reality on the ground in which they were appropriated by marginal groups”.(DORON, 2008, p. 209) This implies that their “being dead” is not an actual physical and social condition of the

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<sup>13</sup> Referring to the notion of interval, which also means “a space of time”. For more about Morales’ connotation of the word “vague” as “movement, oscillation, instability, fluctuation”, see also (FRANK, 2014, p. 162), who interprets the dimension of “time” as both time of occurrence and duration of an activity.

<sup>14</sup> “Ruderal” from the Latin word for rubble (*rudus*), indicates spontaneous vegetation. “Ruderal nature” is nature that is not structured or tended, i.e. spontaneous or ruderal nature. The Geographer Robert E. Frenkel, uses the term “ruderal” to cover the broad category of plant life closely related to man and consisting of native and alien plant species which occupy disturbed habitats and waste places. (FRENKEL, Robert, E. (1970). *Ruderal Vegetation Along Some California Roadsides*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles) See also (DEL TREDICI, 2010)

<sup>15</sup> In his essay “. . . those marvellous empty zones at the edge of cities’. Heterotopia and the ‘dead Zone’”, Doron mentions the ‘aesthetic of architectural ruins’, referring to the “dilapidated structures” left in the abandoned zones. According to Doron this “dead architecture” makes history and transforms these areas in spaces of imagination: because they have lost their whole image (physical as well as functional and symbolic) in order to picture what was there before or, most importantly, what could be there in the future, imagination is required. See (DORON, 2008, p. 209)

space, but rather a construct produced for political, social and economic ends. (DORON, 2008, p. 204)

To explain this last concept further, we can turn to the essay “. . . those marvellous empty zones at the edge of cities”, where Doron refers to the concept of “Colonizing the void” by Hans van Dijk<sup>16</sup> and to Bauman’s (*Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts*, 2004) and Bhabha’s (*The Location of Culture*, 1994) theories on modernity, to argue about the concept of void and its origin. According to these writers depicting a place as a void is the strategy of colonization – if a space is considered a *tabula rasa* it is easier to occupy it and redevelop it. For the European colonialists from the sixteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, empty or wasted land with no boundaries and sovereign administration was a place where “history had yet to begin”, a “*terra nullius*” (see, Glossary, p.xix). The idea of occupation was the most important justification for modern European empires, as Non-European people were said to have no property or no sovereignty, or lacked both, and this justified the occupation of their land or the domination of their political systems. However, Doron argues that often the presence of small and unregulated activities was simply concealed in order to be in the position to propose just about anything in these alleged voids. (DORON, 2008, p. 205) Doron’s theory on these voids is considering them from a political, social and economic stand point. He believes that they are considered empty as a result of speculative interests: the word “zone” links back to “zoning”; therefore, these areas are seen from the land-use and administrative perspective.

I wish to underline how in Doron’s writings we can identify **three crucial aspects of the existence of such voids: spatial dynamics, time, scale, use and potential**. Firstly, by seeing their **spatial dynamic** as a result of the rational organization of the territory, which has left behind spaces that were not usable from planners and architects because inaccessible, too small or irregularly shaped, with unclear ownership rights or simply not lucrative. As Doron, himself, points out:

“Ordering, separating and segmenting the urban landscape leaves gaps between the zones of activity. These gaps have no planned function, and are often of irregular form – for example the spaces between the industrial park and the residential neighbourhood, empty car parks, edges of shopping malls, spaces between tower blocks, between lines of transportation (highways and railways), at the edge of highways, under bridges and at river banks, and parks at night, pavements and so on.”(DORON, 2008, p. 207)

However, Doron includes in the “dead zone” not only unusable spaces, but also spaces that were formerly used and are now abandoned. This is an important point, as relates the “dead zone” theory to the concept of “deleassé” and “Third Landscape” by Gilles Clément, where the aspect of former management is crucial in identifying a specific category of residual spaces (5.2 *Le Tiers Paysage: an emerging new order*). This other kind of “dead zone” can be found in the post-industrial cities, in sites of production, storage, and

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<sup>16</sup> Hans Van Dijk believes that voids do not exist in reality and have always been a colonialist fabrication to justify the brutal act.

transportation<sup>17</sup> and in urban sites that have lost their original function<sup>18</sup>. (DORON, 2008, p. 209)

Secondly, Doron points out the **temporal aspect** of these gaps. In a “dead zone” “time is singular and particular; it is profane and everyday” (DORON, 2008, p. 210). Some of these spaces, in fact, can be perceived as “dead zones” only during certain times of the day or the year. Areas like offices and parks may be abandoned only for some part of the day.

“[...] they transgress any desire to locate them geographically, any confinement, of putting them in (a) place. They are in any place and in a non-place. They relate to time.” (DORON, 2000, p. 256)

The temporal aspect of “dead zones” is further addressed by Doron when he observes how such spaces, “are created by suspension of new plans for an area that is underused or has been abandoned by its formal activities”. He points out that suspension and transgression are not opposing forces; “suspension merely marks the boundaries of any system (i.e. space) and by doing so marks the place where transgression can operate.” Therefore, suspension “opens within the boundary of the “time of planning” a space/gap, a new “time-space”. (DORON, 2000, pp. 260-261)

Thirdly, Doron introduces the notion of **scale** in relation to residual spaces, arguing that a dead zone’s scale can range from the scale of a single building to that of entire streets and even entire cities (like Detroit).

Lastly, Doron deals with the aspect of **use**. He observes how, because they are “left empty”, “dead zones” are “spaces of transgression”, “opened to unplanned activities and unofficial communities”. (DORON, 2008, p. 207) The homeless people in San Francisco sleep inside abandoned vehicles; rave parties take place in giant warehouses in the King’s Cross’ area in the center of London; artists occupy ex industrial areas of Los Angeles; in the neighborhood of Maxwell Street in Chicago people build community gardens and jazz performances take place on the street; and so on and so forth. Because of their indeterminacy these spaces can become a refuge for minorities and diversity in general.

“I believe that many architects during the 1960s and 1970s sensed the potential of spaces devoid of programme and form. As non-utilitarian spaces, they opposed the capitalist society and even more so the architectural profession, the notion of design and production and as such they were spaces of resistance.”(DORON, 2008, p. 207)

All the above observations lead to Doron’s considerations concerning the **potential** behind their lack of formal regulation and the fact that they are “non-utilitarian spaces” (spaces that cannot be used by the hegemonic culture). Regarding this apparently hidden potential, in a previous article he had already highlighted how, from investigative researches operated on these spaces, it appears that the people who live near them do not consider them as waste at all, and they actually see them as an asset<sup>19</sup>. Most people believe that

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<sup>17</sup> Such as factories, slaughterhouses, warehouses, old harbors and train yards, train lines, and quarries and mines, etc.

<sup>18</sup> Such as public telephone booths, public toilets, instant photo booths, etc.

<sup>19</sup> Doron advocates for the need to observe the use communities make of these zones, pointing out that architects and planners should learn from the way these communities create their environments.

these spaces should not be a source for new plans and projects, but rather they should be left as they are. In fact, what they are now is “havens’ for wildlife”, or spaces that are in (informal) use. (DORON, 2000, p. 249)

Although he is mostly centered on the social, economic and political aspects, Doron does mention the issue of a new **aesthetics** when he talks about “Landscape of Transgression”. While discussing the “Architectures of Transgression”, he mentions how the latter transgress many boundaries and it opens spaces in these boundaries; one of these newly acquired spaces can be found in the boundary of the fashionable form and aesthetics. (DORON, 2000, p. 255)

“[...] underneath the maps and outside the discourse, which have tried and failed to cover the whole territory of the city, worlds exist full of unwritten history, overlooked communities, unseen possibilities, a world with a different order, but also architecture: The Architecture of Transgression. (DORON, 2000, p. 252)

Doron uses the term “transgression” to describe the activities that take place in these apparently inert places and the spaces they produce. He believes that in these spaces “marginalized communities transgress spatial constraints and produce different environments”, while still “working within the boundary of the system itself”. (DORON, 2000, p. 252)

In his attempt to further define “dead zones” and to put them in relation with previous theories about space, Doron measures them on the basis of Foucault’s definitions of the Heterotopia, identifying six principles that define them. What emerges from this confrontation is that “dead zones” are simultaneously the cause and the residue of heterotopias (First principle). That the two can never coexist in the same place because the “dead zone” does not have fixed boundaries (it is open); if a heterotopia, which has boundaries and is exclusionary, were to intervene, the dead zone would be replaced by it (Third & Fifth principle). (DORON, 2008, p. 210)

### **Drosscape**

To broaden our perspective on urban Residual Landscapes we can also observe Alan Berger’s “Drosscape” concept which he applied to contemporary urbanized regions, seeing them as the waste product of defunct economic and industrial processes. The term refers not only to wasted places (empty spaces and abandoned areas, like contaminated sites), but also to waste landscapes (actual waste, such as municipal solid waste, sewage, scrap metal, etc.), and wasteful places (such as huge parking lots or retail malls), what Augé described as “empirical non-places” - spaces of circulation, consumption and communication, which are devoid of any organic society, singular identity or relations. (AUGÉ, 2006, p. VIII)

In “Drosscape: Wasting Land in Urban America”, Alan Berger “formally documents and attempts to develop a new **aesthetic and vocabulary** cognizant of the vast, and largely ignored, field of waste landscapes existing and forming within America's old and new urbanized regions.” Drosscapes are the “inevitable wasted landscapes within urbanized

areas”, created as a result of industrial, economic, and consumption processes. (BERGER, 2006, p. 12) Although Alan Berger’s research refers exclusively to landscapes of this kind present in the urbanized areas of the United States, his research can find some useful insights in the generative processes of Residual Landscapes, and help us understand the social and economic aspects that influence this phenomenon in other parts of the world. Berger explains how dross emerges out of two primary processes: first, as a consequence of current rapid sprawl, and second, as the leftovers of previous economic and production regimes (deindustrialization).(BERGER, 2006, p. 12)

Berger, like Lévesque, interprets waste landscapes through the more abstract concept of “interstitial space” - the state of being “in-between” - highlighting their “state of liminality, something that lives in **transition** and eludes classification, something that resists new stability and reincorporation”.(BERGER, 2006, p. 29) This peculiar transitory condition noted by Berger, implies another important characteristic of residual spaces, their **ephemerality** and, as a consequence, their aptness to transformation. Therefore, leftover spaces hold the potential to offer new grounds for urban development. As Berger explains, “the ‘in-between’ landscapes of the horizontal city are liminal because they remain at the margins (or *limen*, which means “threshold” in Latin), awaiting a societal desire to inscribe them with value and status”<sup>20</sup>. (BERGER, 2006, p. 29)

In this last quote we can identify Berger’s idea about the approach towards residual spaces. Differently from the attitude towards “*terrain vague*” declared by de Solà-Morales, and the one implied by Doron, the author makes the case for a pro-active attitude toward them, suggesting creative ways to recover these landscapes and redesign them, advocating for the productive integration and reuse of waste landscapes in urban settlements. In his manifesto Berger introduces and describes “strategies for designing for drosscapes” [...] through a “bottom-up advocacy process, suggesting a move away from the heroic, modernist, master-planner toward the designer who engenders inventiveness, entrepreneurialism, and long term environmental recovery”. (BERGER, 2006, p. 14)

Lastly, in his attempt to highlight the importance of waste landscapes for the future of urban environments, Berger points the reader’s attention toward their character of **openness** and **adaptability**. This is quite evident when he associates “*terrain vague*” to the process evolutionary biologists call “exaptation”, in which “a trait or capability, repeated within the context of successful growth and adaptation, becomes co-opted for unforeseen uses”. (BERGER, 2006, p. 34) As an example of this process he makes reference to the bird feathers, which, he notes, occurred first in flightless reptiles solely with insulation purposes, and later became integral to flight. Similarly, according to Stephen Jay Gould, spandrels in architecture were originally just left over space from the intersection of arches; they became designed mosaic areas only as a side-consequence, and not as an explicitly designed feature in itself. (GOULD & LEWONTIN, 1979) We could say that also for residual spaces, a previous condition of material waste and excess of space can lead to innovation, as they can become the answer to the future, unforeseen needs of cities.

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<sup>20</sup> A. Berger quoting Victor W. Turner (TURNER, 1969, p. 94)



### Topography of Trauma

Residual Landscapes can also be found in “devastated, post-apocalyptic landscape[s]” that result from a natural or man induced disaster (demolitions, attacks or neglect), which display the consequences of the difficult “relationship between nature and civilization.” (Figure 3-6)

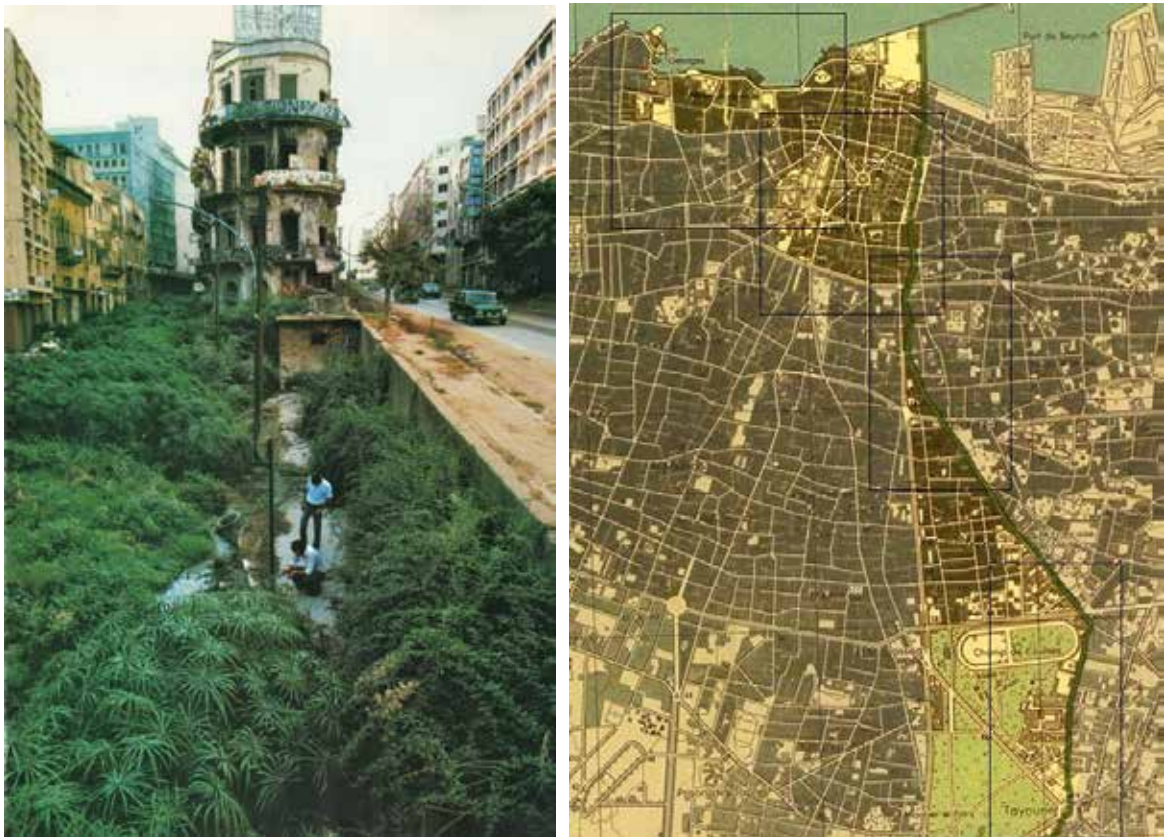


**Figure 3-6.** Oakland Fire #104-91, 1991. Copyright Richard Misrach Photographer. The photograph portrays the swimming pool of one of the houses burned by the urban wildfire in Oakland (Bay Area, California).

“When architecture undergoes a violent event, it is often turned into an absurd object, sometimes an aesthetic one, because it has been deprived of its original functionality” (CANTARELLA & GIULIANO, 2013)

In a research project entitled “Topography of Trauma” (2008), Cantarella and Giuliano address the physical, social and political transformations that occurred on the territories affected by the 1968 Belice earthquake in Sicily, which imposed “resistant incisions” in the morphology of the territory. The violent earthquake, of a magnitude 5.5 on the Mercalli scale, invested 280,000 hectares of land, affecting three provinces (Palermo, Trapani and Agrigento), and violently impacting 14 towns along the Belice River Valley. A part from destruction and death, the “tectonic trauma” generated Residual Landscapes in the area. The towns that were severely affected, if not completely destroyed, by the earthquake became an enormous residue in themselves. In the towns that were only marginally affected, the building ruins were slowly but surely replaced by nature. In the new towns,

the “Third Landscape” (5.2 *Le Tiers Paysage: an emerging new order* p. 102) was free to develop in all the unresolved and uncontrolled spaces.



**Figure 3-7.** The “green line” in Beirut, Lebanon on December 1990’s

A very dramatic example of the sign of a man-inflicted trauma on the landscape generating a residual space is the “Green Line”<sup>21</sup> in Beirut, where until 1990 the city was divided into two by a linear residue. (Figure 3-7) Because the road that marked the separation between the two parts of the city was uninhabited, spontaneous vegetation started invading this fragile geographical threshold. Whenever there is a state of uncertainty Residual Landscapes thrive. This is an emblematic case of a residual space acquiring a very dramatic connotation: in the case of Beirut the landscape, untouched by men for years, added to the symbolism that this was the neutral border of the city. The “no man’s land” that emerged in the spot was not just a “geographical spot of fear”; it also reflected an absence, a metaphorical distance - condensed into a narrow space – and a state of temporal suspension. It contained the memory of the past war (the demolished, destroyed and abandoned buildings) and it revealed the scars left behind by the conflict (in this case even

<sup>21</sup> The “Green Line”, also known as “Demarcation Line”, was a line of demarcation in Beirut, Lebanon, during the Lebanese Civil War from 1975 to 1990. It separated the mainly Muslim factions in predominantly Muslim West Beirut from the predominantly Christian East Beirut controlled by the Lebanese Front. However, as the Civil War continued, it also came to separate Druze from Alewite, and Sunni from Shia. The appellation “green” refers to the spontaneous vegetation that grew because the space was uninhabited.

the physical gash in the urban fabric). But this lush green belt, with its bright green foliage, also seemed to suture that very wound.



**Figure 3-8.** “Germany, Year Zero” (Italian: *Germania anno zero*) (1948) Directed by Roberto Rossellini (IT)

Some contemporary memorials take the form of voids, rather than solid objects. Berlin’s former wall zone is another example of how memory, both personal and public, resides not only within physical ruins, but also in the voids resulting from their erasure. The Berlin Wall in its final iteration was composed by two parallel concrete walls with a hostile strip of “no man’s land” in between. Although most of the wall was demolished after 1989, few sections still remain. These ruins have of course become places of remembrance and have the potential to become palimpsests for multiple meanings and interpretations. But also the negative space left by their demolition, their condition of liminality between presence and absence, transforms them into places of “simultaneous forgetting and remembering” (GOLDEN, 2014, p. 218). Refraining from concealing the scars and quickly occupying such spaces with new activities, or building monumental memorials to impose clear and permanent reminders of the past, and leaving such spaces in a state of vagueness can help overcome the past through a slow reconciliation and healing process. The Germans call this process “Auseinandersetzung”, which in English translates into “working through”, or “coming to terms with” the scars left by past events. (STEVENS, 2014, p. 246)

The chaos created by the natural or man inflicted trauma leaves room for the spontaneous and the unplanned to develop, but also offers a pause for reflection in the evolutionary process of cities. A “suspended” space can help us reflect upon the past, the present and the future and become a space for healing. The fragment, the wound, the crack, the gash, the mending, the monument, the immobility, the superfetation, are all elements generated by a trauma where the memory of a past can reside and future can emerge. (Figure 3-8)

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## Chapter 4. Aesthetics of the indeterminate

As we have discussed in the previous section, social aspects can be valued according to the contemporary value system. A study about Residual Landscapes cannot transcend aesthetic aspects, but the latter introduce a far more complex topic, which needs to deal with the current critical discourse, and most of all, with the dual aspect of the Landscape discipline: the representation of the landscape, and the actual lived and experienced territory. The first aspect is directly connected to the discourse on aesthetics in Art, but it is also strongly linked to the second aspect, the experiential aspect of Landscape. The latter concerns the way we perceive and relate to these spaces and is expressed also through the mutation of the relationship between man and nature throughout history.

### The Trialectics of Nature

*The role of nature. Material-ecological and symbolic-cultural senses of “wilderness” in the context of changing social relations to nature.*

Before addressing the first aspect of Residual Landscape aesthetics, concerning the interpretation of their aesthetic qualities through the resources of Art, we need to engage with the experiential and cultural aspects linked to the concept of nature. We will do so by observing the cyclical change of the relationship between man and nature throughout history, until we are able to evaluate whether we are in the position to identify a new type of nature that transcends the previous categorizations. Landscape architecture is fundamentally linked to nature, and the perception of nature is explicitly cultural<sup>1</sup>. Different nations and religions perceive nature based on the experienced or inherited relationship with the forces of nature.

What we conventionally call nature - in other words, organic materials like trees, shrubs, and grass and inorganic materials like water and rocks – is with no doubt the primary constituent of a landscape; however the two terms are not equivalent. We still often fall in the mistake of quickly associating landscape to nature alone, whilst the first one contains the second one<sup>2</sup>. It is through the mediation of art and culture that natural elements (vegetation + rock formation) become elevated and equal to art<sup>3</sup>.

In the context of changing social relations to nature, also the concept of “wilderness” - as untouched and uncontrolled nature – requires attention. Firstly because the concept of “wilderness” acquires different material-ecological and symbolic-cultural senses in

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<sup>1</sup> In Nature we see the reflection of our own unexamined longings and desires.

<sup>2</sup> Moreover in his book “Nuovi Paesaggi”, Bianconi highlights the common, erroneous association of the word “landscape” to “territory” or “environment”. He says that we often fall in the imprecision of associating a landscape to a Territory, whilst landscape is a “quality of space”, a “spatial and social ensemble, made of things that are subject to transformations and modifications”. Landscape is also different from Environment as the latter highlights an ecological valence (it concerns our living in it, our health and wellbeing and the wellbeing of plants and animals), while a landscape concerns things that are visible. We can indeed live inside a Landscape but in the very moment we start perceiving it as a landscape we are thinking about it as something external, located inside a specific space and time frame. (BIANCONI, 2008, pp. 17-21)

<sup>3</sup> According to Hunt, nature and cultural expression constitute also the prime constituents and paradox of landscape architecture: “[...] what we loosely call “nature,” but which are really the unmediated ingredients and processes of the physical world, organic and inorganic; and what we call art or culture, by which those “natural” elements are mediated.” (HUNT, 2000, p. 9)

different historical periods and cultures. Secondly, because, as we will see, “wilderness” is the reference condition against which all the other kinds of nature are defined, depending on the level and purpose of human intervention on nature. Using a definition of Landscape by writer and Professor of Theory of Landscape Michael Jakob, we can say that:

“Il paesaggio è il risultato artificiale, non naturale, di una cultura che ridefinisce perpetuamente la sua relazione con la natura”<sup>4</sup> (JAKOB, 2009, p. 29)

According to the same writer, the formula that defines Landscape is the following:  $L = S+N$  – which means that Landscape exists if there are three factors: a Subject (with its point of view and with a perspective on the landscape), Nature and a relationship (contact, encounter, and liaison) between the two. It is in fact the conscience about, and the desire for nature that constituted the concept of landscape in the first place. We can therefore say that the latter originates from the city, which has lost its symbiotic contact with the environment<sup>5</sup>. The juxtaposition city/country, and therefore, city/nature has generated a recurring historical phenomenon, where the city has always been the cause of the definition of nature as “something else”, as the cause of a cyclical desire for, or return to, nature (JAKOB, 2009, pp. 8-9).

In order to identify the contemporary role that nature, in the form of spontaneous ruderal vegetation growing in Residual Landscapes, plays in urban contexts, it’s useful to observe the presence of, and the role conferred to, nature in landscape representation (both in the visual arts and in literature) throughout history. This way we can begin to outline the cultural framework that led to the current perception of the new kind of wilderness developing in our cities. Until 1700s nature was the place of negativity, marked by the fall of paradise on earth and by the feeling of helplessness before untamed landscapes (mountains, waterfalls, etc.) and unpredictable natural phenomena. From the seventeenth century, nature loses its mystery and becomes more accessible<sup>6</sup>. In the eighteenth century nature starts having a past and a history; it is domesticated and therefore no longer feared. Mountains are now places of curiosity that can be visited in safety. By the second half of the nineteenth century, “as more and more tourists sought out the wilderness as a spectacle to be looked at and enjoyed for its great beauty, the sublime in effect became domesticated”(CRONON, 1996, p. 12). But, tourism in the wilderness starts causing brutal interventions in the natural landscape and, thanks to technology, nature is significantly modified and subdued to man. This new loss of paradise<sup>7</sup> also marks the end

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<sup>4</sup> Translated in English “Landscape is the artificial, not natural, result of a culture that constantly redefines its relationship with nature.”

<sup>5</sup> The idea of nature was created by the citizens not the farmers. In fact it is not the farmer, shepherd, or hunter who created the idea of nature, and therefore the person that lived in symbiosis with it, but the person separated from it instead: the citizen. (JAKOB, 2009, p. 39). Moreover, Latour refers to a number of anthropological studies on natives that have looked into the ways in which different cultures related to nature. One of the findings was that the cultures that actually lived in harmony with nature and might have been familiar with the first wilderness, “did not blend the social order and the natural order at all; they were unconcerned by the distinction” (Latour, Bruno (2004). *Politics of Nature. How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press).

<sup>6</sup> In the epistolary novel by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, published in 1761, “Nouvelle Héloïse” he starts speaking differently about nature, as something to be enjoyed and not feared.

<sup>7</sup> In the Jewish-Christian tradition the story of man begins in a garden (*paradeus* in Greek means garden) and in the bible the Garden of Eden is the one where the sinful Adam was banished from. Therefore building gardens can be seen as the nostalgic return to this place of grace and harmony that man has lost. The garden is nature as man modeled it to express

of wilderness as pristine nature<sup>8</sup>. But in the second half of the 1900s, the crisis of industrial cities and the obsolete models of twentieth century city planning, gave rise to a new kind of wilderness, inhabited by spontaneous vegetation, debris and waste. This new, unintended, nature seems to bring us back to the feelings of powerlessness arose by the Sublime primordial wilderness. In today's world, where every corner of the earth has been occupied, laid out, mapped, or marked in some way (where even forests are engineered), the only nature that remains is "educated nature"<sup>9</sup>, or better "second nature".

In her essay "Notions of Nature and a Model for Managed Urban Wilds", Jill Desimini gives a very thorough account of the previously conceptualized ideas of nature and the ways in which nature has been categorized based on the human relationship to pristine lands. (DESIMINI, 2014) (Figure 4-5). What emerges from her review is that there is a common thread in most part of the theories and conceptions of nature examined, that is: through slightly different logical processes, they identify a new wilderness, which is the result of abandonment and neglect of industrial, agricultural, and urban land. Clearly, these landscapes are a human made condition because they used to be managed by men, but an unintentional one. In fact, they are generated by the suspension of human activity, and their evolution depends on the future level of human involvement.

Most of the theories on the "tripartite view of the natural world"<sup>10</sup>, start from the interpretations about "The Idea of a Garden and the Three Natures" concept"<sup>11</sup> elaborated by landscape historian John Dixon Hunt<sup>12</sup> in his book "Garden Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory"(HUNT, 2000). Hunt traces the origin of the hierarchical distinctions in the realm of nature back to Cicero's identification of a "second nature" which, according to the Roman philosopher, offered an alternative to nature (*alteram naturam*), and therefore implied the existence of a "first nature". This first nature "'within' which his second is created" is the unmediated "natural world" – untouched nature (what we previously called wilderness). According to Cicero this primal nature comprehended both the "raw materials of human industry and the territory of the gods" (HUNT, 2000, p. 34). While the "second nature" was referred to the anthropized land (cultural landscapes of agriculture, urban development, roads, etc.) and to the ancient construction techniques that seemed like "nature operating on a civil level"<sup>13</sup>. The first nature was therefore the original condition against which the other natures could be defined. (Figure 4-4)

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his spirit through it; to create a space where he can live and contemplate. An entirely subjective nature, expression of the human spirit. (PANDAKOVIC & DAL SASSO, 2013)

<sup>8</sup> On the concept of "wilderness" as a cultural invention, as product of civilization, see also (CRONON, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> The concept of "educated nature" can be linked to the conception of *rus in urbe* (an illusion of countryside created by a building or garden within a city). The phrase, which is Latin and means literally "country in the city", was coined originally by the Spanish-born Latin epigrammatist Martial (ad c.40 to c.104) of the Latin culture. According to this conception, the Italian city, with parks and gardens included within its limits, welcomed the natural, but civilized, landscape - that re-represents other territories - within the urban settlement; while the countryside with its scattered villas, marked the landscape with anthropic elements which defined the urban/human dimension.(BIANCONI, 2008, pp. 41-43)

<sup>10</sup> Between first nature (wilderness) and third nature (gardens), the second may be seen as an intermediate mode. See also (3.1 The Triadectics of Spatiality - Talking in 'triples', p. 19)

<sup>11</sup> See also (BIANCONI, 2008, pp. 41-43) and (DESIMINI, 2014).

<sup>12</sup> English born Landscape Historian focuses on the time between Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century France and England.

<sup>13</sup> Also Goethe used the expression "second nature" to describe Roman monuments during his travels in Italy in the eighteenth century. (GOETHE, 2013, p. 122)

In “*De natura deorum*” (On the Nature of the Gods), 45 BC, the Roman philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero wrote:

“Total dominion over the produce of the earth lies in our hands. We put plains and mountains to good use; rivers and lakes belong to us; we sow cereals and we plant trees; we irrigate our lands to fertilize them. We fortify river-banks, and straighten or divert the courses of rivers. In short, by the work of our hands we strive to create a sort of **second nature** within the world of nature.”(CICERO, 2008, p. 102)

John Dixon Hunt (HUNT, 2000) thinks that Cicero's formulation might have been in the mind of Jacopo Bonfadio (1541) and, not long after (1559), in Bartolomeo Taegio's mind, when they wrote about gardens and referred to them as “third nature”. Bonfadio was writing to a fellow humanist when, turning his glance toward the gardens, he said:

“For in the gardens. . . the industry of the local people has been such that nature incorporated with art is made an artificer and naturally equal with art, and from them both together is made a **third nature**, which I would not know how to name.”(BONFADIO, 1967, p. 501) (HUNT, 2000, p. 33)

The humanist Bartolomeo Taegio also used the term “*terza natura*” in his treatise on “*La Villa*”, published in Milan in 1559:

“L'industria d'un accorto giardiniero, che incorporando l'arte con la natura fa che d'ambidue ne riesca una terza natura.”<sup>14</sup> (TAEGIO, 1559, p. 66)

According to these definitions, the “third nature” expressed in the gardens is a mixture of culture and nature, comprised of horticulturally rich landscapes designed for beauty pleasure and recreation. Gardens are considered far more “sophisticated” and “deliberate”, than Cicero's “second nature”, and therefore they ought to be placed at a higher “scale, or hierarchy, of human intervention into the physical world”. (HUNT, 2000, p. 34) (Figure 4-1, Figure 4-2, Figure 4-3) To reconfirm this conception of the “third nature”, we can observe how Ludovico Centis identifies in Bramante's project for the “Cortile del Belvedere” in Rome - an “architectural garden set between city and open landscape” - the prime example of a “third nature” as intended by Bonfadio and Taegio. Here the “boundaries between nature and art (here to be read as architecture) gradually dissolve”. (CENTIS, 2015, p. 68)

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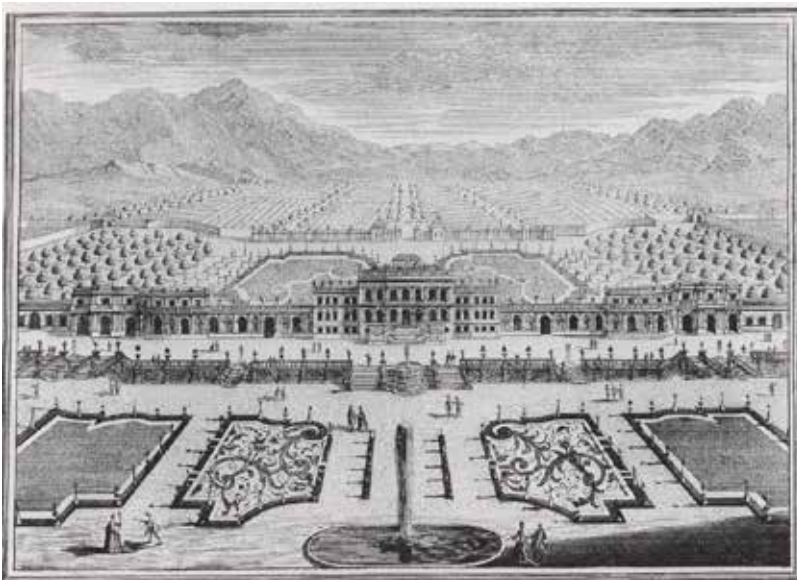
<sup>14</sup> English translation: “The industry of an accomplished gardener, incorporating art with nature, makes of the two together a third nature.”



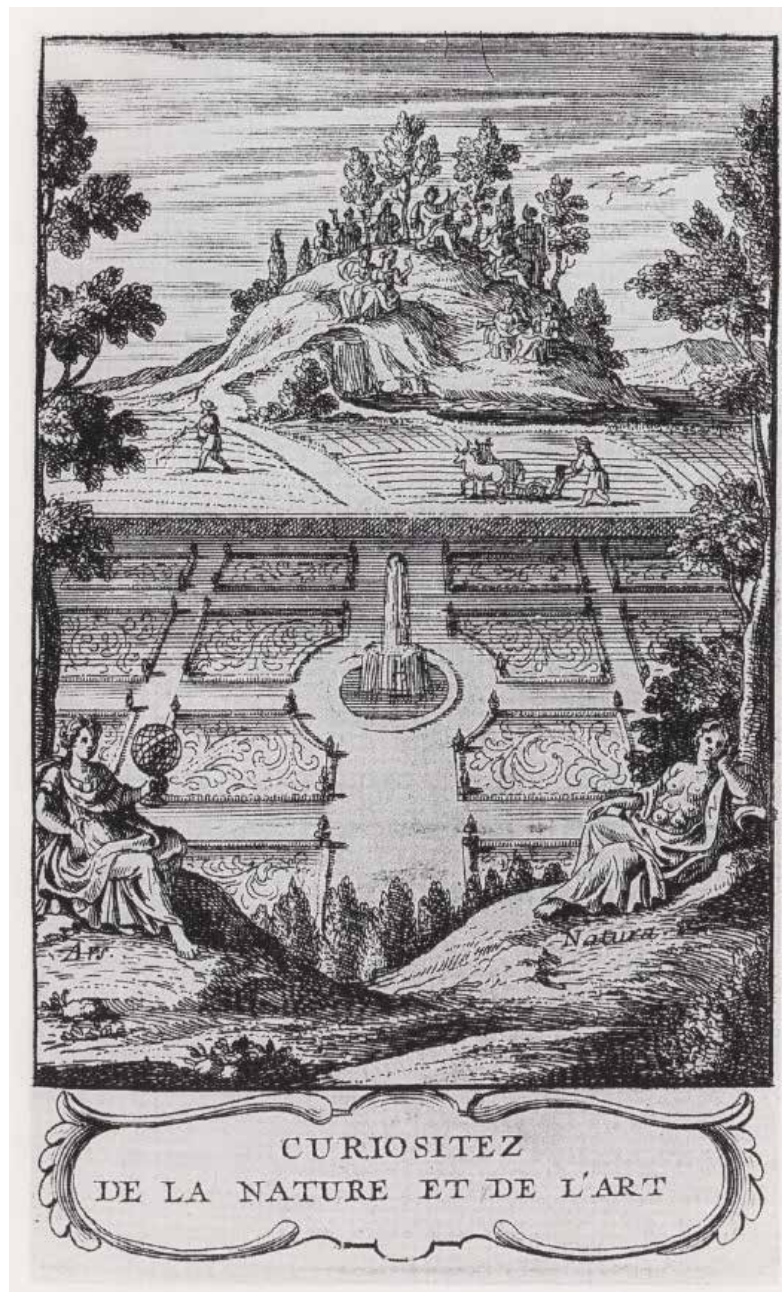


**Figure 4-1.** Giovanni Bellini, *St. Francis in Ecstasy*, tempera and oil on panel, c. 1480. Source: The Frick Collection, New York.

Here the three natures are intermingled yet distinctly registered and so work to define each other. Bellini represents a “wilderness,” with rude rocks that dominate the foreground. Cultivated landscape of farmstead, fields, and distant villa castle (maybe a town). Finally, there is the modest effort at creating a third nature which Saint Francis has evidently initiated in his little garden, a raised flower bed, and a pergola with regular horizontal side pieces, a seat, and the arched enclosure it forms with the cave.



**Figure 4-2.** An engraved view of a “princely seat” from Matthias Diesel, *Erlustierende Augenweide*, Augsburg, 1717-23. Source: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections.



**Figure 4-3.** Frontispiece, “Curiositez de la nature et de l’art” by I’Abbe de Vallemont, Paris, 1705. Source: <http://some-landscapes.blogspot.al/2009/06/third-nature.html>

In the background the illustration shows a distant hill (representing the first nature), succeeded by cultivated agricultural fields (Cicero’s second nature) and then a formal garden (Bonfadio’s and Taegio’s third nature). The transition is inverted in the foreground: moving toward the viewer we can see first the garden, then regularly planted trees and, last, “the waste ground on which sit two women.” (HUNT, 2000, p. 40). According to John Dixon Hunt, “the garden could represent versions of a tripartite nature within its own articulation of the third one” (HUNT, 2000, p. 51), and therefore represent, within its own areas, aspects of the three natures<sup>15</sup>. The garden represented in the engraving, for example, shown a fountain that echoes the water spring at the bottom of the hill; and the cultivated garden beds recall the pattern of the agricultural fields peeking out beyond the hedge.

<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Bonfadio sees the three natures as “representing” in miniature the history of human development - from the “wild, hard people [who still live in the mountains, who are] . . . made as much of stone and oak as of man, and who live on chestnuts the greater part of the year,” down to the “civilized people, gentlemen and signori who live on the shore.” (HUNT, 2000, p. 24)

With the postindustrial urban condition the complexity of ideas of nature and the city increased and philosophers, historians, designers and ecologists started coming up with new definitions and enumerations. The German ecologist Ingo Kowarik, for example, feels the need to introduce a “nature of the fourth kind” (or “new wilderness”) in the “symbolic arithmetic of nature”, referring to the post-industrial nature in abandoned and neglected sites occupied by successional woodlands (KOWARIK & KORNER, 2005). Kowarik’s “nature of the fourth kind” seems to align with Sabine Hofmeister’s “third wilderness”<sup>16</sup>. The Cultural Ecologist claims that these landscapes (formerly industrial sites, but also wild urban woodlands) characteristic of the Post-Modern era, are self-reproductive (no need for human maintenance) “nature-culture hybrids”, where wilderness is a cultural value rather than a physical condition. In his “mixed triadic vocabulary” of nature, Hunt was proposing a hierarchical distinction of natures based on human intervention, explaining how “distinctions, declensions or gradations of intervention” on the landscape determine the hierarchy, a hierarchy that appears to be determined by how much control was exercised over the natural world. Moreover, he claims that the arithmetic of “three natures” is symbolic, not literal and certainly not prescriptive, nor does it necessarily privilege the third over the other two natures. (HUNT, 2000, pp. 35-36) Although both the new natures identified by the above mentioned Ecologists consider human manipulation of land as a determining factor in their evaluation, Kowarik’s fourth nature is based on a chronological consideration of human manipulation and not on a conceptual hierarchy, while Hofmeister’s third wilderness is not chronological and is centered on cultural aspects related to familiarity/unfamiliarity with wilderness<sup>17</sup>. (DESIMINI, 2014, p. 176). (Figure 4-4)

From Hunt’s interpretation, the difference between second to third nature is not based solely on a considerations about the control and manipulation of land for productive purposes (reengineered land and urban development and infrastructures - second nature) or recreation, pleasure, and contemplation (gardens - third nature). In fact, for a “second nature” to evolve into a third nature, there needs to be a human intervention that goes beyond what is required by the necessities or practice of agriculture or urban settlement; an intentional act upon a site to make it beautiful, to elevate it to a refined art. A horticulturally rich landscape needs more leisure and more technical skill to create and maintain them. As Hunt explains: “society has to develop a sufficient complexity for there to be desire and occasions for withdrawal from it into gardens.” (HUNT, 2000, p. 62)

Now, when a site previously exploited by men, a “second nature” - like an industrial site or an urban site – is abandoned, it becomes a Residual Landscape. Since it is no longer managed by men, nor there is any kind of intentional action of men on the nature within it, we could say that it has left the realm of “second nature”. But this does not mean that it can automatically become a “third nature”, as it is lacking the elements that would elevate it to a cultural practice like Garden design: the specific intention (of the creator, or the

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<sup>16</sup> With the “first wilderness” being primeval and primordial wilderness (self-sustaining and reproductive); and the “second wilderness” referring to simulated and constructed wilderness (national parks, wild gardens and conservation areas). (HOFMEISTER, Winter 2009)

<sup>17</sup> “Wilderness is the unfamiliar, the unrecognized, the difference between knowledge and ignorance, between nature known and nature unknown. Wilderness is terra incognita, the untrodden, untouched terrain in the universe of what, throughout modern history, we have sought to know as nature.” (HOFMEISTER, Winter 2009, p. 294)

perceiver, visitor, or consumer) and some aesthetic endeavor. This can only be the outcome of an intentional design action that uses nature as a primary design material. Nor can our Residual Landscape return to a “zero point”<sup>18</sup> of primitive wilderness and become a first nature again. The **three natures are not a cyclical temporal process**. Even though the site is not currently used by men, and nature has become the primary driver in a landscape previously governed by human activity and maintenance<sup>19</sup>, the “human-made conditions [still] underlay natural succession” (DESIMINI, 2014, p. 176). The nature that thrives in these spaces is not the primeval, pure, kind of wilderness that preceded the anthropization of the site, it is rather a new “culture-nature hybrid” combination.

The Landscape Architect, Christophe Girot, takes the “fourth nature” and the “third wilderness” a step further, advancing a theory that fuses the conception of nature with design in a new model of practice (DESIMINI, 2014, p. 177). Girot identifies a “nouvelle nature”, a new form of nature based on three main factors affecting landscape mutation today: time, anthropology of nature, and physical reinstatement of natural structures in the existing urban fabric. (GIROT, 2005, pp. 24-25) (Figure 4-4) Girot, like others before him, introduces this new concept of nature by first separating nature into three distinct realms he names respectively: “exploration”, “admiration”, and “contempt” (the last one being the antithesis of admiration). “Exploration” defines a mythical wilderness still to be discovered; the “admiration” realm represents tamed and acclimatized nature, masterfully arranged in promenades and parks in the heart of cities; and the “contempt” consists in vast zone of conspicuous neglect where residual nature is mixed with industry, waste and infrastructure. (GIROT, 2005) The last realm of nature identified by Girot constitutes a big part of what urban Residual Landscapes are today, as it refers to the spontaneous leftovers from industrial buildings and infrastructures that were dismissed and abandoned in the nineteenth century city. Girot then points out the qualities (accessible, sustainable and dynamic in the course of time) of this “nouvelle nature” by citing the observations of French sociologist François Béguin, regarding “*terrain vague*”: “*terrain vague* was open, undefined and allowed for all sorts of unconventional possibilities to be realised, from the uninhibited lovers’ escapade to the family picnic and the neighborhood fair” ... “This nature born of contempt seemed, ironically enough, to be the most resilient and prevalent of the three”. (GIROT, 2005, p. 24). Lastly, Girot highlights the potential that lies beneath this new urban wild - namely the opportunity to shape future urban growth and reestablish a balance between man and nature - and the related new conceptualization of nature. As Girot, himself states:

“A new anthropology of nature could spell the end of the romantic and solitary myth of nature inherited from the past century and mutate into a new balance between city dwellers and their immediate “natural” surroundings, be they derelict or not.” (GIROT, 2005, p. 28).

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<sup>18</sup> The “zero point” as a reference state prior to any human land use and management (HOFMEISTER, Winter 2009, p. 299)

<sup>19</sup> The vegetation that inhabits it is spontaneous and self-reproductive.

EXTREME I	ALTERNATIVE III	EXTREME II	Category
<b>Nature &amp; Landscape</b>			
natural landscape	city-nature hybridity (ecological simulacrum)	artificial landscape	<i>(management)</i>
managed landscapes	residual / unintended landscape	unmanaged landscape	<i>(management)</i>
first nature (forest) <sup>I</sup>	third nature <sup>I</sup> (gardens)	second nature <sup>I</sup> (agricultural fields)	<i>(aesthetics/ management)</i>
first wilderness <sup>II</sup> (pristine nature)	third wilderness <sup>II</sup> (abandoned industrial sites, wild urban woodlands)	second wilderness <sup>II</sup> (agriculture and gardens)	<i>(management)</i>
first nature <sup>III</sup> (pristine nature)	third nature <sup>III</sup> (gardens) + <i>fourth nature<sup>III</sup></i> <i>(successional ecosystems on Urban-Industrial sites)</i>	second nature <sup>III</sup> (agriculture)	<i>(management)</i>
x	nouvelle nature <sup>IV</sup> (residual nature in abandoned spaces)	x	<i>(aesthetics/ management)</i>
first nature <sup>V</sup> (pristine nature)	x	second nature <sup>V</sup> (urban wilds / post- industrial wastelands)	<i>(management)</i>
first landscape (gardens - constructed nature) <sup>VII</sup>	third landscape <sup>VI</sup> (unmanaged landscapes)	second landscape (agriculture - engineered nature) <sup>VII</sup>	<i>(management)</i>
<b>Aesthetic Categories</b>			
The Beautiful <sup>VIII</sup>	The Picturesque <sup>VIII</sup>	The Sublime <sup>VIII</sup>	<i>(aesthetics)</i>

I. "Notions of Nature" (HUNT, 2000); II. (HOFMEISTER, Winter 2009); III. (KOWARIK & KORNER, 2005); IV. "Nouvelle nature" (GIROT, 2005); V. (GEUZE & SKJONBERG, 2010); VI. "*Tiers Paysage*" (CLÉMENT, 2005) VII. (SHOAF VINCENT, 2010); VIII. (BURKE, 1757), (GILPIN, 1792), (KANT, 1764).

**Figure 4-4.** Table associating the "Tripartite definition of Nature and Landscape". Source: author.

Similar to the idea of a "nouvelle nature" described by Girot – especially to the aforementioned possibility for a symbiotic relationship man/nature - in his essay "Second Nature: NEW TERRITORIES FOR THE EXILED", Adriaan Geuze defines a "second nature that reconciles the urban and rural to the benefit of both". This "second nature" is not the cultivated land mentioned by Hunt, but rather a promising "new strategy for urbanism". (GEUZE & SKJONBERG, 2010). Geuze's approach towards the urban wilds

and post-industrial wastelands, like Girot's, is proactive. For Geuze unintended spaces should be "proactively converted into a new wilderness-not by laissez faire wait-and-see but by the strategic implementation of a clever design that dramatizes the new nature." (GEUZE & SKJONBERG, 2010). Like Girot he advocates for a "reciprocal" and "responsive" attitude toward nature, through the creation of a "new open-ended sustainable urban design approach based on performative integration with the deep patterns of nature itself [...]" (GEUZE & SKJONBERG, 2010, p. 25). But Geuze's approach seems more aggressive. He seems to believe that, although nature has outgrown human hands, it is ready for a new colonization. I argue that this approach is not the redefinition on a "second nature" concept, but rather the definition of a **third colonization**<sup>20</sup>. (Figure 4-4)

	DESIMINI	HUNT	KOWARIK	HOFMEISTER	GEUZE	GIROT	CLEMENT
Pristine	First Nature	First Nature	First Nature	First Wilderness	First Nature		
Cultivated/Infrastructural/ Silvicultural/Agricultural	Second Nature	Second Nature	Second Nature	Second Wilderness			
Horticultural/Designed/ Planted in Green Spaces	Third Nature	Third Nature	Third Nature				
Successional Ecosystems on Urban-Industrial Sites	Fourth Nature		Fourth Nature	Third Wilderness	Second Nature		Third Landscape
Managed Succession on Urban-Industrial Sites/ Cultivated/Infrastructural/ Silvicultural/Agricultural on Urban-Industrial Sites	Fifth Nature					Nouvelle Nature	
Ecological-Cultural Hybrids on Urban-Industrial Sites	Sixth Nature						

Figure 4-5. Table "Natures Enumerated" by Jill Desimini. Source: (DESIMINI, 2014).

Be they "third wilderness", "fourth nature" or "third landscape"<sup>21</sup>, we can agree that this new kind of nature is the product of our consumer oriented society and therefore influenced by anthropological evolution. Logically then, whenever we have a substantial shift in society, the relationship with nature will be altered. But this does not mean that we will need to keep adding progressive digits to the numbering of nature. As I observed earlier, the three natures are not a cyclical temporal process, but neither are they an incremental one. Based on the assumption that the classification of nature is based on two main factors: the presence of nature and the level of intentional physical and/or conceptual human intervention on it (in engineering, exploiting, recreating and managing nature). I believe that the numeration should stop at the "fourth nature": "first nature" – pure nature that has not been subject to human influence (almost extinct today); "second nature" - managed nature; "third nature" – garden and landscape design; and "fourth nature" – new wilderness. Any additional number would be redundant. Let me explain why, by referring again to Jill Desimini's essay on notions of nature. At the end of the essay she carries on with this incremental approach to nature and suggests even a "fifth nature" and a "sixth nature". The fifth one is a "Managed Succession of Urban-Industrial Sites"; a managed nature supporting storm water management and agro-forestry practices (providing

<sup>20</sup> Implying that the first colonization of nature occurred during the First Agricultural Revolution, and the second one during the Industrial Revolution.

<sup>21</sup> Later in the chapter we will also see how these new natures could be seen as part of a broader category of spaces of non-human intervention; what the Landscape Architect Gilles Clément names the "Third Landscape". (5.2 *Le Tiers-Paysage: an emerging new order*, p. 88)

ecosystem services). The sixth one is believed to represent “Ecological-Cultural Hybrids of Urban-Industrial Sites”; meaning a reinvention of the urban park or garden that respects the resources and contributes to the ecology of the city. (DESIMINI, 2014) (Figure 4-5) I argue that the “fifth nature”, as described by Desimini, really coincides with the “second nature” (CICERO, 2008), (BONFADIO, 1967), (HUNT, 2000), (GEUZE & SKJONBERG, 2010), (KOWARIK & KORNER, 2005), as it is managed nature; while the “sixth nature” coincides with the “third nature” (HUNT, 2000), it is still in the realm of “admiration” and “acclimatized nature” (GIROT, 2005).

We will now investigate the source of fear, unease and anxiety provoked by contemporary urban Residual Landscapes, looking at history and at their contemporary social and cultural meaning: the loss of control over them; the strange, elusive presence of the familiar and the unfamiliar within them; their mysterious character and their role as a new form of Sublime; their *picturesqueness* and the presence of rust instead of ruins; their perception as waste; and the fact that they are yet to be fully legitimized by art.

### **Fear of the Uncanny**

*Loss of control – Familiarity – Sublime landscapes or Picturesque Ruins - Mystery and Surprise - Rust instead of ruins – Legitimization through art.*

When we come across an abandoned site or building at night, we might experience a sense of fear. When we catch a glimpse of the roadside verges overgrown with wild grasses, where tangled plastic bags float in the air, we simply turn the other way and keep driving. Our eyes are certainly not pleased to see such neglect. The first thought that comes to our mind is that something must have gone wrong in these areas, that someone, at some point, must have lost control of these spaces.

*But why are marginal urban spaces heavy with uncomfortable meaning?*

The fear and unease we feel when we see a neglected landscape could be rooted in the idea of **loss of control**. A part for the immediate physical dangers that concern people when they see vacant land (presence of hazardous materials and/or chemicals, needles, rats, fire and/or collapse danger) and the direct consequences to our physical comfort and health (smells, and diseases), the sense of unease, fear, anxiety, and even depression connected to these sites, is also a consequence of a sense of loss of control that vacant properties impart. Moreover, if we consider the “broken windows theory”<sup>22</sup>, whereby the presence of vacant and neglected land in a neighborhood triggers more neglect and random destruction, these negative feelings could lead to more neglect and decline, because people take it as a sort of sign that vandalizing space is tolerated. (Figure 4-6, Figure 4-7)

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<sup>22</sup> The “broken windows theory” is a criminological theory of the norm-setting and signaling effect of urban disorder and vandalism on additional crime and anti-social behavior. The theory was laid out in 1982 by criminologist George Kelling and sociologist James Wdson.



**Figure 4-6.** Vele di Scampia Di Salvo. Source: Photo by Federica Zappalà



**Figure 4-7.** Gomorra: La serie (2014). Source: Photo by Emanuela Scarpa/Sundance TV - © 2015 SundanceTV

Similarly, most of us see industrial ruins as places which have outlived their usefulness and become dangerous. In his book “Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality”, Tim Edensor shows a totally different perspective on these newly generated ruins. He believes they are not only reminding us of the failure of capitalism, but can also offer many unexpected benefits: industrial ruins offer shelter to homeless humans, welcome animals whose natural habitat is being destroyed, they are used as stage sets for post-apocalypse movies, and as playgrounds for adventurous children and adults.

The discomfort we experience in the presence of industrial ruins could also be caused by the disturbing **ambiguity between the familiar and the un-familiar**, which emerges in an abandoned site occupied by remains and traces left by the previous use. The familiar past - in the form of a memory of what it once was - and the unfamiliar present – in the



perception of a disfigured version of what we remember – overlap. (ARMSTRONG, 2016, p. 65) (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 96) The unfamiliarity of Residual Landscapes resides also in the fact that they house “fragments” remaining from what once was “whole”. The remains mark an “absence”, which is represented by what is missing, and not by the “presence” of what is left.

Such quality of space can be further explained by the words of Cristian Guizzo. In his essay “Amidst debris and the third landscape”, describing how in old abandoned towns in Sicily nature is slowly reclaiming the space and the abandoned buildings, he observes how “[T]he ruins [have] become the debris of a past relating to the memories and the experience of generations that are gradually disappearing: the ruins thus pass from the condition of a source of memory to a condition of residual material that disfigures the landscape”. (CANTARELLA & GIULIANO, 2013, p. 21)

Also **ruins** stand as testimony of an absence, where the part that remains (for example the column) stand for the whole (the temple). The ruin is the memory of a lost wholeness, shaped, molded and, somehow, recomposed by time<sup>23</sup>. While **fragments** establish a different, but equally important, relationship with memory, integrity and absence: in them we can no longer identify the original formal entity they belonged to; nevertheless, if put one next to the other, small elements can resemble ruins. In fact they are so much more. They can be assembled to generate an infinite number of forms<sup>24</sup>. They open up the possibility for an active and conscious engagement of the observer, who can freely interpret and imagine the becoming of the object. (AUGÉ & MENEGUZZO, 2013, p. 9)

Gissen explores yet another declination of **fragments** in his book “Subnature. Architecture’s Other Environments”. One of the chapters of the book is entitled “Debris”<sup>25</sup>. Here, we can appreciate the subtle, but significant difference of the term from a simple fragment, examined in the architectural field. Gissen traces the origin of the current use of the term in the French word *debris*, which “originated in eighteenth-century France to describe a type of broken, scattered substance that was once part of a building or standing structure.” (GISSSEN, 2009, p. 132) It is in fact the increasing use of gunpowder in the wars of the eighteenth century that gives this specific kind of remains of structures the unique physical character of being “scattered and atomized”, because of the cataclysmic events such as war or natural disasters. As opposed to ruins and architectural fragments that, as we have seen before, refer back to a physical whole, because they are scattered, debris cannot be automatically recomposed into a whole. Their peculiarity is that they stand for the spatial transformations caused by a traumatic event<sup>26</sup>. (Figure 4-8, Figure 4-9)

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<sup>23</sup> “[...] la rovina e’ la vestigial di una grandezza passata, sia che ci troviamo di fronte alle piramidi, sia a un semplice roccchio di colonna greco-romana”(AUGÉ & MENEGUZZO, 2013, p. 30)

<sup>24</sup> According to Marco Meneguzzo the main reason why “fragments” have been used by Modernity with some level of ease is that, as opposed to “ruins”, they have less romantic implications and historical signification and do not seek individuality. (AUGÉ & MENEGUZZO, 2013, p. 32)

<sup>25</sup> In “The practice of everyday life” (volume 2), also De Certeau speaks of urban debris. He describes these spaces as the “ghosts that continue to haunt urban planning.” For De Certeau these spaces of dirt and dereliction are like bumps on the smooth surface of urban utopias. Such bumps talk of the forgotten and strange city where uncanniness lurks in everyday life. (DE CERTEAU, 1998)

<sup>26</sup> According to Gissen, it was the Architectural theorist Julien-David Le Roy who, by showing the architectural fragments scattered in front Parthenon in one of his drawings, provided an evocative image of debris as the product of an



**Figure 4-8.** Southeast view of the Parthenon (Vuë du Temple de Minerve à Athene), 1770. Source: photo by LE ROY, Julien David.



**Figure 4-9.** The Parthenon at the Acropolis in Athens, Greece, circa 1870, photo by William J. Stillman. Source: Getty Museum.

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act of violence and as elements that affect and transform the surroundings; “atomizing” the distinction between social creation and nature. (GISSEN, 2009, p. 133)

Because it is often unrecognizable in its original form, and because it refers to social disasters, *debris* signifies not only the return of society to nature but it exists as a type of latent hybrid nature in its own right. (GISSEN, 2009, p. 142)

But what is even more inspiring, and expresses the positive conception of debris, is Gissen's observation that in the work of Alison and Robert Smithson in England, "debris became a type of authentic nature", contrasting with the "green parkways and fieldscapes of other postwar architects and planners." (GISSEN, 2009, p. 135). Moreover, in his reference to Kenzo Tange's writings describing Tokyo razed to the ground after WW2 bombings, Gissen refers to the latter as a "grey desert" covered by "flowering climber[s]", where the Debris is creating the condition for a "new nature" to emerge.(GISSEN, 2009, p. 139). Therefore, we could say that the debris described by Gissen are closely related to Residual Landscapes.

Some Residual Spaces emerge from **unfinished** buildings and infrastructures<sup>27</sup>. This is yet another characteristic of space that can free the imagination of the observer. Like the aforementioned French word *vague*, in its second Latin root "vagus", the word "unfinished" implies "indeterminacy, imprecision and uncertainty"; but also the lack of a defined form or appearance, which leaves space for freedom.(De SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995). Like the *vague*, the unfinished, the not fully revealed, can always be completed by our gaze<sup>28</sup>. Lastly, like the ruin, also the unfinished has a relationship with time of memory. But, while the ruin is looking back at the past, the unfinished is projected into the future<sup>29</sup> (AUGÉ & MENEGUZZO, 2013, p. 30) We could of course see these abandoned, unfinished artifact as static objects, which do not contain a promise of continuation. But if we refrain from considering only the use value of the uncompleted artifact, and we conceive it as an unfinished work of art, it acquires symbolic value and it opens up infinite possibilities<sup>30</sup>.

### The Third Aesthetic of Picturesque Landscapes

But then, as Helen Armstong points out:

"Why does urban dereliction and rust arouse such alarm when ruins, since the 18th century, have been picturesque settings, restoring man to nature?" (ARMSTRONG, 2016, p. 75)

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<sup>27</sup> Although, Meneguzzo points out that in this case it would be more appropriate to talk about "non-terminato" (in English "uncompleted") as it is related to a building construction. This is true in the Italian language, whereas in English it is precisely the word "unfinished" that relates to a building where construction has been abandoned (AUGÉ & MENEGUZZO, 2013, p. 22)

<sup>28</sup> In the book/exhibition catalogue "Non-finito, infinito" Marco Meneguzzo refers to the concept of "*non-finito*" (in English: unfinished) as something "*non-detto*" that is voluntarily left undefined, because already known, implied and therefore superfluous. He adds that this is true for the Eastern cultural and artistic expression, where finishing and defining in detail a painting is considered a waste of energy and is thought to preclude imagination. In the Western culture, on the other hand, an incomplete work of art, like the "*prigioni*" by Michelangelo, required a strong ideal choice and implied a hidden meaning (like helplessness, mystery, fear of the unknown). (AUGÉ & MENEGUZZO, 2013, pp. 19-21)

<sup>29</sup> The gaze is invited to complete the unfinished and therefore the act should be set in the future possibilities.

<sup>30</sup> See also (CENTIS, 2015) discussing Bramante's attitude towards designing buildings "as ruins" and the concept of "fragments" that generate promises and narratives.

If seen through Uvedale Price's formulation of the Picturesque, abandoned and derelict sites could very well fall into this, third aesthetic category. In his 1810 "Three Essays on the Picturesque", Price makes reference to the capacity of time and vegetation to act as the "levelling improver" that converts into *picturesqueness*, landscapes disfigured by natural disasters. To back up this statement he explains how the effects of time and the progress of vegetation "soften", "conceal" and "ornament" the rawness and deformity of the gash left on the side of a hill by floods, conferring "picturesque beauty" to the landscape. But Price also adds that this is "the case with quarries, gravel pits, etc.", meaning that also landscapes altered by the traumas left on the natural landscape by men can become picturesque after the smoothing process of nature. Following this interpretation also urban and post-industrial ruins can become picturesque after the leveling effect of time.

To expand this concept further, we can turn to Robert Smithson's considerations on the theories of both Price and Gilpin on the Picturesque, and to Olmsted's response to them<sup>31</sup>. In his famous essay "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape", Robert Smithson concludes that the above mentioned theories mark the beginnings of a "dialectic of the landscape". Departing from a static formalistic view of nature, Price and Gilpin are the first ones to acknowledge the fact that the material characters of picturesque beauty are related to "chance and change in the material order of nature", and are therefore grounded on real natural and material processes, and not only on idealized and constructed effects. "The picturesque, far from being an inner movement of the mind, is based on real land". (SMITHSON, 1996, p. 119)

Also Helen Armstrong seems to align with this reading of the Picturesque when, in her 2016 book "Marginal Landscapes", exploring the relationship between dereliction and beauty, she observes how in the eighteenth and nineteenth century: "Picturesque landscapes were valued for their apparent untamed natural qualities; not as frightening wildness, but nature in organic growth and decay, symbolizing what is good and true to a spirit of place or *genius loci*." (ARMSTRONG, 2016, p. 109)

Therefore picturesque landscapes embodied the agency of time and the spontaneity of natural processes, and the latter were able to conceal and soften the roughness of abandoned human artifacts. This can also explain why building ruins were treasured and believed to add to the aesthetic qualities of landscapes<sup>32</sup>. If we were to associate contemporary urban wastelands to the Picturesque they should not make us feel uneasy and scared. It was rather Sublime landscapes that arose such kind of feelings in the past. (Figure 4-4, P. 47)

The Picturesque, the third aesthetic category, needs to be understood in relationship to two other aesthetic ideals, grounded in Burke's notion of beautiful and sublime. (BURKE, 1757) The Beautiful portrayed smoothness, delicacy, balance, regularity and order; the

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<sup>31</sup> Olmsted's response to the Price and Gilpin's theories is, according to Smithson, evident in the constructed landscapes he realized in the USA and in his more general approach to landscape design.

<sup>32</sup> In the above considerations it's implied that the sensations aroused by the view of a picturesque landscape are rooted in the irrational of basic human instinct. Yet, as we know from extensive treaties and books about the Picturesque, they can also be induced by a rationally constructed "aesthetic of effect". This is what William Gilpin (1724 - 1804) asserts when he writes that picturesque is not so much a naturally occurring phenomenon as it is a created one, created primarily by landscape representation, which in turn can train the observers. (GILPIN, 1792)

Sublime, on the contrary, embodied ruggedness, vastness and magnitude. The Beautiful was to be found in the delicacy of nature, in rural estates, soft hills and tranquil lakes; while the Sublime could be found in the vastness of nature, in dramatic views of mountains, waterfalls and cliffs, in the thunder, the sunset and the rainbow, in the untamed wilderness of a forest arousing terror and solitude<sup>33</sup> (but also magnificence). When contrasting the Sublime and the Beautiful, Kant suggested that sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small. (KANT, 1764) He considered that beauty should be smooth and polished; the Sublime, rugged and neglected; beauty should not be obscure; the Sublime ought to be dark and gloomy; beauty should be light and delicate; the Sublime ought to be solid and even massive.

Following the above definitions of the landscape aesthetic categories, and taking into account also Armstrong's interpretation, the aesthetics within abandoned landscapes of wild grasses and rusty industrial remains could be defined as both sublime and picturesque, equally powerful and vulnerable. Maybe the determining factor that influences the aesthetic qualities is assignable to scale: vast Industrial wastelands are sublime, while residual sites, smaller in dimension and filled with ruins, are more picturesque. (Figure 4-10)



**Figure 4-10.** Abandoned industrial building , Tirana (AL). Source: Author.

In effect Burke's idea of the Sublime was not exclusively related to the power originated by wild natural phenomena. He believed that magnitude, infinity, and power could also be embodied in the new technologies and the industrial infrastructures emerging at his time. Moreover the original concept of Sublime was strongly altered by the technological

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<sup>33</sup> In the eighteenth century wilderness symbolized the presence of God on earth, but also satanic temptation, as it was also seen as a landscape where the supernatural lay just beneath the surface.

innovations that occurred at the end of the eighteenth century and the social and spatial transformations that followed: on the verge of the nineteenth century men had already explored all the meanders of the earth; in the twentieth century they had turned the gaze towards space to find new frontiers. Earth was becoming the finite planet we know today with no more enigmas to decode. Although we are no longer capable of feeling the awe of the seventeenth and eighteenth century Sublime because there are no more wild places to discover, a new notion of the Sublime could emerge as a twenty-first century aesthetic, arising from the essential indeterminacy of the conflicted changes in the modern world. Today the only mystery lies in these vague landscapes which are the new *terra incognita* awaiting to be explored. Looking back again at Soa Morales' interpretations of the word *vague* (De SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995), particularly at the definition of the word that refers to "something not defined", we could say that such uncertain and mysterious character can make us experience surprise, awe, terror, and powerlessness again; something very similar to the feelings provoked by sublime landscapes visited by the eighteenth century travelers.<sup>34</sup>

Observing the "frightful" and "disturbing landscapes" of the fringes of Manhattan, with their infrastructures in ruin, Antoine Picon (PICON, 2000) reflects upon the reasons behind the more general unease we feel towards today's "technological landscape", composed, among other things, by the remains of obsolete infrastructures and abandoned sites, as opposed to the sense of peace and beauty associated to traditional landscape. Picon poses the following question:

"How is it that, turning our back on several centuries of tradition that generally associated the contemplation of landscape with the idea of a certain peace of mind, we are so often disconcerted, indeed even anxiety-ridden, by landscapes of this type?" (PICON, 2000, p. 65)

Picon's approach to the question consists first in the definition of "technological landscapes" and then in the identification of their difference from "traditional landscapes"<sup>35</sup>. In the latter the works of man were not only well integrated with nature, but also an "instrument of revelation" of nature in themselves. While, with the Industrial Revolution and the city becoming a landscape independent from the framework of nature (and the city itself becoming the "primary landscape"), nature became circumscribed and confined to survive as a foreign agent: "because in the contemporary landscape the human artifacts are increasing in number and are overpowering natural objects", "nature itself seems fabricated". (PICON, 2000, pp. 66, 72)

As the title of Picon's article declares upfront, in the contemporary landscape we have gone "from ruin to rust, from trace to waste". While until the end of the nineteenth century the productions of man were based on local materials and, hence, surrendered progressively to nature in the form of the ruin; in the contemporary city artifacts are "relegated to

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<sup>34</sup> "These places embody the uncanny - eerie and strange - a concept which emerged in the eighteenth century as a tame version of the fear of the supernatural or the Sublime". (ARMSTRONG, 2016, p. 65).

<sup>35</sup> According to Picon, the "two essential characteristics of the contemporary technological landscape are its absence of clearly marked limits and the relativization of the meaning of human action toward which it drives." (PICON, 2000, p. 71). Residual Landscapes have both characteristics.

obsolescence". The ancient ruin, passing through successive stages, was able to reenter the cycles of nature and bring man closer to it again, while the rusted remains of the technological world seem to remind men that they are confined and forever haunted by things they have built themselves. Similarly, Residual Landscapes can be perceived as a failure of our own making. They are there to remind us of the condemnation of our material creations to become useless waste, and therefore of the futility of our actions.

Following this considerations, we could say that the main problem with today's residues, or leftovers is that they simply won't disappear, that nature alone is not able to decompose and digest them, and their imposing presence is in contrast with nature and the related aesthetic connotations we have assigned to it throughout history (with the due cultural, geographical and historical differences). *Does this mean that contemporary urban wastelands lack an aesthetic connotation?* If we consider the criterion of "double artialisation" advanced by the philosopher Alain Roger<sup>36</sup> to clarify the notion of landscape in general, we might suggest that the visual perception of today's urban residues is lacking an interpretation through resources of art. This is only partially true, as there are many contemporary photographers, poets, artists, filmmakers, and writers concerned with wastelands. I argue that they are the ones who, through their artistic expression, and by promoting a connection between dereliction and 'beauty', can fully legitimize Residual Landscapes and transform them into aesthetic objects.

#### **4.1 A new gaze on Residual Landscapes. The role of artists**

"Given the impossibility of total human control, the cement under which the forests were covered has cracked open, the earth flowers in new and unpredictable forms, preparing to contest with its human occupants the domination of space, from the scrapheaps and beyond." (STALKER, 2002)

It is no surprise that the new sensibility in the gaze on cities of the twentieth century was stimulated by the figurative and performing arts, which trough performances, sculpture and photography, were making people aware of the changes that were taking place right before their eyes, in and around the modern metropolis. But most importantly art was not only able to critically address the current issues related to the modern city, but to do so from very different perspectives, linking environmental, social and aesthetic aspects. The artistic production of the second half of the twentieth century strongly influenced the creation of a new aesthetic of the indeterminate, and it lies at the basis of the current discourse on urban Residual landscape aesthetics. (Figure 4-11, Figure 4-12)

"Photography has largely replaced painting; movies and video games have replaced poetry. It would seem, therefore, that traditional artistic forms meet with some difficulty in portraying the kind of anxiety to which today's technological landscape gives rise." (PICON, 2000, p. 69)

In the Twentieth century the urban landscape has no defined limits, it is reaching out to and absorbing the surrounding countryside, but most importantly it is no longer "framed". This

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<sup>36</sup> "According to Alain Roger, landscape is born of a double movement: of apprehension of the environment and of interpretation of the characteristics of that environment through the resources of art. The aesthetic of landscape resides thus in the imbrication of visual perception and culture." As referenced by Picon (PICON, 2000, p. 69)

“rupture with the Western landscape tradition, which used to depend invariably on a pictorial framing”, might also explain why photography or cinema are a more suitable artistic expressions than paintings, to interpret contemporary urban landscape. “The framings that they propose have a greater capacity for instability, and this instability resonates well with that of a limitless landscape”. (PICON, 2000, p. 72)



**Figure 4-11.** Terrain-vague sur botha Belleville. Willy Ronis (1954).





**Figure 4-12.** “Terrain vague, Porte de Saint-Cloud Paris”. Sabine Weiss (1950).

## From “Ready Made” to “Crossing” - The concept of urban voids as nomadic space

*Art, photography, and film.*

“The voids are a fundamental part of the urban system, spaces that inhabit the city in a nomadic way, moving on every time the powers that be try to impose a new order” (CARERI, 2009, p. 181).

The origin of the acquisition of aesthetic value by abandoned and uncertain places in the city and periphery can be attributed to the shift of attention taking place in the twentieth century in the figurative and performing arts. The unprecedented interest in “other spaces” can be traced back in the Dadaist readymade experiences - the urban excursions in the “banal places” of the city<sup>37</sup> - the Lettrist “drifting” (*dérive*) and in Land Art, which contributed to the redefinition of the artist’s interpretation of nature and, consequently, to the attribution of an aesthetic value to the quotidian. The artists of the second half of the twentieth century were exploring the “banal city” (Dada), the “entropic city” (Smithson), the “oneiric city” (Surrealists) and the “nomadic city” (Situationsists), discovering a “liquid city” where the “spaces of the *elsewhere* take spontaneous form”. (CARERI, 2009, p. 21)

To effect this passage it was necessary to find “an empty field of action, in which the signs of history and civilization were absent: the deserts and the *terrain vague* of the abandoned urban periphery” (CARERI, 2009, pp. 125-126) But although it was in the uncontaminated nature - “Cold Territories” (Lévi-Strauss) - and the industrial landscapes or the suburbs - “warm-territories”- that the Land Artists were expressing their new vision of nature; it was actually in the nomadic empty spaces of the city - generated by subtraction, neglect and absence of control - that the avant-garde movements had started wandering, translating the very act of moving into art.

### Dada and the “city of the banal”

“Dada effected the passage from the representation of the city of the future to the habitation of the city of the banal.”<sup>38</sup> (CARERI, 2009, p. 70)

The first Dadaist meeting in a banal place was realized in an abandoned church in Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre (Paris) surrounded by an unused space enclosed by fences. (Figure 4-13) The work of art consisted in the act of organizing the visit to the undisclosed location, and not in the actions that were taken during the visit, nor in any material operation or sign left on the site. The very act of creating an invitation to meet in a familiar but unknown space - a space people probably came across every day but never intentionally visited, “a banal, useless space which like so many others wouldn’t really have any reason to exist.” (CARERI, 2009, p. 78) - established a symbolic operation that attributed “aesthetic value to a space rather than an object” (CARERI, 2009, p. 75). And it is crucial to the topic of

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<sup>37</sup> On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1921 in Paris, the Dada movement met in front of the church of Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre opening the *Grande Saison Dada*. This was the first of a series of urban excursions to the banal places of the city to celebrate the urban readymade.

<sup>38</sup> Referred to overcoming Futurism.

Residual Landscapes, that such a revolutionary event was taking place in an abandoned garden.



**Figure 4-13.** The dada group posing on the abandoned garden of the church. Source: internet.

### **Stalker's "crossing"<sup>39</sup> as a creation of alternative approaches to abandoned cityscapes**

The Dada urban "readymade experience" "marks the passage from the representation of motion to the construction of an aesthetic action to be effected in the reality of everyday life." Dada was in fact raising the tradition of *flânerie* to the level of an aesthetic operation (CARERI, 2009, p. 73). Clearly influenced by the new aesthetic promoted by the Dada "readymade experience" – but also by the post-war Lettrist International *dérive* (drifting) and the Situationiste Internationale (1957) "nomadic city"<sup>40</sup> - but geared towards the regeneration of urban sites left fallow in the heart of the city and suggesting actual alternative ways to inhabit and design the voids of the city, the Italian collective of activist architects/artists "Stalker" started undertaking numerous "actions" in abandoned urban spaces in the mid twentieth century. Stalker members too were penetrating and inhabiting – to say it in their words, "crossing"<sup>41</sup> - the city "as a creative act". Their early projects were in fact "a series of staged events assembled to attract public attention to sites in the city

<sup>39</sup> "Stalker", is a nominative the group acquired in the lead-up to their founding hike across Rome's abandoned landscapes. It is inspired by the homonymous 1979 film by Soviet film Director Andrei Tarkovsky's, in which the stalker is the guide to a territory, that knows how to walk in a mutant space.

<sup>40</sup> The group was close to the pioneers of contemporary art, Surrealists, the International Situationists and the American Land Artists, but also influenced by Italian film directors such as Michelangelo Antonioni and Pier Paolo Pasolini, who set their narratives in the Roman peripheries. (Peter Lang, in "Stalker unbounded. Urban activism and the terrain vague as heterotopia by default") (LANG, 2008)

<sup>41</sup> Stalker believe that crossing on foot spaces establishes an unmediated experience, allowing for a more dynamic reading. They are for a "nomadic research" that will not prevent the becoming of the site. This also supports why, according to Stalker, spaces need to be "physically witnessed" rather than "represented". (STALKER, 2002)

that had virtually disappeared from the catalogue of popular urban spaces [...]”. (LANG, 2008)

“[...] In Rome the project consisted in traversing the city’s empty spaces, spaces that one doesn’t normally see and where another life carries on unnoticed. This is what we designate as actual territory because what occurs there is always ‘hic et nunc’, in the here and now [...]”<sup>42</sup>

For Stalker the main focus of attention were “The Actual Territories”, the “built city’s negative”, the interstitial and the marginal; spaces forgotten and abandoned or in the process of transformation.(STALKER, 2002) The term “actual” itself, as they explain, defines the very potential of such spaces “in becoming”. The term itself indicates the “process in which space comes into being”, the “other” that becomes other (Foucault). (STALKER, 2002) The suspension in time (vagueness) of such sites identified by Stalker, is what made them and still makes them the most suitable grounds to reconsider the system of appropriation and control of the urban territory, and test new alternatives for its development<sup>43</sup>. As a reconfirmation of the above, in their Manifesto Stalker state that the voids of the city are actually the “background on which to read the form of the city”, and their articulation is important because it determines the structure of the city itself and allows for its “complex evolutionary dynamic”. This implies that these “actual territories” can enrich and give life to the city again and, therefore, they ought to be defended.(STALKER, 2002)

As I mentioned before, the fact that Stalker collective was interested in recovering within the heart of the city, the “wild, the un-planned, and the nomadic”, can be interpreted as a more active and productive approach toward abandoned spaces compared to the non-interventionist approach of the Dada experience. However, in reality “Stalker” also argued that “to forecast the unforecastable, to save the coming into being of the “Actual Territories,” means to abandon them. (STALKER, 2002) For abandonment is the maximum form of a cure for that which has developed outside human will and plan.” This means that the “most effective ‘cure’ for abandoned urban spaces is to leave them alone to be overtaken by nature and to be appropriated by those people who have nowhere else to go; then the spaces are fully in use” (ARMSTRONG, 2006, p. 124). This is what one of the members of “Stalker”, Aldo Innocenzi, replied when asked by the critic Flaminia Genari what type of objects and actions they wanted to produce with their actions:

“Well, we don’t want to produce anything, it’s enough that we have found these *unconsciously produced landscapes*. We have perceived them, crossed them, testified about them and we *prefer that they remain as they are*. The theme of production we haven’t yet confronted in these terms, because we don’t know what we want to produce. *Our production is the event, the discovery of new territories.*” (Genari, F. (1995) ‘Interview with Stalker October 1995’, Rome: unpublished audio tape)

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<sup>42</sup> From the interview to Francesco Careri - one of the founders of Stalker - by Fréchuret, M. (2004) ‘A conversation with the Stalkers’, in *Stalker* (catalogue), Bordeaux: CAPC Musée d’art contemporain-Fage editions.

<sup>43</sup> With the installations ‘Transborderline’ (2001) in the “Mattatotio” (Slaughter House) in Campo Boario (Rome), Stalker actually publicly convinced the municipality to reconsider its plans for the site.

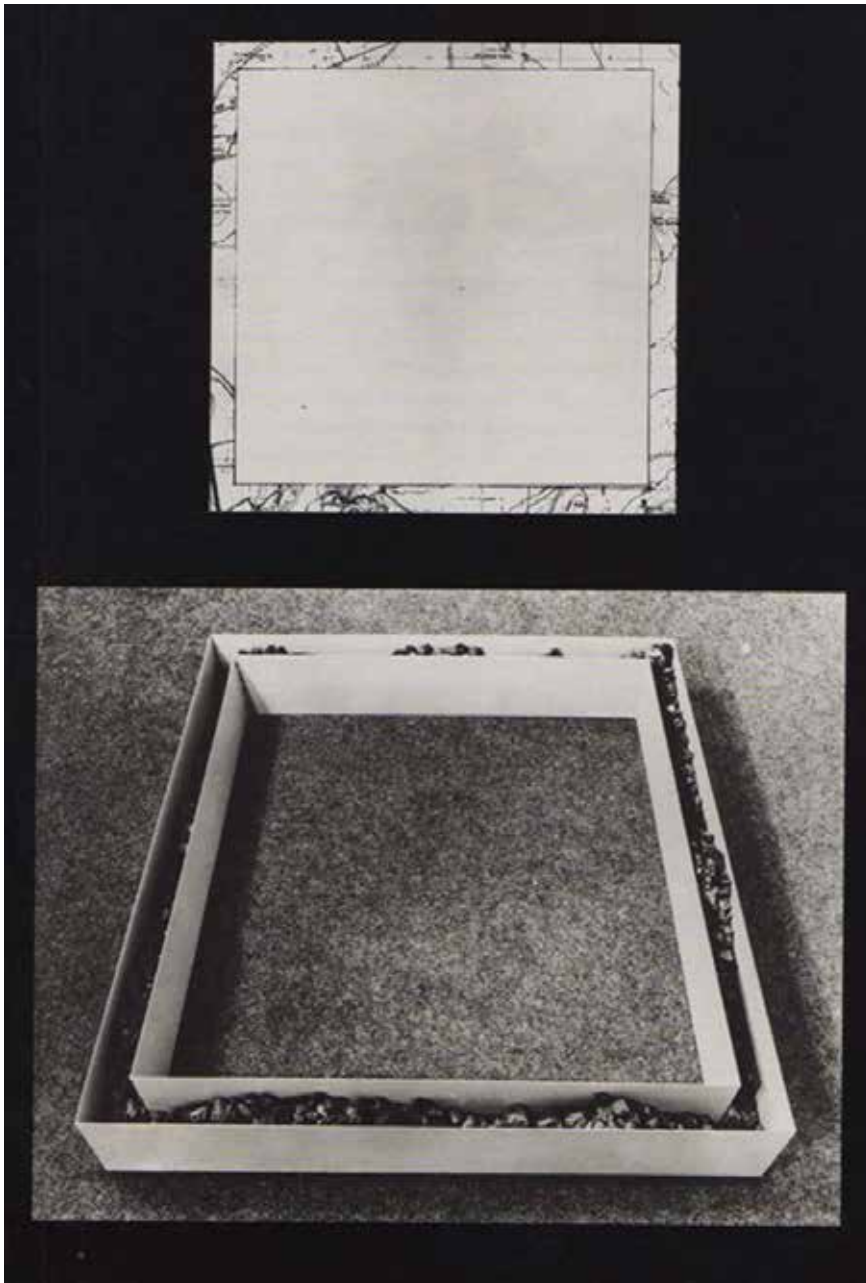
## Land Art & Robert Smithson's "dead spots"

While for Dada and the Situationists walking around the city or out in the county side was experienced as a form of anti-art, Land Artists and Environmental Artists of the second half of the twentieth century used deambulation and exploration as a form to operate inside nature. The origin of Land Art dates back to 1966, with the Journey of Tony Smith along a highway under construction on the outskirts of NY. In that period artists were working in polluted land and industrial areas and dangerous and deserted places started becoming attractive. The artists decided to move art out of the museums and into the outdoors, "reclaiming the experience of lived space and the larger scale of the landscape". (CARERI, 2009, p. 120) Land Art was not about sculpting large or small objects in the atelier and then exhibiting them in open space, or modeling objects directly on site - like the later examples "Art in Nature" or "Environmental Art" in Europe - but the actual physical transformation of the territory, using materials and techniques from architecture to "construct a new nature and to create large artificial landscapes." (CARERI, 2009, p. 140) The main objective of Land Artists was to reestablish a relationship with nature by working inside nature, operating directly on the landscape and not merely reproducing images of nature. They were operating directly on the sites to reconquer the landscape. (D'ANGELO, 2014) Works of Land Art were ephemeral, because they were made of natural materials often found *in situ* and exposed to weather and natural forces. But the contradiction was that, while these works of art were made to experience nature, and therefore they needed to be visited and seen on site, because of their provisional nature and the remoteness of their location, they were only experienced in person by the artist/performer himself/herself. The signs on the landscape operated by the artists were so vague that in most cases they only persisted in the testimony of film, photographs, maps or articles (D'ANGELO, 2014, pp. 87-94), and therefore in the representation of the art work.

But it is in the artistic production by the young artist of the New York Minimalist scene Robert Smithson, in his "non-sites" series (indoor earthworks)<sup>44</sup>, and his journeys in the invisible landscapes of city outskirts, that we can identify the beginning of a new aesthetic paradigm related to abandoned spaces. (Figure 4-14) Smithson celebrates "industrial landscapes, territories disrupted by nature or men, abandoned zones condemned to the oblivion of the entropic landscape. A territory in which one perceives the transient character of matter, time and space, in which nature rediscovers a new "wilderness", a wild, hybrid, ambiguous state, anthropically altered and then escaping man's control to be reabsorbed again by nature". (CARERI, 2009, p. 172)

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<sup>44</sup> The term "non-site" was used by Smithson in his writings (A Provisional Theory of Non-Sites) and it was referred to a series of art works that Smithson produced in the Sixties, but it was later also used to describe territories of the outskirts of cities. The series of "non-sites" artworks resulted from the installation in the gallery of gravel, rocks, salt materials collected from specific mines, excavations or quarries, usually contained in boxes of galvanized steel or situated within mirrors formations. Whereas a "Site" is scattered information, a place you can visit, experience, travel-to, a "non-site" is a container, an abstract work about contained information. A "non-site" is also a "three dimensional map of the site" (Smithson, "Discussions with Heizer, Oppenheim, Smithson", 54, in Holt, "The Writings of Robert Smithson", 172, and Flam, *Robert Smithson*, 244.). In fact, referring to Smithson's artworks, Sébastien Marot defines a *non-site* as a three dimensional logical picture representing an actual site. A three dimensional metaphor – which later became logical representation of abandoned sites *in situ*. (MAROT, 2003)



**Figure 4-14.** Robert Smithson “non site” (1968). Source: internet

Toward 1965, and before the “Earthworks”<sup>45</sup> series - where the artist started revealing landscapes by intentionally transforming nature, Smithson began a series of more methodical explorations of New Jersey, visiting abandoned places overgrown by weeds and jungles that grew out of abandoned houses, but also through abandoned quarries, exploring landscapes altered and destroyed by the incessant action of men. In his journeys he was in the pursuit of “land that time forgot” - where time exists only in suspended timeframes – of a “new nature, a territory free of representation, spaces and times in continuous transformation”(CARERI, 2009, pp. 162-166). In 1967, in fact, as Robert Smithson was exploring the industrial areas around New Jersey and observing dumper trucks excavating tons of earth and rocks, he described them as the “equivalent of the monuments of antiquity”. Smithson’s first notebook essay about this journey on the

<sup>45</sup> The term “*earthwork*” comes from the novel by Brian W. Aldiss, that Robert Smithson was reading during his bus journey to explore the uncharted, virgin territories of the outskirts of Passaic River (Tour of the Monuments of Passaic).

number 30 Inter-City Transportation Co. bus from New York to Passaic, begins with a catalogue of the five types of monuments he came across: “Memorials to exhausted meanings”; “Old Suburbia”; “New Suburbia”; “Ruin in Reverse<sup>46</sup>” and “**Dead spots**,” or empty sites such as dry swimming pools, parking lots, and degraded land masses, which Smithson himself claims “seem to exist for a limited duration of time”. (REYNOLDS, 2003, p. 102)

In the aesthetic consideration of this landscape made of refuse and disruption, Smithson redefined monuments as “natural elements that are an integral part of this new landscape, presences that live immersed in an entropic territory: they create it, transform it and destroy it, they are monuments self-generated by the landscape, wounds men has imposed on nature, and which nature has absorbed, transforming their meaning, accepting them in a new nature and a new aesthetic”. (CARERI, 2009, p. 168) Therefore, according to Smithson the act of nature dismantling these traces imposed by men on earth and taking them back to an earlier state of non-integrity, could be interpreted as a form of acceptance of the violation (forgiveness), as if nature enfolding them was an act of cleansing, a redemption from sins committed against nature, which will restore their dignity and consequently embrace the new aesthetic. In these “territories disrupted by nature or by men, abandoned zones condemned to the oblivion of the entropic landscape”, nature rediscovers a “new wilderness, a wild, hybrid, ambiguous state, anthropically altered and then escaping men’s control to be reabsorbed again by nature.” (CARERI, 2009, p. 172)

Smithson was exploring these unnoticed landscapes and identifying “holes” in the urban periphery and the suburbs “where the future gets lost”, where voids are constantly calling out for adventure (MAROT, 2003, p. 46), and not in the city centers which he himself defied as “tightly packed”<sup>47</sup>. As opposed to the cities with their complex historical layering, Passaic was lacking a “rational past” and this allowed for unconventional and manifold interpretations, while the holes in a sense were like “monumental vacancies that define, without trying, the memory-traces of an abandoned set of futures.” (SMITHSON, 1967, p. 72)

I believe that today it is in these ever changing urban agglomerations that we are called to identify vacancies and begin to appreciate the aesthetic value of indeterminacy. Moreover, in the 1960s such forgotten spaces were noticed and explored firstly by artists, impressed on film by photographers and movie directors, and celebrated by land sculptures; while today noticing and appreciating these undefined spaces seems to be the task of citizens, contemporary *flâneurs* (Walter Benjamin) - connoisseurs of the street who wonder day after day in their apparently familiar cities - or architects in constant search for new alternatives to the inflexibility of Modern urban environments. As Mark Augé would say: to seek “beauty and inspiration in non-places” we need to “resist the apparent obviousness

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<sup>46</sup> Looking at a sign over a construction site Smithson uses the definition “ruins in reverse” for the buildings under construction, “that is all the new construction that would eventually be built. This is the opposite of the “romantic ruin” because buildings don't fall into ruin after they are built but rather rise into ruin before they are built.” (SMITHSON, 1967, p. 72). For more on the concept of *ruins in reverse* see also (MAROT, 2003, p. 42), where the author talks about the unreality feeling these ruins confer and on how space-time do not exist in their presence.

<sup>47</sup> “Passaic seems full of “holes” compared to New York City, which seems tightly packed and solid, and those holes in a sense are the monumental vacancies that define, without trying, the memory-traces of an abandoned set of futures.” (SMITHSON, 1967, p. 72)

of life events and look behind and beyond what institutions put before their eyes through the media”. (AUGÉ, 1995, p. XXII) This means that the recognition of such spaces requires a leap of faith, or better, an emancipation from the prepackaged landscapes cities try to feed us daily.

Smithson’s interest in unnoticed landscapes, his land sculptures and his theories about the aesthetic consideration of this landscape made of refuse and disruption, is starting to delineate a possible origin of the contemporary discourse on the aesthetics of the *délaissé*. As Smithson himself argues, in his final essay about Central Park’s monuments before his premature death, we can find the “rebirth of landscape architecture as an art of in situ representation of territories and their transformations” (SMITHSON, 1996), a condition that would in fact legitimize the new aesthetic as integral part of the transformations operated by man and therefore integral part of culture and Landscape.

The architecture and landscape design critic Sébastien Marot believes that Smithson’s argumentation is “directed towards aesthetic environmentalism (or environmental aesthetics), which is co-responsible for the disaster it predicts” (MAROT, 2003, p. 52). This introduces the aspect of simultaneity in temporal terms, and coexistence in spatial and material terms. In this regard Marot believes that as on-site non-sites, Smithson’s works start merging with the sites they represent (three dimensional logical pictures representing at the same time the material, topographic and human contingency of the suburban realities they represent), becoming the correspondent of the classical definition of the garden as ‘third nature’ (MAROT, 2003, p. 52). But a contemporary version of it. Along the same lines, I would say Residual Landscapes express simultaneously a memory of what once was (the material and organic residues left behind by the activity taking place before the abandonment) and a prediction of its future evolution (the soil and the material residues determine the plant species that will find a favorable condition to grow). Therefore Residual Landscapes, the “‘repressed’ parts of the city”, contain and represent on site the transformation of the territory operated by man and the “abandoned futures produced by entropy” (CARERI, 2009, p. 23). And this, I believe is what makes them as valuable and aesthetically worthy as any other landscape manipulated by men.

### **Gordon Matta-Clark’s “Reality Properties: Fake Estates” (1973)**

“Artists like Gordon Matta-Clark re-imagined a declining manufacturing landscape and found in urban decay new inspiration.” “Without such creative energy, the city stagnates and dies”. (MATTA-CLARK, et al., 2005, p. 37)

In line with the Dada interest in the “banal places” of the city and close to stalker’s “crossing” the city and attributing value to the lack of use of abandoned sites, but more concentrated on the urban processes and operations that generate and influence urban dynamics (DE MONCHAUX, 2016, p. 72) – like deconstructing and remaking of the urban fabric<sup>48</sup> - in the 1970’s the artist Gordon Matta-Clark too started becoming interested in “metaphoric voids, gaps, leftover spaces, places that were not developed”<sup>49</sup> in the city

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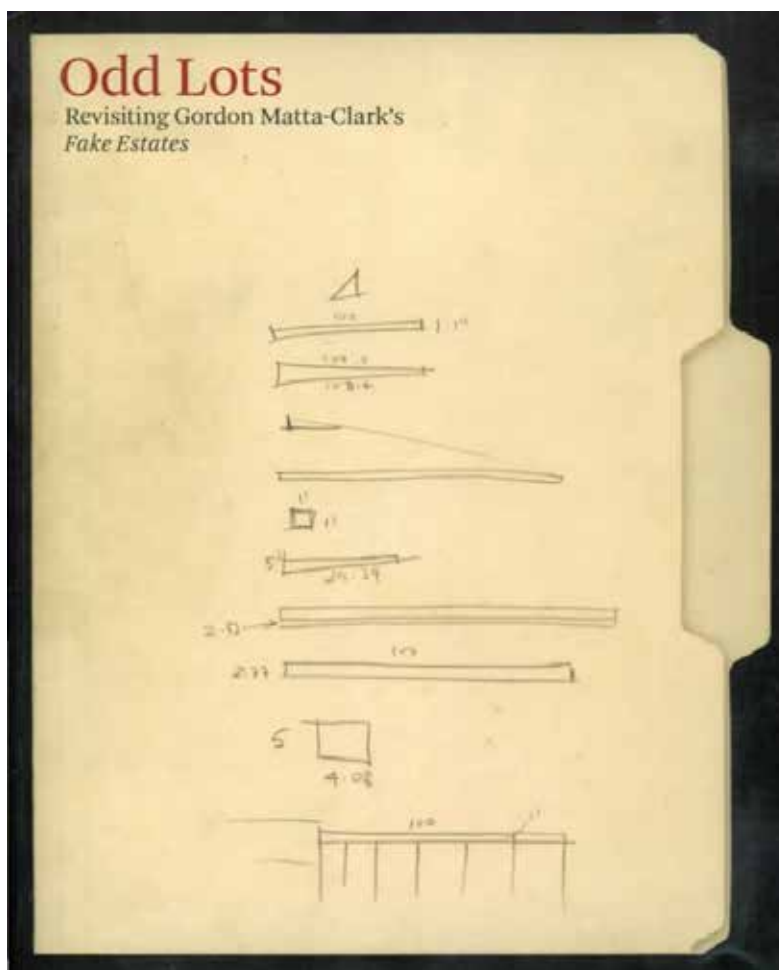
<sup>48</sup> On the aspects of Matta Clark’s research on urban processes see also his “building cuts” series, which are figuratively representing the “perpetual process of deconstructing and remaking urban fabric” (DE MONCHAUX, 2016, p. 72)

<sup>49</sup> Gordon Matta-Clark, interview by Liza Bear, in Liza Bear, “Gordon Matta-Clark: Splitting (The Humphrey Street Building),” in *Avalanche* (December 1974): 35; repr. in Gordon Matta-Clark, ed. Casanova, 375.



suburbs. The project I am referring to is officially known today as “Reality Properties: Fake Estates” (1970’s). The work was left incomplete during the lifetime of the artist and it is full of gaps and ambiguous, even in the name attributed to the project itself. But this also leaves it open to interpretation and why it is still today an unlimited source of inspiration<sup>50</sup>.

Starting in the summer of 1973 the artist purchased fourteen inaccessible or unusable plots in Queens (NY), plus one similar plot on Staten Island and assembled their photographic and bureaucratic documentation. (Figure 4-15) These lots were publicly auctioned by the city of New York for a price ranging between \$25 and \$75 each. Matta Clark’s collection of these unusual properties included a triangular plot, a tiny strip of land between two houses and a curbside. It was a catalogue of bits of land probably resulting from surveying errors or zoning oddities(FABRIZI, 2014) that the artist used to basically question the meaning and value of land property, using these anomalies in the map to reveal its contradictions.<sup>51</sup>



**Figure 4-15.** The picture of the folder containing the deeds to the properties in NY had the outline of the lots sketched of the cover. Source: (MATTACLARK, et al., 2005)

<sup>50</sup> The material collected by the artist was composed by a set of collages and property documents, that later ended in a cardboard box, before his widow found them and assembled them in the 1990s. Therefore, the content of the files was posthumously ordered.

<sup>51</sup> See also Gordon Matta-Clark in Dan Carlinsky, "Sliver' Buyers Have a Field Day At City Sales," The New York Times, 14 October 1973, Real Estate Section, 1 and 12. (CARLINSKY, 1973)

The first important concept arising from Matta Clark's real estate operation pertains the use of conventionally "unusable lots". "In Fake Estates, the *unusability* of this land - and the reification of space through the laws of property - is Matta-Clark's principal object of critique." (LEE, 2000, p. 104) In fact, in an interview with Liza Bear for the "Avalanche" magazine, Matta Clark refers to these fragments as "metaphoric voids, gaps, left over spaces, places that were not developed", explaining that the voids are "metaphoric" in the sense that their interest or value did not reside in their use (MATTA-CLARK, et al., 2005, p. 64). He also affirms that he was excited about the fact that at the Auctions they were described as "inaccessible", and this argues the fact that even if not used, these spaces could be owned, going against the notion of "ownership determined by the use-factor" (MATTA CLARK, 1974). "The word inaccessible merges an invisible thing with an impossible action, naming a condition that otherwise could not be experienced"(MATTA-CLARK, et al., 2005, p. 65)

On the other hand, there is the issue of the potential these site represent for the social life of cities. Lee argues that, "[...] that which cannot be used, that which is inaccessible and therefore non-productive or workless, may also be a potential source of social space."(LEE, 2000, p. 104). These spaces could even be used informally by the citizens because, their abandonment places them "outside of society [...] and free for all"<sup>52</sup>, dogs, junkies and, why not, artists may use them to fulfill their needs" (MATTA-CLARK, et al., 2005, p. 68)

The artist probably didn't have a specific purpose in mind when he purchased the sites, but the "conceptual pieces" of land surely had a great potential in his mind and the mind of artists he involved in his project along the way. In at least one occasion he stated that he planned to sell the documents and the pictures together with the land itself "as artworks".

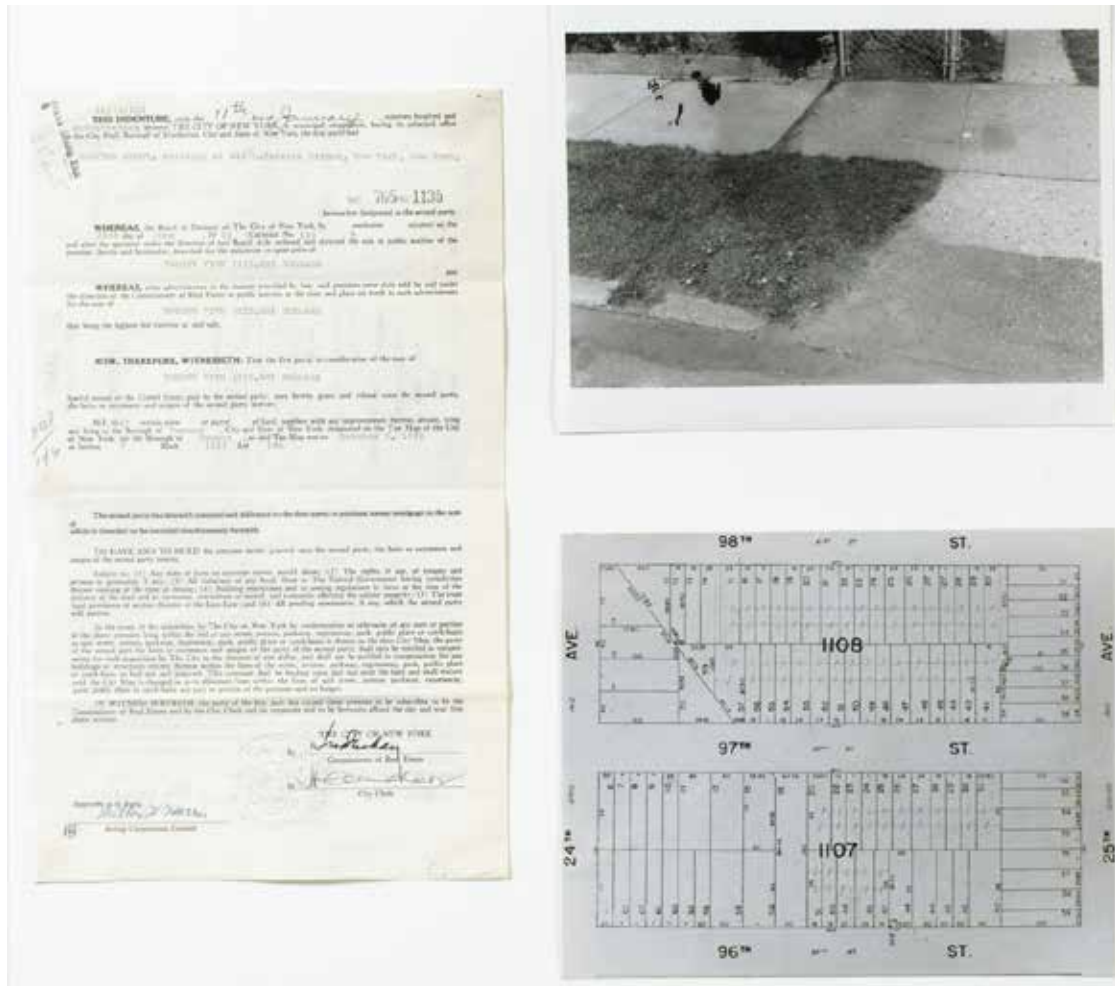
At first glance, the aesthetic value of the empty lots of New York's suburban neighborhoods in Gordon Matta-Clark's work might not appear as the primary aspect of the operation, but if we examine not only the research process itself, but also the posthumous interpretations and the elaborations and exhibitions organized around this work, we can start to identify indirect, but nevertheless important, influence for the aesthetics of the decaying areas of the city, and most importantly in the areas which evolved "outside the law" like SoHo and Tribeca, which Matta Clark considers the "real New York" (MATTA-CLARK, et al., 2005, pp. 33-34).

Between 2002 and 2005 the Magazine "Cabinet" identified, mapped, and photographed Matta Clark's lots and commissioned artists to create temporary projects on the site, which were later published on the magazine. They intended also to commission projects of the micro-parcels and realize them in the licensed land (apparently it was also the intention of Matta Clark himself). The work operated by the magazine was later shown in two exhibitions entitled "Gordon Matta-Clark's Odd lots", respectively in 2005 and 2006, centered on the aspects of the artist's research that interrogate ownership and use-value and

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<sup>52</sup> Even though the fact that the sites are legitimately acquired by the artist inverts this concept.

its relationships with government bureaucracy and urban grid<sup>53</sup>. I believe that this operation (research, methodical organization of the material, exhibition and catalogue) can lead to the identification of three main aspects of the work that determine its importance in the context of research on residual spaces: **generation dynamics, operative approach towards the lots and aesthetic value of the lots.**



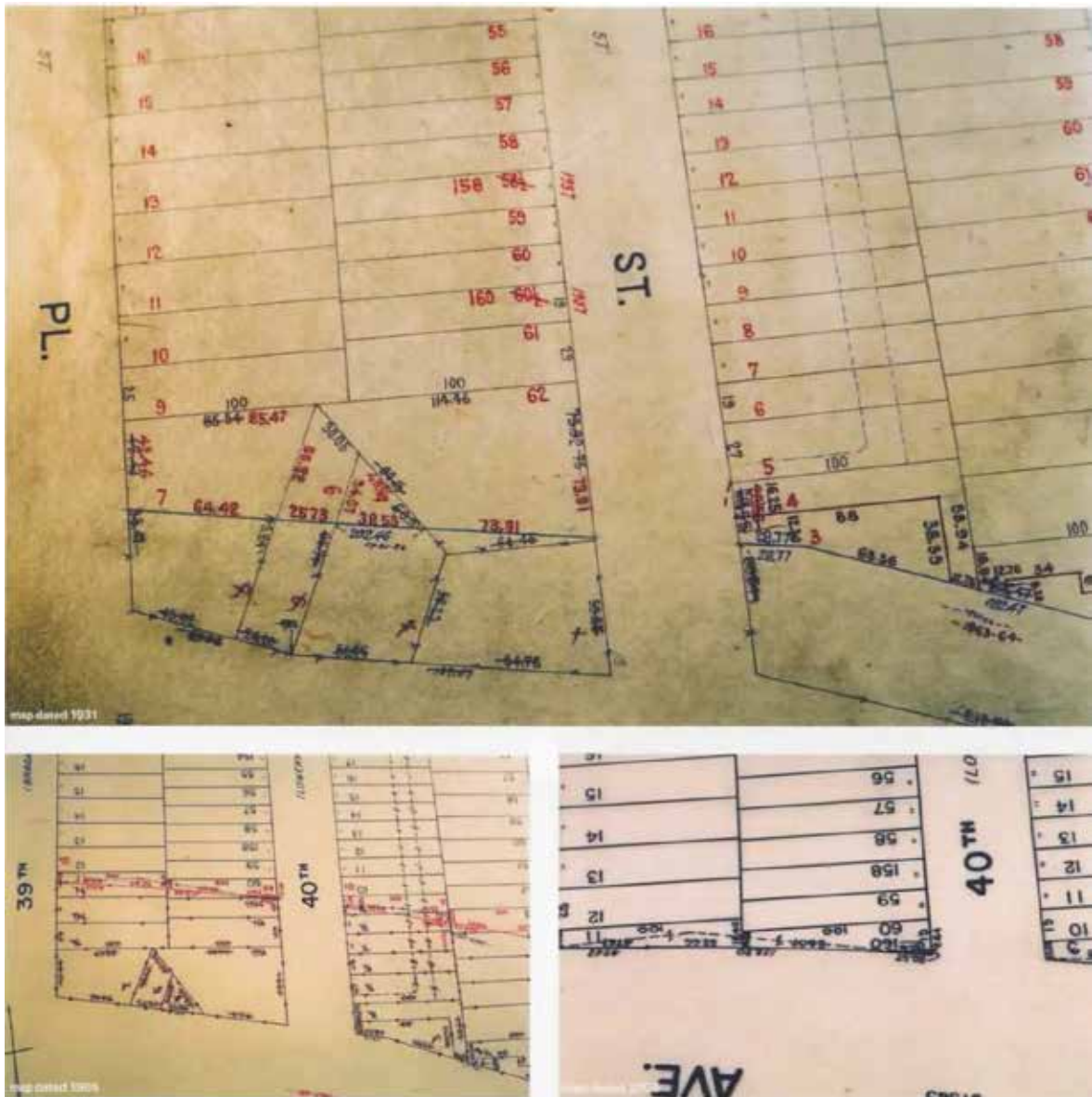
**Figure 4-16.** The image shows one of the collages exhibited at the “Reality Properties: Fake Estates” exhibition. “Sidewalk Grass” Block 1107, Lot 146, 1973. Collage composed by black and white photographs, deed, and map. Source: (MATTACLARK, et al., 2005).

First, in terms of analyzing and understanding the **generation dynamics** of the apparently useless lots themselves. In fact, in occasion of the research and exhibitions curated by the magazine “Cabinet”, for three of the lots that Matta Clark originally purchased, Tal Schori examined the official tax maps of the City of New York, Borough of Queens, which recorded every individual taxable lot in Queens County, and where all the changes in city grid brought about by mergers, apportionments, easements, and municipal projects were constantly recorded<sup>54</sup>. (Figure 4-16)

<sup>53</sup> The two exhibitions were respectively: White Columns 7 sept – 15 October 2005; Queens Museum of Art 11 sept – 22 January 2006. They were both conceived and curated by “Cabinet” magazine editors KASTNER, Jeffrey; NAJAFI, Sina; RICHARD, Frances. (MATTACLARK, et al., 2005)

<sup>54</sup> The system was quite meticulous and used different colors to record the changes affecting the same lot in a given map. For each change affecting a property line, a hand-drawn amendment was applied to the map, coupled with an adjacent note in the same color ink indicating the year in which the change was made.

Quite often the dynamics that generated these slivers of land appeared accidental or even unjustifiable, so that they gained the definition of “odd lots” in the 2005 exhibition (MATTA-CLARK, et al., 2005). But in some cases, by observing each sequence of real estate transactions collected by the artist, it was possible to trace the origin and the evolution of the parcels. In most cases these left over lots appeared to be resulting from the need to create driveway easements, resulting from successive property transactions and illegitimate appropriation of residual spaces, or reconfiguration of roads and the establishment of new street alignments. After all “Matta-Clark's slivers and inaccessible parcels were accidents of the collision of urbanization and the rural landscape” (MATTA-CLARK, et al., 2005, p. 34). (Figure 4-17)



**Figure 4-17.** The image shows three maps for one of the lots (Block 209-Lot 160) purchased by Gordon Matta-Clark in 1973-74: the map prior to the sliver's creation, its hand-drawn insertion into the map, and its official incorporation into the map in a new, printed edition. Source: (MATTA-CLARK, et al., 2005)

Secondly, I believe that the above mentioned exhibitions and related publication are also interesting in terms of the **operative approach to the lots**, demonstrated in the curatorial choice to adopt a light footprint approach on the sites designated by the contemporary artists involved in the project. The artworks commissioned to the artists in 2003 were exhibited off-site and only temporary performances were arranged on the plots themselves. The intention of the curators was to avoid closing the factual gaps - referring to the actual unsolved aspects of the project and the missing critical writings<sup>55</sup> - “but rather act to preserve the very gaps and breaches from which the work derives its enigmatic surplus”(MATTA-CLARK, et al., 2005, p. 5). In my opinion the curatorial attitude is reflected in reference to not only the incompleteness and vagueness of the research work, but also in the attitude towards the physical sites, suggesting a desire to let them be unoccupied and therefore attributing value to their lack of use. Just as they can offer new openings and new research paths to follow, so the unused land can become fertile ground for future speculations.

The previous assumption on the attitude towards the “odd lots”, is also in line with Matta Clark’s original research process and attitude toward the work of art, which was loose and in line with the 1974 *Anarchitectur*<sup>56</sup> experiments: lack of predetermination, spontaneity, doing before even talking about something; which I believe can find a parallel in the actual attitude toward an abandoned site itself. Matta Clark’s work was in fact inspired by the new urban conditions of his time; by the artistic and optimistic wave emerging out of the general decay of the city, by the artists “breathing new life” into the SoHo empty lofts. The historical context in which the artist operated was the 1960s and 1970s, which were marked by the fiscal crisis, abandonment, social tensions and depopulation, but also by “fostered individuals willing to work for the preservation and transformation of their urban environment”. (MATTA-CLARK, et al., 2005, p. 33) His work with abandoned spaces began with a deep concern for the life of the city, and the unavoidable metabolization of old buildings<sup>57</sup>. Both facts begin to outline the more general conception of his work: he was “concerned not so much with the physical shape or statistical outline of the city, but with its processes and operations”, and even his “building cuts” series, are figuratively representing the “perpetual process of deconstructing and remaking urban fabric” (DE MONCHAUX, 2016, p. 72)

Lastly, I mentioned the possibility to identify the **aesthetic value of the abandoned lots** in the context of the posthumous exhibitions and writings taking inspiration from Gordon

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<sup>55</sup> In the introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition, the curators state that they are taking as a curatorial principle M. Foucault’s injunction to “locate the space left empty by the author’s disappearance, follow the distribution of gaps and breaches, and watch for the openings that this disappearance uncovers. (MATTA-CLARK, et al., 2005)

<sup>56</sup> “Anarchitecture Group” - Informal artists’ collective, who also consider spaces of collapse, ambiguity, privacy, and inaccessibility outside of the readily demarcated and legislated. In his book “Local Code” De Monchaux notes how the neologism could have two distinct meanings: “An-architecture: “an” from the Greek, “without” or “waiting”; or “ana-(a)rchitecture”, “ana” from the greek “back again”, literally “architecture anew”. (DE MONCHAUX, 2016, p. 74)

<sup>57</sup> In the New York in the ‘70s where the artist moved there was a great number of empty and neglected structures. He became one of the pioneers who transformed abandoned industrial spaces of SoHo into downtown lofts and the entire industrial suburb into a “landscape of creative practice, in which the renovated urban landscape itself [...] became a work of art”. But, as renovator he was also someone who had to come to terms with land value, ownership and use and had become an investor (first for personal reasons, because he wanted to buy and renovate a loft in Twelfth Street for his troubled brother Batan) and a speculator (and this is one of the reasons why he began cataloging and acquiring property). For more on this aspect of Matta Clark work see (DE MONCHAUX, 2016, p. 72)

Matta Clark's research on residual lots. In the exhibitions and the catalogue curated by "Cabinet", the bureaucratic documentation collected by the artist and the pictures of the sites themselves - both the original prints by Matta Clark and some new photographic documentation showing the current state of the lots - were framed and placed side by side in a gallery space. Moreover, in 2003, the original sites became object of new on site artistic installations, which were represented through drawings, collages and photographs that were later exhibited in galleries and collected in catalogues. I believe that through these artistic operations on the residual lots of the city (representing the lots as art work) the lots themselves acquired an aesthetic value. Both the process-based work by Matta Clark on "fake estates", and the numerous artistic initiatives organized around it, can be placed alongside the previously mentioned artistic experiments of the second half of the twentieth century, which contributed to the introduction of a "new aesthetic of the indeterminate".

## 4.2 Contemporary aesthetics of ruderal landscapes

### *Wasteland Aesthetic*

Building on the work of the Avant-Garde artists of the 1930s and the Land Artists of the 1960s, in the last quarter of the twentieth century there has been growing interest in the aesthetic qualities of abandoned, interstitial or residual spaces, which have proliferated through processes of industrial decline and demographic change.

The main tendency is to stop seeing wastelands and derelict spaces in our cities as contemptuous places, places of blight - considering them as the result of human exploitation and environmental negligence - and to start observing also the great beauty they withhold. Many recent writings stress the "ecological, metaphoric and cultural" qualities of ruderal landscapes and see works of ruderal aesthetics as an opportunity to open up passages between art, landscape architecture, landscape ecology, and other disciplines<sup>58</sup> (COWLES, 2017). Although theories about Residual Landscapes come from very different fields (arts, architecture, urban planning, ecology and social sciences), and deal with the topic from different perspectives, the approaches seem to concentrate on three main aspects that influence the aesthetic value of residual spaces: **the definition of their beauty in relation to cultural conception of nature; the acquisition of an aesthetic value based on utilitarian and performative aspects of Residual Landscapes; and the conception of beauty based on the ecological value of Residual Landscapes.**

Interestingly enough, the above mentioned aspects are in line with the threefold aspects involved in the reclaiming of sites, which James Corner proposes in his introductory essay of the homonymous book "Recovering Landscapes":

“[...] the reclaiming of sites might be measured in three ways: first, in terms of the **retrieval of memory** and the cultural enrichment of place and time; second, in terms

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<sup>58</sup> In her writings, Professor Sarah Cowles discusses how ruderal species are dispatched as aesthetic subject and medium in works of contemporary art and landscape design. Using example of contemporary art and landscape architecture she demonstrates how ruderal aesthetics operate, or are constructed, through six different operations: demarcation, initiation, occupation, reconstitution, restitution, and stylization. For more articles by Sarah Cowles on ruderal aesthetics, visit: <http://www.ruderal.com/>

of **social program and utility**, as new uses and activities are developed; and, third, in terms of **ecological diversification and succession.**” In this threefold way, the inventive traditions of landscape architecture actively renew the significance of those cultural and natural processes that undergird the richness of all life on earth. (CORNER, 2014, p. 121)

We have already addressed the **first aspect** earlier in this chapter, when we introduced the discourse about “notions of nature” and how the aesthetic considerations of nature and landscape design are a cultural construct that is influenced by the evolving relationship between man and nature. Several contemporary researchers are still drawing from these considerations to elaborate a critical discourse about the role such landscapes play in our cities, and directly (DESIMINI, 2014) (CLÉMENT, 2005) (ARMSTRONG, 2006), or indirectly (KOWARIK & KORNER, 2005) (HOFMEISTER, Winter 2009) (GIROT, 2005) (GEUZE & SKJONBERG, 2010) (JORGENSEN & TULECOTE, 2007) dealing with their aesthetic connotations. Dr. Helen Armstrong identifies a “sad beauty in dereliction” (ARMSTRONG, 2016, p. 105). By comparing it to the classical Western idea of beauty, associated to smoothness, harmony and delicacy<sup>59</sup>, and through Emmanuel Kant’s landscape aesthetics considerations, and the interpretation of the three aesthetic categories of the Sublime, the Beautiful and the Picturesque, she arrives to the conclusion that the beauty of abandoned industrial infrastructures derives from a “new form of Sublime”. He continues by saying that the rusty ruins covered by wild grasses resemble painterly ruins, embodying the agency of time as well as a naturalness and spontaneity, and are therefore more Picturesque:

“Can we not see these abandoned landscapes of wild grasses, asphalt, and rusty machinery as having similar value as the 17th century artist, Claude Lorrain’s, painterly ruins?” (ARMSTRONG, 2016, p. 109)

Still connected to the cultural conception of nature as expressed through the art of garden and, later, landscape design, is the aesthetic connotation attributed to formal order. Interstitial urban sites are often unmanaged, and for those who use an “aesthetic of care” to evaluate the quality of urban landscapes and the people who inhabit them, the negligence may represent a complete breakdown in social order (JORGENSEN & TULECOTE, 2007, p. 454). Moreover, urban wastelands unsettle the familiar terrain of cultural landscapes, designed spaces, and the organizational logic of modernity, proposing a completely new aesthetic that celebrates the indefinite and the imprecise. An alternative to regulated spaces, where there is a possibility for the reintroduction of some form of surprise and adventure. As Thomas Sieverts points out, “orthodox urban aesthetics - well designed and managed city places - are more meaningful if they are experienced alongside an alternative form of aesthetics.” (ARMSTRONG, 2016, p. 238). Dr. Armstrong expands on this concept, in the following statement:

“The landscapes of our cities are so pervasively programmed that there are few places where one can withdraw to linger and reflect. Standing in contrast to these

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<sup>59</sup> Helen Armstrong points out how the idea of beauty as a “fragile delicacy” comes from the philosopher, Emmanuel Kant, where he claims that the vulnerability and transience of flowers contributes to their beauty. (KANT, 1764). (ARMSTRONG, 2016)

aesthetically and socially regulated spaces, neglected sites can accommodate reflective meditations where marginal places provide a different beauty in the city. They evoke an aesthetic of disorder, surprise and sensuality, offering ghostly glimpses into the past and tactile encounters with a forgotten materiality.”(ARMSTRONG, 2006, p. 119)

The **second aspect** that seems to influence aesthetic evaluation of marginal urban landscapes is directly related to utilitarian aspects. If a site is abandoned, unmanaged and unproductive, but most importantly, it's no longer in use by any of the officially recognized social categories, it becomes unsightly. But the lack of use is also denoting a latency, an opportunity for an eventual recovery and the promise of productive integration and reuse can, in turn, influence the attitude towards these waste landscapes and their aesthetic value (BERGER, 2006) (WALDHEIM, 2006) (GEUZE & SKJONBERG, 2010). As Matthew Gandy points out in his article entitled “Entropy by design”, “The growing interest in marginal urban landscapes has tended to repeatedly emphasize the utilitarian potential of so-called ‘waste spaces’ rather than their intrinsic qualities.” (GANDY, 2012, p. 5), and most of the recent theories concerning Residual Landscapes reveal “tensions between the aesthetic and scientific significance of so-called ‘waste spaces’ in contemporary cities, and the widening scope of utilitarian approaches to landscape design” (GANDY, 2012, p. 1) (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2)).

In the above mentioned case the potential utility of residual spaces refers to the social and economic benefits they could provide. We will now see how, the following aspect is still concerned with utilitarian aspects of Residual Landscapes, but in this case the performance is referred to the ecological benefits such spaces can provide.

In her “Manifesto on Sustaining Beauty: the Performance of Appearance”, American architectural theorist, Elizabeth Meyer, suggests that “designed landscapes, particularly city spaces and parks, should be infused with a form of aesthetics that is related to sustainability where places can reflect awareness, empathy and care; in other words, conceptions of beauty based on ecological values and the resilience of recycled materials. (ARMSTRONG, 2016, p. 238) This quote introduces the **third aspect** that influences the aesthetic value of Residual Landscapes, which can be traced in the emergence of environmentalism, Urban Ecology and the proliferation of marginal spaces within European cities around the 1960s and 1970s. According to Gandy the aesthetic and scientific roots of this change can be traced back to the seventeenth century, in the meticulous botanical surveys of spontaneous plants in European cities (GANDY, 2012, p. 5), which indicate a shift of attention to the pockets of wild growth in the city, and to the emerging ecologies of neglected urban space.

In his essay about “Marginalia: Aesthetics, Ecology, and Urban Wastelands”, Gandy claims that the changing conceptions of urban nature were strongly influenced by the attention devoted by urban ecology to wastelands as “ecological refugia” or “islands of bio-diversity.” (GANDY, 2013) Following the dictates of Urban Ecology, the ecological qualities of urban nature (flood control, water purification, and the mitigation of the urban heat island effect) ultimately elevate also the aesthetic qualities of the latter.



Theories about the relationship between aesthetic appreciation of spontaneous urban nature and their ecological value, attribute the aesthetic appeal of such places to their cultural and scientific complexity. According to these theories the more our knowledge of their ecological dynamics is detailed, the more they become aesthetically sophisticated. This implies that the aesthetic appreciation of nature is “informed and enriched” by advances in scientific knowledge (Carlson as quoted by (GANDY, 2013, p. 1307)).

While the eighteenth century staged wilderness of the picturesque, was an aesthetic experience based on a purely visual simulacrum of an idealized nature, recent interest in spontaneous and ungoverned vegetation “stems from a synthesis between a metropolitan ‘wasteland aesthetic’ and developments in scientific knowledge”<sup>60</sup> (GANDY, 2013, p. 1305). But there are also substantially different approaches to the aesthetics of nature that stem from the same disentanglement from the purely visual emphasis on the visual experience, to evolve into a sensorial experience complemented by the acoustic, tactile, or olfactory texture of space, “so that sensory immersion in nature takes precedence over the enframing of nature as a space of spectacle”. (GANDY, 2013, p. 1308) The beauty in abandoned sites can be found in the interplay between colors, forms, textures, materiality, sounds and smells. Following this way of thinking, aesthetic responses to interstitial wilderness cease to depend on familiar and valued archetypes, opening up new aesthetic possibilities. (Figure 4-18)



**Figure 4-18.** “Bowery seeds”(1970), photograph by artist Hans Haacke. Source: [https://slought.org/resources/hans\\_haacke\\_on\\_site\\_specificity](https://slought.org/resources/hans_haacke_on_site_specificity)

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<sup>60</sup> In the following section we will discuss at length the work of Landscape designers like Gilles Clément, who advocate for the production of aesthetic effects of nonintervention, or “nondesign”, which is operated through the observation and the guidance of landscape dynamics, and not through predetermination of form.

## New aesthetics in Landscape Architecture Practice

In the last decades of the twentieth century a growing number of Landscape Architecture practices started operating in marginal urban landscapes and abandoned industrial sites. Their research is not only directly engaged with the aesthetic implications of spontaneous urban nature and post-industrial ruins, but also deeply imbricated with ecological issues: on one hand the need to offer solutions for contaminated sites, and on the other, the possibility to use these landscapes to ensure resilience of the urban ecosystem. In fact, urban Residual Landscapes can sustain and regenerate ecosystem services (e.g. climate regulation, hydrologic cycling) and even become platforms for renewable energy harvesting. Many of these landscape projects, aside from offering spaces for recreation and contemplation and providing ecosystem services, are performing a cultural-historical function as well, preserving and narrating the history of the site through the organic and inorganic processes embedded in the landscape. Hence we could say that contemporary landscape architecture practice is deeply engaged with all three afore mentioned aspects, which attribute aesthetic value to residual spaces, namely: the **cultural conception of nature**, their **utilitarian character** of Residual Landscapes and their **ecological value**. “In embracing the distinct character of roughness, ugliness, and otherness, these formally designed projects challenge conventional notions of the aesthetics and functionality of parks, industrial sites, and vacant land in metropolitan cities.”(RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), pp. 96-99)

Many Landscape designers have not only deliberately included ruderal plants spontaneously growing in urban residues in their projects<sup>61</sup>, but some have even gone as far as re-creating aesthetic aspects to spontaneous vegetation and replicating the original city-nature hybridity<sup>62</sup> in their landscape projects, through purposeful design elements<sup>63</sup>, which have become a reinvention of the public urban park<sup>64</sup>. (LOUGHRAN, 2016, p. 312) (MILLINGTON, 2015) (GANDY, 2013, p. 1306) The result is that spaces that had hitherto been regarded as marginal or aesthetically problematic, have gradually gained an increasingly significant role in urban discourse, and wild nature has acquired value in urban design. In Europe there are quite a few landscape architects, like Piet Oudolf, who have embraced this aesthetic and figured out how to present it in such a way that people find it compelling<sup>65</sup>. Although the general tendency in landscape architecture practices is to integrate spontaneous plants in their projects, acknowledging the aesthetic value of unmanaged (at least apparently) wild urban plants, I believe there are three distinct approaches that can be identified: **integration, guidance, and imitation**.

The first approach can be identified in landscape projects where existing volunteer wild vegetation is **integrated** in the project. This means that the aesthetic value of wild nature is recognized, protected and valued to the point that it becomes the main substance of a

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<sup>61</sup> E.g., Peter Latz projects in industrial wastelands of the Ruhr Valley, and Gilles Clement’s Parc André Citroën.

<sup>62</sup> The city-nature hybridity consists in an imbrication between forces of nature and decaying built environment. In the case of the New York Highline, the landscape project celebrates this hybridity by producing a distinctive kind of ecological simulacrum of what occurred on the derelict structure before its extensive landscaping. For more on “wasteland as artifice” see (GANDY, 2013, p. 1306).

<sup>63</sup> E.g., the “High Line” project in NY and Gilles Clement’s *Derborence Island* in “Parc Henri Matisse”.

<sup>64</sup> See also Jill Desimini’s concept of “Sixth Nature”. (DESIMINI, 2014, pp. 184-185)

<sup>65</sup> Piet Oudolf is not creating meadows per se, but his work has changed the way people view the meadow aesthetic.

landscape project. This is the case of several projects developed in Germany, especially from the 1980s onwards, influenced by the prominence of ecological arguments within land use planning. In the case of Berlin<sup>66</sup>, there are several instances where marginal spaces were transformed into parks, “partly or completely modelled around scientific insights from urban ecology.” (GANDY, 2016, pp. 437-438)

Because of the slow urban development between 1945 and 1989 in West Berlin a large number of formerly built-up areas that had been destroyed in the war remained undeveloped. This allowed for an undisturbed natural colonization process that led to the development of wild urban woodlands, but also to development of specific urban-industrial ecosystems, or what Kowarik called “nature of the fourth kind” (KOWARIK & KORNER, 2005) (DESIMINI, 2014), and Hofmeister named “Third Wilderness”. (HOFMEISTER, Winter 2009) Natur-Park Südgelände is one of the most emblematic cases where an abandoned rail yard, after years of neglect, evolved spontaneously into a new wilderness becoming a refuge for biodiversity. (Figure 4-19) In 1999 it was classified as landscape and nature conservation area and was made accessible to the public as a park<sup>67</sup>.



**Figure 4-19.** Natur-Park Südgelände, Germany (1996). Source: internet.

Another example of projects that incorporate elements of volunteer wild vegetation and artificial ruins is Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park in Germany (Figure 4-20). The park was designed by the German landscape architecture office Latz + Partners. The office’s principal Peter Latz, believes that landscapes developed as a residue of human activity, have nothing in common with natural, agricultural or designed landscapes. In his projects is able to identify the latency that lies within these abandoned sites and to design with the inherent disharmony. First he identifies the unique nature of these post-industrial sites and the forces embodied in the human-made elements that inhabit them, then, through a

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<sup>66</sup> E.g., Südgelände (2000), the winning Park am Nordbahnhof (2009) along a former ‘death strip’ adjacent to the Berlin Wall, and the Park am Gleisdreieck (2013).

<sup>67</sup> For more information about Natur-Park Südgelände, see also (KOWARIK & KORNER, 2005, pp. 287-299)

combination of art, architecture, and horticulture, he manages to create a new type of landscape. “He has developed what he calls a form of “syntactic design”, in other words, a design approach where each site requires a new language and associated syntactic rules. The grammar of this language involves identifying the hierarchy within the syntax and the rhythm that reflects the regularity with which things are repeated.” (ARMSTRONG, 2016, p. 241) In the furnace plant at Meiderich in Duisburg, Latz + Partners found “an ecological disaster area which nature was slowly winning back for herself over the years”. (WEILACHER, 2008, p. 105) Instead of merely preserving the industrial relics as attractive curiosities, or as monuments, they tied them into the complex landscape context. First, by acknowledging their past use; second, by discovering a “new aesthetic perception of gigantic production machines, described as an identification item, ‘landmark’ or mythological dragon”<sup>68</sup>; and last by proposing innovative reuse of individual site structures. (WEILACHER, 2008, p. 112) In terms of vegetation, Latz + Partners valued the natural vegetation growth as it reflects the site’s industrial history: all the seeds that were introduced over the years in the site through imported aggregates, lead to a great variety and mix of native and exotic species. The result is a system that is “both highly artificial and highly ecological”, where technology and nature are in accord. Peter Latz’s intention was: “to try to integrate natural sequences as much as possible, and to let nature be nature. On the other hand, nature we create artificially must allow us to find an aesthetic language that is identical with the technical one”.<sup>69</sup> (WEILACHER, 2008, p. 128)



**Figure 4-20.** Duisburg Nord Landscape Park, Germany, Latz+Partner (1991). Source: internet.

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<sup>68</sup> In one of his interviews, Peter Latz even compared the Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park to the Bomarzo Park in Italy.

<sup>69</sup> For more information about projects by Latz + Partners, see also (WEILACHER, 2008) (STILGENBAUER, 2005)

Elsewhere, examples of parks that incorporate elements of abandoned landscapes include Toronto's Downsview Park, emerging from a former industrial and military site, and New York's proposed reclamation of the vast Fresh Kills landfill site scheduled for completion in the year 2036. But there are also many contemporary Landscape architects who embrace what may appear as a more drastic approach. For example Florian Beigel, who has undertaken numerous projects on post-industrial sites, states that:

“Perhaps the key issue is to do with designing emptiness, to decide where nothing will go. This word emptiness is enigmatic, has a sense of wonder and an almost inbuilt potential for getting one's imagination going and provoking involvement. I feel such an ‘emptiness’ is inherent to certain landscapes. It can also be found in cracks, or holes in the city, where there but also the imaginations of people who come to inhabit them. Nonetheless, designing in these situations is a very delicate thing because such wildness is so fragile and can all too easily be destroyed. Even a successful intervention can only briefly sustain a lawless environment. “The key is to do ‘almost nothing’”, as Mies once said. I find this to be a very provocative statement and good starting point.” (Beigel, Florian (1997) as cited in (MOSTAFAVI, 2003, pp. 54-55)

The second approach I identify stands between passive integration of ruderal vegetation and imitation of its aesthetic appearance. I regard it as **guiding** natural processes (like spontaneous plant growth), because in this design approach the attitude is to observe what is already naturally present on the site, understand its potential, and only then, guide it loosely. Or, vice versa, to begin by artificially inducing the initial stages of a natural landscape process, to then let them evolve spontaneously.



**Figure 4-21.** Parc André-Citroën, Paris, Patrick Berger and Gilles Clément (1985-1992).  
Source: internet.

The first case coincides with the design philosophy adopted Gilles Clément in his concept of *jardin en mouvement* (in English “garden in motion”), which was reflected in his project for Park André-Citroën (Figure 4-21). Designed on the site of the former Citroën factory along the Seine, the park includes the well-known and controversial “Jardin en mouvement”. Differently from the other gardens of the park, the “Garden in motion” is not formally designed; it’s a constantly evolving landscape, a space in becoming, where the behaviors and actions, of both humans and plants, define the garden. In fact, the formal conception of the spaces in motion doesn’t depend only on the work of the gardener, but also on their interaction with the public: the flower islands can be shaped also by the trajectory and the use that the users make, defining always new layouts<sup>70</sup>.

The case of the approach that Georges Descombes adopted in the project for the Renaturation of the River Aire (2001), is emblematic of the way abandoned artificial infrastructures (the irrigation canals) can establish a dialectic relationship with natural landscape elements (the river Aire), but also shows another approach towards the landscape project, whereby the initial stages of the natural landscape process are guided. (Figure 4-22)

The Aire river flows through valleys historically devoted to farming. From late nineteenth century it was progressively canalized, but instead of destroying the canal, Descombes transformed it in the pointer for the transformations, a reference line giving the possibility to understand the “before” and “after”. The artificial straight canal that was already present had no exchanges with the underground water. Descombes kept the artificial sign and made it permanent by transforming it into a linear public space. This implies a very clear attitude towards the artificial footprint of past human intervention. With this act the designer is saying that also these signs have value. He selected in the site what was useful and then transformed it into a footprint. A footprint is the “permanence of the occurred transformation; one is free to move inside it, but you can always see where it came from.” (DESCOMBES, 2016)<sup>71</sup> It is a permanent trace which introduces a complex temporality, both past and future, memory and desire<sup>72</sup>.

While for the re-naturalization of the river Aire, Descombes operated on the site as if it were an open air laboratory. To accelerate the formation of the new riverbed, he guided the land erosion process by modeling the land in a specific diamond-shape pattern, which would help the river design itself in a natural form. With time, the natural flow of the river is modifying the geometrical matrix of lozenges, returning to acquire the unpredictable character of natural rivers. In this approach, like in Clément’s, man is present and guides nature, but only to help nature regain its power once again<sup>73</sup>. (Figure 4-22)

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<sup>70</sup> For more information about Gilles Clément projects see also, (CLÉMENT & RAHM, 2006) (GANDY, 2012) (COEN, 2007)

<sup>71</sup> Lecture available at: <http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/event/georges-descombes-designing-a-river-garden/>

<sup>72</sup> In his book “Sub-urbanism and the art of memory”, Sebastien Marot makes a parallel between the Descombes’ “Aesthetic of revealing imperceptible forces” exploring the hidden face of the mappable surface, and Smithson’s “non-site” and “three dimensional logical picture”. In the case of Descombes’ landscape projects in Lancy, the “three dimensional logical picture” is built on the site itself, by changing the surface into an active plane that “embeds all the layers of memory or states of consciousness”. (MAROT, 2003, p. 74)

<sup>73</sup> For more about projects by architect Georges Descombe, see also (MAROT, 2003, pp. 57-82)



**Figure 4-22.** Evolution of the riverbed, June 2014-May 2015 “Renaturation of the River Aire” project, Geneva. Atelier Descombes Rampini Superpositions (2001). Source: internet.

**Imitating**, the third attitude, has to do with artificially re-creating aesthetic aspects to spontaneous vegetation and replicating the original city-nature hybridity<sup>74</sup> in their landscape projects, through purposeful design elements. This is the case of landscape projects incorporating various forms of biotope mimicry that can foster a wasteland aesthetic. The emblematic case is the New York Highline, by James Corner Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro with Olafur Eliasson, Piet Oudolf landscape architect, and Biuro Happold; an example of landscape that acts as a catalysts of public life and real estate development.<sup>75</sup> (Figure 4-23) The project was developed along a disused section of elevated railway in Manhattan, where the long period of abandonment had left room for wild grasses and flowers to grow undisturbed. The famous photographs made by artist Joel Sterfeld of the wild vegetation taking over the post-industrial structure once the trains had stopped running,<sup>76</sup> served as an inspiration for the project developed by the winning team, who re-created aesthetic aspects to spontaneous vegetation in their proposal, producing a “distinctive kind of ecological simulacrum of what occurred on the derelict structure before its extensive landscaping”. According to Gandy, in the project “wasteland as artifice” becomes appealing thanks to the appearance of the natural environment’s agency. “The park, in this context, is a designed fragment of nature that inscribes social and political power into the urban landscape.” (GANDY, 2013, p. 1306).



**Figure 4-23.** New York High Line. James Corner Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro with Olafur Eliasson, Piet Oudolf landscape architect, and Biuro Happold (2009). The images show the landscape process: technological landscape – abandoned residue – constructed wild.

Kevin Loughran also refers to this project to show an example of what he defines a “city-nature imbrication”, which can also be identified in vacant lots where decaying built environment and “insurgent” nature are aesthetically united. “Imbricated spaces present “city” and “nature” as active agents in their creation through the decay of the built environment and the growth of the natural environment”. According to Loughran, spaces like the High Line demonstrate how “city-nature hybridity is a process existing outside of

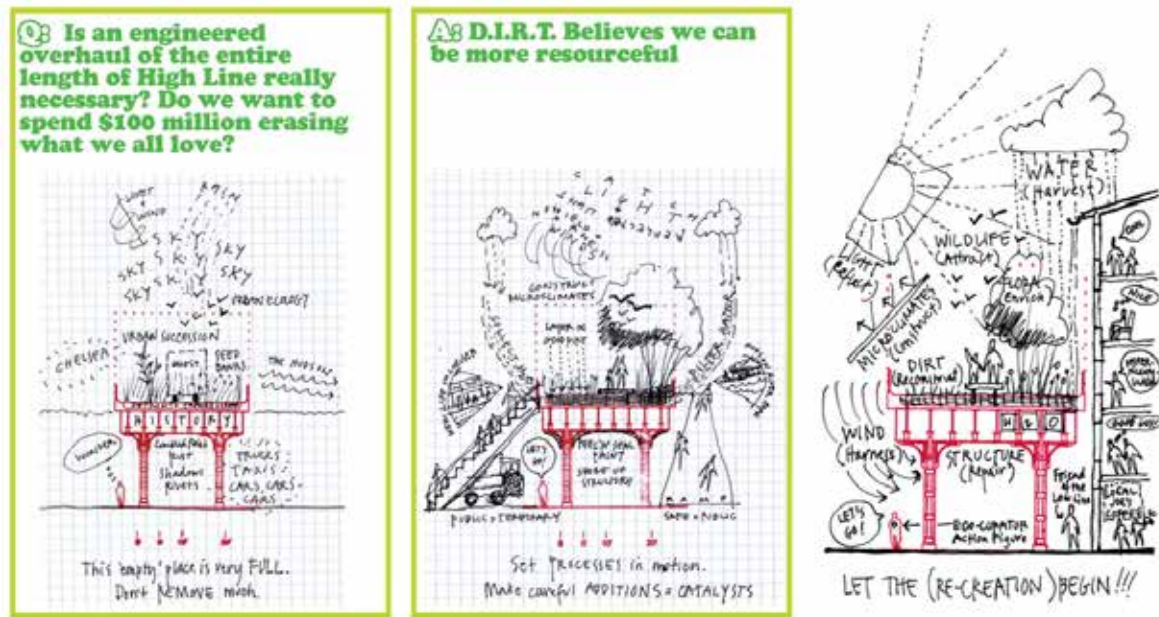
<sup>74</sup> The city-nature hybridity consists in an imbrication between forces of nature and decaying built environment. (LOUGHRAN, 2016, p. 318) For more on “wasteland as artifice” see also (GANDY, 2013, p. 1306).

<sup>75</sup> Among other projects that operate in abandoned infrastructures we can mention the very successful “Viaduct des Arts”, by Patrick Berger & Janine Galiano, in Paris and Viaduct “Kreis 5” by Schweingruber Zulauf Landschaftsarchitekten, in Zürich. “Viaduct des Arts”, is a 4.7 km elevated linear park (*La Promenade plantée*) built on top of obsolete railroad viaduct, with exhibition galleries and shops emphasizing highly skilled arts and crafts in the vaults beneath the viaduct. Viaduct “Kreis 5”, is located in the former industrial district of Zürich. In this project the junction between the two viaducts (the old viaduct houses a bike and pedestrian path that connects the green spaces of the city) became an occasion to generate new retail and recreational activities and to regenerate and revitalize the district.

<sup>76</sup> For more on the photographic work of Joel Sternfeld and the way they influenced the aesthetic politics of the accidental landscape of the site before renovation, see (MILLINGTON, 2015, p. 2329).



human intervention and suggests that city and nature can be the creators of an aesthetically interesting space.” (LOUGHRAN, 2016, p. 321)<sup>77</sup>



**Figure 4-24.** From the TerraGRAM (Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates with D.I.R.T. Studio of Julie Bargmann and Beyer, Blinder, Belle Architects) proposal for the New York High Line. Source: internet.

Equally interesting to mention, is another one of the four finalists of the High Line competition, because its attitude is directly related to the aesthetic value of the city-nature hybridity mentioned by Loughran, although in this case the approach adopted by the designers is more aligned with the first and second approaches we mentioned earlier in this section (i.e. integration and guidance). In the New York High Line project proposal by TerraGRAM<sup>78</sup> the natural ecological succession of the existing vegetation - which had already created a compelling urban landscape atop the elevated rail free of human intervention - was the program generator. In fact the team’s intention was to reveal the complexity of the landscape that was already there, by inviting locals and tourists up into the found wilderness of the overgrown elevated railway. Moving away from the traditional conception of urban park program, and proposing a process more than a product<sup>79</sup>, TerraGRAM’s strategy included reusing the site’s existing physical conditions, and simply in filling it with an emergent volunteer ecology and overseeing its ecological evolution. The landscape plan was proposed to be incremental: first soil remediation, plant in fill, and later introduction of new program. Above all, the objective was to allow visitors to explore the nuances of a degraded landscape’s natural succession and experience that

<sup>77</sup> For more on the relationship between the High Line project and real or mimicked wasteland aesthetic, see also (MILLINGTON, 2015) (LOUGHRAN, 2016) (GANDY, 2013)

<sup>78</sup> TerraGRAM is composed by: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates with D.I.R.T. Studio of Julie Bargmann and Beyer, Blinder, Belle Architects. Inspired by Archigram who, in the 1960’s, intended to reinvent the established norms of architecture, TerraGRAM are interested in reaching the same goal with parks. They aspire to “reveal the potential social and programmatic links between public space and urban ecology—with people as the most important creatures in this hyper-urban ecology.”

<sup>79</sup> The concept of “landscape as a medium of process” is one of the main principles of Landscape Urbanism. (CORNER, 2014)

wildness.<sup>80</sup> As I mentioned earlier, I believe that the TerraGRAM project concept is clearly contributing to the definition of wasteland aesthetics, but in this case through a process that sees first the integration of existing spontaneous vegetation and, later, the introduction of similar plant species in the biotope. (Figure 4-24)

There is nevertheless another landscape project that ought to be mentioned to further illustrate this landscape approach that confers value to wasteland aesthetics by re-creating aesthetic aspects of spontaneous vegetation: Gilles Clément's Derborence Island in Parc Henri Matisse.<sup>81</sup> Parc Henri Matisse was completed in 1995 as part of the vast Euralille development where the fortifications of Vauban once arose. The idea for the park derived from several sources, including the aesthetic characteristics of uncultivated ground, the symbolic reconstruction of a fragment of primary forest and the enhancement of urban biodiversity. According to Gandy:

“What we find in Lille [...] is an ecological simulacrum that represents a form of ‘entropy by design’ so that the possibility for long-term ecological succession can be introduced into the middle of a modern city. (GANDY, 2012, p. 17)

Derborence Island is a massive, 7 metro high, concrete and rubble structure, that rises at the centre of the park. The island is created from the rubble of urban soils and deconstructed ground from the hill of earth excavated from the contiguous TGV station (Figure 4-25, Figure 4-26). It is filled with plants seeded by the wind, and inhabited by urban birds. Although visible in plain view, the cliff is physically inaccessible to people, and this allows for the spontaneous development of a forest of the future, without any human interference. In fact, the island has become a territory that welcomes diversity, serving as a matrix, and as a supplier of seeds for the entire surroundings, without the need for maintenance.

A part from the explicit desire to give importance to wild and unmanaged vegetation, by placing an element of “constructed wild” (an artificial reproduction of primary forest) in a central position of the park, Clément's project presents other aspects which, I believe, are directly related to the process of aesthetization of unmanaged urban wilderness. First, the large manmade island is in contrast with the large and highly organized lawn-like open space, which appears as the “material and symbolic antithesis of any conception of urban nature that might place greater emphasis on biodiversity, spontaneity or the aesthetic delights of ‘wild nature’”. (GANDY, 2012, p. 9) Secondly, the original design for the island included a research and education centre with a giant periscope to enable ecological changes on the top of the structure to be observed by the public. The educational aspect would have certainly played an important role in the potential acceptance of urban wilderness, just as scientific knowledge plays an important role in the enhanced aesthetic appreciation of nature. Unfortunately, this aspect of the project was never realized, which also caused a lack of public interest or understanding. Nevertheless it shows how in Clément's idea “science not only plays a role in making nature ‘visible’ but also contributes towards the aesthetic experience”. (GANDY, 2012, p. 12) Last, the

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<sup>80</sup> For more on the “TerraGRAM” project for the High Line competition, see also: <http://www.dirtstudio.com/#highline>; <http://www.mvvainc.com/project.php?id=77#>

<sup>81</sup> For more information about “Derborence Island” and “Parc Henri Matisse” see also, (CLÉMENT & RAHM, 2006) (GANDY, 2012) (COEN, 2007)

introduction of a symbolic element in the park<sup>82</sup> calls for a deeper engagement with the metaphorical power of landscape architecture. As the plaque in the park explains: “Through its symbolic composition”, the island, “invites the visitor to reflect upon the place of nature in an urban environment”.



**Figure 4-25.** Principle of elaboration of an undecided landscape and scenography for the “Third Landscape” at Derborence Island, Parc Henri Matisse in Lille (collage by Atelier Empreinte)



**Figure 4-26.** “Derborence Island”, Parc Matisse, Euralille (1991-95)

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<sup>82</sup> The shape of Derborence Island within Henri Matisse Park In Lille refers to Antipodes Island In New Zealand, right on the other side of the globe and a secret place, just as inaccessible as this fragment of a 'Third Landscape'.

Through the different approaches adopted by Landscape Architects dealing with the new aesthetic of spontaneous urban nature and post-industrial ruins, a new concept of landscape is emerging, one that is definitively overcoming the traditional conception of landscape design as predetermination of formal order and activities, and heading towards a more hybrid practice, that operates with nature and through process. The French landscape architect Michel Desvigne, for example, “approaches landscape architecture as a form of earth marking that is inevitably provisional, staged and cumulative”. (DESVIGNE & AA.VV., 2009) In an interview with Gilles Davoine, the Landscape architect Michel Desvigne explains his concept of “intermediate landscape”:

“The exceptional temporal and physical scale of the project (Greenwich Park) led to the creation of what I would call an intermediate landscape: a living landscape texture flexible enough to be integrated into a future urban context. This process appears to be comparable to the reconstruction of a natural landscape, but our starting point is explicitly artificial.” (MOSTAFAVI, 2003, p. 83)

Desvigne is one of the practicing contemporary Landscape Architects interested in the temporary and the uncertain, the “intermediate natures”. With his Harvard students he has “taken on the derelict urban fringes of Boston, those abandoned areas next to roads, railways and industrial infrastructures, spaces that in fact belong to no official spatial categories”, but are nevertheless forming, together with such infrastructures, a “coherent geography”. He then mapped them - finding out, among other things, that they made up more than 25 per cent of the overall urban area – and proposed to colonize them. Given the lack of financing and political interest, he opted for small landscape interventions, using rudimentary techniques, where the form of the landscape is more about process than composition<sup>83</sup>. The mapping exercise and design experiments operated in Boston did not only offer far reaching hypotheses of the role Residual Landscapes might acquire in the regeneration and the overall transformation of the urban environment - imagining their evolution into a new type of “urban geography”- but, most importantly, they demonstrated how some benefits offered by temporary landscapes are immediate, and derelict areas can become “working landscapes” that provide ecosystem services. (MOSTAFAVI, 2003, p. 84)

The contemporary design explorations into the transformation of derelict, abandoned space are attempting to set a balance between space and time. These projects are aligned with Landscape Urbanism because they communicate through process, transformation and growth rather than focusing on the final product. (WALDHEIM, 2006) “The design only sets the spatial framework in which natural processes occur, while the site is in constant transformation, unpredictable and unfinished, providing the possibility for a different kind of environmental and spatial experience.” (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 97)

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<sup>83</sup> The importance given to “process” is one of the aspects that links his practice and writing to Landscape Urbanism.

## Chapter 5. Ecological benefits of residual spaces

*The essential ecological properties and structures of Residual Landscapes.*

“This is ecology, which understands the creature itself in relation to its living environment. If we stop using the metaphors of mechanistics [sic] and semiology and start using the metaphor of ecology, then it should be possible to discover layer upon layer of meaningful environmental unities [...]”.<sup>1</sup>

I will now address the third thread which, together with cultural, social and aesthetic values mentioned in the previous chapters (Chapter 3. Space and the politics of Residual Landscapes, p. 19; Chapter 4. Aesthetics of the indeterminate, p. 39Chapter 3), contributed to the emergence of interest in Residual Landscapes: the ecological value of urban Residual Landscapes, strongly influenced by studies on Urban Ecology<sup>2</sup> and, as we have discussed in the previous chapters, one of the aspects affecting their aesthetic value. The ecological benefits of urban Residual Landscapes can be measured through scientific observation and collection of quantitative data. It is in fact through the Ecologists’ fieldwork, the careful monitoring of the city’s fauna and flora operated in Europe from the 1950s onwards, that urban wastelands started to be considered “valuable ‘ruderal areas’ or ‘biotopes’ which displayed a high amount of species diversity” (LACHMUND, 2013, p. 1) and, as such, had to be preserved<sup>3</sup>. It was in the post-war island city of West-Berlin of the 1950s<sup>4</sup> that the vegetation ecologist Herbert Sukopp (SUKOPP, 2008), and a growing number of collaborators, started their research of the urban wastelands flora, developing a detailed scheme of the series of plant communities through which succession developed in the abandoned sites. Sukopp formulated a systematic approach to the study of urban nature, making Berlin one of the “emblematic cases of the newly emerging urban ecology.” (LACHMUND, 2013, pp. 1-5)

Although Herbert Sukopp remains the most influential figure in the field and his studies laid the foundation of contemporary study of Urban Ecology, there were earlier examples of studies on urban nature around Europe, which were initially more interested in the medicinal properties of plants and, only later, evolved into a new distinctive interdisciplinary subfield. In 1855, for example, Richard Deakin compiled “The Flora of the Colosseum”, recording more than 420 species of plants. By the end of the nineteenth century several guides to “wild urban nature” had been published for European cities. In the 1930s, French botanist Paul Jovet recognized the strong impact of human activities on the evolution and the dynamics of urban vegetation. In his paper “Marginalia: Aesthetics, Ecology, and Urban Wastelands”, Matthew Gandy explores the “intersections between

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<sup>1</sup> Atelier Bow-Wow, *Made in Tokyo* (Tokyo: Kajima Institute, 2001)

<sup>2</sup> “Urban Ecology is an integrative sub-discipline of ecology. It focuses on urban-dominated ecosystems: these include cities, suburbs, exurbs, villages connected to cities by transportation or utilities, and hinterlands managed or affected by the energy and material from the urban core and suburbs.” (MARZLUFF & [et.al.], 2009, p. 68)

<sup>3</sup> In the US “Urban Ecology” was introduced earlier by a collection of biologists and social scientists at the University of Chicago in 1925, although it was an influential work it is not dealt with in this section because it was strictly focusing on social processes such as social organization of mobility. For more information, see (MARZLUFF & [et.al.], 2009)




<sup>4</sup> Although urban abandoned areas with ruderal vegetation have existed more extensively since World War II or de-industrialization processes, more recently they have also arisen in the course of demolition and rebuilding during urban redevelopment.

critical cultural discourses and recent advances in urban ecology” aiming at providing a useful counterpoint to narrowly utilitarian approaches to urban nature. (GANDY, 2013) He points out that it was in the second half of the twentieth century that researches started to enquire on the nature of ecological relationships with social, cultural, and economic processes. Gandy also mentions that German ecologist Ludwig Trepl (1996), echoing Theodor Adorno, was the one to underline that the “presence of weeds and other spontaneous forms of urban nature posed a challenge for ecological thinking that was rooted in bourgeois conceptions of unintentional nature as the antithesis of urban space.” (GANDY, 2013, pp. 1303-4)

### Cities of Weeds

Trepl’s observation on the importance of the of spontaneous urban nature’s cultural perception in the emergence and evolution of urban ecology, highlights the need to understand the cultural significance of “weeds”, before analyzing the ecological significance of spontaneous urban vegetation and how it contributes to the definition of urban Residual Landscape’s value.

TABLE 2.  
Theoretical responses by landscape alternatives

	Industrial Lawn	Freedom Lawn	Meadow
			
<b>Management</b>			
mowing	regular	occasional	once/twice a year
fertilizer	yes	no	no
pesticide	yes	no	no
irrigation	yes or no	no	no
<b>Ecosystem</b>			
structure	one layer	one layer	more complex
plant diversity	monoculture	diverse	most diverse
soil organism diversity	narrow, adapted to pesticides and fertilizers	broader	broadest
infiltration of water	modest	modest	most
bird diversity	modest	more	most
<b>Hydrology</b>			
use of city water	yes or no	no	no
quality of runoff	low	good	best
groundwater recharge	modest	modest	best
storm flow contribution	modest	modest	least
<b>Associated social costs</b>			
fossil fuel use	most	much	least
landfill contribution	most	least	least

Note: Illustration adapted by Susan Hochgraf from a sketch by F. Herbert Bormann, 1999.

Figure 5-1. Table: Theoretical responses by landscape alternatives. Source: (BORMANN, et al., 1993, p. 141)

The label “weed” or “invasive species” is just a value judgment that we, humans, apply to plant that grow “where we do not want them to”, not a biological characteristic. (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 2). In his book “Subnatures: Architecture’s Other Environments”, Daid Gissen explores the cultural meaning of “weeds” and tries to identify the origin of the negative value judgment around them. Paraphrasing Douglas’s study in “Purity and Danger”, where Douglas asserts that things, people, and practices become dirty when they are “matter out of place”, Gissen arrives to the conclusion that “weeds are plants out of place”, and that the “only constant between weeds and other plants is their socially determined undesirability”. In fact plants become weeds when they are out of place in agricultural settings, but they also become weeds in other non-natural settings when they disrupt an inherent order. (GISSSEN, 2009, p. 150) Moreover, according to Gissen, the negative value judgment around invasive plant species comes from the introduction of weeds in landscape representation: “in the Picturesque landscape weeds represent not only something wild but something “unimproved,” left as it was. Weeds, as useless plants, came to signify untransformed landscapes having no cash value. By the nineteenth century, weeds emerged as an inherently confrontational force against established forms of social order.” (GISSSEN, 2009, p. 153)

As a counter to this conception of weeds, Philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, examined plants as conveyors of a ‘vitalist’ form that was expressive of life’s inherent energy. (GISSSEN, 2009, p. 156) The evolutionary potential of free nature and their aesthetic value, was also implied in the writings of nineteenth century American writer Henry David Thoreau, whose masterpiece “Walden”, strongly influenced the notion of wilderness and, later, the art of naturalistic landscaping in the United States. Thoreau saw the weed as something having an inherent organization that was under threat by civilization. (THOREAU, 2016) We could say that the attitude towards wilderness started changing since the seventeenth century, when men started exploring nature and stopped seeing it as a place of negativity. By the end of the eighteenth century wilderness had become a touristic attraction, and, thanks to technology, the process of domestication (and disruption) of nature had begun. But, while appreciating the spontaneity of vegetation in natural woodlands and wetlands seems natural, the same cannot be said for weeds growing in urban settings. Until recent years, spontaneous nature developing within the city limits was never valued. Although, by the end of the twentieth century, some new approaches to vegetation management that welcomed an aesthetic of “wild nature, modified just a bit”(KENFIELD, 1996, p. 19) started appearing in the United States – through “Naturalistic landscaping”<sup>5</sup>, “freedm lawn”<sup>6</sup> - landscaping with Spontaneous Urban Vegetation is something relatively new<sup>7</sup>. As we have discussed in the previous section, the subjective lens of cultural value judgment influences the way people look at spontaneous vegetation and directly concerns issues related to aesthetical value related to landscaping.

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<sup>5</sup> A practical art involving the esthetic manipulation of plants and plant-communities to form a pleasing whole. See, “The Wild Gardener in The Wild Landscape. The art of naturalistic landscaping” by Warran G. Kenfield; (KENFIELD, 1996)

<sup>6</sup> The Freedom Lawn is mowed, but the grass clippings are not removed, nor are fertilizers or pesticides applied. See, “Redesigning the American Lawn. A Search for Environmental Harmony” by F. Herbert Bormann, Diana Balmori, Gordon T. Geballe (BORMANN, et al., 1993)

<sup>7</sup> As we have already mentioned, in Germany, and in many European cities, in the last years many landscape architects have embraced the new “wild” aesthetics of ruderal plants and incorporated them in their designs creating aesthetically pleasing, low maintenance landscapes.

The “civilized” nature recreated in the cities was always contracted nature, made of ornamental plants and staged landscapes. Vegetation management is therefore a key aspect of urban landscapes, and this explains why weeds, which are precisely “plants that escape control”, have been negatively judged for most of western urban history.

**Table 1 ■ A simple taxonomy of urban landscapes**

	<i>Remnant Native Landscapes</i>	<i>Managed Horticultural Landscapes</i>	<i>Abandoned Ruderal Landscapes</i>
Land-use Category	Minimally disturbed woodlands, wetlands and coastal habitats	Large and small parks, cemeteries, lawns, ball fields, street trees, residential gardens, commercial landscapes, corporate and educational campuses	Post-industrial land, vacant lots, infrastructure edges, railroad and river corridors, degraded wetlands, abandoned parks, successional woodlands
Primary Vegetation	Native plants and associated invasive species	Cultivated plants and associated weeds	Spontaneous native and exotic species
Soil Characteristics	Native soils with minimally disturbed profiles	Nutrient rich and highly manipulated; often manufactured or relocated from off-site	Disturbed and/or compacted; often mixed with subsoil or construction rubble
Maintenance Requirements	Low to moderate	Moderate to intensive	None to low

**Figure 5-2. Taxonomy of urban landscapes. Source: (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 301)**

American Botanist Peter Del Tredici classifies vegetated urban land into three broad categories: remnant native landscapes, managed horticultural landscapes, and abandoned ruderal landscapes. The taxonomy is based on functional considerations and, according to Del Tredici, these landscape types can be distinguished from one another on the basis of: 1) their past land-use history; 2) the types of vegetation they contain; 3) the characteristics of their soils; and 4) the levels of maintenance they require in order to preserve their integrity. (DEL TREDICI, 2010, pp. 299-300)

While cultivated plants are voluntarily introduced in the urban environment<sup>8</sup> and native plants are the ones who preceded our occupation of the land, nonnative<sup>9</sup>, invasive plant species, or weeds, are basically spontaneous plants “growing where we do not want them”. In fact, the terms “weeds” and “invasive plants” have an imprecise meaning, and they are used to indicate all the plants disagreeable to man for all sorts of reasons: they could be in competition with crops, stock or simply occupying waste land. These plants seem to be unwanted and unpleasant also because, as Gissen noted, they seem to “disrupt an inherent order”(GISSSEN, 2009, p. 150). In an urban setting order referred to plants concerns their formal appearance and, consequently, their maintenance. In fact constructed, intentionally designed landscapes like lawns, parks, and street trees, require from moderate to intense maintenance to preserve their formal appearance; while spontaneous plants, growing in abandoned or neglected urban open spaces and along infrastructures, require zero

<sup>8</sup> These plants can be non-native *archaeophytes* - introduced with agriculture into a given area from other parts of Europe, Asia, or Africa prior to 1500; and non-native *neophytes* which were introduced after 1500, mainly from Asia and North and South America (Wittig 2004). (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 304)

<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, there is a fourth category of urban vegetation—mainly annuals of European origin—that seem to have no known natural habitats. These *anecophytes*, as they are known, have mainly arisen through the process of hybridization and show specialized adaptations to habitats associated with agriculture, urbanization, and/or industrialization. (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 304) While *apophytes* are indigenous plants occupying artificial habitats.



maintenance, but they don't comply with the integrity of "constructed landscapes"<sup>10</sup> (Figure 5-2). This contraposition between constructed/designed and adaptive/spontaneous landscapes and the disregard for the latter, is nevertheless being overcome by the more recent research into the "Emergent Urban Ecosystems"<sup>11</sup> dominated by disturbance-adapted plant species and their potential benefit. In this "anthropogenic ecology", "spontaneous, wild, messy, adaptive, dynamic, competing", become the ecological and sustainable alternative to "planned, cultivated, neat, rigid, static, and maintenance". As a matter of fact, maintaining urban vegetation also means arresting the ecological succession in order to preserve design.

The above considerations open up the possibility to reconsider what we normally refer to as "natural vegetation", which is no longer uncontaminated nature – that actually no longer exists - but rather "spontaneous" and "unmanaged" vegetation. In fact if we acknowledge a "new ecological paradigm"<sup>12</sup> - one that sees men and its artifacts on the earth as integral part of the environment and not as alien and artificial elements – and we accept that ruderal plants are actually the most spontaneous species which grow without the willful intervention of men; we could also imply the fact that the word "natural flora" or "natural vegetation" can be attributed to whatever grows without the "active" and "intentional" intervention of men (even though men indirectly, and unintentionally, generated the suitable climatic, geological and hydrological conditions that allowed for their growth).

Another common misconception about our urban environments is that we should restore native ecosystems by reintroducing indigenous (native) plant species in our cities. Firstly, most of the plants that inhabit our cities today are plants intentionally (adventives) or unintentionally (through material fill)<sup>13</sup> introduced into an area by man throughout history, and therefore are not native. Consequently, if we want to restore native (remnant) landscapes, we would need to have a native soil profile. With over 25% of our cities covered with impervious surfaces, soil compaction, decrease in water availability and substantial changes in soil chemistry<sup>14</sup>, there is very little hope that it will be possible. Instead, these new conditions are precisely the ones favoring the development of invasive plant species.

In his book "Wild urban plants of the Northeast", Peter Del Tredici created a manual to identify ruderal plants in urban environments of the US Northeast region. By giving

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<sup>10</sup> From a functional perspective Ecologists classify Urban land into three categories: Native (Remnant) Landscapes, dominated by native plants – requiring low levels of maintenance; Managed (Constructed) Landscapes, dominated by cultivated plants – requiring from medium to high maintenance; Ruderal (Adaptive) Landscapes, dominated by spontaneous plants – requiring zero maintenance. (Del Tredici referencing, Whitney 1985 and Zipperer et al. 1997) (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 12)

<sup>11</sup> Peter Del Tredici refers to these ecosystems as "Novel Ecosystems" (DEL TREDICI, 2010)

<sup>12</sup> Moving away from an anthropocentric perspective, which has dominated the discourse until the last century, many as "Alberti, Marzluff, and Pickett have called for a "new ecological paradigm" that directly incorporates the "human dimension" into ecological processes (see Alberti, M. A., J. M. Marzluff, E. Shulenberg, G. Bradley, C. Ryan, and C. Zumbunnen. 2003. Integrating humans into ecology: Opportunities and challenges for studying urban ecosystems. *BioScience* 53 (12): 1169–79.). (GANDY, 2013, p. 1312). Also according to Peter Del Tredici, ecological theory usually excludes people, when as a matter of fact Urban Ecology concerns areas dramatically impacted by human activities, and it seems a contradiction to exclude human beings and their behaviors and actions.

<sup>13</sup> The movement of plant species in cities was facilitated by the movement of soil (and included seeds) from the countryside, for coastal fill-in or bringing hay for the cattle, etc.

<sup>14</sup> Like the acidification process of soils (high Ph content in soil – amount of calcium in the soil).

readers the possibility to identify and understand the origin and the properties of such plants, he is attempting to counter the widespread perception that these plants are ecologically harmful or useless. He points out how, the plants that grow spontaneously in urban areas, whether native or nonnative cultivated plants, are performing important ecological functions. In fact, ruderal plant species can guarantee nutrient absorption in wetlands, heat reduction in paved areas, erosion control on slopes, stream and river bank stabilization, ground water infiltration and filtration, phytoremediation of contaminated land, soil building on degraded land, and offer food and habitat for urban wildlife. Moreover, plants that grow in harsh conditions such as urban environments, offer high tolerance levels towards air pollution, draught on compacted soils, and salt tolerance along roadways (DEL TREDICI, 2014) (DEL TREDICI, 2014, p. 245). In general, these plants are able to survive in our cities because they are “flexible” in all aspects of their growth, “opportunistic” in their ability to take advantage of locally available resources, and “tolerant” of the stressful growing conditions. (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 11)



**Figure 5-3.** Boreal pine forest after fire. Source: internet.

Among plant species, some are particularly suited for exploiting recently disturbed sites<sup>15</sup>. (Figure 5-3) Vegetation with the potential for rapid growth can quickly take advantage of the lack of competition, and in most cases, with the abundance of sunlight. Species that are well adapted for exploiting disturbance sites are referred to as “pioneers”<sup>16</sup> or “early successional” species. Disturbance-adapted wild plants that grow in urban environments are subject to a very particular succession<sup>17</sup> cycle, which does not depend exclusively on seasonal factors like in the agricultural habitat<sup>18</sup>. This “disturbance-driven succession cycle” is in fact characterized by periodic, unpredictable disturbance - caused by the continuous construction and demolition cycles in the building fabric and infrastructures – and immigration - continual introduction of new species into the urban environment from

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<sup>15</sup> Ecological disturbances may include fires, flooding, windstorms, plague outbreaks, earthquakes and even climate change. Anthropogenic disturbance, is disturbance produced by human impact.

<sup>16</sup> “Pioneer species” are specially adapted for the colonization of new substrates, they grow and reproduce rapidly and are adapted to drought and nutrient deficiency.

<sup>17</sup> Succession is the change in the composition of biological communities over time. Early succession phase is dominated by rapidly growing plant species that need a lot of sun, while late succession species that are shade tolerant, persist until the next disturbance.

<sup>18</sup> Disturbance of vacant land in cities tends to be periodic, due to the life cycle of human artifacts, while for agricultural land the disturbance cycle is annual and for the woodland landscape is on the order of 50 to 100 years, and it’s influenced by unpredictable climatic, biological and economical factors.

outside sources. But most importantly, “the disturbance-driven succession cycle in the city is unpredictable and depends on socioeconomic rather than seasonal factors”. Therefore urban environments are characterized by “stress-tolerant, early successional species” that are constantly destabilized by disturbance and competition from new species entering the urban habitat, and they need to reorganize before becoming stabilized again. (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 14)



A



B



C



D

**Figure 5-4.** A. Carpetweed (*Mollugo verticillata*) subsisting on air-conditioner drip in Boston. B. Grasses growing in pavement cracks in Boston. C. Crabgrass (*Digitaria spp.*) in the median strip. D. Two “bonsaied” American elms (*Ulmus americana*) are well adjusted to their chain-link fence habitat in Hartford, Connecticut. Source: (DEL TREDICI, 2014)

The “wasteland flora” is well adapted to stressed and disrupted habitats like the ones that characterize major cities and metropolitan areas, where the ongoing physical disturbance and fragmentation is caused by the continuous contraction, maintenance, demolition and reconstruction of the infrastructural fabric. We can find them crawling on the chain-link fences, along the highway median strips, on stone walls, under a window air-conditioning units, in the asphalt pavement cracks and in the seams of our urban paved surfaces, along rivers and railways corridors. (Figure 5-4) These “plants gone wild” are present in all the disturbed urban edges and the ephemeral urban niches: the neglected, vacant lots of our cities. What makes them suitable for these environments is also the fact that several of these plants have inherited life-history traits in their native habitats that have “preadapted”

them to flourish in cities. For example, plant species that originally grew in limestone cliff habitats, are likely to grow also on stone or brick buildings (and on their abandoned ruins for that matter), as they are analogous habitats to naturally occurring limestone cliffs. (DEL TREDICI, 2014, pp. 246-250) This obviously implies that the soil's chemical content is determining which plants are more likely to grow and their endurance. "Every type of land use seems to leave behind as a legacy a few species able to make the transition to the new type of land use." (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 9) For cities, this sequence usually starts with native species occupying the territory before the city is built, which are followed by species adapted to agriculture and pasturage, and later, when the area becomes urbanized, by plants adapted to paved surfaces, compacted soil, lawns, gardens, infrastructure, pollution and, ultimately, to rubble and abandonment. (Figure 5-5) Therefore, we could say that by observing what kind of plants persist in a specific environment, we can learn about the activities that took place in that area in the past. The plants that inhabit our cities today reflect both the natural and the cultural history of the area, and plants growing in urban wastelands embody the history of the previous use of the site.



**Figure 5-5.** Diagram showing “The drivers of the succession cycle in urban habitats”, from (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 14)

A part from reflecting the history of a site, spontaneous urban plans withhold the future of our cities. Since the plants are the first ones to be affected by air pollution, higher concentrations of carbon dioxide, altered solar radiation regimens, altered wind patterns, altered hydrology, decreased humidity, elevated soil pH, soil compaction, etc., they can be seen as a symptom of environmental degradation. Hence, urban areas are the perfect place to study the effects of climate change on the entire planet, not only because all the aspects of men's negative impact on the natural environment are already condensed in these confined areas of the planet, but also because the dynamics and the consequences brought by these interrelated factors are extremely accelerated by the high concentration of such negative effects<sup>19</sup>. “Urban areas are the perfect place to study how climate change will

<sup>19</sup> The core areas of many of our larger cities have already warmed up to the levels predicted for the surrounding countryside 20 to 50 years from now. This is what the “heat island effect” indicates.

affect the environment because they have already arrived at the future.” (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 16) (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 307)



**Figure 5-6.** Concept of succession - “A Short History of America”, drawing of cartoonist R. Crumb, 1980.

### 5.1 A Brave new Ecology

“Ecological functionality should be recognized as being of equal value to ecological form” (SAGOFF, 2005)

As we have seen so far, spontaneous vegetation growing in abandoned or neglected spaces is commonly considered a problem in cities as it’s perceived as a sign of neglect or because it might offer a hiding place, a suitable environment for hosting illicit activities. *Is there a way to harmonize the ecological functionality of spontaneous urban vegetation with people’s desire to live in a safe and beautiful environment?* Of course, if we consider the enormous ecological functionality of spontaneous vegetation, the urban wastelands it inhabits can begin to acquire growing importance as contributor to the ecological health of the cities and their inhabitants. And through careful design approaches centered on the integration of ecological functionality with aesthetic appearance and recreational potential, we can achieve the above mentioned harmony. (KOWARIK & KORNER, 2005)

In his book about “Wild urban plants of the North East” Peter Del Tredici proposes a new approach toward urban ecology: a “Brave new Ecology”. This new approach should start coming to terms with the fact that there is no such thing as a native flora in a city, or better, that the indigenous plants that inhabited the site where the urban agglomeration now stands assertive, are no longer suitable for the area because the land has been deeply and irreversibly transformed by men and the climate has changed. If we were to plant native species in the city they would now need intensive horticultural maintenance to survive; this to say that “[i]n an urban context, the concept of restoration is really just gardening dressed up to look like ecology” (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 16)<sup>20</sup>. In reality the “default vegetation” of the cities is the one that develops spontaneously and needs not to be cared for or maintained: the ruderal species that “thrive without the input of human energy” (DEL

<sup>20</sup> The original reference is: Del Tredici, P. 2007. The role of horticulture in a changing world. In *Botanical Progress, Horticultural Innovation, and Cultural Changes*, ed. M. Conan and W. J. Kress, pp. 259-264. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks.

TREDICI, 2010, p. 17) According to Del Tredici we need to acknowledge these “Novel emergent ecosystems”<sup>21</sup> in our cities - but also in suburbs, agricultural and industrial areas - and manage them to better serve future social, ecological, and aesthetic needs.(DEL TREDICI, 2014, p. 239) (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 21)

To this regard, Del Tredici formulates the concept of the “cosmopolitan urban meadow”<sup>22</sup> as a way of capitalizing on the aesthetic and ecological opportunities offered by spontaneous plants, selecting plants based on their erosion-control value (durability), stress tolerance, aesthetic value, wildlife value (capacity to attract pollinating insects), and even economic value (commercial availability as seeds). The basic idea behind the cosmopolitan urban meadow is to select an “assemblage of plants that will grow well on typical urban soil, create an aesthetically pleasing urban meadow on vacant land, and remain in place until a more permanent use for the land is developed”. (DEL TREDICI, 2010, pp. 20-23) This last aspect of the “cosmopolitan urban meadow” is particularly relevant to the aim of this research on urban residual spaces, as it not only considers the functional and aesthetic value of spontaneous vegetation, but it also implies the temporary nature of such landscapes.

Urban wastelands are often the most diverse of habitats because they encompass a wide range of sites with varying substrates, topographies and other factors that determine the distribution of plant and animal species. As a consequence, according to the inorganic and organic materials present on the site and the site morphology, we can find reptiles, amphibians, birds, mammals, insects and other invertebrates. (ARMSTRONG, 2016, p. 166) But the main reason why marginal lands become diverse habitats is the fact that they are “left alone”, and plant and animal species can grow undisturbed.

### **Environmental functionality of urban wastelands**

The ecological potential of the urban environment is just beginning to be understood. Ecologists have begun to question long-accepted assumptions regarding the ecological condition of urban areas and are suggesting more accurate ways of studying them. Gandy believes that urban wastelands are now recognized as part of the “ecological infrastructure” of the city, extending to roles such as flood control, water purification, and the mitigation of the urban heat island effect.” (GANDY, 2013, p. 1305) Urban Residual Spaces are part of the urban nature system, which is usually discontinuous, and present in patches and corridors. Patches are areas of green space that support the needs of both resident and migratory animal populations, while corridors connect patches. The latter are linear spaces that can be composed by continuous canopies of street trees, by plants along the river banks, but also by roadside verges or railway embankments<sup>23</sup>. (GANDY, 2013, p. 1305)

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<sup>21</sup> Emergent ecosystems develop as a result of addition of new species (non native) and the rearrangement of preexisting species, induced by changing environmental conditions. They are a product of globalization, and climate change and they result from disturbance-intensive practices of urbanization, agriculture, industry and mining. For more about “Novel Ecosystems” see also, Richard J. Hobbs, Eric Higgs, and James A. Harris, "Novel Ecosystems: Implications for Conservation and Restoration," *Trends in Ecology and Evolution* 24 (11, 2009): 599-605. Ingo Kowarik, "Novel Ecosystems, Biodiversity, and Conservation," *Environmental Pollution* 159 (2011): 1974-1983.

<sup>22</sup> See also: “The Dynamic Landscape, edited by Dunnett and Hitchmough (2004).

<sup>23</sup> The Dutch introduced the term “eco-ducts” to define these biological corridors that allow vulnerable plant species to be connected and to spread their seeds in radial pattern across the city

*How can vacant land, through the provision of ecosystem services, become a resource as opposed to a liability?*

In a more comprehensive view of the potential ecological value of leftover urban spaces, we must consider their capacity to sustain and regenerate the urban ecosystem. These neglected spaces can be utilized in ways that can help regulate micro-climate, produce energy<sup>24</sup>, absorb carbon emissions and favor wildlife habitat. All natural landscapes in cities contribute to the resilience of the urban ecosystem by providing ecosystem services<sup>25</sup>, ultimately contributing to the reduction of the ecological footprint of cities. Thanks to their richness in biodiversity and the presence of pervious soil, also residual spaces can contribute to carbon mitigation and significantly, and positively, impact the microclimate of cities and the comfort and wellbeing of citizens:

Residual Landscapes can, in fact, act as **carbon sinks** that accumulate and store greenhouse gases (carbon sequestration), through photosynthesis processes in plants and trees, and through the soil. Furthermore, spontaneous urban plants are adapted to flourish on tough sites and can assist in mitigating the concentrations of pollutants in a given area, through phytoremediation processes.

Secondly, these spaces can function as **urban heat sinks** and mitigate local temperatures, thanks to their vegetation cover (plant shadows reduce the radiant heat of the sun and plant transpiration processes can cool the air). Through reflection, absorption and release of direct radiation also the soil present in these areas can contribute to microclimate mitigation.

Thirdly, these sites can become storm water retention systems to **collect and store rainwater**, which can be further used for watering plants and/or sanitary purposes. Thanks to the presence of soil and vegetation cover, they can **absorb, filter and infiltrate rain water and water runoff** from buildings and streets, preventing flooding (in case of heavy rains) and pollution of underground aquifers. Additionally, water evaporation processes can contribute to the reduction of air temperature.

Lastly, these small scale green infrastructures inhabited by wild urban plants can reintroduce wildlife habitat into our cities. In fact the plants can serve as a connective link between disparate green patches spread throughout the city, offering food and shelter to bees, insects, birds and small mammals.

Sean Burkholder, assistant professor of Landscape and Urban Design at University of Buffalo (NY), is surveying 5,500 vacant lots in Buffalo with the help of his students and in partnership with the Buffalo Sewer Authority. By assessing the soil permeability, vegetative cover, and related site conditions - such as the presence of open gutters, paved surfaces or dumping - he is evaluating the potential of these vacant sites to work as green storm water management system. The data collected will not only inform the city's

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<sup>24</sup> Residual Landscapes could become active producers of energy by welcoming local scale energy production, such as integrated solar photovoltaic (PV) panels or micro-wind turbines.

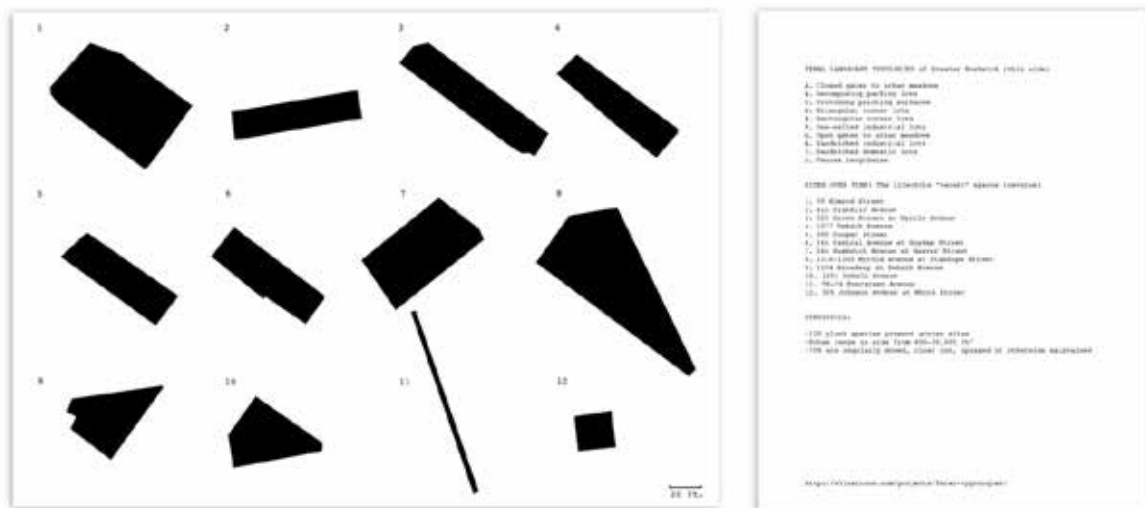
<sup>25</sup> "Ecosystem services" are benefits (such as food) and services (such as waste assimilation and water drainage and filtration) provided by natural, ecological processes.

federally mandated “mitigation plan for ‘combined sewer overflow’ events”, but it will also make sure that the ecological performance levels of these sites will not be compromised in the future by developers. In fact, the federal plan also requires the future builders to guarantee that performance levels remain unaltered. Burkholder is also interested in the other ecological services that the vacant land can provide, such as heat management and carbon sequestration. The overall strategy according to Burkholder is to “buy time”; “time to see what the site does on its own, and how people access, use and enjoy it.” “Burkholder intends to, “create a “lag” of both time and space in which to engage, understand and ultimately sustain a highly dynamic and fragile system.”<sup>26</sup>

### Feral landscapes

The word Feral is commonly used to define animals that are in a wild state, especially after escape from captivity or domestication. Therefore “feral landscapes” are landscapes that “have gone a bit wild”. When an urban lot or a former industrial site are abandoned and nature reverts, for some people it becomes dangerous and threatening, for others out of control and mysterious, but for many contemporary researchers in the field of novel ecologies they are simply fascinating and full of opportunities.

The artist and educator Ellie Irons<sup>27</sup> was fascinated by the “feral landscapes” of plant communities that pop up in abandoned urban lots, and then disappear as those lots become buildings, parking lots, or community gardens, so she dedicated her research to these lots that, as she points out, are “vacant-at-the-moment”. In her ongoing “Feral Landscape Typologies” research and photography project (2015), she started tracking and documenting “vacant” land in Bushwick<sup>28</sup>, and the species that live in and on it. (Figure 5-7; Figure 5-8; Figure 5-9; Figure 5-10)



**Figure 5-7.** Descriptive information included with Ellie Irons’ installation. Source: [www.ellieirons.com](http://www.ellieirons.com)

<sup>26</sup> “When doing nothing is doing something: Sean Burkholder, assistant professor of landscape and urban design”, online article by Rachel Teaman, in “B/a+p Magazine” 2016-2017 (<http://ap.buffalo.edu/news-events/alumni-magazine/alumni-magazine-1617/research-spotlight/burkholder-doing-something.html>)

<sup>27</sup> <https://ellieirons.com/#/projects/>

<sup>28</sup> Neighborhood in the northern part of Brooklyn (NY).





**Figure 5-8.** Feral Landscape Typologies (The rise, fall and rise of a lot at the corner of Irving Avenue and Cooper Avenue from May-October 2015). Source: [www.ellieirons.com](http://www.ellieirons.com)



**Figure 5-9.** Feral Landscape Typologies (The journey from forest to parking lot, Broadway and Dekalb Avenue, April 2015 – May 2016). Source: [www.ellieirons.com](http://www.ellieirons.com)



**Figure 5-10.** Feral Landscape Typologies (Myrtle Avenue and Grove Street, August 2015 and May 2016). Source: [www.ellieirons.com](http://www.ellieirons.com)

The project was aimed at identifying different typologies of “vacant” spaces, and it laid down the groundwork for another project she has been invested in since 2015: “Feral Landscape Lobby” (FLL), an informal, artist-run assemblage of ideas, interventions, experiences and spaces designed to advocate for urban weeds and their habitats. Among its activities, the lobby designates specific spaces where “city dwellers can bear witness to untended nature at work in the fabric of urban life”. With these activities she seeks to demonstrate that these spaces “are already working” (ecologically). Her approach is based on the belief that such apparently vacant lots can provide refuge for nonhuman life, while also ecologically and culturally benefitting the very people who ignore them.

But most of all her interest lies in the preservation of these “informal greenspaces”. Consequently in one of the multiple initiatives linked with the FLL, “Transitory Spaces for Urban Rewilding species”, she proposed only a surface level makeover of vacant urban land, rendering them accessible and approachable to their human neighbors, while allowing the basic functions of “neglected” spaces to remain in place. Through light operations such as, ongoing site maintenance and cleaning<sup>29</sup>, addition or maintenance of walking and sitting areas<sup>30</sup>; through awareness rising initiatives, like workshops with artists

<sup>29</sup> She proposes cleaning the sites up from dangerous materials and substances, by no means she proposes weeding or planting new plant species.

<sup>30</sup> She ensures that the existing biotope is secured by laying down tent stakes to create temporary paths for visitors.

and naturalists; and through educational activities related to urban plants ecology<sup>31</sup>, her projects are “dedicated to “degrowth” and reinvestment in what already exists. In addition she proposes monitoring activities like: tracking of plant population diversity, density, relationships; periodical documentation of the site through aerial photography; creation of “Invasive plant Pigments” palette; and mapping of plant populations.

Ellie Irons’ research builds on precedents from Land Art, earthworks, and social practice. Her process is based on observation, research and response to urban land and the processes that are activated once they stop being managed by men. She advocates for an actual paradigm shift in human interactions with urban land, starting by overcoming the belief that all land in the city must be “used in an anthropocentric way”.



**Figure 5-11. Invasion Ecology: A Fieldtrip to Bushwick, with Genspace Community Biolab, August 2014.** Source: [www.ellieirons.com](http://www.ellieirons.com)

<sup>31</sup> Field guides, maps, and educational signage on the vacant lots.

In 2015 Ellie Irons paired with artist Anne Percoco and established the “NEXT EPOCH seed library”<sup>32</sup>, a public access, Artist-Run Seed Bank, that reinvents the traditional seed bank, adapting it to the oncoming Anthropocene era. (Figure 5-12) The seed bank focuses on weedy species most likely to survive and thrive in a landscape dominated by human excess. Similar initiative, mostly based on observation, monitoring and documentation is the “#spontaneousurbanplants” initiative launched in Brooklyn (NY). “Spontaneous Urban Plants” (SUP)<sup>33</sup> is a research project that investigates the role of weeds in the urban ecosystem, exploring societal perceptions of weeds and questioning the stigmas that surround them. Initiated by Future Green Studio in 2010, with the intent to stimulate a discourse between ecologists, designers, artists and the general public, the project is still operating today through web interactive mapping<sup>34</sup>, photography and engagement of the wider public through social media<sup>35</sup>. (Figure 5-13) The website offers a list of spontaneous urban plants’ performative attributes (medicinal use, edibility, phytoremediation, carbon capture, erosion control, noise regulation, storm water retention, etc.) and offers a classification of plants by species and performance attributes.



**Figure 5-12.** “NEXT EPOCH seed library”. Source: website <http://nextepochseedlibrary.com/>

These projects are not only enquiring into the ecological benefits of wild urban plants, but also foster aesthetic and social engagement with derelict landscapes and their role in the urban ecosystem. The outreach and effectiveness of such initiatives is augmented by the use of social media.

<sup>32</sup> <http://nextepochseedlibrary.com/>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.spontaneousurbanplants.org/>. in 2016 David Seiter with Future Green Studio published a book entitled “Spontaneous Urban Plants. Weeds in NYC”, publisher: Archer. NY.

<sup>34</sup> An interactive MAP on this website filters photos by species or performance attributes, thus highlighting SUP’s ecological, cultural, and aesthetic significance.

<sup>35</sup> Through Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, profile members of the public can contribute to the project, for example by uploading photos of wild urban plants.



**Figure 5-13.** Interactive map of spontaneous urban plants in New York. Source: <http://www.spontaneousurbanplants.org/map/>

## 5.2 *Le Tiers Paysage: an emerging new order*

“I was looking for diversity in the landscape....I found it “in between” (CLÉMENT, 2011)<sup>36</sup>

Among the key researches and theories on urban landscape processes related to residual spaces and the numerous terms that have been used to define and describe them, French gardener, landscape architect, engineer, agronomist, botanist and entomologist - but most of all, one of the greatest landscape theorists - Gilles Clément offers a holistic vision that takes into consideration ecological, social and aesthetic implications of residual landscapes. According to Gilles Clément “*les délaissés*” (the residues) are smaller, nearly invisible leftover spaces within the centre of cities colonized by wild plants. Clément includes these spaces in a broader category, which collects under the new term “Le Tiers Paysage”<sup>37</sup> all the “areas of non human landscape evolution”(MARIANI & BARRON, 2014, p. 4). Clément defined the notion of the “Third landscape” in 2002, in the context of a study of the area around Vassivière-en-Limousin in France. He identified transitional or unused spaces, undeveloped land, and officially designated natural places as fragments of the “*Le Jardin planétaire*”<sup>38</sup> which have the potential to ensure the future of earth's

<sup>36</sup> Lecture available online at: <http://www.college-de-france.fr/site/gilles-clement/course-2011-12-08-14h30.htm>

<sup>37</sup> French word that in English literally translates into “Third landscape”.

<sup>38</sup> “The Planetary garden”, is a concept introduced by Clément (based on writings by philosopher Alain Roger) to define an approach towards the environment that takes into account the finitude and the frailty of life on the planet. If we consider the planet as a garden - from the German word “Garten”, which means fenced, enclosed space – the limits of the biosphere define the finite space of living elements. With this metaphor, Clément, is implying that man must perceive the space for life and the living creatures as an enclosed space. (CLÉMENT, 2011, p. 149)

biodiversity (CLÉMENT & RAHM, 2006, p. 78). In 2004, the phrase gave its name to the title of his “*Manifeste du Tiers Paysage*”<sup>39</sup>, which to French ears echoed the famous pamphlet about the Third Estate issued by Abbot Sieyès in January 1789, shortly before the outbreak of the French Revolution<sup>40</sup>. Hence, the word refers to space which expresses neither power nor submission to power, a “Third landscape” seen as a “Third state”<sup>41</sup>. The introduction of the “Third landscape” concept originates from Clément’s observation that the only place where we can still find diversity in our intensively engineered landscapes is “in between” the natural landscapes we have altered, in the spaces where man is not acting. In his Manifesto Clément explains how, if we observe landscape as the object of human activity, we will discover a great quantity of uncertain spaces, at the margin, with no function and no name.

According to Gilles Clément, the “Third landscape” is composed by forgotten spaces “in between”, “at the end”, “on the border”, spaces in transition, abandoned urban or rural areas. Clément uses the term to designate all “places that man has abandoned”, parks and nature reserves, large uninhabited areas of the globe; “les friches”<sup>42</sup> (brownfield sites, swamps, moors, as well as roadsides, shores and riverbanks, railway embankments, displaced industrial zones covered by bushes, weeds that grow in the seedbeds of traffic islands); as well as those more widespread, smaller, nearly invisible spaces within the centre of cities (*les délaissés*). These spaces can be produced by cities, industry, tourism, agriculture and farming. After being abandoned they evolve naturally towards a secondary landscape. They are dynamic spaces, instable, heterogeneous and chaotic, and the species that inhabit them change rapidly until they reach a balance. These spaces can have different shapes, size and status and the only thing they have in common is the current absence of human activity and their importance for the conservation of biological diversity<sup>43</sup>. As cities grow the number of residual spaces increases; this doesn’t necessarily mean that their total surface is increasing, but rather that they are becoming more fragmented (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 37). (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 37)

With his Manifesto Clément doesn’t propose the usual dichotomy of contraposition between city and uncontaminated landscape (wilderness), artificial and natural; instead, he proposes a more articulated contraposition between managed and unmanaged spaces, the latter being governed by the spirit of *laissez-faire*<sup>44</sup> (Figure 5-14). The “Third landscape” is the opposite of the organized world and it derives from the principle of rational organization of the territory, because it includes all the spaces subtracted/left over/carved

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<sup>39</sup> “Manifesto del Terzo Paesaggio” (CLÉMENT, 2005)

<sup>40</sup> The pamphlet, Sieyès argues that the third estate – the common people of France – constituted a complete nation within itself and had no need of the “dead weight” of the two other orders, respectively the first and second estates of the clergy and aristocracy.

<sup>41</sup> Translated from the Italian text: “Uno spazio che non esprime né il potere né la sottomissione al potere” (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 11)

<sup>42</sup> The French term *friches* indicates uncultivated abandoned land and fields (there is no equivalent term in other languages). It still holds a negative connotation, as if the re-conquer of a soil by nature corresponds to degradation.

<sup>43</sup> According to Clément, it’s the very disinterest of the institutions for the “Third Landscape” that determines the existence and survival of such spaces and the thriving of diversity in them. Translated from Italian: “*Il disinteresse per il Terzo paesaggio da parte dell’istituzione garantisce il mantenimento e il dispiegamento della diversità*” (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 54).

<sup>44</sup> French for “let (people) do (as they choose).”

out, from the land managed by man<sup>45</sup>. (CLÉMENT, 2005) In the “Third landscape” natural succession is shaped by the fact that men abandoned, are neglecting, or are protecting these areas from human intervention, leaving plants and animals to colonize them without being disturbed.



**Figure 5-14.** Landscape classification diagram by Gilles Clément. Source: (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 10)

The common character of these fragments of landscape – the absence of human decision and the presence of a rich biodiversity – requires, according to Clément, the introduction of a new item to the typological classification of landscapes. (CLÉMENT, 2005) The “Third landscape”, is not the equivalent of the “Third nature” (HUNT, 2000), composed by gardens, “lieux d’artifice absolu”<sup>46</sup>. Nor, in his re-working of the three natures for the contemporary era, Clément mentions, or defines, the “First” and “Second” landscape. But if we consider the fact that in his Manifesto he includes in the “Third landscape” not only all the abandoned (*les délaissés*) and uncultivated (*les friches*) areas, but also the spaces inaccessible to men and machines, and the ones which have explicitly been set aside and protected from human activity (the reserves)<sup>47</sup>; we can deduce that the “First landscape” is not wilderness (because it is already included in the “Third landscape” category as “conserved wilderness”)<sup>48</sup>. Moreover, Clément’s theory seems to start from the underlying

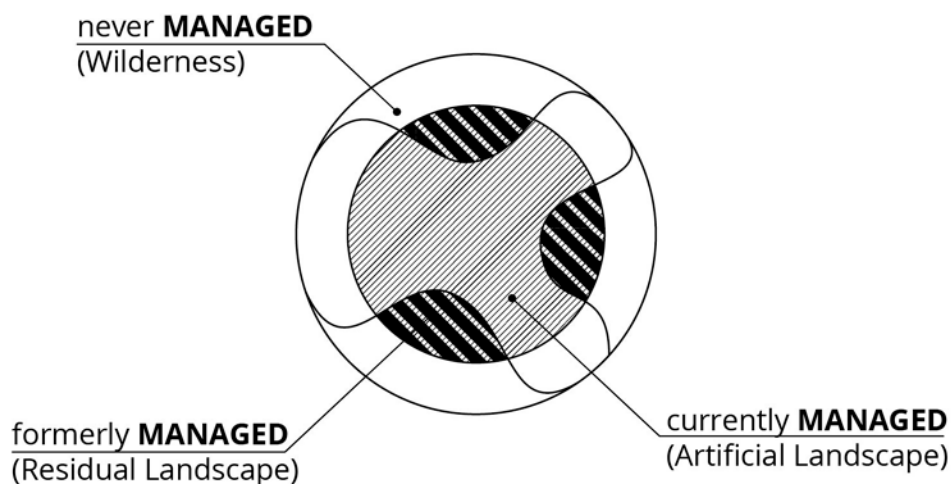
<sup>45</sup> The anthropized territory (result of human activity) influences their existence and their shape. (CLÉMENT, 2005) (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 305).

<sup>46</sup> From an interview with Gilles Clément, mentioned in an article by Emmanuel de Roux, *le Monde*, 10\_12\_1996.

<sup>47</sup> The *tiers paysage* is constituted of: “*tout ce que l’homme a décidé de laisser intact—ce qui lui cause bien du souci—mais aussi tout ce qu’il n’a pas encore attaqué* (la calotte glaciaire, le tréfonds des mers, etc.)”. (CLÉMENT, 1995, p. 393)

<sup>48</sup> In his Manifesto Gilles Clément identifies three categories of spaces where we can find diversity thanks to the absence of human activity: “Primary sets” – spaces that were never exploited by men. The species that inhabit these areas have reached the optimal living conditions suitable for the specific environmental conditions. “Reserves” – areas difficult to access and therefore difficult to exploit, or voluntarily protected from human activity because they are sacred, fragile or they house endangered species. Both primary sets and reserves present high biodiversity composed by indigenous species and are characterized by high endemism. “Residual spaces” – spaces resulting from the abandonment of a field originally

assumption that there is no such thing as uncontaminated nature anymore. Hence, untouched wilderness, unmediated and pristine, can no longer be the original element of comparison against which nature's classification and comparison is defined<sup>49</sup> (HUNT, 2000). Also the unbounded expanse to which garden practice lends meaning is no longer wilderness but manmade environment. Most probably, gardens (constructed nature) and agriculture (engineered nature) would come to constitute “First” and “Second” landscape respectively (SHOAF VINCENT, 2010, pp. 168-171). Or, we could deduce that since in his typological classification Clément uses the word “landscape” and not “nature”, it is implied that he is not attempting to revisit the tripartite view of the natural world introduced by Hunt, but rather formulating an entirely new paradigm, which considers people as integral and inseparable part of the environment, hence excluding the possibility to consider nature independently from man. The term “landscape” is not equal to “nature”; in fact it defines a relationship between a subject (man) and nature (see “The Trialectics of Nature”, Chapter 4. Aesthetics of the indeterminate, p. 39). Therefore everything is measured in reference to human presence and action (Figure 5-15). Clément’s classification is closer to the “taxonomy of urban landscapes” operated by Peter Del Tredici (“remnant native landscapes”, “managed horticultural landscapes”, and “abandoned ruderal landscapes”) (DEL TREDICI, 2010), as among the parameters he uses to distinguish them he includes, not only vegetation and soil type, but also land use history and levels of maintenance required. (Figure 5-2, p. 90)



**Figure 5-15.** Landscape classification based on human management. Source: author.

Following the above consideration, I propose the following reworking of Clément’s classification: nature that has never been exploited or managed (inaccessible areas, reserves) constitutes the “First landscape”; managed nature (agriculture, gardens) compose the “Second landscape”; while once managed and now abandoned residual spaces, where nature grows spontaneously, make up the “Third landscape”. In this hypothesis **human management** becomes the defining parameter of the categorization. As opposed to conserved or inaccessible nature (First landscape), where the ecosystem and its diversity

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exploited by man, house high, but heterogeneous, biodiversity (indigenous and exogenous species) and are characterized by weak endemism. (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 23)

<sup>49</sup> See “The Trialectics of Nature” in section 2.2

were never impacted by human intervention, in the “Third landscape” the organic and inorganic life and its succession is an indirect and unintentional result of past use/s, and therefore we could also refer to these landscapes as “unintended landscapes”(See Glossary, p. xix).

EXTREME I	ALTERNATIVE III	EXTREME II	Category
<b>Nature &amp; Landscape</b>			
managed landscapes	residual / unintended landscape	unmanaged landscape	<i>(management)</i>
first nature <sup>I</sup> (forest)	third nature <sup>I</sup> (gardens)	second nature <sup>I</sup> (agricultural fields)	<i>(aesthetics/ management)</i>
<del>first landscape (gardens - constructed nature)<sup>III</sup></del>	<del>third landscape<sup>II</sup> (unmanaged landscapes)</del>	<del>second landscape (agriculture - engineered nature)<sup>III</sup></del>	<del><i>(management)</i></del>
first landscape (never managed – reserves & inaccessible nature) <sup>IV</sup>	third landscape <sup>II</sup> (unmanaged landscapes)	second landscape (managed landscapes - gardens & agriculture - engineered nature) <sup>IV</sup>	<i>(management)</i>
remnant native landscapes <sup>V</sup>	Abandoned <sup>V</sup> ruderal landscapes	managed horticultural landscapes <sup>V</sup>	<i>(management)</i>

I. "Notions of Nature" (HUNT, 2000); II. "Tiers Paysage" (CLÉMENT, 2005) III. (SHOAF VINCENT, 2010); IV (Author); V "Taxonomy of urban landscapes" (DEL TREDICI, 2010)

**Figure 5-16.** Table associating the “Tripartite definition of Nature and Landscape”(REVISED). Source: author.

These considerations would of course reconfirm the obsolescence of the usual and simplistic dichotomy between “natural” and “artificial” landscape, confirming the incontrovertible anthropogenic character of our planet. Consequently, the very meaning of the adjective “artificial” referred to the environment that surrounds us ought to be reconsidered. Clément is offering a completely new perspective. Associating the “Third landscape” to the “Third state”, to a condition or an institution that represents an alternative between two powers; he is advocating for a new space between light and shadow, a landscape representing neither the power nor the submission to power. (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 11) (Figure 5-16, see also Figure 4-4, p. 47)

### **New Values: disorder, open-endedness and spontaneity**

If, following Clément’s theory, we observe landscape as the result of human activity we can identify uncertain spaces, without name or function. Marginal areas where the woods fray, along streets and rivers, or residual spaces in urban context resulting from the abandonment of originally exploited land, waiting for a function that might be on hold for financial, legal or political reasons. Among these landscape fragments there is no formal resemblance, they only have one thing in common: they are all a refuge for diversity (plants, animals, bacteria etc.). In fact, after being abandoned they acquire an uncertain



character, which corresponds to an evolution left to the biological beings that inhabit the territory, in total absence of human decision making. They are dynamic, heterogeneous, chaotic and instable spaces. The species that inhabit it change rapidly until they reach a balance (Figure 5-17).



**Figure 5-17.** Le Jardin des Orpins et des Graminées, Saint-Nazaire FR (2009) – Gilles Clément.

The evolution of the “Third landscape” is not constant (by adaptation), but rather inconstant (progressive adaptation<sup>50</sup>), because it depends on the biological modality of the environment. While pristine nature is characterized by a stable ecosystem and high biodiversity, and spaces artificially maintained by men are characterized by reduced or null biodiversity, an abandoned site will welcome heterogeneous diversity (indigenous and exogenous species) and become an unstable ecosystem. If the latter is not reintroduced in a productive system (which would compromise its diversity), and left undisturbed, it will eventually develop into woodlands and provide cities with social and ecological services. (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 1) (KOWARIK & KORNER, 2005) (Figure 5-18) “left alone or encouraged to develop into future forests, and woven into a hybrid fabric of wild and built land”, Residual Landscapes are invaluable sources of biodiversity.(MARIANI & BARRON, 2014, p. XII) And the “Third landscape” in general is a constantly developing global landscape, the common space of the future. The “Third landscape” constitutes an opportunity.(CLÉMENT, 2005)

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<sup>50</sup> Constant evolution is subject to crisis moments (Darwinian), inconstant evolution follows consecutive recovery stages (Lamarck). (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 49)

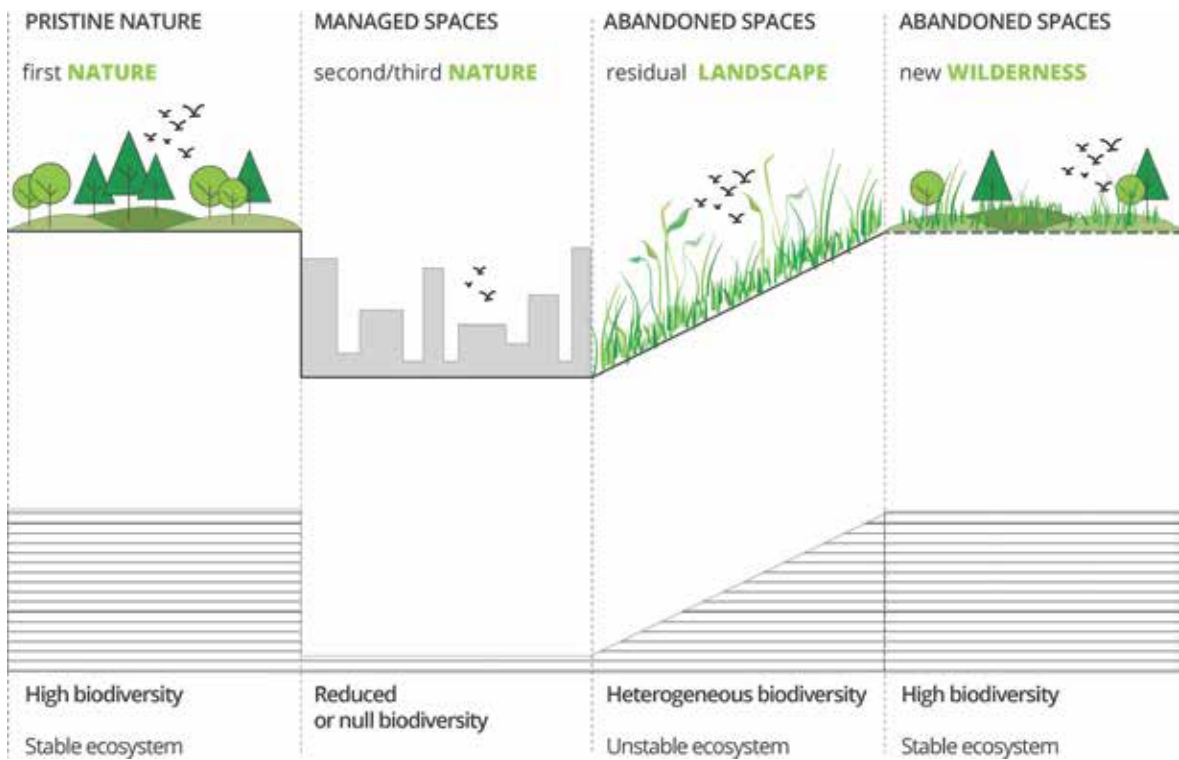
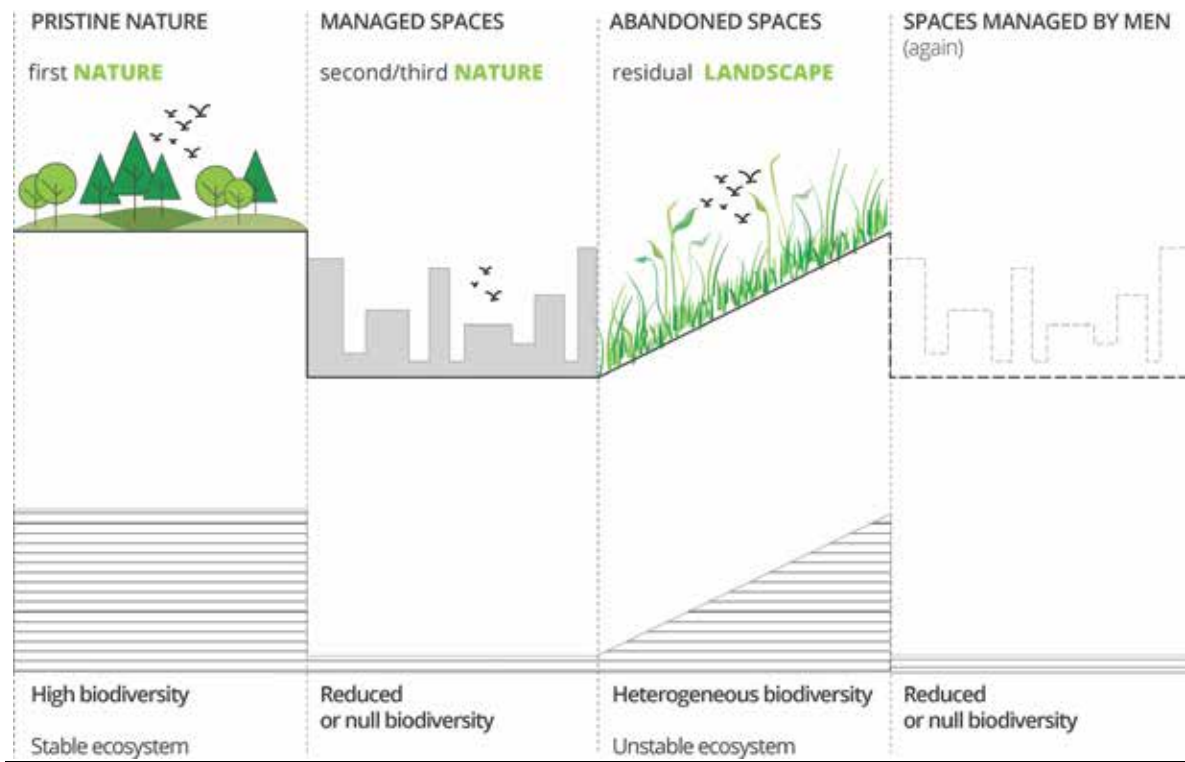


Figure 5-18. Diagram Residual Landscape process. Source: author

## **Biological order vs. Formal order: *loss of control***

*Disorganization, inaction & disinterest.*

Like Del Tredici, Clément's theories and his landscape projects seem to reaffirm that aesthetics are connected to knowledge of ecological dynamics. Clément assigns to aesthetic endeavor the tasks of rendering *délaissés* identifiable and preserving them, and argues that aesthetic endeavor should be at the service of ecological aspects. This position can be traced back to his reflections on "order" and garden design, inspired by the observation of his own garden: "*La Vallee*", a plot of abandoned land he bought in 1977. After prolonged and sustained observation, and patient experimentation on his garden, Clément, shared the acquired knowledge in his famous 1991 book "*Le Jardin en Mouvement*" (The Garden in Motion). "The garden in motion takes its name from the physical movement of plant species on the land, which the gardener can interpret as he wishes. Flowers starting to sprout in a pathway confront the gardener with a choice: to keep the path or to preserve the flowers. The garden in motion advocates preserving the species once they have decided on their choice of a site". (CLÉMENT, 2011)

This attitude towards the spontaneity of vegetation was later reflected also in the theories about residual spaces. Clément points out how "[T]he architectural void contains the biological volume where the motion of the garden can take place" (CLÉMENT, 2011). As we have discussed previously in this chapter, vacant or abandoned lands usually confer a sense of discomfort, probably caused by the apparent loss of control over such indefinite and imprecise spaces. Moreover they are commonly considered as a left over, as the result of a subtraction from the totality of the land controlled by men. *But, what if we see them as an addition, as urban fertile land, as wilderness spontaneously reentering the city, instead?*

With the intent of answering this question we observe Clément's reflections on aesthetic issues related to "order". If we consider disorganization as an opportunity to introduce life in an organized operational model<sup>51</sup>, then also indecision, inaction, unproductivity, disinterest and disorder (in the formal sense) acquire dignity and are seen as an actual potential that ought to be valued. Then, surrender to chaos ought to be protected from the "contamination by the city" (KOOLHAAS & MAU, 1995, p. 977) and not vice versa.

"[...] apparently incoherent or complex conditions that one might initially mistake as random or chaotic can be shown to be highly structured entities that comprise a particular set of geometrical and spatial orders. In this sense, cities and infrastructures are just as "ecological" as forests and rivers." (WALDHEIM, 2006, p. 29)

Order is not equal to cleanliness. Even within the urban landscape we can identify a **natural disorder**, or better **biological order**, which has its own logic and does not necessarily need to be reorganized, but rather "observed", "studied" and "managed" (CLÉMENT, 2011, p. 19).

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<sup>51</sup> "*Considerare la non organizzazione come un principio vitale grazie al quale ogni organizzazione si lascia attraversare dai lampi della vita*" (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 59).

Natural disorder is still seen as something to be organized by architecture, while biological order is not perceived as a possible conception yet. In his first book “*Le Jardin en Mouvement*”, G. Clément mentions that only in gardens nature is represented according to particular order. The order of the garden is only visual and perceivable through its form; order is therefore at the same time an illusion, a contour of forms, a surface or an architecture, everything else is considered disorder. (Figure 5-19) Of course, if we see the order in the garden as a static order, an exception is undesirable; if, on the other hand, we see it as dynamic order, then an exception (a seed that escapes or enters) can start a new evolutionary phase in the garden (“disorder” would then be to interrupt this evolution) (CLÉMENT, 2011).



a



b



c



d

**Figure 5-19.** a. *Structural Order* - Tinfou, Draa Valley, Morocco. Mash made with weaved palm leaves Fascine to retain sand. b. *Formal order* - Box hedges in a garden. c. *Biological order* – moss growing in the seams of a brick wall and Nautilus Cutaway Logarithmic Spiral. Source: internet.

In the concept of “Garden in Motion”, the gardener himself has less power than the past, he inhabits the garden and then “guides” it. There is a substantial difference between managing<sup>52</sup> or guiding<sup>53</sup> vegetation, and predetermining its form. In the history of garden

<sup>52</sup> From the Italian “*gestire*”, which also translates into “organizing”.

<sup>53</sup> From the Italian “*orientare*”, which also translates into “steering” or “directing”.

design man has always imposed a formal order on the garden, fighting against the natural movement and the changes that occur in the vegetation. The new strategy towards the landscape, according to G. Clément, is following the natural flux of vegetation, the biological current that animates a site, and orienting it. Consequently in the “Garden in Motion” the process followed by the gardener ought to be observing, understanding and, only then, acting. But acting for G. Clément means using natural forces that are already present on the territory and cooperating with the “power of invention of nature”<sup>54</sup>. (CLÉMENT, 2011, p. 5)



**Figure 5-20.** Biological versus formal order, Tirana (AL). Source: author

If we extend the concept of natural forces and include also the forces in terms of spontaneous approach of people toward the residual spaces, and therefore include the informal uses and the creative approach people have towards these apparently unproductive spaces, they acquire even more richness and contribute to growth and development. Then such spaces can be considered as “shared fragments of a collective conscience”<sup>55</sup> in a specific culture, where a different kind of growth and development occur: unlike economic systems where growth and development result in (and are aimed at) accumulation, in biological systems growth refers to transformation and evolution processes (CLÉMENT, 2011, p. 55). In this sense the “Third landscape” is a “*paesaggio globale in divenire*”<sup>56</sup>, the common space of the future. Consequently residual spaces represent an opportunity.

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<sup>54</sup> Translated from the Italian text: “*il potere di invenzione della natura*”(CLÉMENT, 2011, p. 12).

<sup>55</sup> Translated from the Italian text: “*Il terzo paesaggio può essere considerato come frammento condiviso di una coscienza collettiva [...]*” (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 57).

<sup>56</sup> Translated in English: “constantly developing global landscape” (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 63).

## ***Disorder and resilience***

As we have seen, the value of ruderal vegetation and the abandoned urban areas they occupy, and the emergence of Urban Ecology as a distinctive subfield within the biological sciences, was acknowledged in connection with the environmental debate in the 1970s, which introduced a whole new perspective and attitude towards their preservation. From all the above considerations pertaining the ecological value of residual spaces and the vegetative species that inhabit them, three main aspects emerge: first, the fact that such landscapes are sustainable and **self sufficient, as they require no maintenance**, and consequently no use of irrigation water, fossil fuel energy, pesticides, fertilizers and associated social costs (impact on global fossil fuel supplies and municipal landfills); second, they **guarantee plant and animal diversity**, and soil organism diversity and perform a wide range of quantifiable **ecosystem services** on marginal land with a minimal input of maintenance (reduce surface runoff, groundwater recharge and overall reduction of global warming by net removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere); third, they can **provide a “preview of coming attractions”** because, from an ecological perspective, they have already arrived at the future.(DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 308) But, most importantly, they show flexibility and adaptability.

Del Tredici introduces the aspect of “preadaptation” and disturbance succession regimes, while Clément brings our attention on the fact that “disorder”, or “biological order” is desirable. The latter also refers to Entropy<sup>57</sup>, the lower potential energy, to explain the disorder of a system and how, tending towards a state of greater disorder, also means leaning towards a state of greater probability. (CLÉMENT, 2011, p. 21) The above considerations pave the way to a new approach towards Urban design, which draws inspiration from the spontaneous evolution of Residual Landscapes, and the soft landscape approach proposed by the “Planetary gardener” Gilles Clément. To this regard, in the 2008 “Envisioning Resilience” study by J. H. Woodward, the concept of an emerging paradigm of “nonlinear systems thinking” in urban design and planning was used as a basis to address new design methods in urban design and landscape architecture, that take into consideration the need to develop characteristics of resilience, and therefore refine objectives for methods in ecological design in a way that encourages resilience<sup>58</sup>; “understanding that systems are not in equilibrium, that disturbance is a constant part of any system, and that succession is at best a probabilistic pathway”. (WOOSWARD, 2008)

In conclusion, Urban design can become a tool to improve the microclimatic and social conditions of a city, if we learn how to operate in open spaces managing the perpetual mutation of nature, orienting its variation, respecting the spontaneous/biological processes that characterize it, and refrain from the urge to predetermine its form or limit the natural and dynamic movement and modification of nature.

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<sup>57</sup> In thermodynamics Entropy allows us to evaluate the decay of energy in a system, and therefore it characterizes its disorder. When it is abandoned a closed system tends to a state of disorder and therefore also of greater probabilities.

<sup>58</sup> Resilience - that is, design that maintains functional integrity while also adapting to volatile conditions. (GUNDERSON & HOLLING, 2002)

## SECTION TWO. EXPLORATION (*observing the evolution of Residual Landscapes*)

Answering the question: *How do Residual Landscapes come to be? How do we observe their evolution?*

*“The terrain vague cannot be dissociated from the forces that produced it.”*

As we have discussed in the previous chapter, urban residual spaces are not a new phenomenon. Since cities started being built they also started producing residues, which are a byproduct of urbanization, of the rational organization of the territory, zoning, and land use policies<sup>1</sup>. Observing the contemporary world there are two important considerations that ought to be made: firstly, although Residual Landscapes are potentially present in any city of the world, the way they are produced and approached changes considerably. Furthermore, while the causes behind their generation and evolution can be identified in social, political and economic factors influencing demographics and urban dynamics, different values are projected on residual spaces depending on the shared intersubjective cultural field. This means that the way citizens and institutions perceive and approach them is strongly subjective, as it is influenced by culture. Secondly, in transitioning cities, in cities that are undergoing social, economic or political changes, Residual Landscapes tend to evolve more rapidly and become a noteworthy phenomenon. Transitioning cities are both, expanding cities where increase in population is driving urban densification or sprawl; and shrinking cities, which have become oversized and under-maintained for the decimated population. These observations reveal the limitations of an attempt to formulate an objective set of considerations concerning the value of such landscapes. Nevertheless, we can acknowledge the fact that, especially following the effects of post industrial urban shrinkage in many US and European cities, and the late and rapid post war economical growth of many eastern European countries, there is a renewed interest in Residual Landscapes. Based on the social, aesthetic and ecological considerations explored so far, we could say that residual spaces are the spaces of the future and they could become key elements in the urban strategies of countries around the world. But, before putting Residual Landscapes in perspective, we need to understand their genesis and evolution: through **observation** (the most suitable tool to approach the complexity of this phenomenon), **analysis** and **classification**, researchers all around the world have been offering different approaches to the subject: setting up analytical processes, and defining new landscape classification methods.

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<sup>1</sup> The creation of these spaces is intrinsic to the Post-modern planning system.

## Chapter 6. Observing Residual Landscapes

### 6.1 Character and behavior of Residual Landscapes

A part from the numerous critical writings concerning urban wastelands, extensively described in the theoretical review chapter, the end of the twentieth century witnessed more empirical research initiatives involved in the careful surveying and analysis of urban residues. In his research Gil Doron documented such areas, which he called “Dead Zones”, wastelands and voids, in 20 cities in Europe, America and Asia (DORON, 2008, p. 210; DORON, 2000). In the summer of 1999, he went on a journey in these cities<sup>2</sup> with the aim of:

“finding the ‘Dead Zone’; Seeking for the ‘Void’; Searching the ‘Nothingness’; Investigating the ‘no man’s land’; Locating the ‘Free Spaces’; Mapping the ‘Terrain Vague’; Outlining the ‘Wastelands’ and ‘Derelict areas’; Photographing the ‘Residuum’”. (DORON, 2000, p. 250)



**Figure 6-1.** Shelter for the homeless in L.A. Source: (DORON, 2000, p. 249)

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<sup>2</sup> The research was done in the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, UCL. The cities that were investigated were: New York, Detroit, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Mexico City, London, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Berlin, Copenhagen, Rome, Naples, Tel Aviv, London.



In these 20 different cities Doron observed 20 sites in the boundaries of the city centre. The sites were all approximately the same size (a few square kilometers) and in the same edge location. The main considerations that he drew from this research were two: firstly, he was able to conclude that the phenomena was present in post-modern cities like Los Angeles and Detroit and Mexico City, as well as in modern cities like Tel Aviv, and historic ones like London, Rome or Copenhagen. Secondly, he noticed that in all the 20 cities analyzed these spaces were located at the edge of the city centre, but they had different former uses - neighborhoods (Chicago and Detroit), ex military camps (Copenhagen), ex industrial zones (Rome Naples and Los Angeles), harbors (Tel Aviv, Amsterdam, San Francisco) and mixed uses (London and Mexico) (Figure 6-1). Moreover, reflecting on the ephemeral character of such abandoned sites - which appear when an area is (temporarily) not in use - he identified the impossibility to confine them and locate them geographically. "They are in any place and in a non-place. They relate to time." (DORON, 2000, p. 256)

Therefore Doron was enquiring upon the presence and more likely location of urban residual spaces in different cities, and only indirectly observing the way they have been produced (their generative logic). But the most important aspect of his investigation was the introduction of an approach that involved the close observation and the consideration of the people who are actually affected by these spaces. In an interview, referring to methodologies used in prior investigations<sup>3</sup> which, he believes, "viewed these places from a distance: maps, photography, aerial photography and maybe the view from a passing car", he proposes a different method of investigation which involves the people from below, the ones that actually live close to these spaces and are affected by them in first person<sup>4</sup>. (DORON, 2000, p. 249)

## 6.2 From the satellite to the microscope

*Observation as a tool to approach the complexity of urban phenomena.*

"Gli strumenti di osservazione del Terzo paesaggio vanno dal satellite al microscopio." (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 41).<sup>5</sup>

The tools to analyze Residual Landscapes investigate the very near and the very far, and encompass also the temporal dimension. Analyzing these landscapes at the micro scale we can learn from the natural order that shapes them and from the way the urbanized territory influences their existence; whilst at the macro scale they appear as scale less fragments, interruptions of the urban fabric that together reveal a "new geo-geography" (JAKOB, 2009, pp. 118-119). Each fragment acts as a spatial organism of the city, or a monad<sup>6</sup>, "[...] containing within it the totality whence it came, and [is] also illuminating as parts of the new montage in which it is assembled." (GILLOGH, 1996, p. 35). Meanwhile the temporal component of landscape - intended as changes according to the time of the day, seasonal changes and mutations caused by long processes over consistent spans of time - is the

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<sup>3</sup> Namely: "Wasteland" Thames Television Report. (1980), Rupert Nabarro and David Richards with Honor Chapman; "Concurring the Void" by Hans Van Dijk; "Ladders" by Albert Pope;" S,M,L,XL" by Rem Koolhaas.

<sup>4</sup> He uses as example of this methodology, the approach adopted by the Civic Trust in "Urban Wasteland Now".

<sup>5</sup> Translated in English: "The tools to observe the Third landscape range from the satellite to the microscope".

<sup>6</sup> From Walter Benjamin's theories on the life and form of cities, where he introduces the concept of "monad", in which the "universal is discernible within the particular".

aspect that identifies it as a means by which we can decode the relationship between society ecology and history. These punctual landscapes can be reframed and extended into a broader system, projected in space and time and become germ for possible futures.

Our gaze is educated by views from high rise buildings, television and movies; from observation satellites and aerial shots we perceive a continuous smooth flow of spaces and we have an image of the world as a harmonious environment; rather that's what we would like it to be. But in reality "the mirage disintegrates if we look at it too closely" (AUGÉ, 1995, p. XIII), and we will notice a myriad of fragmented and discontinuous spaces, natural barriers, artificial partitions and walls appearing at the local scale and in the everyday management of space.

Researchers all around the world have been offering different approaches to the subject of urban residual spaces, setting up analytical processes and defining new landscape classification methods<sup>7</sup>. Through **analysis** and **classification** they are acknowledging the existence of commonly ignored spaces and defining a new landscape typology; by mapping and monitoring urban residues they are uncovering their relationship with underlying urban spatial dynamics; and through close up analysis they are identifying their peculiar character (both, physical and functional), behavior, and potential. **Observation** is unequivocally the most suitable tool to approach the complexity of this phenomenon.

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<sup>7</sup> E.g. Del Tredici formulates the "Ruderal Landscapes" category in the "Generalized Taxonomy of Urban Landscapes" (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 12); Gilles Clément includes residual spaces in the new landscape typology he names "Third landscape" (CLÉMENT, 2005).

## Chapter 7. Transitioning cities – Tokyo, San Francisco, Detroit

### *Explanatory/Exploratory case studies.*

Among the Empirical Research precedents in this field, three main researches were selected and analyzed. The choice was made based on the fact that they share the following characteristics: they deal with the Residual Landscape phenomenon as a primary research topic; they observe and explain the phenomenon in specific city and are therefore representative of a unique urban condition; they directly or indirectly define a method to observe and analyze the phenomenon. For each case study the list reported below indicates: *the city object of the study and a keyword to describe its character; (I) reference book, author/s & publication year; (II) what generates Residual Landscapes in that particular context and influences their morphology, location and spatial distribution; (III) keyword/s indicating the evolutionary pattern of Residual Landscapes; (IV) what kind of best practices and models the research is a precedent for.* (Figure 7-1)

### **1. TOKYO - dense/dynamic city case study**

- I. “Tokyo void. Possibilities in Absence” (JONAS, Marieluisse & RAHMANN, Heike) 2014.
- II. residual spaces (private/public) are a result of high land value, tax policies and post bubble economic crisis
- III. ***progressive subdivision & fluctuation*** of Residual Landscapes (the overall extent of urban voids remains relatively unchanged)
- IV. research methodology, management strategies, theory on Residual Landscapes.

### **2. SAN FRANCISCO, saturated city case study**

- I. “Local code. 3659 proposals about Data, Design & the Nature of Cities” (Nicholas De Monchaux) 2016
- II. residual spaces (private/public) are a result of land management, real estate and socio-economical urban dynamics
- III. ***stagnation*** of Residual Landscapes
- IV. research methodology, management strategies, theory on Residual Landscapes.

### **3. DETROIT, shrinking city case study**

- I. “Shrinking cities”<sup>1</sup> (Philipp Oswalt) 2002-2006
- II. residual spaces (private/public) were generated by suburbanization in the second half of the twentieth century and increased further as result of postindustrial financial crisis
- III. ***multiplication*** of Residual Landscapes
- IV. research methodology, management strategies for Residual Landscapes.

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<sup>1</sup> EU funded ‘Shrinking Cities Project’ (2002-6) [www.shrinkingcities.com](http://www.shrinkingcities.com); Philipp Oswalt, *Atlas of Shrinking Cities*. Ostfildern, 2005.

In Chapter 8 - UNINTENDED LANDSCAPES (*observing the evolution of R.L. in Tirana*) (p. 159), the **TIRANA fast expanding city** case study is introduced and described.

- I. Author, 2017
- II. residual spaces (private/public) a result urban transformation processes occurred over a short period of time driven by political and social conditions after the fall of the Socialist Regime
- III. *incremental fragmentation* of Residual Landscapes
- IV. potential benefits of informal approach to Residual Landscapes.

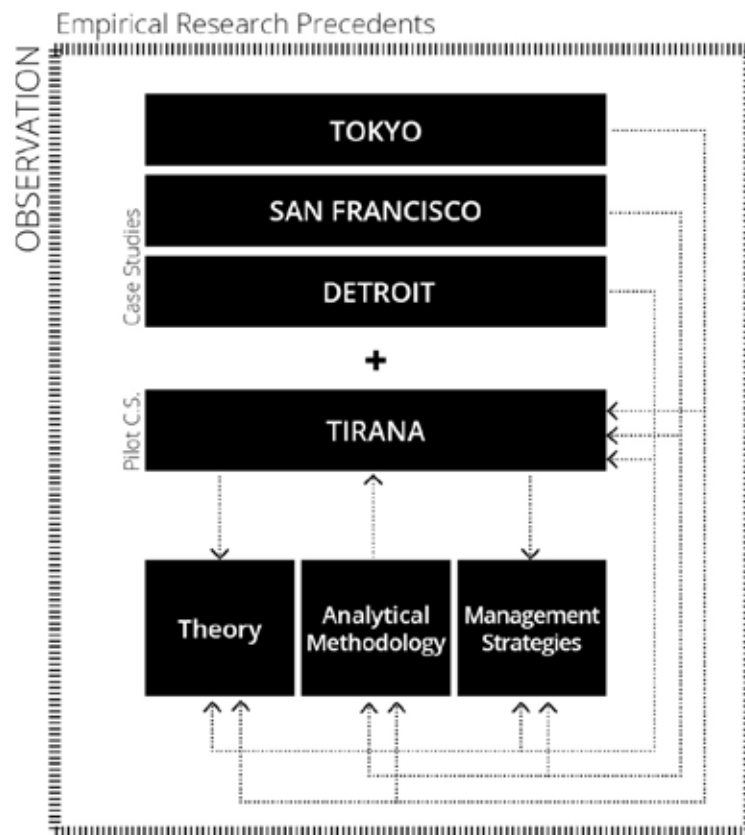


Figure 7-1. Case studies. Source: author.

## 7.1 Tokyo Void

Tokyo's vastly complex urban environment might be best represented through the unusual manifestations of its development: small and “impossible” buildings, hybrid infrastructures and “voids”. “The peculiarity of Tokyo’s voids is rooted in the context, the culture, and in the unpredictable and complex nature of the city” (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 93)

An attempt to explain such complexity ought to follow unconventional approaches, which draw the attention on the small and apparently invaluable details, the spaces that are commonly overlooked and neglected. But most of all, it should advocate “learning from reality”, and documenting the redundant and the exceptional. Like the “PET Architecture Guide Book” by Tsukamoto Architectural Lab & Atelier Bow-Wow (Tsukamoto Architectural Lab & Atelier Bow Wow, 2001), where the authors identify the small, humorous and charming architecture built in the most unexpected spaces within the city: blades squeezed between other buildings or tiny slivers, constructed in impossible areas left over by lot subdivisions.

When it comes to urban voids, the specific philosophical and cultural positions of the Japanese context can explain how these spaces are seen. In Japan emptiness is seen as latent possibility, imperfection is an ideal, and inwardness is a spatial concept. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2)) Therefore we can start from defining the words that are related to space and void in the Japanese language:

***Mu* - the “void”.** Emptiness is traditionally perceived as an expression of latent possibility. Ideas of void are deeply embedded in philosophical, religious and spatial concepts and can be found in terms such as: *Ma* (in between space, emptiness), *Wabi-Sabi* (imperfection), *Oku* (inwardness), or *Harappa* (open field). (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 28)

***Ma* - the “space-time” concept.** The concept of “space” in Japanese culture is even more ambiguous than that of “smallness” because space is without substance, fluid and malleable. Unlike the Western understanding of space as an empty container that is filled with objects and people, Japanese space flows through the gaps and crevices between things. In Japanese the letter for space is *Ma* which combines “gate” *mon* 門 and “sun” *hi* 日. “Space is the light that shines through an open gate”. *Ma* is more adequately translated as “interval” or “space in between”, “emptiness”, but it also refers to room; interval; pause; rest (in music); time; while; leisure; luck; timing and harmony. Thus, the word indicates both spatial and temporal concepts. This Japanese concept derives from a Zen understanding of space as what is formed “in between” objects. Space is therefore obtained and defined by negation, it’s what is left after mass is erected<sup>2</sup>.

***Wabi-Sabi* - aesthetics of transience and imperfection.** The idea of beauty related to the imperfect, the ephemeral and the unfinished is grounded on the belief that leaving something incomplete makes it interesting and leaves room for imagination and growth.

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<sup>2</sup> Architect and design theorist Azby Brown writes that all architecture is created by “extracting” space from a larger landscape. He claims that architecturally nurtured space is space extracted from a zone left abandoned, and therefore what defines architecture is the degree to which a place has been nurtured as opposed to its degree of abandonment.

The ephemeral beauty of the cherry blossom tree and the fragility of its flower petals is an example of such beauty. (Figure 7-2)

**Harappa** - “open field”. The word literally means “vacant rental space”. The word “*Harappa*” - which means, open field, wild field, and is often used in association with void spaces, recalling an innocent childhood memory, of overgrown, open “*Harappa* spaces” (i.e. vacant spaces) conquered for play and adventure – is often associated to the word “*ondi*” - which means sound of soil, referring to the beauty of the site exposed to natural elements.

**Oku** - “inwardness”. The spatial concept of *oku*, defines the innermost, the inwardly oriented nature of things. Through this concept urban voids can be seen as concentrated and deeply detailed spaces.



**Figure 7-2.** Limit between the vacant lot and the driveway. The vacant lot is covered by a blanket of cherry flower petals. The petals and the vacant lot reflect the Japanese transient ideal of imperfection. Source. “Tokyo Void” Facebook page.

Building on these definitions and the way they reflect the cultural practices of the city, in the “Tokyo Void. Possibilities in absence”<sup>3</sup> publication, Marieluise Jonas and Heike Rahmann, are offering us a perspective through which we can observe the city and interpret its vacancies. They begin their enquiry by looking inward (*oku*) at the detail, the small and the overlooked, and then, gradually zoom out to reveal the larger contextual conditions that shape vacant spaces. They are starting from the innermost which lies at the core of space, unfolding its infinite layers and details, to then invert the trajectory and take a step back, to observe these spaces from a distance and through time. This explains why their approach to research about interstitial spaces follows a progressive trajectory that starts from the human scale of vision – observing approaches and strategies towards urban voids in Tokyo – digs deep into their cultural meaning, morphology, materiality and performance, and ends by viewing from a distance the processes that produce and shape vacant spaces. But most of all the writers are looking “through” the voids to capture the essence of Tokyo’s cityscape, made of “smallness” and “dispersal”.

For the purpose of this analysis I will invert the order of the “Tokyo Void” research and start with the analysis of the processes that shape vacant spaces in Tokyo, continue with the documentation and analysis of their materiality and performance, and conclude with the observation of approaches and strategies towards urban voids in Tokyo.

### **Processes leading to vacancy in Tokyo**

Vacant spaces are produced under very distinct local circumstances and context specific transformation processes, which also influence their morphological and typological structures (shape, size, location). Therefore to understand the phenomena in Tokyo we need to examine the spatial, economic, and political conditions that form and transform the city and influence the generation of voids. Although restructuring and decline are usually considered the main urban processes that generate urban voids, “in Tokyo vacant spaces are products of development and growth, rather than shrinkage and decay”. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 90). In Tokyo socio-economic processes and planning regulations play an important role in the development of vacant spaces: i.e. economic decline during the 1980’s economic recession, demographic change, urban policy and tax regulation, to mention just a few. The so-called “bubble economy” was a result of a period of rapid economic and urban growth after WWII, followed by rapid economic decline caused by the collapse of overinflated land and stock prices. The economic stagnation after 1995 produced a great quantity of vacant spaces. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 111) Also demographic trends can be accounted for the increase of vacancies, mostly in suburban areas. Through a combination of increased longevity and a very low total fertility rate, Japan's population is aging more rapidly than any other country in the world<sup>4</sup>. (OSWALT, 2005, p. 101) Processes of demographic change have led to a redistribution of the age structure of the Japanese population and the displacement of younger generations

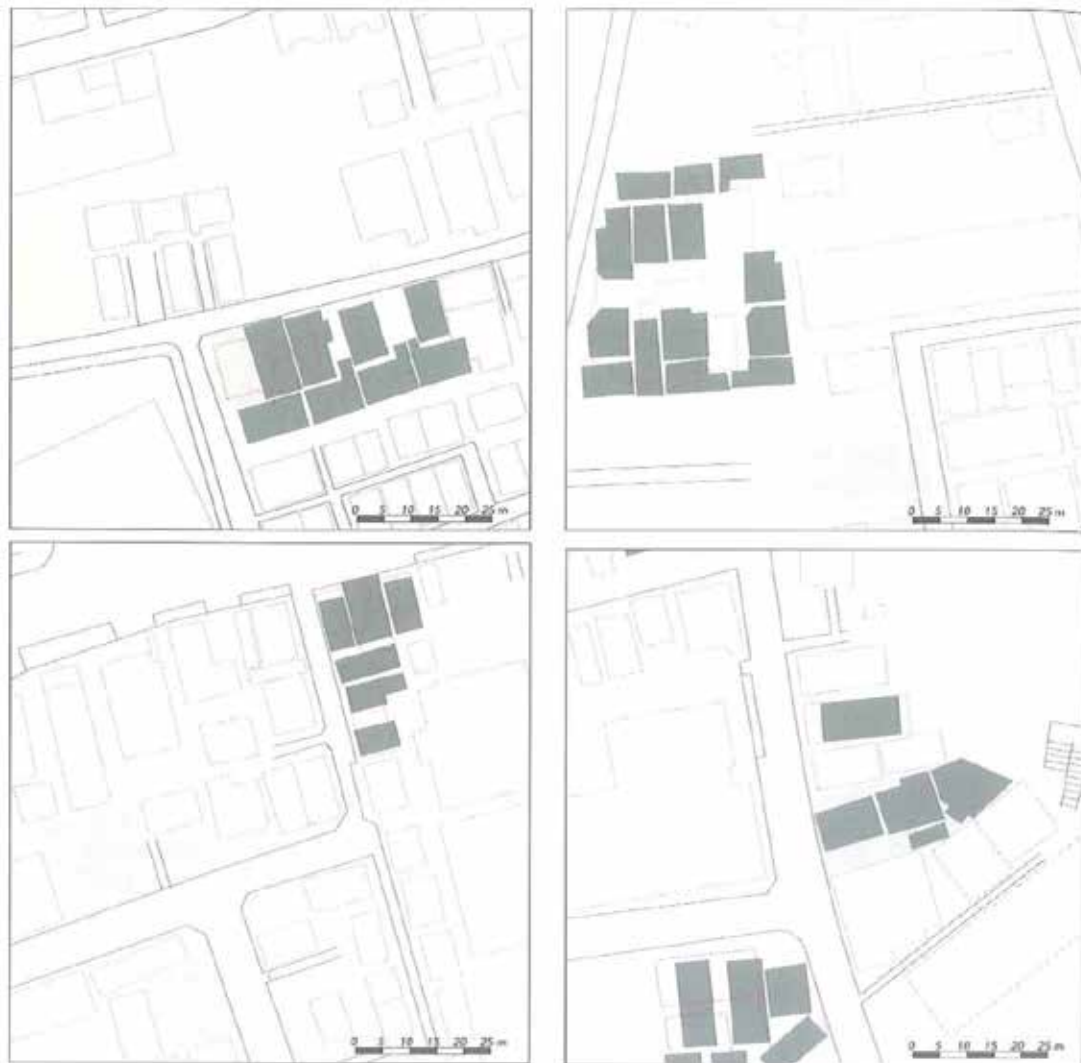
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<sup>3</sup> The “Tokyo Void” project is an ongoing Design Research Collaboration on urban landscapes between The University of Tokyo + RMIT University led by Heike Rahmann and Marieluise Jonas. Through cultural activities, workshops and publications they aim at highlighting the potential of vacant spaces in Tokyo. [TokyoVoid.com](http://TokyoVoid.com), one of the initiatives of the project, is a web-based agency of designers and researchers in landscape architecture, that brings owners of Tokyo's vacant lots together with users, thereby creating a network of small spaces that offer flexible uses.

<sup>4</sup> As of 2002 people over the age of 64 represented a larger proportion of the population (18.5%) than those between the ages of 0 and 14 (14.2%). (OSWALT, 2005, p. 101)

from the rural areas (influenced by the changes in the social structure of families), with consequent household abandonment and vacancy.

The voids produced by the above mentioned processes are of different types (small and disjointed leftover spaces, gaps between buildings or vast spatial entities), and they are further defined by their duration in time. The ways in which the above mentioned socioeconomic conditions and policy frameworks influence the location, the pattern, and the scale of vacancies in the metropolitan region of Tokyo are listed below under four keywords<sup>5</sup>:



**Figure 7-3.** Plot subdivision in Itabashi-ku. The light grey areas are vacant plots. Source: (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 152)

<sup>5</sup> The attribution of a dimensional quality (“x-small”, “small”, “from small to large”, and “large”) to each vacant space phenomena is not present in the original “Tokyo void” research; it’s an interpretation of the author of this dissertation.



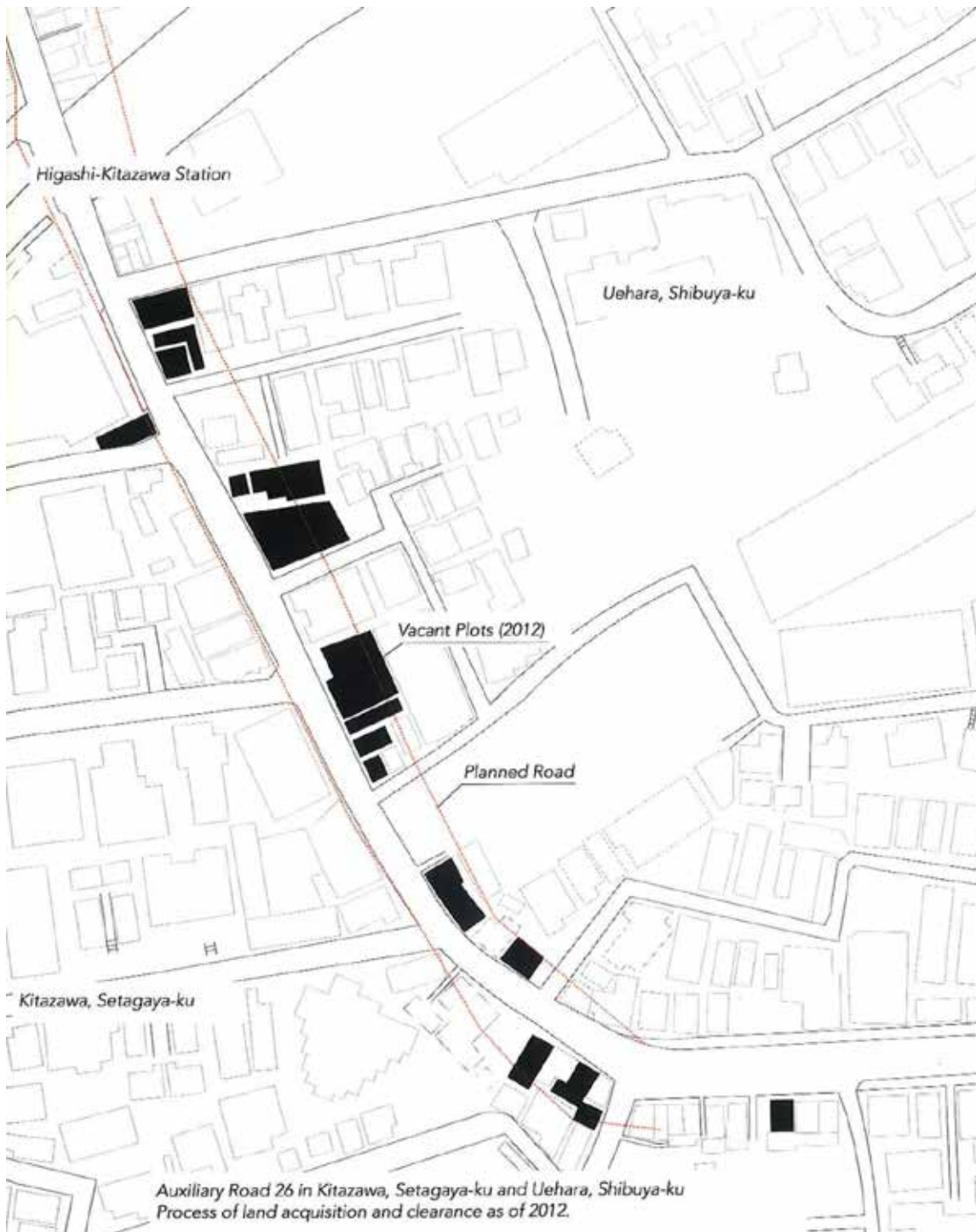
**Extra Small** - Smaller vacant lots in dense neighborhoods in central Tokyo are often generated by plot subdivisions operated in response to heavy inheritance taxation policies. “With inheritance tax as high as 40 percent of the land value, each generational shift in land ownership causes subdivision of plots”. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 149) This process of land subdivision has had a direct and dramatic effect on the quantity and the fragmented character of vacant spaces in the city, because the continuously shrinking and narrowly shaped plots are less attractive for residential development. (Figure 7-3) Moreover these vacant lots tend to be short term vacancies, as they are temporarily rented to avoid the heavy taxation of empty land.

**Small** - In the peripheral and rural areas population shrinkage leads to a growing number of demolitions and increasing number of vacant properties. Houses for rent remain without repair or reconstruction and they become deserted because of financial reasons or lack of agreement among residents. Also playgrounds are abandoned in some districts due to the population’s high age the reduced number of children. (OSWALT, 2005, p. 83) The population shrinkage is a result of low birth rate an aging population (out-migration of young people to urban centers, in search of education and work). (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 117) These urban voids are mostly produced by “reconstruction cycles”. The city’s dynamic urban fabric is characterized by a spatially complex and fragmented environment of mostly small, detached residential plots. Since the construction of private homes in Japan is for the short term, and after a single generation (thirty to forty years), buildings are demolished and rebuilt<sup>6</sup>, the succession cycle of rebuilding produces urban voids. These individual, mostly small, vacant lots, might be vacant for some weeks, months, or even years. Nevertheless, given the fact that constant renewal is the norm, the problem of vacancy can be adjusted to demand with greater flexibility. (OSWALT, 2005, p. 91)

**From Small to Large** – Also road readjustment processes generate vacant spaces. The vacant spaces generated by infrastructure adjustment and setback rules are initially small and scattered. They are formed because the significant portions of plots acquired for road construction, reduces the size of the already small plots to the point that they become unusable. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 91) As the government gradually buys, clears and fences off the plots in the area where the future infrastructure will rise, the initially sporadic small gaps, become a continuous field of decay, forming a long strips of vacant land along roads, until the road is widened and they disappear at once. (Figure 7-4) In this case the vacant areas are a result of a slow process of land acquisition and adjustment.(RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 92) (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 143)

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<sup>6</sup> Also, as many elderly cannot afford cost of property upgrading, when their siblings inherit the property the structures are run-down. The heirs tend to let the house deteriorate until the property is sold, because property taxes are higher on vacant land. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 121)



**Figure 7-4.** Processes of land acquisition and clearance as 2012 in auxiliary road 26 in Kitazawa. Source: (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 145)

**Extra Large** - Vacant spaces are also generated by wasteland transformations. The large scale developments and land readjustment projects produce larger and contiguous vacant spaces. These developments, like the Tokyo waterfront development on artificial landfill islands in the Tokyo Bay, are a result of the overestimated expectations typical of the 1980's bubble economy and they tend to become long term vacancies. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 126)

## Research methodology

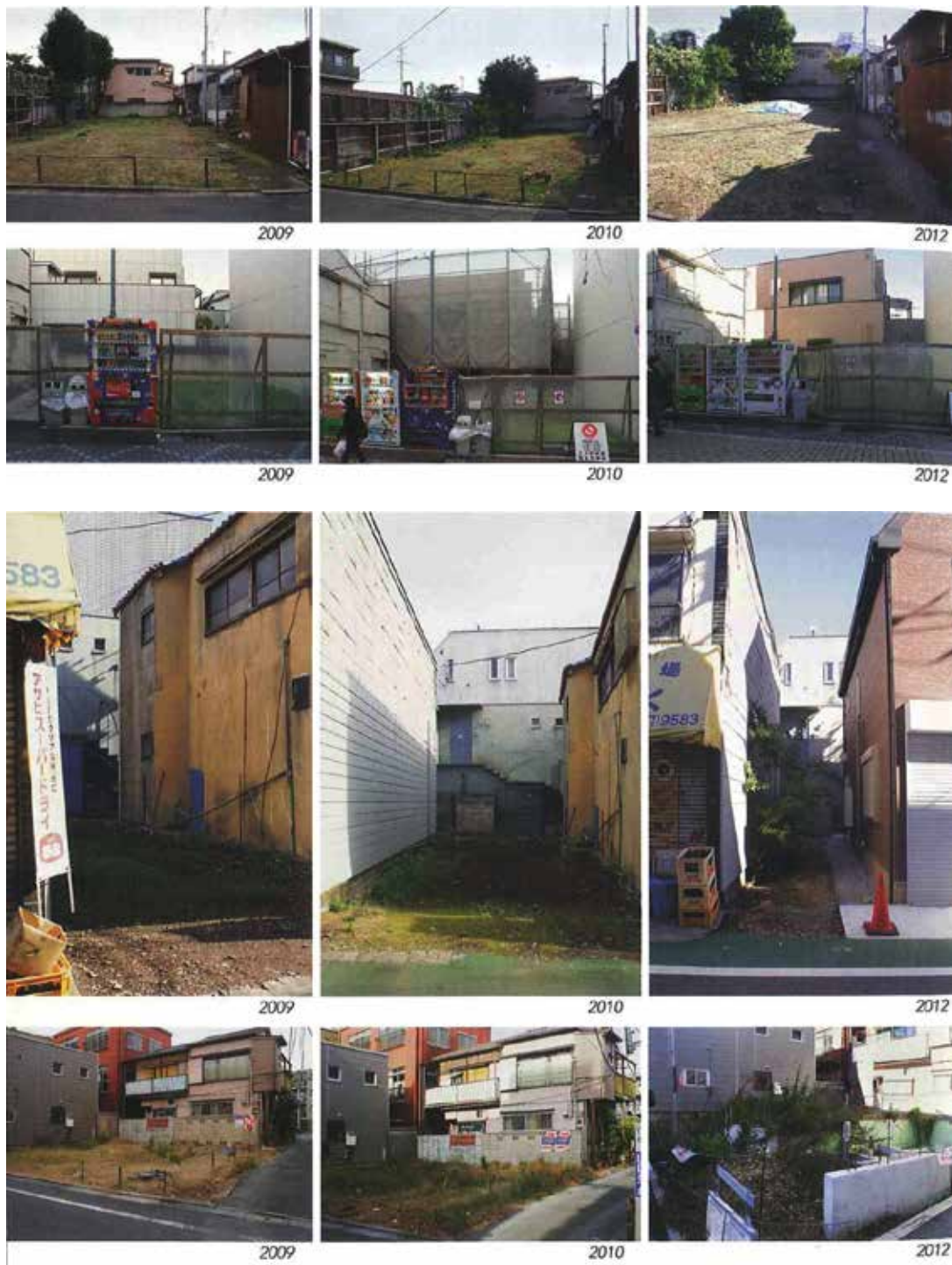
In the “Tokyo Void” publication, Marieluise Jonas and Heike Rahmann first indicate the main trajectories that characterize thus far the writings and research about interstitial spaces, “Terrain Vague”, and temporary urbanism (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 24), namely: “Phenomenological nature of voids” - exploring the visual and aesthetic qualities of these spaces (De SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995); “Economic processes leading to vacancy” - exploring the social, political and economic conditions that inform urban transformation processes and the production of vacant spaces (BERGER, 2006) (OSWALT, 2005); “Program and uses for vacant spaces” - research initiatives about “informal uses” that highlight the catalytic effect of appropriation processes that led to question the established ideas about urban planning (OSWALT, 2013) (CRAWFORD 1999) (CAMPO 2013) (LERNER 2014); and writings that see voids also as “materialscape”, where remnant vegetation and unsealed surfaces contribute to Urban Ecology (DEL TREDICI, 2010) (CLÉMENT, 2005) (LACHMUND, 2013) (SUKOPP, 2008).

The objective of the research project Jonas and Rahmann started in 2009, was to trace individual vacant sites over a period of time. In fact, they analyzed vacant spaces in five areas of Tokyo with different contextual environment over a period of four years (2009-2013). The methodology applied by the researchers included a combination of methods, ranging from visual and GPS data, GIS-aided assessment and land use statistics. The first challenge that they encountered was the ephemeral nature of voids. They wanted to record something that is in an “in between state”. Therefore they added a non-empirical method to capture the “fluctuation of vacancy”, observing and tracing vacant spaces over time on Google maps. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), pp. 156-163) Land use statistics in Tokyo define “unused land” since the 1984 census as composed of “Residential sites prior to construction, sites undergoing zone adjustment, demolition sites, deserted buildings, and reclaimed land.” (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), pp. 116,157) Over the past 15 years, the overall extent of urban voids has remained relatively unchanged<sup>7</sup> even with the 1993 collapse of economy; although the number of vacant buildings increased, the percentage of vacant land remained stable<sup>8</sup>. The issue was not the “quantity” of vacant spaces, but rather “how” the transformation processes occur and the speed at which they occur. The only way to answer this question, and deal with the shifting character of vacant land, was to combine the taxation records and the land use statistics with closer observation, site visits, photographs and aerial images (spatial and non-spatial data). The sites were mapped and visited in yearly intervals. (Figure 7-5) In the end the researchers observed that over 90% of the voids remained vacant. This could mean that their overall surface remains unaltered, but they become more fragmented and scattered, or that they simply shift location. According to Jonas and Rahmann “[W]hile the overall quantity might remain similar, vacant spaces change on an individual level in the highly fragmented fabric of Tokyo, and reflect localized processes of growth, transformation, and decline”. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 158)

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<sup>7</sup> Unused land in central Tokyo (23 wards' area): 1996, 4 %; 2001, 3.3 %; 2006, 3.1 %; 2008, 3.1 % (Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> The fact that unused land is taxed at higher rates than occupied land is accountable for this trend.



**Figure 7-5.** Photograph recordings of Urban Voids between 2009-2012 in Motohasunuma, Kita-ku. Source: (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 168)

### **Vacant space morphology, materiality & performance**

Shifting back to the inwardly oriented detail of Tokyo’s voids, the research evaluates the performance of such space through their material ecology reflected in “ground, atmosphere and vegetation”. “These spaces may be void of programmatic function, yet they are still performing in an ecological capacity and as part of larger urban landscape systems” (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 34) As a matter of fact, the absence of anthropogenic alteration is what increases the ecological performance of such spaces, and the former

manipulation of the land is what defines their current materiality<sup>9</sup>. The “**materiality**” of the ground is the first one to be explored in the Tokyo Void research. What forms the void is the “absence of volume above ground”, but the ground itself possesses depth. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 88) In vacant sites the materiality of the ground surface is made of open soil, bitumen, concrete, tiles, gravel, remnant vegetation and building debris. Often these material are layered on top of each other, allowing for traces of the past programs and uses to reemerge<sup>10</sup>. Ground contains, filters, stores and transports material, water and air. Open soil can absorb liquids (water) and air (including pollutants) and perform as growth medium for spontaneous vegetation. Unsealed soil can mitigate storm surge events and contribute to evaporation and cooling effects in local microclimate. The “**atmosphere**” is the second aspect of a void’s material ecology. These “invisible aspects of the volumetric space define its presence” and contribute to urban microclimates and to the reduction of urban heat islands in the centre of Tokyo. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 96) The third and last aspect of vacant space materiality is “**vegetation**”, in the form of escaped garden plants, trees, and weeds. A part form contributing to weather mitigation, vegetation can allow for biomass cultivation. Moreover, these “micro natures”, form a landscape pattern that maps “human non interference” and its changes over time. Ground cover vegetation reflects ecological site conditions such as availability of water, sunlight, air, soil type, and nutrients, and can map “contexts such as climate extremes”. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 99) As we discussed in Chapter 5 (Ecological benefits of residual spaces, p. 87), by observing the spontaneous vegetation growing on an abandoned site, we can understand the present site condition and learn about its natural history<sup>11</sup>.

While through the examination of processes that lead to vacancy (influenced by time, ownership, legislation and context), the authors explained the “formation”, the “duration” and the “temporal fluctuation” of individual voids (succession cycle of rebuilding of houses in the residential areas, subdivisions prompted by tax policy in the dense neighborhoods of central Tokyo, and large scale unsuccessful developments); they explained how the morphology (small and disjointed leftover spaces, gaps between buildings or vast spatial entities) influences their material qualities. The predominant types of urban voids identified in Tokyo by Jonas and Rahmann are the following: “gap voids”; “empty plots”; “linear voids”; and “large open voids”. The “**gap voids**” can be found between the high rise buildings of the densely built city centre. Given the fact that they are usually overshadowed by the tall buildings that surround them, the environment is dark and damp, and the vegetation we can find consists mostly of low grasses and mosses. “**Empty plots**” occur mostly in areas with low-rise and less dense building fabric. The vegetation will mostly depend on the soil type. “**Linear voids**” are corridors formed by the combination of multiple voids in road readjustment areas. They contribute to increased permeability of the soil and ease airflow. “**Large open voids**” can be found in land reclamation sites and can contribute to increased evapotranspiration through the extensive

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<sup>9</sup> The soils that have been formed or altered by human cultivation or land manipulation processes (terracing, draining, irrigation, transportation of soil) are called “Antrosols”.

<sup>10</sup> See also: (GISSEN, 2009), (CANTARELLA & GIULIANO, 2013) (ARMSTRONG, 2016)

<sup>11</sup> See also: (GISSEN, 2009), (DEL TREDICI, 2010)

presence of ground cover vegetation and open soil; their extensive size also encourages airflow. (Figure 7-6)



**Figure 7-6.** Tokyo's Urban Void Typologies: urban reconstruction and road readjustment areas. Voids recorded in five areas between 2009-2013. Source: (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 124)

## Appropriation strategies

The main aim of the “Tokyo Void” research project was to:

“investigate utilization strategies that are appropriate for Tokyo's specific conditions. It navigates between the platforms of formality, informality, and hybrid forms of intervention, with their various expressions of ownership, involvement, and initiation.” (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 96)

In public spaces informal practices and appropriation occur at a much subtler level in Tokyo. Through “subtle adaptations” and “careful negotiations”, citizens operate “informal extensions” of their private space into the public sphere. Residents in extremely dense areas, for example, traditionally practice informal gardening involving mobile flowerpot gardens occupying public areas like roads and sidewalks. This kind of practice is unofficially accepted as it contributes to the beautification of the streetscapes (the desire to maintain visual integrity). But more in general, it highlights the traditional consideration of spaces and utilities in the alleyways as “shared, informally reclaimed public space”. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 62)

Temporary, unintentional and often unwanted, Tokyo’s voids “function as mirrors of the past and offer counter-perspectives to normative space.” (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 95) Since the environment is highly regulated in Tokyo, vacant spaces become an opportunity to explore prohibited activities and, indirectly, to critique the loss of social values in the contemporary urban space. Moreover these spaces offer the possibility to rediscover traditional trades and craftsmanship<sup>12</sup>, encourage and support communal activities, and to introduce a new concept of public open space (which is a foreign concept to Tokyo residents and day time workers), “enhance[ing] urban space by understanding its reality”. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 95)

Based on their observations concerning the environmental and social qualities of vacant land in Tokyo, Jonas and Rahmann explore the potential re-appropriation strategies of these “cracks in the urban surface”, listing what kind of interventions can be operated on them. Keeping in mind that “[p]otential types of use mainly depend on four factors: the wishes of the owner of a space; the desired use of the potential user; the size of the space; and temporary availability.” (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 103), the authors propose a differentiation of intervention approaches towards vacant land based on the appropriation initiative, namely: “formalized design strategies”; “informal appropriation” (“Tokyo Void” RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014); and “hybrid interventions” (“Void Potential” essay, RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014).

The formal development of vacant sites is usually found in the form of architectural, landscape architectural, or urban design interventions. **Formal design strategies** on vacant land can be observed in projects such as the “*Uni no Mori*” (The Sea Forest) project by Tadao Ando in collaboration with the Metropolitan Government (2009), a land reclamation operation in the Tokyo Bay, that intended to transform the artificial island (a former

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<sup>12</sup> See for example the “Giza Rice Farm” project (2009), where a 100 m<sup>2</sup> vacant space in Ginza was transformed into temporary rice paddy. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 40)

landfill) into an urban forest. Projects such as “*Uni no Mori*” set the spatial framework in which natural processes occur over time. The sites are in constant transformation, unpredictable and ever unfinished. Consciously embracing the dimension of time, “[r]ather than focusing on the final product, the projects communicate through processes, transformation, and growth” (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 58), and this condition aligns this kind of projects to the Landscape Urbanism approach to Urban landscape. (WALDHEIM, 2006) Jonas and Rahmann argue that these formal design strategies conform to a “strict choreography that allows no opportunity for spontaneous actions”. The risk is that instead of creating a symbiosis between forest, people, city, and nature, they will simply become a “beautiful scenery”, an immaculate and homogeneous green blanket. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 58) They believe that it seems particularly difficult for the discipline of architecture to find a meaningful approach to void spaces without falling back into common practice, focusing on form generation, aesthetics, and productivity. (GISSSEN, 2009) (LÉVESQUE, 2002) (De SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995) The key to unravel this issue seems to be the “degree of control” design should execute on these spontaneous expressions of our urban ecosystems.

Japanese taxation incentivizes the use of vacant land, even if only temporarily, because unused land is taxed at higher rates than land used for building or agricultural production. In fact, another formal approach that can be observed in Tokyo, is the **commercialization of vacant spaces**. An example of this practice is the current predominant practice of transforming void spaces into coin-operated parking lots. This practice guarantees the productivity and economic performance of the site, while giving visual integrity through immaculately designed surfaces and equipment. (Figure 7-7, Figure 7-8)

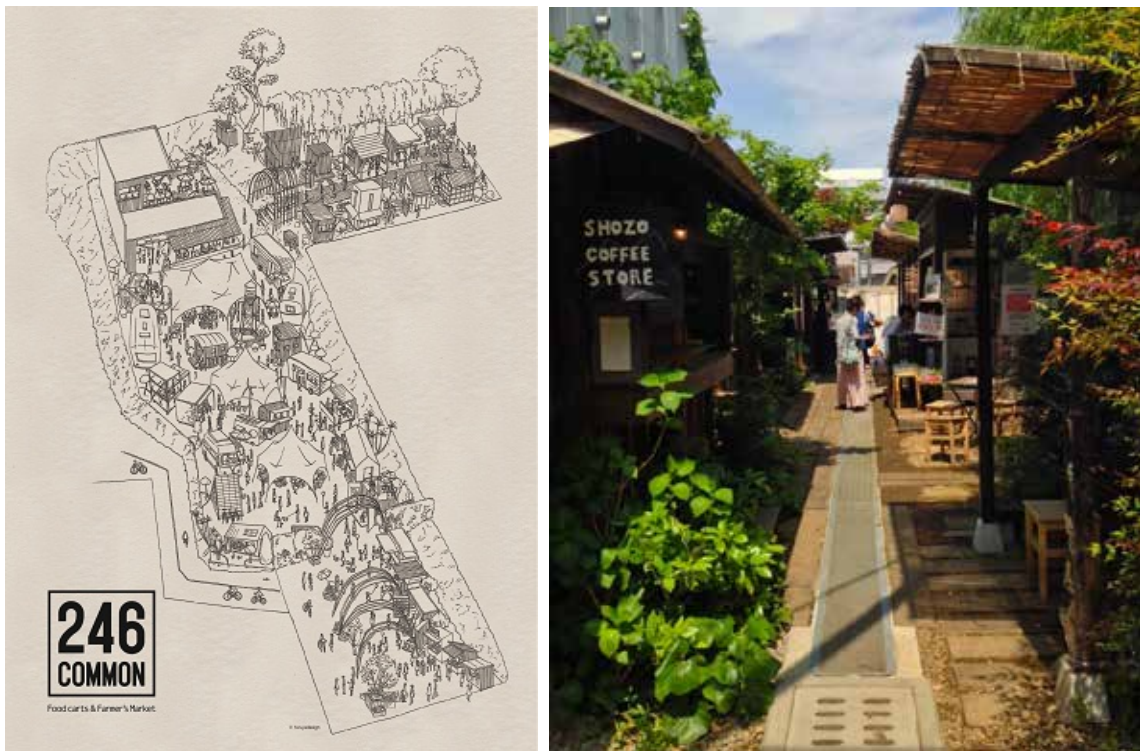


**Figure 7-7.** Wooden house and coin-operated parking in Japan. Source: Wikipedia, photograph by Miquel Ràmia.





**Figure 7-8.** Zoning limitation, setback requirements, or simply plot subdivision due to financial limitations, led to the transformation of the front part of the lot into a coin-operated parking. Kyoto, Japan. Source: Copyright 2007 Jeffrey Eric Francis Fried. [http://regex.info/imageinfo.cgi?url=http%3A%2F%2Fregex.info%2F%2Fi%2FJEF\\_033687.jpg](http://regex.info/imageinfo.cgi?url=http%3A%2F%2Fregex.info%2F%2Fi%2FJEF_033687.jpg)



**Figure 7-9.** Cafes, farmers market and workshops in the 246 Common, Aoyama Minato'ku, Tokyo. Source: <http://www.tripstyler.com/trip-styler/2014/5/24/tokyo-where-to-sip-coffee>

The coin-operated parking solution adopted to make profit out of vacant sites seems effective, but profitable only for the private owner. Instead, the 246 Common (2012-2014) provided also a place of encounter, promoting interaction and communication. Located in a shopping and entertainment district of Tokyo, characterized by small-scale mixed use buildings and a mazelike patters of backstreets, the formerly vacant site was reactivated through a set of small commercial and cultural activities. Pop-up stores and galleries, cafes, workshops, and a farmers' market were introduced in the area. (Figure 7-9) The intimate atmosphere and the numerous activities offered in the 246 Common, provided recreation and meeting space for residents, visitors, and workers, promoting community values.

**Informal appropriation** can be used as a “applied tactic” in reclaiming unused land and in a new approach toward community-driven urban development. Informal appropriation can occur through “subversive actions” (like guerrilla gardening) and through “accepted interventions” which require intermediations. When it comes to vacant lots the informal approaches are less frequent in Japan due to cultural codes, which impart strong respect for private property (even if definition of private property is only symbolic or with a thin rope, nobody would dare to traverse the property). Nevertheless, we can witness negotiated uses of such spaces through domestic activities - such as washing and drying clothes, drying and storing vegetables, gardening, and storing garbage (Figure 7-10, Figure 7-11) - and commercial ones - such as temporary display and storage of commercial goods – or even through provision of services for the public - such as do-it-yourself garbage sorting systems. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 66) According to Rahmann and Jonas, this “deeply embedded practice of informal appropriation might point to utilization and activation strategies for temporarily available spaces and form a starting point for reinvestigating the potential of void spaces.” (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 100)



**Figure 7-10.** (left) Pot Plant Corner in Nakano. Source: Tokyo DIY Gardening (<http://tokyo-diy-gardening.org/>)

**Figure 7-11. (right)** Classic Pot Garden in Shiba/Mita. Source: Tokyo DIY Gardening (<http://tokyo-diy-gardening.org/>)

**Hybrid interventions** concern the formal activation of vacant spaces by means of informal interventions. In this case, “the intervention that is undertaken transforms the vacant space on a temporary basis, influenced only by the participants in the intervention, while the activation process itself is set up and coordinated by a formal party, such as the owner”. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 100) An example of a hybrid intervention is offered

by the “Kasu Harappa ONDI”<sup>13</sup> situated in a quiet neighborhood of Yanaka, a low rise residential area. Instead of transforming the lot in a coin-operated parking, the owners decided to make the vacant site available for a diverse mix of events, such as performances, demonstrations, art exhibitions, cultural celebrations, market events and student workshops. (Figure 7-12) Neighbors have the freedom to rent the space at a minimum fee and use it however they please, as long as they follow a simple set of rules and take responsibility for their event. By opening up private, vacant space to the public and welcoming cultural activities, the site is “transforms into an open stage, without walls or roof, where strolling residents and visitors become part of the audience - participants in the event, not just spectators.”<sup>14</sup> (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 100)



<sup>13</sup> “*Harappa Ondi*” literally means “vacant rental space”. Composed by the word “Harappa” - which means, open field, wild field (often used in association with void spaces, recalling an innocent childhood memory, of overgrown, open “Harappa spaces”, i.e. vacant spaces, conquered for play and adventure), and the word “ondi” - which means sound of soil, referring to the beauty of the site exposed to natural elements. (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2))

<sup>14</sup> See also “House of Weeds” project by Atelier Bow-Wow.

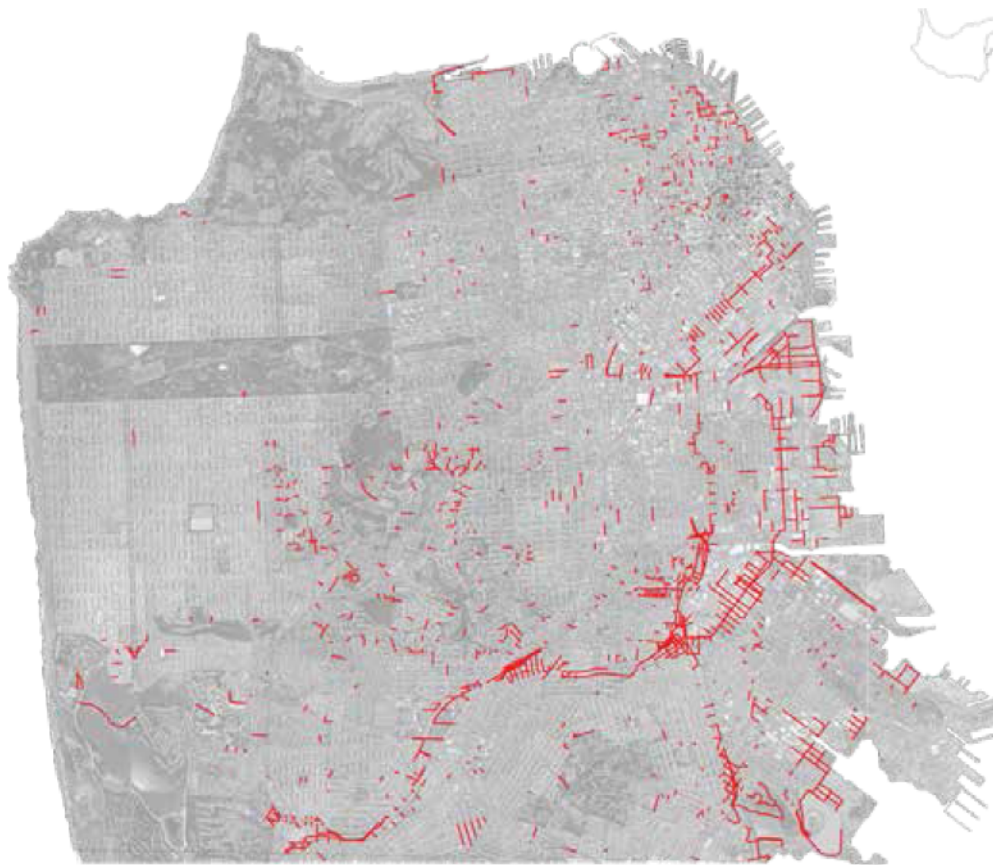


**Figure 7-12.** Kasu Harappa ONDI, an unused piece of land that can be rented by anyone as a public gallery, market and event space. Yanaka. Taito-ku, Tokyo. Source: <http://popupcity.net/tokyo-void-possibilities-in-absence/>

The main conclusion that can be drawn by exploring the “Tokyo Void” research project is that in Tokyo there is a tendency towards the recognition of value in “imperfection” and “emptiness”, which translates into the consideration of urban voids as opportunities for a break in the continuous and formalized urban tissue. The qualities of voids in Tokyo include the fact that they are accidental, multifaceted, devoid of an official program, but rich in material ecology. “Space needs to function as a medium that allows multiple flexible uses” (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 71), as non-programmed spaces welcomes alternative functions, vacant spaces are an ideal social medium. Thanks to their materiality, vacant spaces can fulfill ecological functions such as the “provision of open soil in an otherwise fully sealed urban context, storm water collection, biodiversity, dust absorption, and improvement of microclimate.”(RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 103) But, most importantly, voids are ephemeral: “Transient spaces serve no productive purpose. They offer the possibility of accidental discoveries and nonproductive activities, experiences that are unplanned and momentary. They offer, maybe, just a glimpse of the unfinished.”(RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (2), p. 94) According to Jonas and Rahmann, “Embracing ephemeral as a cultural practice” - welcoming the incompleteness, imperfection and unpredictability of voids, and refraining from the urge to assign them a permanent function or to apply on them formalized design strategies - suggests tending towards temporary use and negotiated levels of “interaction” with the vacant sites. Lastly, the fluctuating condition produced by multiple voids, calls for a consideration of a “connected, dynamic network of spaces”.

## 7.2 San Francisco - Local code

In “Local Code: 3,659 Proposals about Data, Design, and the Nature of Cities”, Nicholas de Monchaux<sup>15</sup> assembles information about thousands of publicly owned or abandoned sites in four cities, and three essays concerning past speculations on the complex and adaptive qualities of opportunistic urban networks, which act as a support and theoretical background to the case studies. The biographical stories concern independent thinkers who inspired the research and hold a special place in the intertwined histories of information systems and cities in the last century: artist and “anarchitect” Gordon Matta-Clark, who experimented with a “net-work” of vacant remnant sites in New York City in the 1970s, using as its raw material urban laws and activities (see 4.1 A new gaze on Residual Landscapes. The role of artists, p. 57); Jane Jacobs, architecture critic turned author and activist, who declared the failure of the orthodox planning practice exploring, through observation, the complexity of the urban phenomenon; and Howard Fisher, an architect who contributed to the development of GIS (geographic information systems).



**Figure 7-13.** “Unacceptable” sites, 1500 city-owned remnant parcels in San Francisco (CA). Source: <http://demonchaux.com/Local-Code-San-Francisco>

In the research projects presented in the book, de Monchaux uses GIS mapping techniques to identify, analyze and speculate on the possible futures of abandoned sites in three representative American cities (San Francisco<sup>16</sup>, Los Angeles<sup>17</sup>, and New York<sup>18</sup>), and a

<sup>15</sup> Nicholas de Monchaux has been visiting researcher at the Santa Fe Institute since 2001. The Santa Fe Institute is an independent, nonprofit research and education center located in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The centre is engaged in research activities around complex systems, and it is increasingly concerned with matters of the city (<https://www.santafe.edu/>).

<sup>16</sup> See also: <http://demonchaux.com/Local-Code-San-Francisco>

small European one (Venice) (Figure 7-13). Spatial analysis serves to identify possible relationships between their location and other underlying social and ecological dynamics, and the potential integration between these properties in an ecological and social network. The research results show that “spaces generally abandoned and avoided by normal urban mechanisms of occupation, exploitation, and use turn out to have several very essential qualities in common” (DE MONCHAUX, 2016, p. 10), which could become an asset from an ecological, social and economical perspective. In fact, de Monchaux noticed that these spaces are usually concentrated in areas of the city (downhill, downstream) where they could become most useful in the prevention of floods and in mitigation of the urban heat island phenomenon. Secondly, the results show that such sites are predominantly positioned in communities where there is little or no access to parks and public space. Therefore these sites could, on one hand, contribute, through ecosystem services, to the prevention of ecological threats, and on the other, benefit Public health and the social wellbeing of the citizens.

There are three main aspects of de Monchaux’s “Local code” research into residual spaces that I wish to highlight, because I believe they position this research within the framework of Residual Landscape analytical methods and offer strategies on how to determine their ecological and social value: the first one concerns the way residual spaces are **identified**; the second one can be observed in the **digital tools** used to map the areas, interpret the collected data and elaborate design decisions; and the third one consists in the overall intent of the proposed **design strategies**. The possibility to rely on the use of geographic information systems and parametric tools is crucial when dealing with a big quantity of data, such as the one processed by de Monchaux, and to deal with highly complex systems of information.

Although the mapping and data elaboration process adopted by the author in all four surveyed cities is analogous, the specific type of urban residual space under examination vary according to the city. In the San Francisco (2009-2010) case study the research objects are zones that the Department of Public Works listed as “unaccepted”; in the New York (2012-2015) case study the analyzed areas are vacant and underutilized parcels (most of them city owned) catalogued since 2009 by the urban ecology laboratory of Timon McPhearson at Parsons the New School for Design<sup>19</sup> (Figure 7-14); the Los Angeles case study (2010-11) concentrates mostly on underutilized lots leased by outdoor advertising companies along the Los Angeles River basin and the parallel highway system (Figure 7-15); in the Venice case study (2012)<sup>20</sup> the residues analyzed are no longer swats of land between buildings or neglected infrastructural interstices, but (drawing from the discontinuous character of the Venice lagoon system) the research identifies abandoned or neglected islands, which were originally part of an interlinked archipelago and are now isolated by their apparent obsolescence. (Figure 7-16)

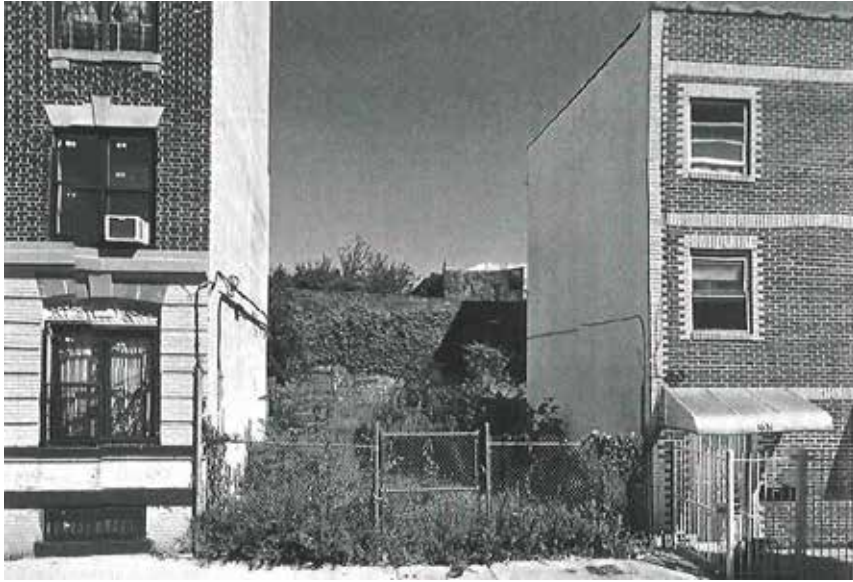
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<sup>17</sup> Project in collaboration with Los Angeles Nonprofit Amigos de Los Rios. See also: <http://demonchaux.com/Local-Code-Los-Angeles>

<sup>18</sup> Project in collaboration with Timon McPhearson, Director of the Urban Ecology Lab, Parsons the School for Design.

<sup>19</sup> The aim of the catalogue was to identify estimate the specific potential for ecosystem services within the abandoned sites of New York city.

<sup>20</sup> Developed for the US Pavilion at the 13th Venice Architecture Biennale, entitle “Towards and Ecology of Strangers”.



**Figure 7-14.** Prospect Place vacant and underutilized parcel in New York. Source: (DE MONCHAUX, 2016)



**Figure 7-15.** Billboards in an underutilized lot in Los Angeles. Source: <http://demonchaux.com/Local-Code-Los-Angeles>

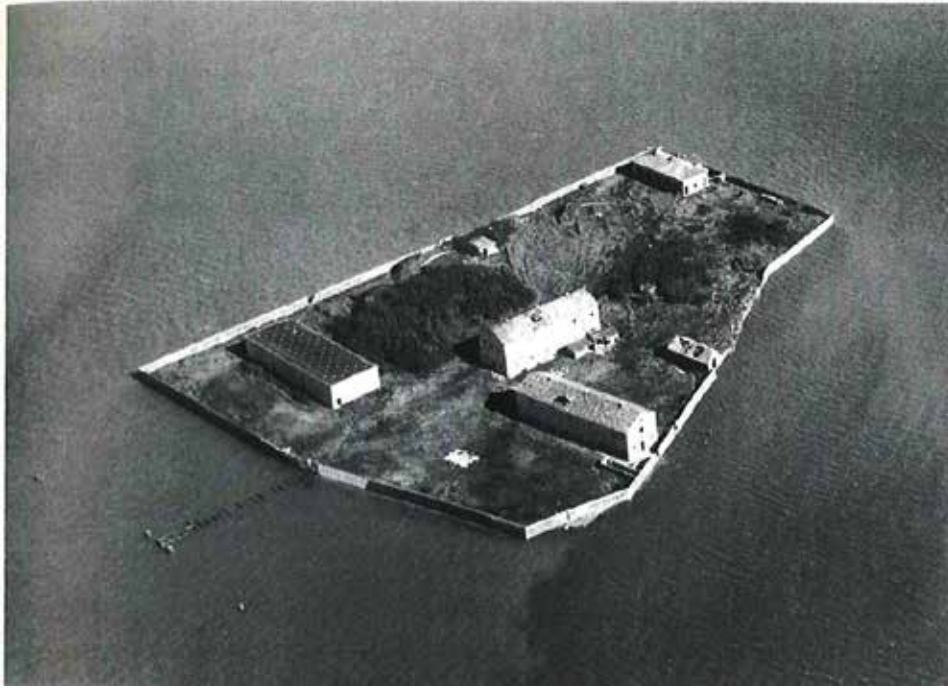
Considering the large amount of information involved in the research process, data collection and interpretation was manageable thanks to the employment of digital tools. Nevertheless mixed techniques were used, both analogic and digital. To identify the sites both existing land ownership documentation and databases, digital map observation and crowdsourced<sup>21</sup> labor were employed. The abandoned sites were mapped with GIS. Statistical information about public health, criminality, and environmental hazards was used to identify possible interrelation between the presence and location of residual spaces and other underlying demographic, spatial and political dynamics. Parametric tools (i.e. Grasshopper) were used to merge the layers with information about the site and read them “perpendicularly, not horizontally”. (see **Appendix 1** - Interview with Nicholas de Monchaux, p. 221) Although the digital tools allowed to manage a high number of sites and elaborate design decisions made on 10, 20, 30 sites, to 1500 sites at the same time, direct observation of a sample of representative sites was crucial during the design phase. It was an iterative process that involved going back and forth between digital tools and traditional direct design approaches, where the human designer still had a crucial role. (see **Appendix 1** - Interview with Nicholas de Monchaux, p. 221)

In terms of **project proposals**, while all the case studies share common strategies and intention, they are nevertheless offering specific answers to the peculiarities of each climatic, social and economical condition, giving indications on how to reach the full potential of each specific site. In both the San Francisco and the New York case studies, the landscape strategies proposed for these abandoned sites are aimed at reconfiguring each site to obtain the best ecological and social potential. They are programmed to include, among other things, storm water retention systems, water runoff drainage infrastructures, organic water filtration and infiltration systems (planting). (DE MONCHAUX, 2016, pp. 14,178) Moreover, since a lot of these sites are in areas of the cities without access to fresh produce, de Monchaux’s proposals also look at how to maximize the agricultural potential of each site, for example through community gardens (see **Appendix 1** - Interview with Nicholas de Monchaux, p. 221). In the Los Angeles case study, a set of water-focused retention landscapes are proposed, to serve both, ecological (water retention basins) and social purposes (offering open space and amenities for the poor communities).(DE MONCHAUX, 2016, p. 87) In Venice the proposal transforms the abandoned islands into “cultural and ecological catalysts that offer housing for artists in residency and add structured landscapes to the existing land to absorb pollutants, capture sediment and moderate high tide.” (DE MONCHAUX, 2016, pp. 141-142) (Figure 7-16)

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<sup>21</sup> Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) is a crowdsourcing internet marketplace enabling individuals and businesses (known as *Requesters*) to coordinate the use of human intelligence to perform tasks that computers are currently unable to do. Employers are able to post jobs known as Human Intelligence Tasks (HITs), such as choosing the best among several photographs of a storefront, writing product descriptions, or identifying performers on music CDs. Workers (called Providers in Mechanical Turk's Terms of Service, or, *Turkers*) can then complete the jobs offered in exchange for a monetary payment set by the employer. (<https://www.mturk.com/mturk/>). The word Turk is an adjective referring to someone who is extremely brave. It is a common slang term used in some parts of West Coast in the United States (<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Turk>).





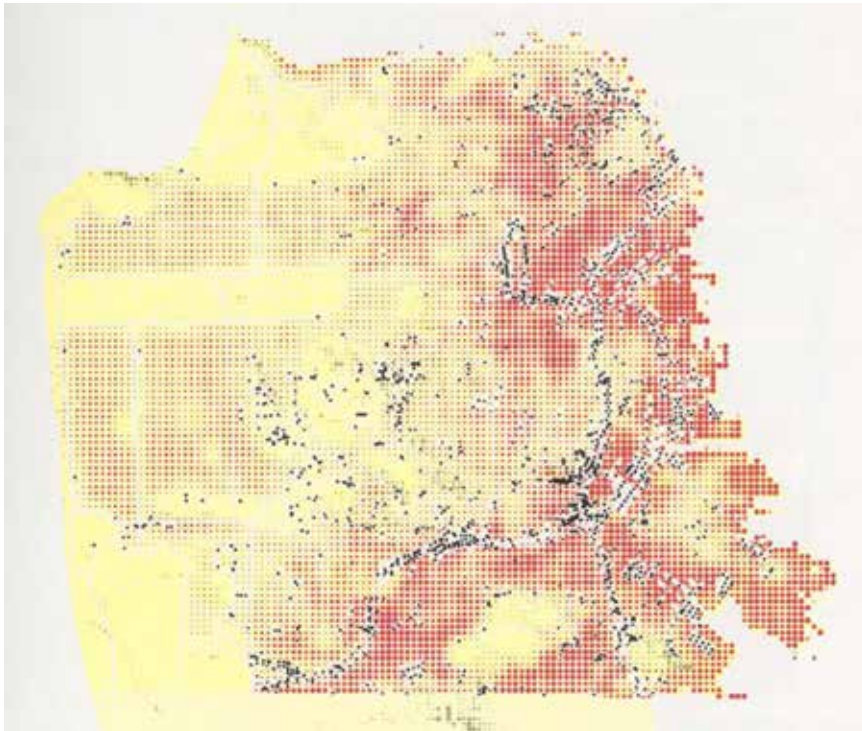
**Figure 7-16.** Santo Spirito Island in the Venice lagoon. Source: (DE MONCHAUX, 2016)

#### **The San Francisco case study (2009-2010)**

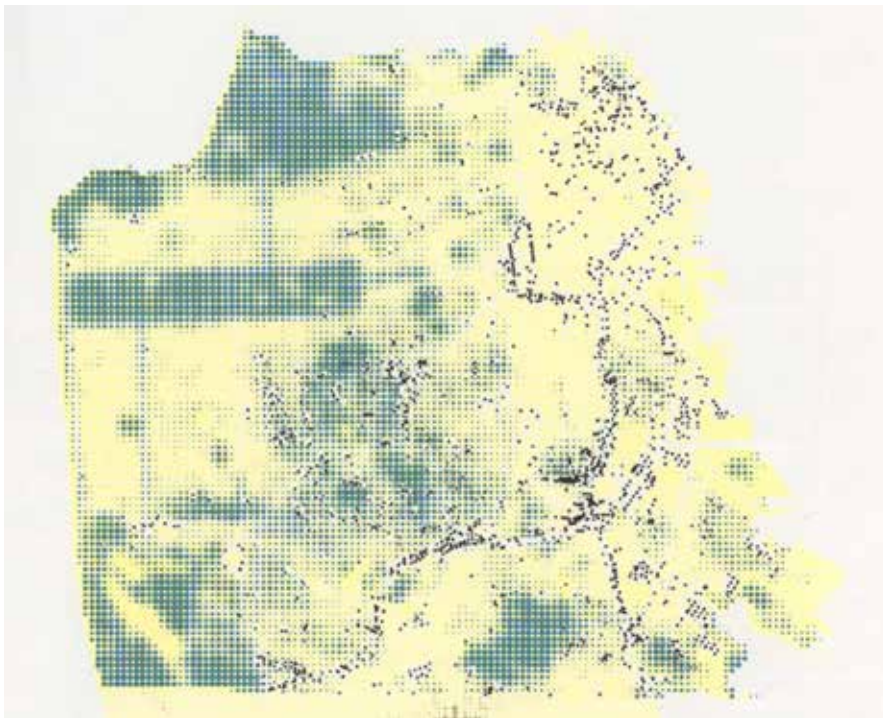
The San Francisco case study is particularly relevant, because it offers an example of a densely built and consolidated city where residual spaces are all the more important to ensure a margin of flexibility in the otherwise saturated and static urban fabric. In San Francisco the presence of residual spaces is a result of land management, real estate and socio-economical urban dynamics. For this project De Monchaux collected data about the vacant sites in the city, described as rights-of-way but not maintained (listed as “unaccepted”) by the Department of Public Works. After mapping with GIS their location and morphology, he overplayed available information about criminality, poverty, atmospheric pollution (i.e. airborne contaminants), water management (i.e. drainage and sewer systems), public health (i.e. cancer diagnosis), urban ground cover (green surfaces) and urban heat islands. (Figure 7-17, Figure 7-18) He concluded that in the more fragile areas there is a higher concentration of these abandoned sites, and he observed how the sites themselves, which are distributed throughout the entire city, could improve urban thermodynamic performance where most needed, and increase the overall resilience of the city’s existing infrastructure (DE MONCHAUX, 2016, p. 15). Accordingly, in the design process he used thermodynamic data and physical disposition of the site in relation to these factors to figure out where the new landscape interventions would have the most effect<sup>22</sup>. He used local models of water flow, solar gain and wind movement to parametrically define a suitable location of soft and hard surfaces (e.g. porous paving, trees, bioswales, storm water retention basins, drainage pathways and produce gardens) which would have contributed to water drainage, reduction of atmospheric pollution, flood prevention (through storm water retention and reduction of water runoff), and management of energy loads. (Figure 7-19) In this way, and through the support of parametric design tools

<sup>22</sup> By identifying where each site was located in the watershed and where in terms of the larger storm water flow, and after making local solar analysis of each site, he was able to define the scale and location of storm water infrastructures and where the landscaping would have the most effect.

(grasshopper), he was then able to calculate the energy performance and remediative potential of the abandoned sites, and propose schematic landscape strategies and flow diagrams estimating the financial savings in terms of surface interventions' cost, compared to the money allocated for city infrastructure improvements.



**Figure 7-17.** Urban Heat Islands San Francisco (CA), Landsat Infrared Band, September 2010. Source: <http://demonchaux.com/Local-Code-San-Francisco>



**Figure 7-18.** Urban ground cover map in San Francisco (CA). ASTER Image Analysis 2010. Source: (DE MONCHAUX, 2016)

What makes the project's results valid is the fact that they are based on tangible, quantitative, physical data, and on the measurable potential of each unused site. In fact, by offering a quantitative comparison between the cost of the above mentioned surface interventions on vacant sites with the money allocated for city infrastructure improvements in 2003, the project demonstrates that these surface interventions would offer financial savings while still guaranteeing ecological and social improvement<sup>23</sup>. Another important aspect of the San Francisco case study, which makes it relevant to this dissertation's research intent, is that it does not dictate a specific design project for each site, but rather it intends to give suggestions on how to reach the full potential of the latter. What de Monchaux is proposing are in fact some sort of "loose guidelines" which allow for adjustment to each individual case, while still operating within an overall scheme to guarantee environmental and socio-economical benefits. Lastly, it's worth mentioning that the project is under further development, and the new phase will focus on the social aspect of these Residual Landscapes and include community design in the strategies, integrating public crowd sourcing consensus into the design of public landscapes. The aim of this phase of the research is to promote "digital democracy" using place based media to engage and include communities and collect findings through an online system<sup>24</sup>.

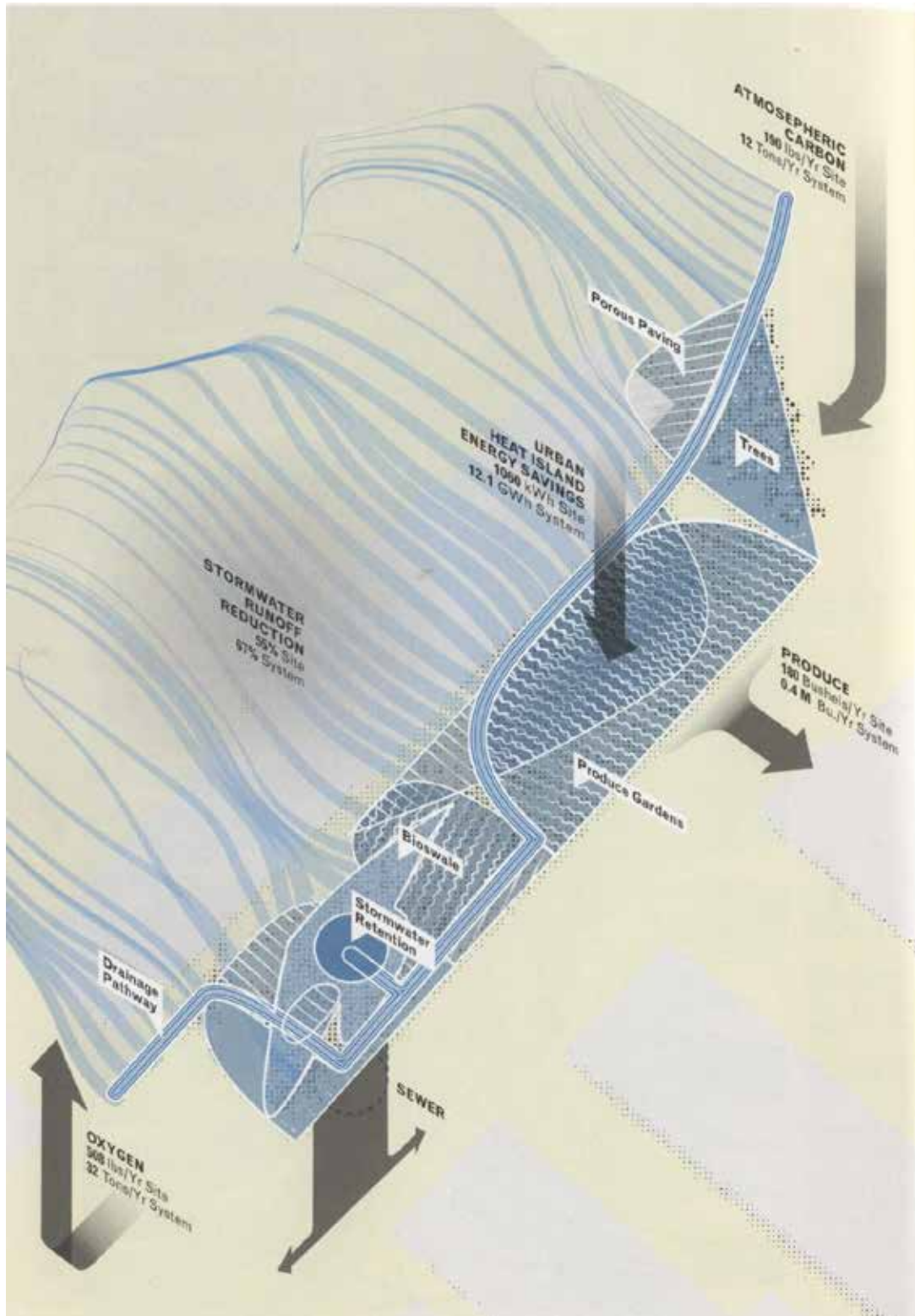
The four case studies developed by de Monchaux share the common interest in attributing both ecological and socio-economic value to vacant and underused sites in urban environments. The social aspects are more explicit in the San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York projects and less in the Venice project, although in the latter they are implicitly considered in the shared analytical and evaluation method adopted by Nicholas de Monchaux. More in general, all the analyzed case studies imply that the answer to the growing need to guarantee resiliency of cities towards unpredictable natural and economical crises, does not necessarily lie in large scale proposals and massive investments, usually concentrated in the richer neighborhoods, thus failing to distribute the resources throughout the city. Nor can resilience be guaranteed by monumental artifacts or sumptuous infrastructural projects, whose only purpose is political propaganda and certainly not the common interest. In contrast, all the ignored sites presented in the research, taken singularly or as an interconnected network, demonstrate the potential to offer an alternative to the above mentioned attitude, and evaluate the possibility to operate democratically, addressing such vital issues in an equitable way. But most of all, they demonstrate how it's possible to act right where it's needed and to efficiently put to use undervalued land. These lots can become hybrid systems, offering social and ecological benefits at the same time, and for the same price (with the same investment in terms of money), as they are naturally capable of responding to environmental stressors through consecutive adaptation patterns. These residual spaces are part of the city seen as a "living

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<sup>23</sup> In the social science and landscape literature there is a methodology for calculating the financial effects of landscape interventions. See E. Gregory McPherson, David J. Nowak, and Rowan A. Rowntree, *Chicago's Urban Forest Ecosystem: Results of the Chicago Urban Forest Climate Project*, General Technical Report NE-186 (Radnor, PA: US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, 1994); Gary Moll, *Urban Ecosystem Analysis for the Washington DC Metropolitan Area* (Washington, D.C.: American Forests, 2002), [http://www.americanforests.org/downloads/rea/AF\\_WashingtonDC2.pdf](http://www.americanforests.org/downloads/rea/AF_WashingtonDC2.pdf); and Haan-Fawn Chau, *Green Infrastructure for Los Angeles: Addressing Urban Runoff and Water Supply through Low Impact Development* (Los Angeles: City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning and UCLA Department of Urban Planning, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> The project is called "Telescope" and it is supported by the Albert Baker funding. (see **Appendix 1** - Interview with Nicholas de Monchaux, p. 174)

organism” (G. M. Clark and Jane Jacobs). As a byproduct of the rational organization of the territory, they are the outcome of urban metabolization process (the process of undoing and remaking of the built fabric). (DE MONCHAUX, 2016, p. 80)



**Figure 7-19.** Flow diagram. Design proposal with location of soft and hard surfaces in one of the mapped sites in San Francisco (CA). Source: (DE MONCHAUX, 2016)

## Complexity and resilience

The distributed potential of such underutilized sites makes them suitable to build a “network of physical resilience”, but at the same time, guarantee social and economic resilience (DE MONCHAUX, 2016, p. 179)

In the book “Local Code: 3,659 Proposals about Data, Design, and the Nature of Cities”, de Monchaux also draws our attention on the potential of Residual Landscapes to contribute to the resilience of cities, thanks to their aptitude to compensate ecological and social mutations. He asserts that resilience, intended as a perfect recovery of a previous state, or linear response to stress, is impossible. Its Latin origin describes a mechanical spring’s return to form, which for a city faced with unpredictable disasters would mean being able to reacquire a previous state and a linear process. Cities instead are “[I]ike us, adaptive, self-sustaining systems with interconnected metabolisms” (DE MONCHAUX, 2016, p. 9) Apart from being physical, urban metabolisms are also economic, cultural and social, and therefore, to survive and thrive in the face of what de Monchaux calls “predictable uncertainty”<sup>25</sup>, we need to understand and engage the existing complex and multifaceted nature of our cities as “complex, networked artifacts” (DE MONCHAUX, 2016, p. 13). We need to understand “robustness” and “resilience” as a network of many elements working together with loose connections, and not as single revolutionary solutions or mechanisms<sup>26</sup>. These systems need to possess a quality that evolutionary biology calls “evolvability”, which is the ability to adapt, or better, “to change alongside change” (see **Appendix 1** - Interview with Nicholas de Monchaux). De Monchaux’s book is an attempt to trace such a landscape “Landscape of adjacent possibility” (Stuart Kaufmann) in the “fabric of abandoned space in the city”.(DE MONCHAUX, 2016, p. 10)

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<sup>25</sup> Referring to the unpredictability surrounding the inevitable effects of man-made climate change that, despite the abundance of data on the urban fabric that we possess today, does not give us the knowledge to predict such events.

<sup>26</sup> On “resilience” and “robustness”, see also “chapter - 9.1 Things that gain from disorder” (p. 158).

### 7.3 Detroit - Shrinking city



**Figure 7-20.** Image of abandoned playground in Detroit, part of the collection “THE ZONE”, 1999 present. Scott Hocking photographer. Source: <http://www.scotthocking.com/zone.html>

#### **Vacancies and Detroit’s post-industrial apocalypse**

As anticipated in the introduction to this chapter, residual spaces can be found in all transitioning cities, but the agencies and processes that influence their morphology vary according to the form of urban transformation. “Shrinking cities” unavoidably generate vacancy, often followed by neglect and social degradation. “Urban shrinkage”<sup>27</sup>, one of the two major trends of urban development since the beginning of the industrial revolution<sup>28</sup>, is not simply the antithesis to urban growth. As Philipp Oswalt rightly points out in the introduction of his epic book “Shrinking Cities”<sup>29</sup>, “[t]here is also growth in the process of shrinkage: it results in excess spaces, buildings, and obsolete properties.” (OSWALT,

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<sup>27</sup> Decline of the urban population and economic activity in a city. The shrinkage is not related to the actual extent of the urban surface, but rather to the rarefied population and activities: i.e. less activities spread out over a greater space.

<sup>28</sup> The other one being exponential urban growth in Asia and South America.

<sup>29</sup> The book “Shrinking cities. Volume 1: interventions” is one of the publications by Philipp Oswalt related to the EU funded “Shrinking Cities Project” developed between 2002 and 2006. An initiative project of Germany’s Federal Cultural Foundation that aimed at placing developments in eastern Germany in an international context, involving various artistic, design, and research disciplines in the search for strategies for action (including urban geographers, cultural experts, architects, journalists, and artists took part in the work). The first project phase was an international study of processes of shrinking, whereby four local interdisciplinary teams were commissioned to study and document urban shrinking processes in Europe and USA, Each site standing as an example of a specific form of shrinking: Detroit (USA) suburbanization; Manchester/Liverpool (Britain) deindustrialization; Ivanovo (Russia) – post-socialism; and Halle/Leipzig region (Germany) a compound of all the above processes of shrinkage (later on, also a Japanese city was added to the project as an example of demographic change - low birthrate and a high life expectancy - causing urban shrinkage). The second project phase, was dedicated to the development of strategies for action in shrinking cities and to an Exhibition. See also: Philipp Oswalt, “Atlas of Shrinking Cities”. Ostfildern, 2005; (OSWALT, 2006); [www.shrinkingcities.com](http://www.shrinkingcities.com).

2005, p. 12) In fact, among other things, the “Shrinking Cities” project developed insightful architectural and planning remedies to the problem of the increasing amount of abandoned areas in shrinking cities around the world.

Since the 1950s the number of shrinking cities around the world has grown. The essential causes of urban shrinkage have been suburbanization, deindustrialization, demographic change and post-socialist change. Since 1990, shrinking cities have increasingly been found also in Russia, in South Africa and in Japan, although the center of gravity of the development of this phenomenon has been in Europe and in the USA. Most of the shrinking cities in the USA have been losing population for a period of more than 50 years. One third of the suburbs in the United States suffer population losses today, so far mostly due to continuing suburbanization into ever more outlying suburbs. (OSWALT, 2005) Most shrinking cities in the US are a result of radical “regional restructuring”, a transformation whereby population and employment continue to grow region-wide (and mostly at the edge of the city), but their location shifts from the centre to the periphery, leaving extensive abandonment and poverty at the core. (OSWALT, 2005, pp. 67-68)

Detroit, one of the most extreme examples of shrinkage in the American “rust belt”<sup>30</sup> and a seminal case study of post-fordist urbanism, represents a relevant case study of residual spaces as a result of suburbanization and postindustrial financial crisis. The reason of Detroit’s decline is closely related to deindustrialization, race riots and the suburban exodus. (Figure 7-21) A combination of industrial restructuring, anti-urban federal policies and racism led to the current crisis of the city. From 1950-2004 Detroit witnessed 51% population loss. (OSWALT, 2005, pp. 226-247) After the Second World War a series of events marked the beginning of the desertion, which originated from the core of the city and spread to adjoining districts: spread of private transportation in the 1910s and 1920s, shift from rail to highway, factories and workers moving to the edge of the city, white middle class moving in the “American dream house” in the suburbs, and the concentration of low income and African American population in the inner city<sup>31</sup>. As a consequence, since the 1950s, “80% of the population lives in suburban areas outside the city limits, while large segments of the inner city have become overgrown with grass, evolving into quasi-idyllic pastoral scenes.” (OSWALT, 2005, p. 13) (Figure 7-22) Detroit epitomized the low-density suburbanized American city. Today the extent of abandonment due to de-industrialization has resulted in sprawling anarchy and the city has become a mosaic of deteriorating urban structures and new rural spaces. Because of the destruction of so many houses and the demise of industry, the inner ring of worker-housing surrounding the remnant central business district has become a “new form of rural land”. (Figure 7-23) These new rural areas offer a different urban paradigm where “an outer suburban ring surrounds a re-ruralised core of new farmland and forests.”(ARMSTRONG, 2016, p. 151)

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<sup>30</sup> America’s “rust belt” is referred to the Northeastern and Midwestern cities that formed the backbone of American industrial might a half century ago.

<sup>31</sup> Between 1940 and 1970 the “great black migration” brought more than six million blacks to northern cities. The intense racial conflicts associated with this migration only accelerated the exodus of factories and the whites who had worked there. As black poverty approached the “first-ring suburbs” built soon after 1945, the white middle class fled these areas as well, often seeking new housing at the extreme edge of the district. (OSWALT, 2005, p. 70)



**Figure 7-21.** Neighbourhood with numerous empty lots in Detroit, November 21, 2008. Source: Spencer Platt/Getty Images.



**Figure 7-22.** Lots of recently demolished homes overgrown with vegetation in the Fitzgerald neighborhood of Detroit. Source: Photographs by Alex S. MacLean.





**Figure 7-23.** The Packard plant, regarded as a sophisticated auto production facility when it opened in the early 1900s, now in ruins. Source: Photographs by Alex S. MacLean. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/12/07/opinion/sunday/exposures-detroit-by-air-alex-maclean.html>

**Data driven Detroit: documenting vacancy**



**Figure 7-24.** Abandoned and demolished houses in Detroit. Source: <http://www.urbanmarkers.ro/actions/how-to-perceive-the-importance-of-small-scale-actions-in-a-big-scale-perspective/>

In August 1990, Detroit's City Planning Commission published the “Detroit Vacant Land Survey”, a report that documented the process of depopulation and disinvestment that had been underway in Detroit since the 1950s, and proposed the “decommissioning and abandonment of the most vacant areas of what had once been the fourth largest city in the U.S.”(DASKALAKIS, et al., 2001, p. 104) This unprecedented document was followed, in 1993, by the press release by Marie Farrell-Donaldson on “The Economist”<sup>32</sup> that referred to the City Planning Commission's recommendations as the “Ombudsman”<sup>33</sup>, calling for

<sup>32</sup> "Day of the Bulldozer. "The Economist", May 8, 1993, p. 33-34.

<sup>33</sup> A government official who hears and investigates complaints by private citizens against other officials or government agencies.

the discontinuation of services and the relocation of the population that was still living in the vacant portions of the city. Entire “bits of the city” were sought to be “closed down”, residents “relocated from dying areas to those that still had life in them”; “empty houses would be demolished and empty areas fenced off”. (Figure 7-24) But most importantly, the journalist was suggesting that, after their forceful urban erasure, these areas would “either be landscaped, or allowed to return to ‘nature’”, implying that there was no desire or potential for their repopulation as they were no longer useful to the obsolete model of “fordist urbanism”. These landscapes were therefore disposable, and their condition of futility and waste, was officially sanctioned by the report. The document even included maps of the city where the vacant land was blacked-out with a marker, materially erasing from the urban planning substance portions of land, introducing an “urbanism of erasure”. As pointed out in the critical commentary of the “Decamping Detroit” project by James Corner in the “Stalking Detroit” publication, “Detroit was the only city that dared publicly articulate a plan for its own abandonment and conceive of organizing the process of de-commissioning itself as a legitimate problem requiring the attention of design professionals.” (DASKALAKIS, et al., 2001, p. 106)



**Figure 7-25.** Project by Erin Kelly, Associate ASLA, working with “deconstruction” (as opposed to straight demolition). The goal of the initiative is to try to understand what the economic and environmental impacts will be for taking down some of Detroit’s vacant properties. The hypothesis is that deconstruction can become a viable model if the right combination of timing, muscle, and environmental mitigation and job-creation are determined. Source: Detroit Future City.

<https://landscapearchitecturemagazine.org/2014/12/22/detroit-from-the-ground-up/>

In reality, the largest demolition programs in the history of American urbanism<sup>34</sup>, was a response to, and a continuation of, the vandalistic acts performed on abandoned and vacant properties; activities that were severely damaging Detroit's image. In fact, the process of erasure had already been initiated spontaneously (and illegally) in the beginning of the 90s by the population, through arson and general acts of vandalism. This resulted in vast portions of Detroit being erased, through a combination of unsanctioned burning and subsequent legitimized demolition, in the attempt to erase the visual residue of Detroit's ongoing demise<sup>35</sup>. (DASKALAKIS, et al., 2001, p. 107) (Figure 7-25)

In addition to being an official acknowledgment of a process of post-industrial de-densification, the "unsentimental" plan for the city's "de-colonization" shows a clear attitude towards urban residues: by funding demolition, fencing off empty areas and pushing away citizens, the city and its administrators were intentionally creating residual spaces. Moreover, by corroborating the "Devil's Night" vandalism of the unhappy population, supporting and accelerating the evolutionary process of "Terrain Vague", they were officially declaring those lands useless from an economic and productive point of view. Ten years after the "Detroit Vacant Land Survey", a project brought this attitude one step further, expanding upon the City Planning Commission recommendations and pushing the concepts of vacancy and obsolescence to their extreme. The controversial approach I am referring to is the one proposed by Charles Waldheim and Marili Santos-Munné in the framework of the "Stalking Detroit" project and publication<sup>36</sup>. The publication title seems to refer to the unwanted attention that has been surrounding Detroit for many decades, while the projects collected in the book attempt to model possible solutions for large abandoned areas in Detroit, in a strategic and extended plan of "hybrid urbanism". Among the proposals for the abandoned urban lands, ranging from rural forests, to parkland, and even to pre-urban ecosystems, Waldheim and Santos-Munné proposed the controversial "Decamping Detroit" project (DASKALAKIS, et al., 2001, pp. 112-124), premised on the "staging" of the most vacant portions of Detroit for which the City Planning Commission recommended abandonment and a "return to nature". (Figure 7-27) In their project proposal, the abandoned land of the inner-city urban form was removed from the city's legal control and filled with a "reconstituted ecology". The re-colonization of the landscape in the selected sites (areas containing over 70% vacant land) was choreographed through a design process divided in four stages: "Dislocation" (voluntary relocation, discontinuation of city services and capping of utilities); "Erasure" (authorization and acceleration of arson and aggressive demolition); "Absorption" (ecological reconstitution of the areas as woods, marshes, and streams); and "Infiltration" (re-programming the sites with village-like enclaves, like "migrant worker mobile-homesteads" (Figure 7-26), "ex-urban survival training camps" and "experimental agricultural cooperative homesteads"). The proposal was not a landscape project in a traditional sense (the design of a scenic

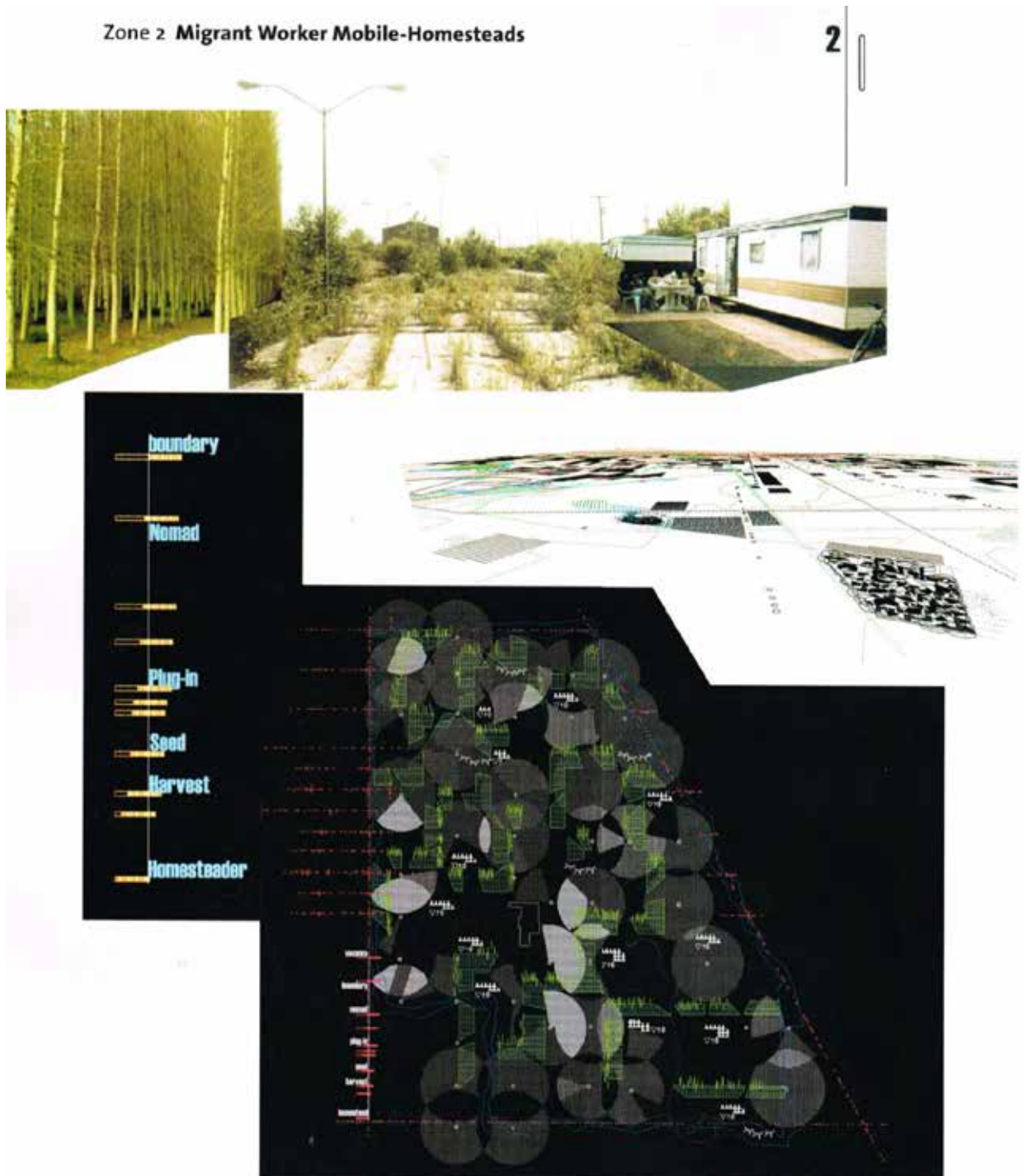
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<sup>34</sup> This program continued throughout the 90s, largely supported by the city's real estate, business, and civic communities.

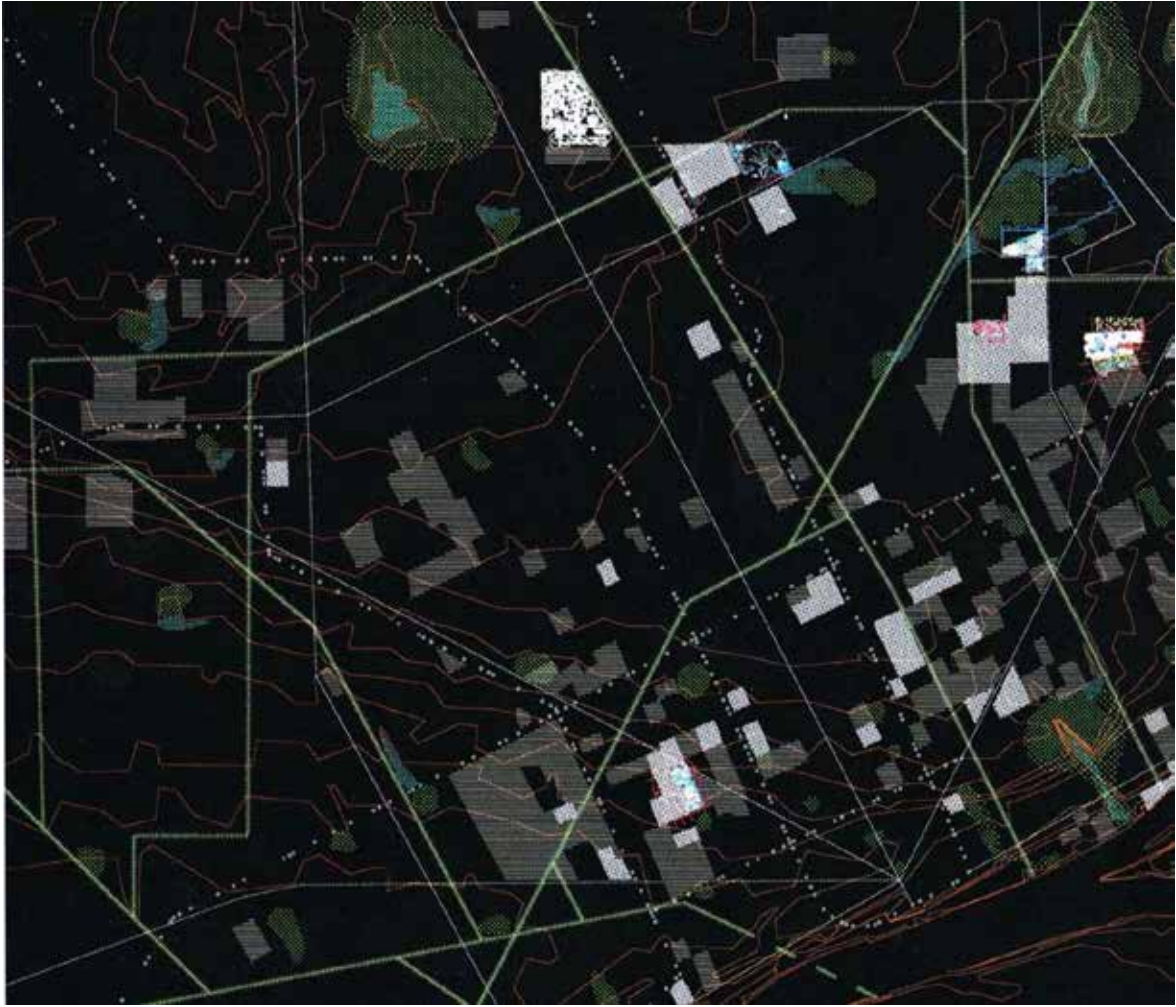
<sup>35</sup> From 1969 to 2001 the city of Detroit has issued 167,130 demolition permits and 3,540 building permits. As a result of demolition and arson, 147,000 housing units in the inner city were lost between 1950 and 2000. During the same period approximately 1,000,000 new homes were built in the suburbs (OSWALT, 2005, pp. 227-230)

<sup>36</sup> The book includes a collection of essays, images and projects; the result of a multidisciplinary group of contributors, (including photographers, practicing architects and landscape architects and an academics working within architecture, landscape architecture, American studies, Latin and comparative literature). (DASKALAKIS, et al., 2001)

composition), but rather design of management procedures and “strategies of disappearance”, very much aligned with the “Landscape Urbanism” strategies which point toward a “logistical” and “performative” form of architectural practice. (WALDHEIM, 2006)



**Figure 7-26.** Project proposal for Zone 2 – “Migrant Workers Mobile-Homesteads”, from the “Decamping Detroit” Project by Charles Waldheim and Marili Santos-Munné. Source: (DASKALAKIS, et al., 2001)



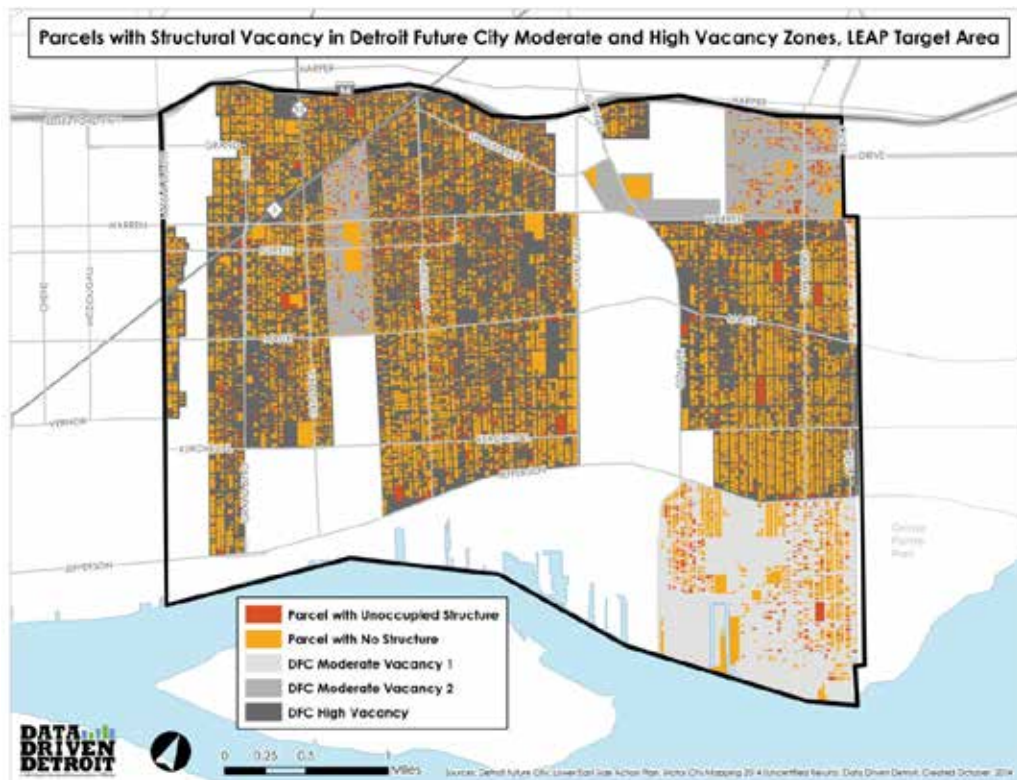
**Figure 7-27.** “Decamping Detroit” map. Project by Charles Waldheim and Marili Santos-Munné. Source: (DASKALAKIS, et al., 2001)

After the attention drawn upon Detroit by the numerous research activities prompted by the “Shrinking cities” projects, a great number of designers have studied Detroit’s vast “abandoned geography”. Within this context, the public, private and institutional sectors started acting to address Detroit’s condition, with a particular emphasis on vacancy. Turning our attention to more recent developments, we can observe that a number of nonprofit organizations started addressing the city’s condition of vacancy, with a primary focus on residential structures and land. Campaigns, such as the “Vacant Property Campaign” (VPC)<sup>37</sup>, have been supported by community resources to assist citizens and property owners by elaborating inventory and assessment of vacant homes. Thanks to services such as Data Driven Detroit (D3)<sup>38</sup>, anybody can access information about the number and the location of vacant lots and buildings<sup>39</sup>. (Figure 7-28, Figure 7-29)

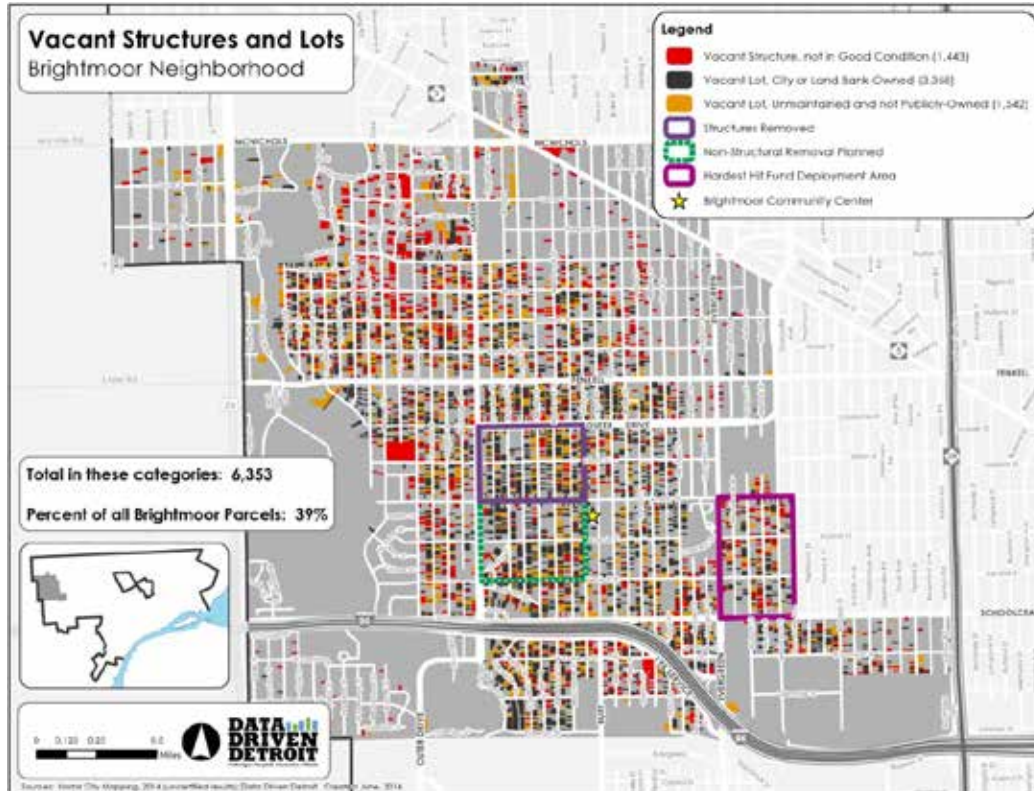
<sup>37</sup> More information available at: <http://michiganvacantproperty.org/>

<sup>38</sup> “Data Driven Detroit” (D3) was established in 2008. It’s an independent data center that provides accessible comprehensive, and reliable information and analysis relating to social, economic and environmental indicators. For more information visit: <https://datadrivendetroit.org/>

<sup>39</sup> In 2009 the vacant land in Detroit was mapped through the “Detroit Residential Parcel Survey”, in collaboration with the Detroit Office of Foreclosure Prevention and Response (FPR), and Community Legal Resources (CLR).



**Figure 7-28.** Parcels with Structural Vacancy in “Detroit Future City” Moderate and High Vacancy Zones, LEAP (Lower East Side Action Plan) Target Area. Sources: Detroit Future City; Lower East Side Action Plan; Motor City Mapping 2014 (Uncertified Results); Data Driven Detroit. Created October, 2014. Available at: <https://datadrivendetroit.org/portfolio/>



**Figure 7-29.** Vacant Structures and Lots in the Brightmoor Neighborhood, Detroit. Source: Motor City Mapping, 2014 (uncertified results); Data Driven Detroit. Created June, 2014. <https://datadrivendetroit.org/portfolio/>

### “Tending” to terrain vague

“Vacancy is a new infrastructure for the city. Vacancy, as it manifests, in land, buildings and infrastructure, is generative. We recommend productive, temporal uses for vacancy, to generate the next urban form of the city.” (BODUROW, 2010, p. 19)

Constance Bodurow claims that vacancy can guide the city’s future urban form. Working primarily in Detroit’s problematic neighborhoods, together with studio[Ci] at Lawrence Tech University, she developed an approach, methodologies, and design applications aimed at re-purposing vacant land to influence the future urban form of Detroit. A relationship between infrastructure and vacancy in the city emerged through Bodurow’s research, prompting recommendations for a variety of productive, temporal uses for vacant land. The proposed uses focused on hybrid renewable energy, target mixed use density, water cycle management and reforestation, in support of sustainable community and economic growth. Bodurow believes that vacant areas do not necessarily need to be “rewoven in the urban fabric in the traditional sense”. In the “Ford C3” project, after categorizing vacant land<sup>40</sup>, analyzing through Geo-Design interface analysis the spatial dispersion of vacant parcels and the concentrations of vacancy in Southwest Detroit, the design team proposed a productive use for vacancy that hybridizes vacancy with adjacent “blue|green|gray+white infrastructure”. The generative use for the repurposed vacant land they propose comprises design interventions and policy recommendations focusing on nature (reforestation, water cycle management, and urban agriculture), energy (hybrid renewable energy, including solar, geothermal and hydro-current), and density (areas for building and population targeted density). (BODUROW, 2010, p. 23)

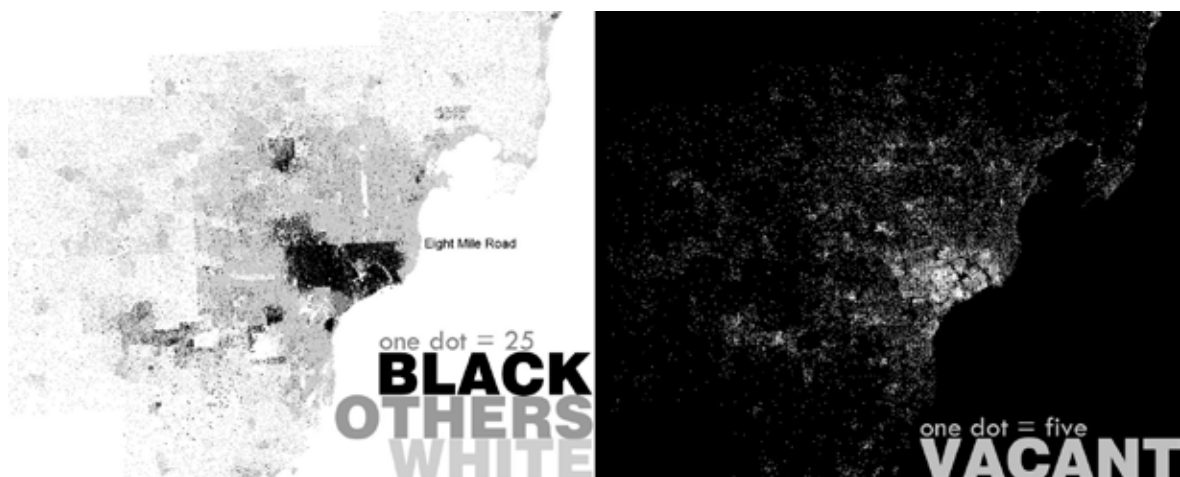
Not far from the above mentioned approach towards vacant land, in their essay “The Interstitial Challenge”, J. Stevens and A. Adhya investigate the processes and agencies that influence residual spaces and propose a new design approach, examining two case studies: Paris and Detroit. (STEVENS & ADHYRA, 2014) First, they consider residual spaces from the perspective of large scale systems and the specific responses to the latter, where the unit of analysis of the city are the forces influencing and affecting “Terrain Vague”. The adopted case study methodology involves empirical documentation, mapping, and analysis of “spatial geography and human ecology of Terrain Vague” through three critical processes/forces of *terrain vague* transformation: historic boundaries, economic forces, social perceptions, and politics.

In the Detroit case study, Stevens and Adhya observe how the complex interrelated histories of race, residence and work determined the urban crisis and the multiplication of “Terrain Vague”. (Figure 7-30) Moreover, they claim that residual spaces occur in cities like Detroit regardless of scale, urban typology, and size of city or suburb. “Terrain vague is fluid across scale and content. It is the manifestation of forces and processes that cut across scale of building, site, community, and city.” (STEVENS & ADHYRA, 2014, p. 203)

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<sup>40</sup> Vacant parcels were grouped into three categories: Vacant (V); vacant w/abandoned structures (A); and Vacant w/occupied structures (O). (BODUROW, 2010, p. 23)

Stevens and Adhya point out something extremely important in terms of a possible approach towards the analysis and documentation of urban residual spaces. In fact, they assert that there is no clear quantitative method to map residual spaces, no correlation between “Terrain Vague” and mappable features. By locating and observing their position on a map, we are able to identify possible manifestations of the latter, but it is impossible to confirm the existence of “Terrain Vague” without further investigation. These spaces can only be understood by “close observation of the use, occupants and owners!” (STEVENS & ADHYRA, 2014, p. 209) This consideration reinforces the concept of dual scale of observation mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, which is key to fully comprehend Residual Landscapes. Moreover, the writers introduce another important consideration in relation to the way society and institutions consider and respond to such interstitial spaces. It is enough to acknowledge how, in most cases, residual spaces do not even have a distinct category in urban land categorization, and they are relegated to broader classifications. Consequently, with no legal classification, or a clear definition of ownership for these residues, they are rarely considered as opportunity for design and “there is no sanctioned professional design response” to them. (STEVENS & ADHYRA, 2014)



**Figure 7-30.** Detroit’s Infrastructure of Vacancy & Racial and Ethnic Divides. Source: vacant land map reconstructed based on guidelines developed by Eric Fisher. Data from Census 2000. Base map from University of Michigan Map Library database.

As opposed to “colonialist creation” and “linear problem solving”, Stevens and Adhya refer to their own approach to design in “Terrain Vague” as “tending”. They investigate “the ways in which different agencies and processes influence terrain vague”, and how their morphology can become a “narrative of urban transformation through design”.(STEVENS & ADHYRA, 2014, p. 202) In terms of responses for these landscapes out of control, they propose “unobstructive”, “informative” and “ever evolving” design actions, gracefully “tending” towards a new framework of design within “Terrain Vague”. Through “subtle interventions” designers can align with the nature of “subversive and user-defined alterations”. Following this approach, instead of limiting diversity and spontaneity, they can open up infinite possibilities for user development in interstitial spaces. (STEVENS & ADHYRA, 2014, p. 212)



## **The character in Detroit's Residual Landscape**

“Terrain vague has manifested itself in Detroit in the spaces between the surviving elements of the city's former landscape”. (STEVENS & ADHYRA, 2014, p. 209)

Deteriorating physical environment, changing demographics and racial profile are all affecting the landscape, which reflects the enormous economic pressure the metropolis is facing. The postindustrial landscape marked by a weak urban core and surrounded by fragmented communities is reflected also in the geographical distribution of such residual spaces. Understanding other dimensions of the urban condition such as, income distribution, political alliances and spatial distribution of age, can reveal countless possibilities for actions.

The specific processes of suburbanization that caused the urban shrinkage in Detroit (regional shifting of activities and people into the surroundings), influenced the type of residual spaces, their location and their extent. In Detroit we can find a high concentration of vacant lots, deserted buildings, and abandoned industrial facilities in the inner-city areas and the “first ring suburbs” (the residential suburbs surrounding the central business district). The location of residual areas is a consequence of industrial restructuring, anti-urban federal policies and racism, which progressively led to the displacement of white population and financial investments. As these areas became increasingly poorer and neglected, also services started deteriorating. Since the social and economic conditions of the city at the end of the last century was not suggesting an imminent inversion of the trend - i.e. a process of re-concentration of activities in the city core<sup>41</sup> - millions in federal funding were spent to demolish vacant homes in the areas surrounding Detroit's city center and give way to a new green belt. The drastic measures employed by the City Planning Commission and the extent of the abandonment are the primary factors influencing the extensive character that residual spaces present today in Detroit.

While we are witnessing a renewed development in Detroit's city center, the surrounding neighborhoods are still being bulldozed and forgotten. I argue that precisely because the abandoned areas are vast and mostly concentrated in a large portion of the urban territory, and because most of the vacant land is publicly owned (and therefore under the legal control of the city), they tend to remain vacant and they are not reintroduced in the traditional productive logic of the city. Instead, in shrinking cities like Detroit, the “gaps” made available by state withdrawal offer possibilities for the development of social and cultural initiatives. As “paradoxes are often rich material for artists”<sup>42</sup>, and the process of urban erasure that was initiated in Detroit in the 1950s is certainly a controversial topic, in the last decade many artists and designers proposed new and creative uses for urban residual spaces.

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<sup>41</sup> Although, in his “Hypotheses on urban shrinking in the 21st century”, Oswalt argues that in the future the suburbs will probably lose population while we will witness a process of “reconcentration” in urban centers. He believes that this inversion of tendency will be caused primarily by total population loss in the suburbs, and by withdrawal into the city centers, motivated by increasing mobility costs and an aging population. (OSWALT, 2005)

<sup>42</sup> Detroit's techno music culture is an example of the fact that the presence of neglected and abandoned areas and buildings can also become breeding ground for creative minds.



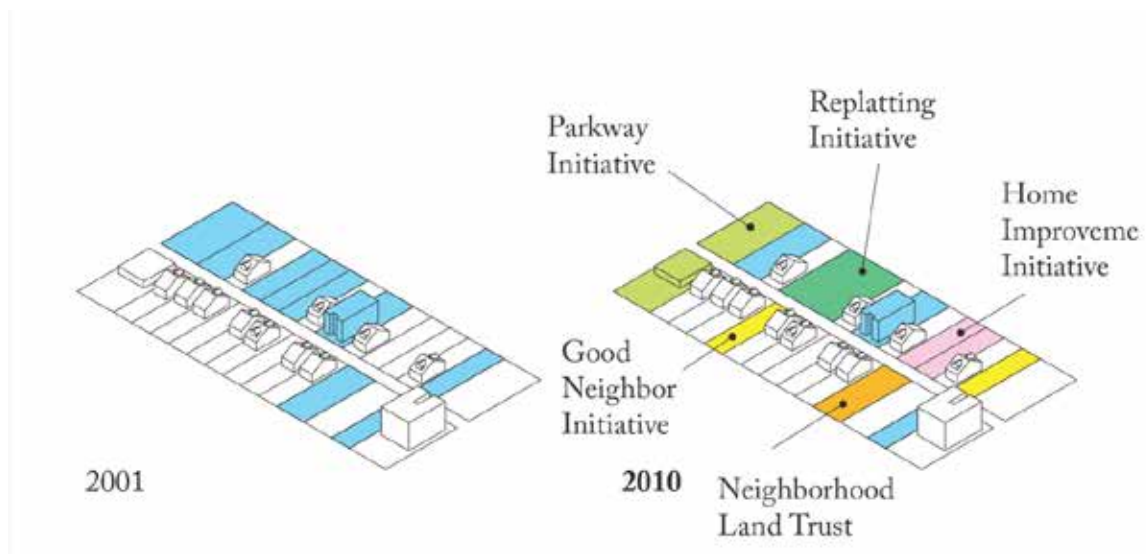
**Figure 7-31.** The Michigan Urban Farming Initiative’s Brush Street farm, north of downtown Detroit. The farm covers a full acre of land. Source: Photographs by Alex S. MacLean.

A part from cultural initiatives, many of these abandoned sites are subject to individual tactics and small-scale economies. Those who live in Detroit have discovered the “art of survival”, they are building a culture isolated from the mainstream, creating a unique way of living and a new kind of city. Their modes of utilization of residual spaces are temporary, ephemeral, non-bureaucratic and self-organized. Instead of reviving the inner city, many proposals suggest spreading the assets of the suburbs throughout the region. A “New Suburbanism”, or “bottom-up” suburbanization, that happens when vacant lots, after being abandoned by their owners, and taken by the city (or state), are generally taken, borrowed, or bought by entrepreneurial landowners nearby. Often these plots are used to develop community gardening, urban farming initiatives<sup>43</sup>, and neighborhood cultural and recreational activities. (Figure 7-31) However, apart from these localized initiatives, there is another tendency, which aims at making these neighboring, extensive residual spaces come together in a “re-ruralised core”, made of new farmland and forests. For example, in some areas marginal lands are being reconsidered as new community based rural-urban agriculture and forestry. Detroit’s new form of urbanity also involves an emerging self-help social structure, similar to an extended family or the community cohesion found in rural towns, whereby community-initiated enterprises buy land for very little money and grow, harvest, prepare, and preserve food for the community<sup>44</sup> (ARMSTRONG, 2016, pp.

<sup>43</sup> Several urban agricultural initiatives have been led by the “Greening of Detroit” (TGD, <http://detroitagriculture.net/>), that promotes planting and educational programs to green the city and build community capacity.

<sup>44</sup> Of course, inserting rural activities on abandoned land in the city is still a controversial theme. Although the juxtaposition of farms within the city provides employment and empowers residents to take charge of their lives and their land. See “FARMADELPHIA” project by the Front Studio designers [www.TreeHugger-farmadelphia-fields](http://www.TreeHugger-farmadelphia-fields).

150-152). In the end, the spatial vacuum and its weak economy are generating new financing and trade concepts, and giving locals the chance to take on disused land or property and exploit its potential. (Figure 7-32)



**Figure 7-32.** Diagrams explaining possible strategy to repurpose abandoned lots in the suburbs around the city core of Detroit. Source: <http://www.urbanmarkers.ro/actions/how-to-perceive-the-importance-of-small-scale-actions-in-a-big-scale-perspective/>

#### 7.4 Concluding observations on the examined case studies

While all three researches presented are exploring the phenomenon of urban Residual Landscapes, each one is employing specific documentation and analysis methods specific to the context of enquiry. The research results from all three case studies, highlight specific generative patterns, outline possible future development, identify performative qualities and suggest possible formal and/or informal appropriation strategies for Residual Landscape. From the observation of these case studies, a set of general considerations can be made:

- All the observed research projects about vacant spaces consider both social and ecological values of residual spaces. While their aesthetic value is directly addressed only in the Tokyo void project and indirectly in the Local code and “Shrinking cities” project.
- In cities like Detroit the location and spatial extension of the phenomenon, combined with the social and economic dynamics - which do not suggest and inversion of tendency in terms of their formal reintroduction in the productive logic of the city - these spaces tend to remain vacant and evolve into a new woodland. On the other hand, the predominance of public ownership of vacant land facilitates coordinated plans for the repurposing of such areas, and their inclusion in landscape strategies aimed at improving the environmental and social conditions of the city. The two competing tendencies towards are, on one side, the intention to mitigate the impact of vacancies through temporary activation before the spaces are

returned into a productive state; on the other, the acceptance of the fact that they are part of a natural process of downsizing and, as such, they should be left alone in the spirit of passive preservation.

- In San Francisco, where vacant lots are fewer and more fragmented, and high land value imparts pressure on their productive use, these spaces were analyzed on a broad scale, considering the potentials they can provide for social activation and environmental performance. The “Local Code” research builds on the fact that, although small and dispersed, abandoned sites can be regarded as an “infrastructural network” of spaces, which can perform in an ecological capacity and as part of larger urban landscape systems. The research demonstrates the remediative potential of the abandoned sites by means of quantitative methods, aimed at evaluating the total amount of non-sealed surface and its potential contribute to climate mitigation and water drainage in the city. Moreover, the quantitative approach translates into the quantification of financial savings obtainable by including vacant spaces in a landscape infrastructure network.
- The research project centered around Tokyo concentrates on the socio-cultural and environmental qualities specific to vacant spaces in Tokyo, starting from the observation of the micro scale, reflecting the inwardness (*oku*) of traditional Japanese concepts of spatial formation. Inwardly oriented qualities are observed on a detailed scale and then translated to inform a broader network scale. The main factors that generate vacancies in Tokyo are social and cultural values associated to family, the constant replacement of building stock and property policies. Moreover, in Tokyo the vacancy phenomenon acquires different characteristics depending on the location of the vacant sites (in the highly dense city centre, the medium density residential suburbs, the suburban areas, and along infrastructures) and the related demographic and economic patterns. In the city centre, given the high land value and the unfavorable taxation policies, vacancies tend to be small and fluctuate in terms of space (they quickly appear and disappear) and time (they are temporary). Residual spaces in residential suburbs tend to have a transient and discontinuous character. Whilst in suburban areas, the vacancies tend to be larger and stagnating.

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## Chapter 8. UNINTENDED LANDSCAPES (*observing the evolution of R.L. in Tirana*)

Answering the question: *How do Residual Landscapes come to be in Tirana?*

- *What generates R.L.? (what are the processes that facilitate their generation and shape them)*
- *How do we observe R.L. evolution? (documentation and analysis)*
- *What are the qualities of R.L.? (how do they perform; what are their visual and aesthetic qualities; how do people interact with them)*

Tirana is used as a particular case of the Balkan Region to explore socio spatial dynamics that contribute to the generation of urban Residual Landscapes, considering their value, not only from a social perspective, but also from an ecological and aesthetic one.

Tirana represents a **fast expanding** city where urban residual spaces can be found in both private and public land. The presence and morphology of Residual Landscapes in the contemporary city is a result of the political, economical, and social conditions of Albania after the fall of the Socialist Regime and the transitioning period that followed (1990-present), characterized by significant internal migration trends, the inadequacy of planning instruments, and the more general cultural reaction to 45 years of isolation (individualization, disorder and incoherence). Therefore, Residual Landscapes appear to be an indirect result of urban development trends in the post-communist era, mostly because the urban transformation processes occurred over a short period of time. The character of urban residues in Tirana is *transient* and their evolutionary pattern is characterized by *incremental fragmentation*. Through the present case study, I will also explore the potential *benefits of informal approaches* to urban residual spaces.

### 8.1 Incoherence & Disorder: Tirana's landscape

*Albanians' relationship with the landscape.*

“[...] sono i processi di lunga durata che creano i paesaggi stabilizzati, culturalmente identificabili, mentre i mutamenti di breve durata, che scombinano assetti raggiunti e concrezionati, possono indurre stravolgimenti non culturalmente risolti, paesaggi antagonisti, confusi: paesaggi del mutamento e della crisi [...]”<sup>1</sup> (TURRI, 2008, p. 19)

Tirana has experienced periods of stasis (like the 45 years of isolation during the Socialist Regime - 1946-1990/1) that are sedimented in the landscape<sup>2</sup>, moments of abrupt breaks with the past (the Ottoman conquest in the fourteenth and twentieth century, the Italian occupation 1949) that tended to restructure completely the urban landscape, and phases of fast mutations (from 1990 until present day) that result in “antagonist landscapes”, or “Topographies of Trauma” (CANTARELLA & GIULIANO, 2013). The latter almost unavoidably generate residual spaces.

<sup>1</sup> Translated in English: “long processes are the ones who generate stabilized landscapes, the culturally identifiable ones, whilst the mutations which occur in a short time, that spoil the achieved order, can cause considerable disruptions which are not culturally absorbed, antagonist and confused landscapes: landscapes of mutation and crisis.”

<sup>2</sup> The Socialist regime imposed a sign on the Albanian landscape through a rational organization of the territory which reflected the economic and social organization of the regime (collectivization), generating the still identifiable industrial and agricultural landscapes that once surrounded (and are now included inside) the capital city, Tirana.



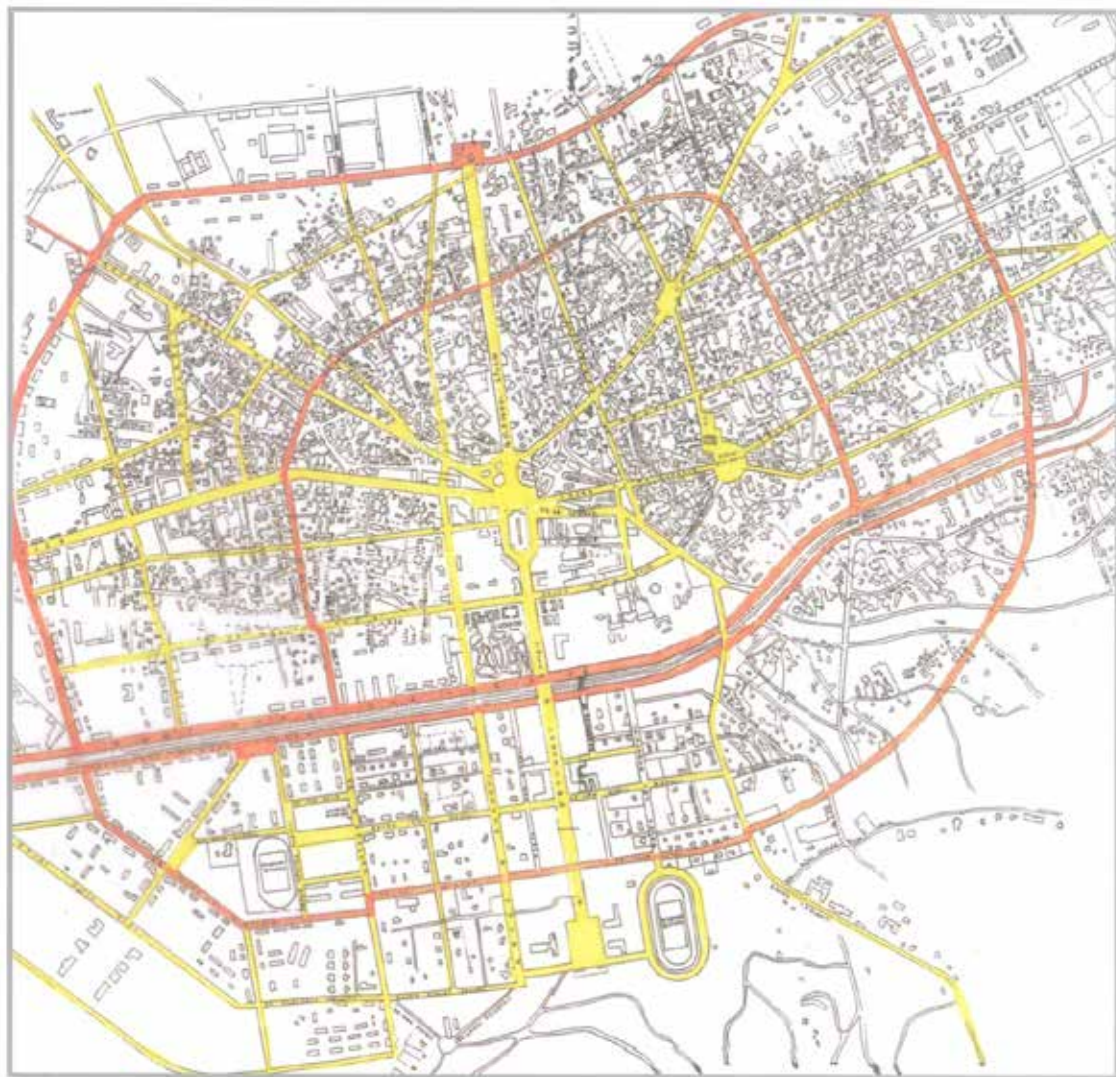
**Figure 8-1.** Informal development areas in Tirana “from above”. Source: Nikos Danielidis Photography 2013.

The lack of order and coherence in Tirana’s urban landscape after the 90s can be attributed to the abrupt social and political changes that occurred in the last 25 years (ALIAJ, et al., 2003). Tirana is a city accustomed to big and violent changes in the development and evolution of the landscape: a succession of foreign rulings and occupations until the mid-twentieth century<sup>3</sup> was followed by a long isolation period caused by the Socialist regime under Enver Hoxha<sup>4</sup>. All the sequence of historical events can partially be traced on what is left of historical maps, but the continuous breaks with the past and the tendency to erase the traces left by every new conqueror or established government (which still happens today), resulted in a city without a clear morphology. The reason for this can be traced back to the fact that foreign occupations always imposed new signs on the city eliminating, but not totally erasing, all the local cultural expressions. This resulted in a very weak historical layering: most of these overlapping morphological layers are not fully embedded in the local culture and they survive only in the form of monuments and in the infrastructural layout of some parts of the city. (Figure 8-1)

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<sup>3</sup> Roman-Byzantine (before Fifteenth Century); Skanderbeg’s Liberation (1444 ca., resisting to Turk invasion); Ottoman (1481-1912); 1912-24 (Princedom); 1928-39 (Reign of King Zogu); Italian and German occupation (Italian protectorate 1939-1943); Socialist Republic of Albania (1946-1991).

<sup>4</sup> First secretary of the Party of Labor Central Committee and political commissar of the Army of National Liberation, who became Prime Minister of his country in 1944.



*Urban Plan of the year 1957*

**Figure 8-2.** Map of Tirana regulatory plan (1957). Source: (ALIAJ, et al., 2003)

The end of WWII marked the end of the Fascist influence on Tirana's urban development and the beginning of the dictatorial communist system, characterized by centralization of power and the banning of private ownership. Following the statement of the Albanian Communist Party in 1945, which soon renounced the promised democratic program and pursued the road of the so-called "dictatorship of the proletariat" instead, the first reforms of a socialist character that started being undertaken affected also urban planning and administration. After 1945, private property was gradually eliminated through forced and unrecompensed expropriation, and collectivization became the basic social, economical, and political organizing principle. In addition, during the last phase of the dictatorship (starting from the 1980's), self-isolation<sup>5</sup> and centralized economy led to the economic collapse of the country. One of the first measures taken in the capital city was the drawing up of a new regulatory plan (1957) for the capital Tirana. (Figure 8-2) The plan aimed at densification of buildings in the existing city and elimination of private estate; redistribution of the population; creation of new satellite towns; and new agricultural,

<sup>5</sup> After breaking relations with both China and the Soviet Union, at the end of the 1970's, Albania was completely isolated and started relying solely on its forces.

mining and industrial zones along the main transport roads and in the outskirts of the city. Thus, during the post WWII reconstruction phase (1945-60), many important infrastructural projects were developed, including the improvement of the road system, and the reaffirmation of the radial distribution network through the addition of an outer ring road, a sign that the city was expanding beyond the boundaries of the old ring road. In terms of densification of the city inside the first ring road (the core of the city), older buildings were torn down to be replaced by complexes of 3-4 floor apartment buildings (low quality, standardized, and often prefabricated buildings), reaching a density of 350 inhabitants/ha; while the residential areas outside the ring were developed with lower density through 1-3 storey buildings. Moreover, to lower the importance of the Oriental imprint in the urban fabric of the city centre, several historical buildings were torn down, including the old bazaar that stood at the core of the old city. After its reconstruction, Tirana sustained a rapid economic, social, cultural, and artistic development. During the industrialization phase (1960-70), large industrial complexes (mostly dedicated to mechanical and textile industries) were developed in the periphery, to the east and west of the city. (ALIAJ, et al., 2003, pp. 52-65)



**Figure 8-3.** “The fall of symbol of dictatorship”. Source: (ALIAJ, et al., 2003)



The capitulation of the communist-dictatorship<sup>6</sup> in 1990, brought the long awaited democratic changes, but it was also followed by a complex transition period, which left distinctive traces on the urban development of the capital city. (Figure 8-3) First, during the 1990's, Albania went through a period of socio-political stagnation and economic decay caused by a series of events that created public disorder, such as the collapse of the pyramid investment schemes (1997), the Kosovo conflict (1999) and the repeated internal political conflicts. Moreover, at the end of the socialist period, peripheral regions fell into economic and social depression, because their economy was totally dependent on state-subsidized enterprises and state managed industrial facilities. The collapse of the centralist economy and of the scheme of subsidies for the unproductive regions of the country, caused economic and social problems and total isolation of the local population. Consequently, once the suppression of freedom of movement had ended<sup>7</sup>, many Albanians migrated overseas<sup>8</sup>, while most of the population from the small mountain villages and the industrial towns started migrating towards the more developed regions of the country, settling in and around their urbanized centers. (Figure 8-4, Figure 8-5) The phenomenon evolved quickly and irrevocably. (ALIAJ, et al., 2010, pp. 12-21) From 60.000 inhabitants in 1945, Tirana's population increased to 300.000 in 1992<sup>9</sup>. (ALIAJ, et al., 2003, p. 64) Although, in order to adapt to these new trends in the urban development, a new regulatory plan had been already drawn and adopted by the government in 1989, the latter was not able to accommodate the extraordinarily high demand for housing and employment or, more in general, to respond flexibly to the complex and dynamic urban and social processes of the transition phase. (Figure 8-9) The sudden rise in urban population also affected the rural areas around the city, where the housing demand pressure transformed farmers into city dwellers. Furthermore, the need for housing and services led to the explosion of the construction industry, particularly the residential housing sector (accounting for 60% of total constructions), making development the primary sector of Tirana's economy (ALIAJ, et al., 2003, p. 85)

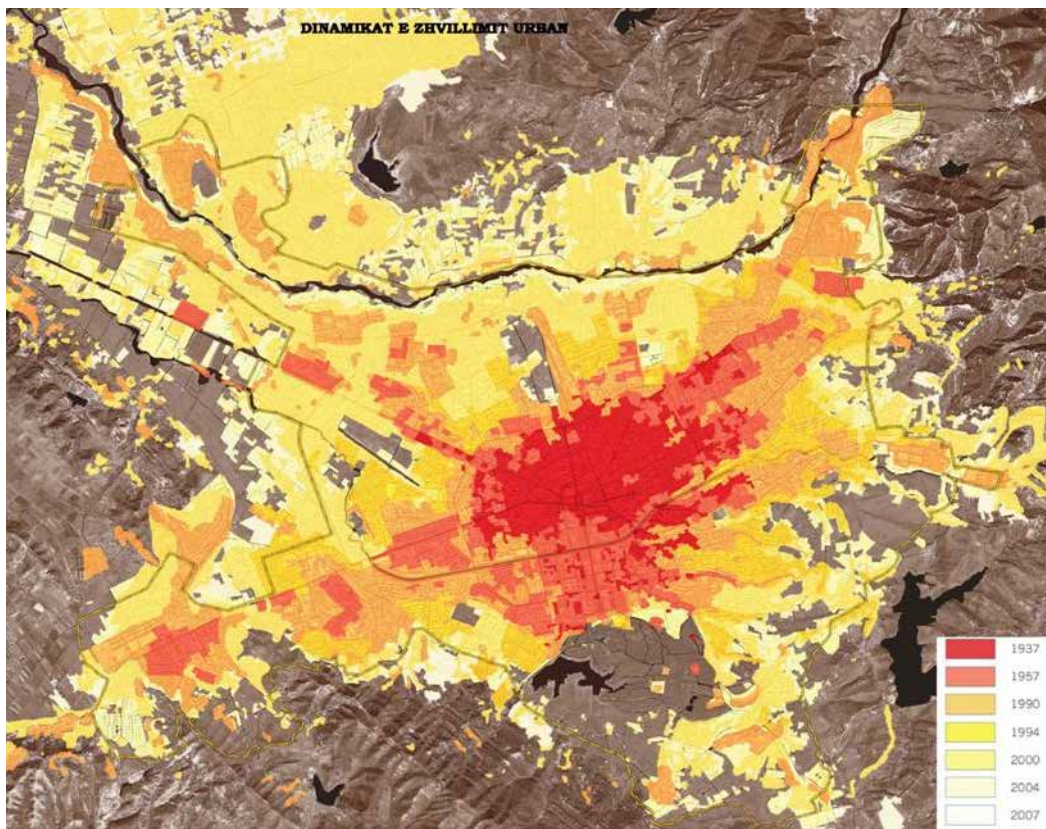
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<sup>6</sup> Following the reforming wave brought by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, in Tirana students and workers initiated a set of protests in 1990, which led to the "triumph of political pluralism in the country (12 December 1990), the overthrow of Enver Hoxha's monument (20 February 1990), and the first pluralistic election (31 March 1991)." These events marked the beginning of the so-called period of transition and the transformation of the communist dictatorship with state-owned economy, into a democratic pluralistic system with a liberal market economy. (ALIAJ, et al., 2003, p. 177)

<sup>7</sup> In 1990 a decree was issued giving freedom of movement and official recognition of the private sector in the construction industry. (ALIAJ, et al., 2003, p. 83)

<sup>8</sup> In 1990, economic collapse and widespread political and social unrest in the country, drove over 10.000 citizens to the Western embassies, demanding political asylum and visas to leave the country. Many Albanians emigrated to Germany and Italy (The very dramatic case that exemplifies this period is the event that took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August 1991, when between 10,000 and 20,000 Albanian refugees boarded the "Vlora" ship in a desperate fleet towards Brindisi). There has been an inversion of this migratory trend in the last decade, and many Albanians that emigrated in the 1990s are returning to their home country. This trend is sided by the phenomenon of incoming immigrants from European countries like Italy.

<sup>9</sup> The increase rate of Tirana's population is 5-7 % a year, 2 % is a result of birth/deaths ratio, and 3-5 % result of mechanical growth (newcomers/people that leave the city ratio). (ALIAJ, et al., 2003, p. 84)



*Tirana - Dynamics of Urban Development, 1937-2007 (from Tirana Regulatory Plan, MoT+Urbaplan, 2008)*

**Figure 8-4.** Map of Tirana population growth and city expansion. After the Fall of communism in Albania in 1990, the city had about 250.000 inhabitants, and since then a large scale influx from other parts of the country has increased the population to 800.000 (last census 2011). Source: internet.



**Figure 8-5.** Albanian refugees boarding the “Vlora” ship in a desperate fleet towards Brindisi, August 1991. Source: internet.

Thus, the post-communist era was characterized by an unprecedented population growth and a rapid chaotic urbanization. The latter was a consequence of two main phenomena, which occurred in two distinct phases, as a direct consequence of the lack of vision of the authorities: **illegal** constructions and the consequent **process of demolition** (Figure 8-7). The total absence of development plans and policies on the one hand, and the difficult political, economic, and social transition from centralized economy to a free-market society on the other, led to the proliferation of illegal constructions for housing purposes (mainly in the outskirts of the city) and illegal constructions for business purposes (mainly, but not exclusively, around the city centre). A further differentiation ought to be made between “informal” constructions (where land ownership is respected, but town planning norms and standards are violated), and “illicit” constructions (where neither land ownership nor town planning regulations are respected). (Figure 8-6) This means that a great percentage of the constructions made in Tirana after 1990 were either made without building permission, or developed illegally through the occupation of public premises or lands with uncertain ownership. Moreover, Illegal building practices were further alimented by the hesitation in restituting private estates that had been expropriated without compensation after 1945, causing confusion and disputes over citizens. (ALIAJ, et al., 2003, pp. 65-70) The miss-use of freedom and violation of the public interest was a direct consequence of the “vacuum” of development policies by the local authorities over the years of transition. (ALIAJ, et al., 2010; ALIAJ, et al., 2003)



*Arrival the first load of stones*



*Building the first floor*



*Building a "barrake"*



*Completing the house*

**Figure 8-6.** Process of informal construction in Kamza (Tirana). Source: (ALIAJ, et al., 2003)

The impellent needs of the new urban population and the failure to enforce the law, left the phenomena to develop practically undisturbed, until 1998, when the Albanian authorities began to exercise control, as a reaction to the civil unrest of 1997. Starting from 2000, important urban operations were undertaken. Buildings without permission in downtown Tirana were demolished; historical buildings were restored; main streets were widened and illuminated; landscaping was reintroduced in the city's public spaces. Most importantly, parks and riverbanks - where the green space had been destroyed by illicit businesses with their improvised structures - were finally cleared of the illegal structures; and multi storey buildings, floor additions to existing buildings, and illegal fences, were demolished within a relatively short period of time (and with little or no resistance at all) (Figure 8-7). Whereas, in the “informal” neighborhoods in the outskirts of the city, like Bathore<sup>10</sup>, where the buildings are primarily private houses, in order to avoid social conflict with the inhabitants of the areas, the authorities had to use a softer approach, which consisted in improving and integrating the areas<sup>11</sup> (Figure 8-11). Such improvement concerned mainly infrastructures and the launching of a “legalization process” to reinsert these, currently isolated areas, in the city's infrastructural networks<sup>12</sup>.



**Figure 8-7.** Demolished building in Ksamil (Albania). Source: author.

<sup>10</sup> Bathore (in the Kamza Municipality) is the first informal settlement that developed around in the capital. Its vicinity to Tirana made it a convenient location for poor people coming from the north-eastern regions of Albania, who settled in this formerly rural area at the beginning of the 1990's.

<sup>11</sup> Local authorities started collaborating with the World Bank and NGOs at development projects. Co-PLAN (Institute for Habitat Development), a professional non-governmental and non-profit organization, has been one of the main promoters of community development initiatives since 1995. (<http://co-plan.org/en/>)

<sup>12</sup> The lack of infrastructure in these new informal developments has serious impact on the environment: pollution of potable water due to illicit discharge of sewage; increased erosion of unpaved roadways; garbage dispersal in rivers due to the lack of roads and the impossibility to insert these areas in the urban garbage collection network.

In the above-mentioned informal settlements, the urban development process seems to be inverted. While the traditional planning process is characterized by the order: planning - building infrastructure - building housing - occupying the dwellings; in informal developments people first occupy the land and build a house with the available resources (improving it as economical resources become available to them), while the infrastructures come only at a later stage, thanks to regeneration and legalization processes, whereby these neighborhoods are legalized and included in the city plans. (ALIAJ, et al., 2010)

After 2000 planning instruments have been reformed, but their implementation is still a challenge due to corruption and misuse. The main challenge for Albania thus far has been to mediate the clash between individual needs and rights, and public interest. Coming from a centralized society, where individualization was suppressed in favor of collectivization, it is only natural that the adaptation to a democratic pluralistic system and a liberal market economy will take time.



**Figure 8-8.** “Continuity and discontinuity of individualization of the society”. Occupation of an abandoned public surface by private access stairs to a multi-dwelling building. Source: author.

The above considerations lead to the conclusion that the “cultural sedation” imposed by Communist dictatorship was followed by a sudden explosion of individuality. The city grew too fast for authorities to keep up with it and respond to the housing and service needs of a swelling urban population. Similarly to what Engels noted about Manchester in the in 1842, after the Nineties Tirana appears to have been built through “accident” rather than planning (JOHNSON, 2002, p. 36). It seems as if repeated invasions and interruptions have delayed the homogeneous reflection of coherence and order on the Albanian

landscape<sup>13</sup> and caused a permanent state of conflict in the relationship of people towards the landscape. In spite of the great progresses of the last five years, nowadays Tirana's landscape is still dominated by individual will that continuously clashes with the general and centralized will. (Figure 8-8, Figure 8-9)



**Figure 8-9.** Illegal additions to existing buildings: floor additions, illegal buildings in private or public land for business (in the city centre) or housing purposes (in city outskirts). Source: author.

<sup>13</sup> Considering landscape both as intermediary and tool of the relationship between man and environment and as a witness of the presence of men, their living and operating in the world. (TURRI, 2008, p. 59).

## Accidental Landscapes

### *Strange objects and Second Natures*



**Figure 8-10.** Residual space and contradictions. Tirana (AL). Source: from left - Jason Payne, author & James Stevens.

The landscape frames the contradictions that are present in Tirana. It shows the visible signs of history on the landscape (abandoned war objects), their gradual deprivation of meaning and function process, and the antagonist landscapes generated by a fast urban growth that generated residual spaces in the city.

As we have discussed, after the fall of the Socialist regime the individual needs of people became the driving force of development and informal settlements started growing relentlessly. This condition coincided also with a new drastic attitude of people toward nature and the urban landscape in general: Albanians started neglecting their natural environment and, moving from a predominance of programmed and controlled communal spaces, the city witnessed a decrease in shared spaces and the transformation of all the public spaces into “non-places” (AUGÉ, 1995). Venturing in the “accidental landscape” (Glossary, p. xix) of one of Tirana’s informal development areas - characterized by disorder, the lack of reference points, and the absence of a clear morphology in the building and street layout - what strikes our attention are the high walls and gates around informal (often illegal) detached houses. (Figure 8-11) These walls contain “gardens without landscape”<sup>14</sup>, voluntarily erasing the neglected landscape that surrounds them, but also underlining the sense of property over the landscape and the will to confirm the long denied property rights<sup>15</sup>.



**Figure 8-11.** Informal settlement in Kamza (Tirana). Source: author.

<sup>14</sup> Referred to the medieval enclosed garden typology, a “garden without landscape” is a garden with no exterior views, no horizons, and profiles of mountains or sea. (PANDAKOVIC & DAL SASSO, 2013, pp. 64-67)

<sup>15</sup> During the Socialist regime most Albanians were deprived of their lands in favor of the collectivization of property. After the fall of the regime many lands in the capital have been occupied illegally and, still today, Albanians are dealing with tedious issues caused by the reclaiming of property rights by original owners in illegally occupied areas.



**Figure 8-12. Bunkers in the Albanian landscape.** Source: Jason Payne.

Recurring elements in Tirana’s contemporary landscape are also the visible signs of its recent history, like abandoned war objects and industrial ruins. These ruins are present in Tirana and in the rest of the Albanian landscape. Among them the “strange case of the Albanian bunker” (PAYNE, 2014) is emblematic of the complex and manifold relationship that Albanians have with their environment. These currently dismissed war objects are spread throughout both the rural and the urban landscape<sup>16</sup>. (Figure 8-12) As nature takes over and absorbs them<sup>17</sup> they become “Second Natures” and, to the person passing by, they might appear as ancient Roman ruins appeared before the eyes of travelers in the late eighteenth century Europe: as “elements of nature that operate at the civil level”<sup>18</sup>(GOETHE, 2013), but nevertheless integral part of the landscape. In spite of their original military function, the bunkers were never really needed or used and most of them are now ruins in the landscape. They have become part of the natural landscape, passing through a gradual deprivation of meaning and functions which can be witnessed in the attitude that different generations of Albanians have toward Bunkers today: for the older generations who suffered the isolation and the imposition of the Socialist period, they are alien and unpopular objects that should be nullified and can be pillaged of their precious materials (steel reused in new constructions); for the Albanian designers and entrepreneurs bunkers are useful architectural object (that can be re-functionalized and even annexed to houses); and finally, to the eyes of the younger generations - who are too young to have a direct memory of Hoxja and might not even remember why the bunkers were built in the first place - the bunkers are almost invisible and they should be left “alone, in place, in the spirit of passive preservation”(PAYNE, 2014)<sup>19</sup>. Similarly, abandoned industrial facilities and endless fields covered by rusty greenhouses are experiencing a slow and inexorable purgatory, and progressively becoming part of the natural landscape.

<sup>16</sup> During the last phase of the socialist dictatorship, more than 700.000 bunkers were built by the dictator Enver Hoxha for a population of a little over 3.000.000 people. See also: “The strange case of the Albanian bunker”, Cit. from Article by Jason Payne. (PAYNE, 2014)

<sup>17</sup> A part from the ones that have been adapted for practical use by farmers or repurposed programmatically as hotels and bars by resourceful entrepreneurs.

<sup>18</sup> In “Viaggio in Italia” Goethe defines them as a “Second Natures that operate on a civil level”. On “second nature” concept see also (HUNT, 2000) and (BIANCONI, 2008, pp. 41-43).

<sup>19</sup> The three listed attitudes are partly deduced from the strategies towards bunkers outlined by Payne, who in turn refers to the four forms in which the bunkers persist as a spatial phenomenon in Albania (Pike, “The Bunkerization of Albania,” Cabinet 59).



Indistinctively all the signs present in the territory are “expressing something about men and the society they live in”<sup>20</sup>, they represent the importance of people through their transformations of the landscape and therefore they should be considered and valued as meaningful expressions of our presence in the world. Tirana, a diffused city with undefined urban margins like many others, suggests a crisis of the canonical vision of a defined city and can be used as an example of a condition which cannot be studied and understood solely through aerial representation and maps, as most of its essence lies within small scale individual actions, in the “accidental landscape” of self-built environments, generated as a consequence of direct needs and in the absence of urban regulations<sup>21</sup>.

## 8.2 Tirana’s residual landscapes

*What generates R.L.s?*

The same trajectories followed in the development of the Residual Landscape topic, are reflected on the Tirana Pilot case study, answering the questions: *what are the processes that facilitate their generation and shape them, and what could they become in the future?*

While searching for the essence, the distinguishing character of a city dominated by disorder and individuality, borrowing Gilles Clément’s words, I could say that I found it “in between”, but not between the rural and the urban landscape, rather in the interstices of the dense urban fabric, where the restless expansion and reconstruction cycles comes to a pause, and we can catch a glimpse of a “new wilderness”. Where we can stop and contemplate the spontaneous beauty of these “unintended landscapes” (Glossary, p. xix) where people operate informally. As I was observing these overlooked spaces, I realized that they not only comply with the three declinations of “terrain vague” by De Solà-Morales (De SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995) - most of these residual landscapes are devoid of intentional human interference (they are “vacant”); they have undefined margins and unclear status (they are “vague”); and their status is suspended in time and space (they are “discontinuous”) – but they also withhold and express the transient character of Tirana’s landscape.

In Tirana residual spaces are a result of the instable political, cultural and financial pressure upon the formation of the built environment. They can be found in both private and public areas. They manifest the administration’s incapacity to manage public space due to the lack of (or difficulty in allocating) financial resources. They can be produced by economic and/or political issues related to property rights disputes, or by the relatively recent phase of fast real-estate development, which was operated without clear planning regulations (or rather with a very loose interpretation of the latter). The factors that influence these spaces are in constant mutation and the spontaneous, informal, and most of the times illegal, use that people make of them are expressing the immediate needs of the population. Nevertheless, the indeterminate and provisional nature of such spaces could

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<sup>20</sup> Signs intended as recognizable marks on the landscape (TURRI, 2008, p. 137).

<sup>21</sup> Sometimes the regulations exist and the problem lies in the difficulty in implementing them.

actually constitute an asset for the urban development of cities; these spaces leave room for flexibility and adaptation in an otherwise fragile<sup>22</sup> environment.

### **Politics of Vacancy**

*Social, political and economic processes that contribute to the production of Residual Landscapes. How laws and land management influence their generation.*

The very specific social, economic, and political events that Tirana witnessed in the last 25 years occurred in an incredibly limited span of time, generating a great number of residual spaces and vacancies in the city centre, and in the expanding formal and informal suburban neighborhoods surrounding the city. The generation and shaping of residual spaces was influenced mainly by the following dynamics: fast urban growth due to the displacement of population from the countryside and the small mountain villages (from 1990 until 2016 the population of the capital almost tripled) and the consequent explosion of the illicit and informal building phenomena; uncertainly and deregulation concerning land ownership taxation policies; and the cultural rejection of programmed communal space after the socialist dictatorship, which caused the explosion of individuality.

In Tirana residual spaces can be found in different parts of the city: between communist residential blocks in the centre of the city, in neglected public areas throughout the urban fabric, in the new expansion suburban areas, in informal settlements within and on the fringes of the city, along infrastructures, and in abandoned industrial areas inside and around the city. Their size varies from small gaps between buildings, to linear voids along roads and rivers, to wide, open areas within the city and in the former industrial and agricultural areas that surround it. Following up is a list of the types of vacant space we can find in Tirana depending on the socio-political processes that influence their generation and location.

Type and location of residual landscapes in Tirana:

**Property disputes/suspended landscapes** – As we have discussed the administration hesitated in restituting private estates that had been expropriated without compensation after 1945, mostly because in many instances there is no evidence that proves the ownership, or because there are disputes over more people that claim them. Unsolved issues end up suspending these sites in time, waiting for a clarification of their ownership and functional status. Since these lands and the structures that inhabit them<sup>23</sup> are on hold until the rightful owner is legally confirmed, they usually become abandoned and overgrown with vegetation, a part from cases in which they are illicitly occupied by commercial or domestic activities. Nevertheless, these appropriation strategies are usually temporary and they only partially influence the evolution of the spontaneous vegetation. Unless there is a clear sign or fence around the site that declares their legal status (private property), their temporary alien occupation is tolerated. This type of residual spaces can be found both in the city centre and in the suburban areas around the city. The abandoned

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<sup>22</sup> Intended as fixed, rigid and breakable due to the lack of elasticity.

<sup>23</sup> Sometimes they contain unfinished buildings. A very common case is when the sites only contain the structural skeleton of the building and the construction is halted by the administration. These naked buildings are often used by the street vendors to display their merchandise.

plots tend to be relatively small and surrounded by other buildings in the city centre. In suburban formal developments they might occupy larger surfaces. While in informal neighborhoods they tend to have irregular shapes and they are often surrounded by walls or fences. This phenomenon is particularly relevant in informal settlements after they start undergoing a legalization process. Since the legalization of informal buildings is operated on a case-by-case basis, it tends to be extremely complex and slow. Hence, these procedures leave behind a great number of temporarily abandoned spaces. (Figure 8-13; Figure 8-14)



**Figure 8-13.** Residual space used as private parking space. Source: author.



**Figure 8-14.** Abandoned traditional house in the city centre. Source: author.

**Infrastructural processes / *fragmented or linear residues*** - Road readjustment is a very common practice in both, informal neighborhoods in the city outskirts, which completely lack roads, sewage and public lighting; and in the city centre where high concentration of informal constructions and the inadequacy of the existing organic street layout, requires structural updating (widening, addition of sidewalks, water drainage, street lighting). Where acquisition of the property and demolition of the structures is not possible, compromises are made. This results in interruptions in the road's linear development, and in the generation of small, irregularly shaped portions of land. The residues resulting from the intersection between a regularized infrastructural layout and the organic nature of the informal settlements are usually too small to be used. This last aspect, together with the fact that the infrastructural renovations take place over extended periods of time, determines the character and evolution of this type of residues.



**Figure 8-15.** Demolished building ruins in a Residual Landscape, Tirana. Source: author.

**Demolition process after the 1990s / *landscapes of trauma*** – In moments of uncertainty and chaos, people use strategies to fulfill housing and living needs. As we have previously explained, most of the informal appropriation of space has been overlooked for many years as a form of deemed acceptance. From 2000, after the process of formalization of property (legalization of informal housing) and public space started taking place, many illegal structures were demolished throughout the city. Informal commercial activities were cleared from central public spaces; several shanties and squats developed on public and private land were demolished to make room for future formal real estate developments and the

much-needed infrastructures. The illicit structures that inhabit these sites are either immediately demolished or simply abandoned until new construction begins. Either way, as these processes tend to take time, plants and animals start to inhabit the abandoned sites, which evolve into “ruderal landscapes”. This type of residual spaces tends to have different spatial characteristics according to their location and context. They usually contain abandoned structures or material remains from the demolition of preexisting buildings. (Figure 8-15)

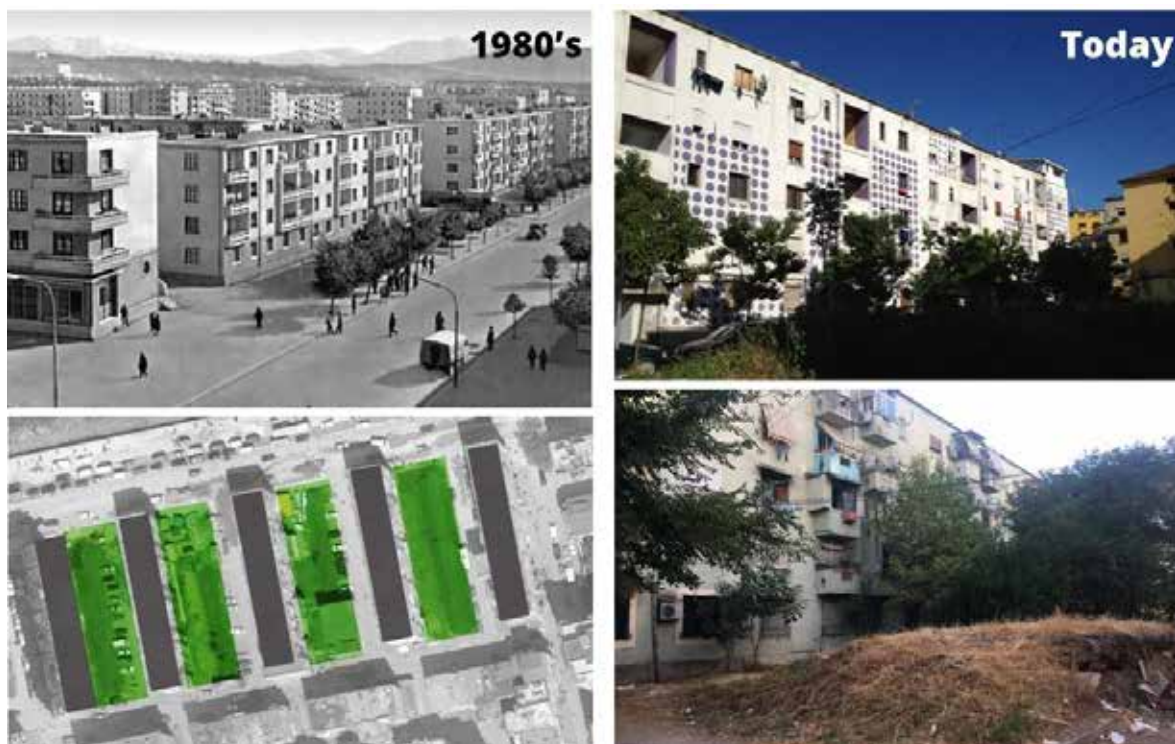
**Collectivization versus individuality / *From formalized communal public space, to no-man’s-land.*** According to the Tirana’s regulatory plan developed during the socialist period, the set objective for public space and landscaping was 8 m<sup>2</sup> per inhabitant. In that period squares and parks<sup>24</sup> were built and maintained regularly. (ALIAJ, et al., 2003, p. 56) Today, the ratio inhabitant/factual green space has certainly decreased (a little over 3.40 m<sup>2</sup>/capita), but what the statistics are not taking into account is their calculations is the great potential of the wild green spaces that are cyclically appearing and disappearing around the city. We can find a large number of Residual Landscapes around the center of the city, in former playgrounds and sport fields, or along sidewalks in residential areas, where socialist dictatorship small flowerbeds and benches used to politely beautify the streetscape during the. These wild spaces vary in size according to their location and to their prior function, and they are inhabited by organic and inorganic matter (soil, spontaneous plants, birds, dogs and insects). We can identify such wild landscapes also in the round shaped traffic islands and the extensive linear residues along the roads. These unintended “wildscapes” are a result of very little or no maintenance operated by the current administration. However, the most recurring residual spaces can be found between the repetitive and standardized residential complexes of 3-4 floor apartment buildings, dating back to the 1950s and 1960s. The typical layout of the “communist blocks” included a fixed percentage of surface dedicated to outdoor manicured green spaces for sport and leisure. When the socialist administration was overthrown, these spaces, together with most of the public green areas in the city, ceased to be maintained: they became neglected and evolved into small urban forests. Due to the original formal design and function, this specific type of residues, have a rectangular shape and their width matches the longitudinal extent of the multifamily building. (Figure 8-16)

After the 1990s, in the overall reaction to the impositions of the regime, which included the control over people’s activities, people started missing and abusing public spaces. Today’s conflicting attitude towards public spaces in Tirana is still a result of the mentality developed in response to the rapid shift from a collective orientation to one of individualization. Like Russia and the GDR, Albanians were accustomed to “public places without publicity” (OSWALT, 2005, p. 46), because city’s public spaces were intended for controlled collective celebration, rather than expression of private lifestyles and socialization. As a result, private socialization was taking place only in the privacy of homes and away from the control by the state. Private spaces were also the only place where individuality and withdrawal from the demands of everyday life could be developed.

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<sup>24</sup> In this period also the definition of the park around the artificial lake located in the southern part of the city, was programmed.

The fall of the Socialist regime and the end of a collectively organized way of life led to individualization, characterized by risk and uncertainty. Yet, the new consumer world that opened up offered residents an opportunity to participate in public life on the streets. As a result, public spaces in present day Tirana are used both casually, as an extension of private spaces, or illegally, through illicit acquisition as a means of economic survival and to provide basic subsistence. However, the most interesting aspect that ought to be mentioned, is that both the afore mentioned conditions coexist with more orthodox occupation of the public milieu, a condition that is certainly unique to Tirana. In fact these apparently void spaces are subject to temporary or semi-permanent appropriation strategies such as: illegal parking, collection of spices, grazing of small quantities of livestock, drying clothes, private gardens, informal playgrounds, and outdoor extensions of commercial activities. All activities, which respond to the direct individualistic needs of the population. (Figure 8-16)



**Figure 8-16.** Communal space between communist buildings before and after the 1990s.  
Source: author.

**Abandoned factories / *manufactured landscapes***<sup>25</sup> - Similarly to what occurred in other post-socialist countries in Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union, also in Albania the deindustrialization process caused polarization between cities and regions, depending on their economic success in the new political and economic conditions. Several small towns that depended solely on industrial production started shrinking, and some of them became ghost towns. Similarly, most of the large industrial facilities built in the periphery of Tirana were closed down, and gradually evolved into large industrial wastelands. These industrial

<sup>25</sup> The definition “manufactured landscapes” has been used by Canadian Photographer Ed Burtynsky to define the secondary and unexpected landscapes produced as a result of industrial manufacturing processes. See: “Manufactured Landscapes” (2006). Documentary film about the work of photographer Ed Burtynsky. Directed by Jennifer Baichwal. [AVI] Canada.

sites, and their buildings in ruin, are still present in the landscape of the city and have seldom been object of regeneration initiatives. After being abandoned for a long period of time, industrial structures (a byproduct of the industrial production of goods), and raw material extraction sites (a result of natural resource exploitation), naturally evolve into unintended hybrid landscapes. The size of these “manufactured landscapes”<sup>26</sup> is considerable and they provide shelter for biodiversity.

### **Evolution of Residual Landscapes in Tirana**

*Processes that shape R.L. in Tirana.*

As pointed out by Peter Del Tredici, in the absence of intensive horticultural maintenance (i.e., planting, weeding, mowing, and watering), spontaneous vegetation will eventually come to dominate most urban landscapes. “In economically depressed cities, where portions of the urban core have been abandoned for relatively long periods of time, plant succession has been allowed to proceed without interference (i.e., maintenance), and stable plant associations of woody plants (forests) have developed.” (DEL TREDICI, 2014, p. 240) Moreover, according to Del Tredici, the “amount and maturity of spontaneous vegetation that cities contain is inversely proportional to their economic prosperity.” (DEL TREDICI, 2010, p. 17) This is true for most transitioning cities: for shrinking cities like Detroit, and for Tirana, a still relatively poor city compared to European countries. However, given the fact that spontaneous urban vegetation contributes to the city’s ecological processes by providing ecosystem services, and is therefore an index of richness for the city, we should integrate and revise the previous statement. If we redirect our attention toward the benefic aspects of spontaneous vegetation, and we acknowledge the positive contribution of urban Residual Landscapes to the ecological health of cities, we can reframe the previous statement and come to the conclusion that: “*The amount of spontaneous vegetation in a given city is always inversely proportional to its financial prosperity, but directly proportional to its ecological richness*”.

Until recent times these “antagonist landscapes” (Glossary, p. xix) and the informal use that people make of them have mostly been ignored or considered only as a problem to solve. But, as Peter Kraftlin argues in his recent study of utopias, “in dense, disorderly cities lie the tools to teach people to live with flexibility and accept risks”. (KRAFTLIN, 2007) The Tirana pilot research project on urban Residual Landscapes is attempting to identify that very quality in the attitude and the approaches of Albanians towards these spaces. Overcoming the bad connotations assigned to vacant spaces in Western civilization, and embracing “loss of control”, “inaction”, “spontaneity” and “improvisation”.

### **8.3 Geographic Apocrypha**

*How do we observe R.L. evolution? Building a taxonomy of Residual Landscapes.*

From the prolonged observation of residual spaces in Tirana, taking into account all the afore mentioned considerations on the types of vacancy and the processes that have generated them (and are still shaping them), and based on the theories analyzed in the first

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<sup>26</sup> See previous footnote.

section of the present dissertation, what emerged is that one of the main characterizing factors of their morphology and materiality is the trace left by the activities that were carried on these sites prior to their abandonment. While the social and environmental context is what determines their future ecological and social potential. Hence came the decision to operate a systematic study and categorization of Residual Landscapes in Tirana.

The scope of the research project, partly developed during three years of Graduate Landscape Design Studio at POLIS University, in Tirana, was to identify, analyze, and document Residual Landscapes in the inner ring of the city, with the aim of reestablishing their ecological, social and aesthetic value. The physical and theoretical understanding of Residual Landscapes was largely based on the definition given by Gilles Clément of “*Le Déléissé*” (the residue) and the “*Tiers Paysage*”(CLÉMENT, 2005). Within the research framework, the identification of urban Residual Landscapes was based on the absence of active human intervention (management), as this is the determining factor in the evolution of this particular type of landscapes. The documentation was restricted to urban spaces previously managed by men and in a current state of abandonment, where adventives plant species are free to colonize space. Also the process followed during the research was inspired by what Gilles Clément indicates as the process followed by the gardener in the “Garden in motion”: “observing”, “understanding” and, only then, “acting” by using natural forces that are already present on the territory. (CLÉMENT, 2011) In fact, the process followed in the research was based on: I. Identification, II. documentation (mapping, classification), III. Analysis, and IV. identification of possible approaches. The following list indicates the main actions that were undertaken during the research:

- I. Identification (*definition of the rules*)
- II. Recording (*GIS mapping*)  
Classification (*identification of residual landscape typologies*)
- III. Analysis (*identification of residual landscape qualities*)  
Evaluation of the potential (*setting of the parameters*)
- IV. Taking action (*definition of possible approaches*)

The first step was setting up the base rules for identifying, mapping, classifying and analyzing existing residual spaces in the city. Later their spatial, bioclimatic, biophysical and anthropic characteristics were analyzed (including the social context, and the legal and economic status) in order to evaluate their ecological, social and aesthetic qualities. The adopted survey and classification method was defined after observing the methods adopted in the “Tokyo void” and “Local Code San Francisco” research precedents (7.1 Tokyo Void, p. 119; 7.2 San Francisco - Local code, p. 135) , adapting them to the Tirana context and to the overall scope of the research.

### **I. Identification of residual urban landscapes**

The three prerequisites for the identification of urban Residual Landscapes were:

- previous use



- abandonment (current absence of management)
- presence of spontaneous vegetation

The identification was based on the description of the “*Le Délaisé*” by G. Clément, therefore from the **standpoint of human exploitation** of land and the **presence or absence of management** (Figure 5-15, p.105). This starting assumption conditioned firstly, the identification of urban Residual Landscapes, and secondly, their inclusion into different categories (see below: II. Taxonomy). The second characteristic that defines them is the **presence of spontaneous vegetation**; again, a consequence of the absence of human activity, which gives room to the growth of ruderal plant species.

Since the premise to identify urban Residual Landscapes was the current absence of human activity (absence of continued management), the presence of spontaneous vegetation (but also organic and inorganic materialscape, animals and insects), and the former exploitation by man, it came as no surprise that in Tirana there has been a proliferation of such spaces since the 1990s. Moreover, if we look at abandoned and neglected landscapes in Tirana through Gilles Clément’s eyes, less obvious places such as hidden passages, remains of defensive structures (i.e. bunkers and underground tunnels), abandoned cars covered by weeds, and derelict greenhouses, can be identified as Residual Landscapes. The identification of such spaces within the urban context of Tirana suggests the acknowledgement of their existence, stimulating the re-consideration of what is familiar in terms of potential landscape. Similarly the identification of their qualities and performance can lead to the reconsideration of their role in future urban development strategies.

## **II. Documentation – Mapping and Taxonomy of urban Residual Landscapes (MACRO scale)**

This aspect of the research consisted in mapping and monitoring the “Geographic Apocrypha” (unmapped and uncharted spaces; see Glossary, p. xix) of Tirana that share the above mentioned properties, over a period of two years. At present, these “Apocryphal Landscapes” (see Glossary, p. xix) are not included in the officially classified spaces in the city, and as such, they are kept away from formal use. Hence the decision to map and classify them. The Residual Landscape category includes a vast array of spaces as a response to both cultural values and physical characteristics. Specific qualities and characteristics were identified and patterns of association were established to justify associating and relating such elements hierarchically across scales. A non-empirical method (Google maps) was used to locate the vacant spaces in a preliminary phase; the mapped sites were then visited, photographed, and context and site information was recorded. Later, using a combination of field surveying, visual and GPS data, and GIS-aided assessment, multiple layers of information were recorded and combined. This method allowed, on one hand, to magnify the detailed characteristics of each site, and on the other, to facilitate the identification of Residual Landscapes’ interrelation with underlying spatial dynamics.

The definition of a classification method was motivated by the need to organize the identified range of spaces within the new landscape category (defining a new taxonomy), and it reflects the observation that previous status influences their character. Thus, the

different types of Residual Landscapes were classified based on formal status and use of the site before the interruption of human management<sup>27</sup>.

### **III. Analysis – magnification of the units (MICRO scale)**

Each site mapped was photographed and observed through a closer analysis, aimed at identifying its specific character, behavior and potential. After analyzing and recording on GIS the spatial aspects of the Residual Landscapes - i.e. morphology (shape), scale (dimension), and location (coordinates) - their functional characteristics - i.e. use (current informal status), ecological characteristics (ecosystem services provided & biodiversity), contextual characteristics (social and programmatic context), and evolution (process, transformation and growth) - and their materiality – i.e. ground, vegetation, and atmosphere characteristics - it was possible to group them into specialized categories based on morphology, materiality, context and environmental performance. A selection of the sites was subject to periodic visits to trace their vacancy over time.

### **IV. Identification of possible approaches**

Based on the evaluation of the ecological and social performance of a selection of vacant sites, some suggestion on possible intervention approaches (design speculations) based on indigenous capacities and abundant assets of the sites, were proposed. While, the observation of the phenomenon at a macro scale, led to the definition of a set of policy recommendations for future engagement and agency (which will be discussed in the concluding chapter).

#### **Scale**

The above-mentioned process concerned different **scales of observation**. Classification and mapping at the **MACRO scale**, were used to acknowledge the existence of these commonly overlooked spaces, define a new landscape typology, and expose their relationship with underlying urban spatial dynamics. Closer observation and analysis at the **MICRO scale** were used to identifying their peculiar character (both, physical and functional), behavior, and potential (Figure 8-17). By observing the form and dynamism of the particular, and identifying the legibility of the whole, we can define a new language for Residual Landscapes, make it transmissible and therefore sensitize people.

Following up I will describe more in detail the steps of the adopted analytical process:

#### **MACRO scale:**

- a) Definition of a method for identifying Residual Landscapes
- b) Definition of a method for classifying Residual Landscapes (based on previous use)
- c) Spatial mapping of Residual Landscapes in Tirana (comparison with statistical data, identification of patterns)

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<sup>27</sup> The formalized function or activity that took place on the site prior to its abandonment.

### **MICRO scale:**

- d) Definition of analytical sheets for a sample of sites
- e) Definition of specialized categories based on morphology, materiality and context



**Figure 8-17.** The micro and the macro scale. Source: author.

### **EXPLORING Residual Landscapes and their Hybrid Dynamics at the MACRO scale**

*Research Results of pilot study - Mapping, spatial analysis, classification and visualization of accidental landscapes in Tirana.*

a-b) From the observation of the “Tokyo Void” research on vacant spaces, the following urban void typologies based on **status and use** were identified (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1)) :

- Residential sites prior to construction
- Sites undergoing zone adjustment
- Demolished sites
- Deserted Buildings
- Reclaimed land
- Wasteland (barren land, uncultivated land with shrubberies)

Expanding upon the above-identified typologies, for the Tirana case study, it was decided to define the classification categories of residual spaces based on previous status and program. The “former use categories” identified in Tirana are the following:

RESIDUAL LANDSCAPE TAXONOMY - LEGEND KEY		
R.L. TYPOLOGY ID	R.L. LANDSCAPE TYPE NAME	DESCRIPTION OF STATUS BEFORE ABANDONMENT
A	BROWN_LANDS	abandoned, manufacturing sites; industrial sites; brownfields
B	TRAUMA_LANDS	abandoned, war objects; buildings; sites for bellic purposes
C	UNDER_LANDS	abandoned, tunnels; underpasses
D	NARROW_LANDS	abandoned, narrow passages between two areas or between two buildings
E	AGRI_LANDS	abandoned productive landscapes: farmland; vegetable gardens; greenhouses
F	INFRA_LANDS	abandoned infrastructures: gas stations; electric stations; water lines; sewage systems; traffic islands; vehicles & parking lots
G	SPORT_LANDS	abandoned sports facilities: soccer fields; tennis fields etc.
H	GARD_LANDS	abandoned private gardens
I	DEBRIS_LANDS	abandoned, demolished building sites; living facades; deserted buildings
J	COURT_LANDS	abandoned public space: courtyards; parks; playgrounds
K	PLOT_LANDS	abandoned residential sites prior to construction (parcelas)
L	EDGE_LANDS	abandoned, limits, edges, borders (like fortification wall, ditch)
M	MARK_LANDS	abandoned, landmarks, monuments etc.
N	WASTE_LANDS	abandoned landfills; areas for garbage collection; barren lands not cultivated
O	<i>other</i>	

**Figure 8-18.** Tirana's Residual Landscape Taxonomy - Legend Key. Source: author.

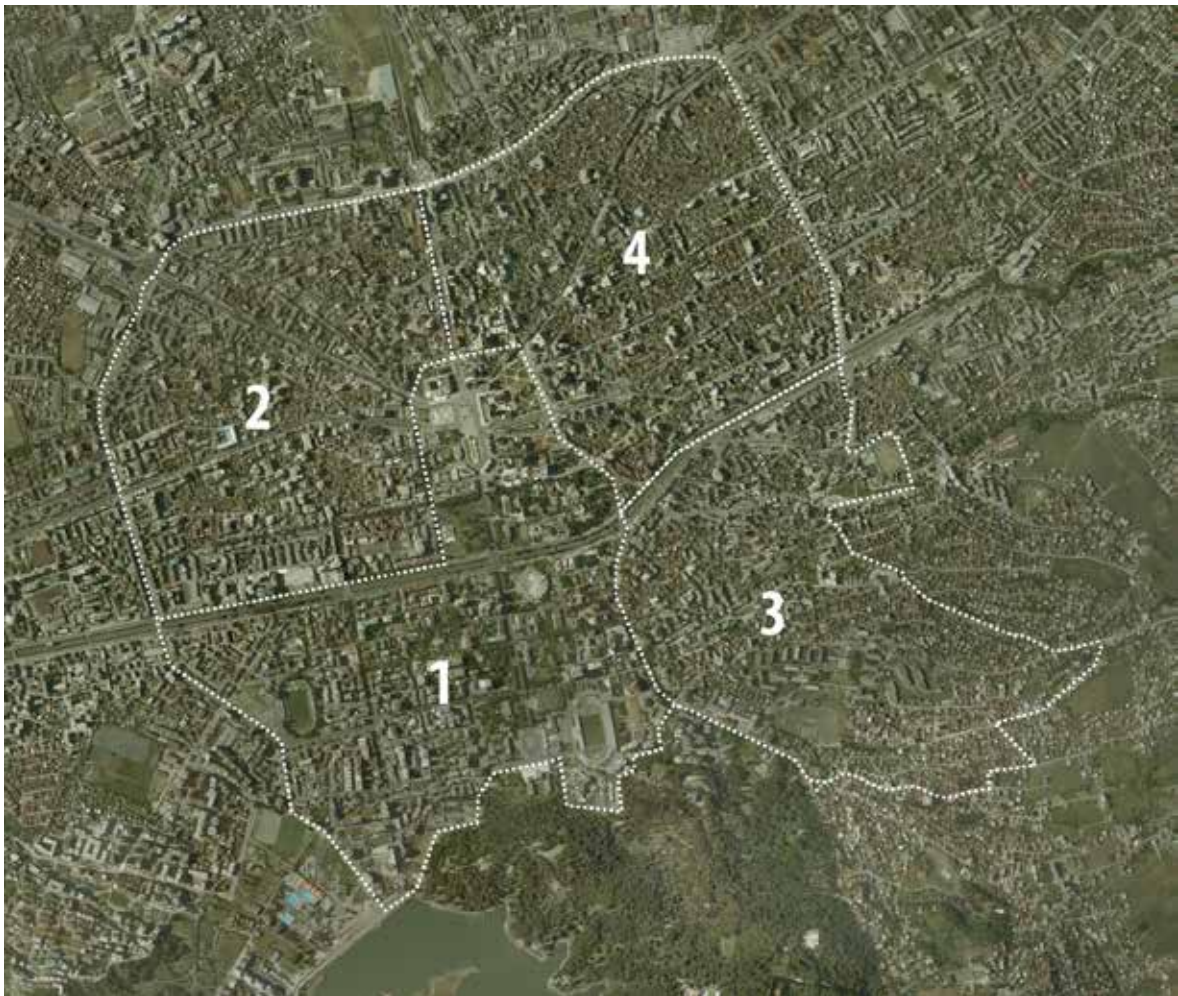
**Appendix 2** - Residual Landscape Types in Tirana, contains a sample of images representing the above-mentioned typologies.

c) In order to document these spaces in Tirana, the city within the inner ring was divided into four survey areas of similar surface. (Figure 8-19)

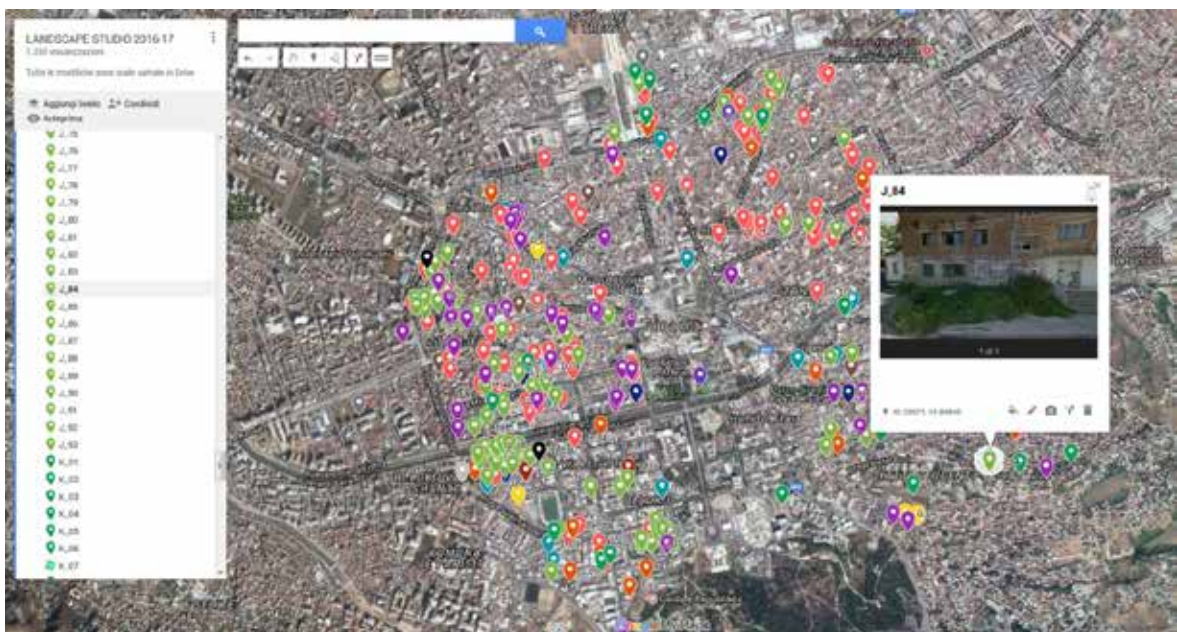
Through the observation of Google maps and Google street view<sup>28</sup>, a preliminary identification of abandoned spaces was carried (Figure 8-20). Each potential site's location was pinned. Later, survey groups explored the four predefined areas, visiting the identified sites to verify their effective residual character. During these field visits also additional sites were identified and recorded. All the sites were photographed and coded according to the above-described landscape typologies. All the above information and comments were recorded on the shared Google map online. This intermediary phase was necessary to guarantee a correct and progressive numbering and coding of the sites, since the four different groups of surveyors were recording the information simultaneously. The fact that

<sup>28</sup> The possibility to rely on Google Street View information was only possible starting from October 2016, before this date only aerial, orthophoto and satellite images were available for Tirana.

the map was instantly updated avoided repetitions and allowed for a real time monitoring of the mapping procedures.

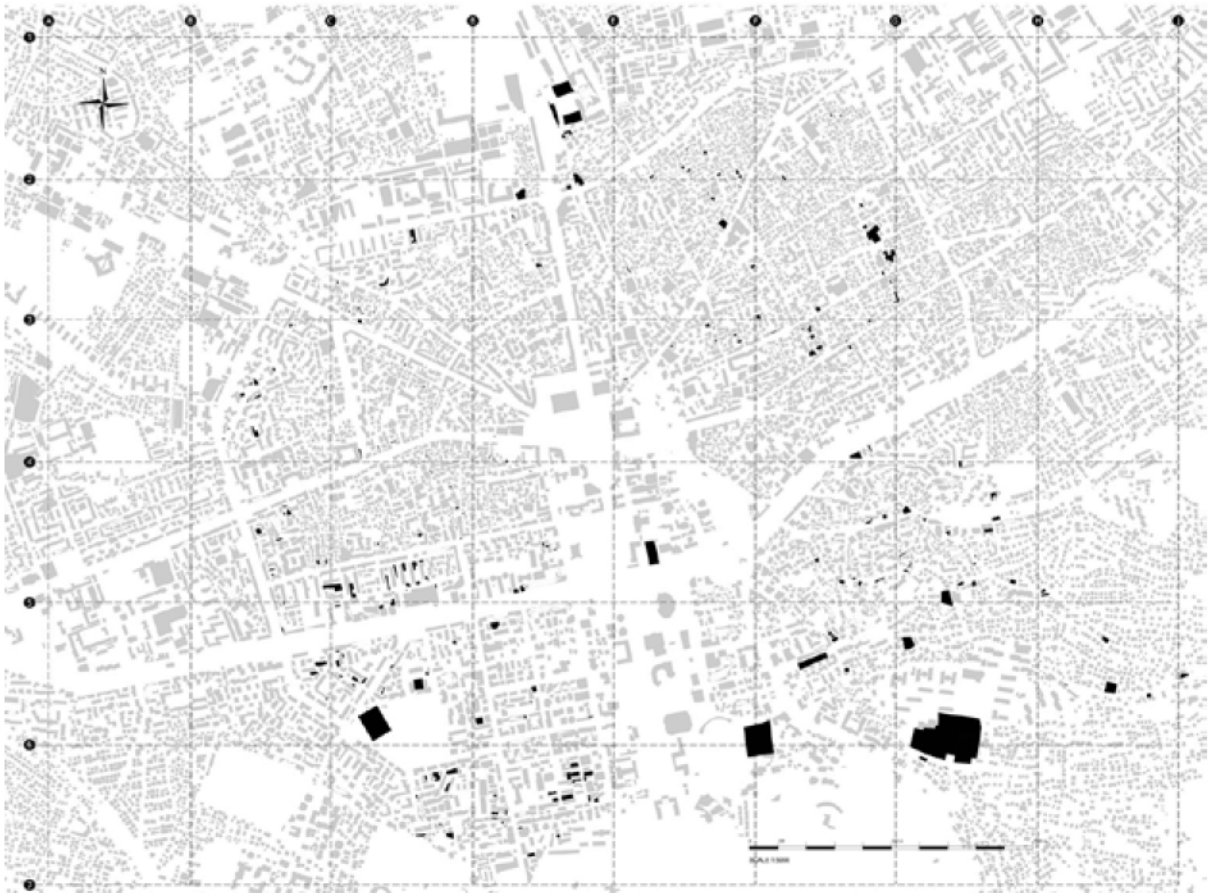


**Figure 8-19.** Map of the project survey areas in Tirana. Source: Eranda Janku.



**Figure 8-20.** Preliminary mapping with Google maps and Google street view. Source: author.

All the located sites were later transferred into a GIS file. **Appendix 4 - Tirana's Residual Landscape map**, shows the final outcome of the mapping survey. (Figure 8-21)



**Figure 8-21.** Residual landscapes map. Source: author.

d) Data concerning residual spaces' **morphology, materiality** and **context** was recorded and added to the GIS file, in order to understand their **spatial, ecological** and **social qualities**. The choice of data collected was based on a selection of parameters identified in the analyzed existing researches as follows:

From the "Tokyo Void" research on vacant spaces, the following factors that define their character were identified (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1)):

- Morphology (shape and size)
- Site and context characteristics
- Meanings (how people perceive them and interact with them)
- Status of the plot before it was abandoned
- Status of the plot after the temporary abandonment
- Materiality

Furthermore, the following **morphological characteristics** based on site and context were identified (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1)):

- Gap voids
- Empty plots
- Linear voids
- Large open voids

In addition, the following information about the sample sites analyzed was recorded (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1)):

- Location
- Type
- Ownership
- Current Use
- Size
- Duration of status

The above methods were taken into consideration, adapted to the context of the Tirana research project, and to the overall objective of the research. In the end, the data recorded in the spreadsheet for each mapped residual space in Tirana was the following (see also **Appendix 5** - Morphology, Materiality and Context data spreadsheet):

- Type (based on former use)
- Location coordinates
- Surface
- Perimeter
- Ownership
- Use Status & Duration
- Context Land Use Type
- Site morphology (GAP voids; LINEAR voids; LARGE OPEN voids)
- Vegetation cover

### **EXPLORING Residual Landscapes and their richness at the MICRO scale**

*Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER.*

d) For a selection of sites, analytical sheets presenting all the recorded aspects of morphology, materiality and context of the sites were elaborated (**Appendix 6** - Residual Landscape Analytical Sheets sample). The chosen sites were representative of the different Residual Landscape typologies.

e) Observation: morphology, materiality and context. The closer observation of a selection of sites was aimed at discovering their specific character, qualities, and potential. Three sites in particular were object of periodic visits over the course of four years. During these visits the **spatiality**, **temporality**, and **materiality** - three phenomena unique to the medium of landscape (CORNER, 2014, p. 165) - of the Residual Landscapes were

observed. While the morphology of vacant spaces is a direct consequence of their former status, their indeterminate and unstable, **spatial character** is influenced by the socio-economical context. The residual spaces observed in Tirana tend to change cyclically over time: they appear when policies or economical conditions interrupt their management; and disappear every time citizens and the administration decide to assign them a formal function. Indeed, the **temporal character** is what influences Residual Landscapes' appearance and materiality the most. By tracing the vacancy over time, we can observe the physical mutation of the vegetation according to season and time of the day, or the visible impact of human intervention. On the other hand, the **material character** of these sites (ground, atmosphere, vegetation and fauna), combined with local environmental and morphological conditions, determines how they perform from an ecological standpoint.

The questions considered when observing the vacant sites were the following:

- *What generates the Residual Landscape?*
- *What inhabits the Residual Landscape?*
- *What are the qualities of the Residual Landscape?*
- *How do people interact with the Residual Landscape?*

Three of the observed sites, located in the same neighborhood in Tirana, are described below. (**Appendix 3** - Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape Narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER)

### **“Site\_ZERO”**

Site zero is the first Residual Landscape observed in Tirana. (**Appendix 3** - Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape Narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER, p. 228) Most probably the site used to be occupied by a building, at least on the southern portion of the site; this is presumed by observing the presence of the remains of demolished building materials. In 2013, when the site was observed for the first time, it was surrounded by a wired fence and an improvised sign marked it as a private property. The sign discouraged people from entering the site, while dogs used it as a shelter. Several stray dogs delivered their puppies undisturbed, and well hidden, inside the thick bushes. The spontaneous vegetation was only trimmed once a year, when the weeds extended beyond the limits of the fence, into the sidewalk. It was not clear who trimmed the plants. Shortly after the first year of observation, the private sign and the fence disappeared altogether. In the following years a bar located on the ground floor of the residential building next to the site, extended his tables on the threshold of the vacant land. In addition, some of the ground floor residents facing the north side of the vacant site informally occupied a small portion of the site with an improvised kitchen garden and a clothesline. The space started being used also as a shortcut, as it connected to a road where a primary school is located. The ephemeral trace made by the continuous crossing of the site, turned into an adventurous path during springs and summers, as the vegetation grew higher and thicker. Kids seemed to enjoy this daily adventure into the “urban jungle”. As the seasons changed and the vegetation cyclically blossomed and dried out, different



temporary activities took place on the site: a man often visited the site during spring to collect wild spices; a couple of times people grazing cattle in the site (turkeys) were spotted. In 2015, a small portion to the south of the site became an illegal residential parking. Until 2017 the site was periodically mowed, or at least once a year, when the weeds were getting too thick and tall. Between spring and summer 2017, the vegetation reached a considerable height and the natural path became quite challenging. During this period, not many people used the shortcut, and hidden behind the thick vegetation, someone improvised a doghouse and regularly left food for stray dogs that inhabit the site.

### “LOST\_Site”

The site started to be observed in 2014 (**Appendix 3** - Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape Narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER, p. 228). It represents the typical condition of communal spaces in the communist block layout, whereby the landscaped areas between the 4/5 storey buildings are no longer maintained and naturally evolve into Residual Landscapes. The site in exam was occupied by ruderal plants and by some of the trees originally planted in the 1940s. The site's appearance changed with seasonal sequence. This condition remained unaltered until 2017, when some of the ground floor premises were occupied by commercial activities, such as bars and small shops. These newly instated commercial activities appropriated the vacant land, paving and landscaping most of its surface. Hence, this Residual Landscape was lost.

### ”WASTED\_Site”

The site is public and it is located at the intersection of two residential streets (**Appendix 3** - Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape Narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER, p. 228). It was visited and observed periodically since 2015. The presence of the remains of a paved path, and trees, suggests it used to be landscaped. Its proximity to a set of garbage bins and the interruption of municipal maintenance, contributed to its evolution into a Residual Landscape. A part from being occasionally used as an informal parking spot, the site appears as an improvised garbage sorting area and a storage space for unwanted furniture. Until 2017, garbage recycling was not practiced in Tirana. Poor people, and the nomadic ethnic groups that live in the city (Rom), were used to collect plastic bottles and sell them for recycling. The vacant site in question was temporarily used by these people to sort the garbage, and collect plastic bottles and other scrap material. In 2017 municipal recycling was introduced, garbage bins were substituted, and special ecological force garbage men were hired. Although this partially discouraged informal garbage sorting practices, the vacant site keeps being used as a temporary dumpster for old mattresses and home appliances.

The above considerations are a result of walks around the Tirana neighborhoods. Walking can become an aesthetic tool, capable of revealing the marginal urban spaces and their elusive qualities. Walking and exploring can reveal aspects of these landscapes that are hidden from the objectivity of aerial maps and photographs. Through a subjective

experience of such places, we can catch vague, unusual, and surprising glimpses of familiar local places and discover the complexity found in ecological and social niches.

#### 8.4 Qualities & performance of Residual Landscapes in Tirana

*What are the qualities of R.L.? (how do they perform; what are their visual and aesthetic qualities; how do people interact with them)*

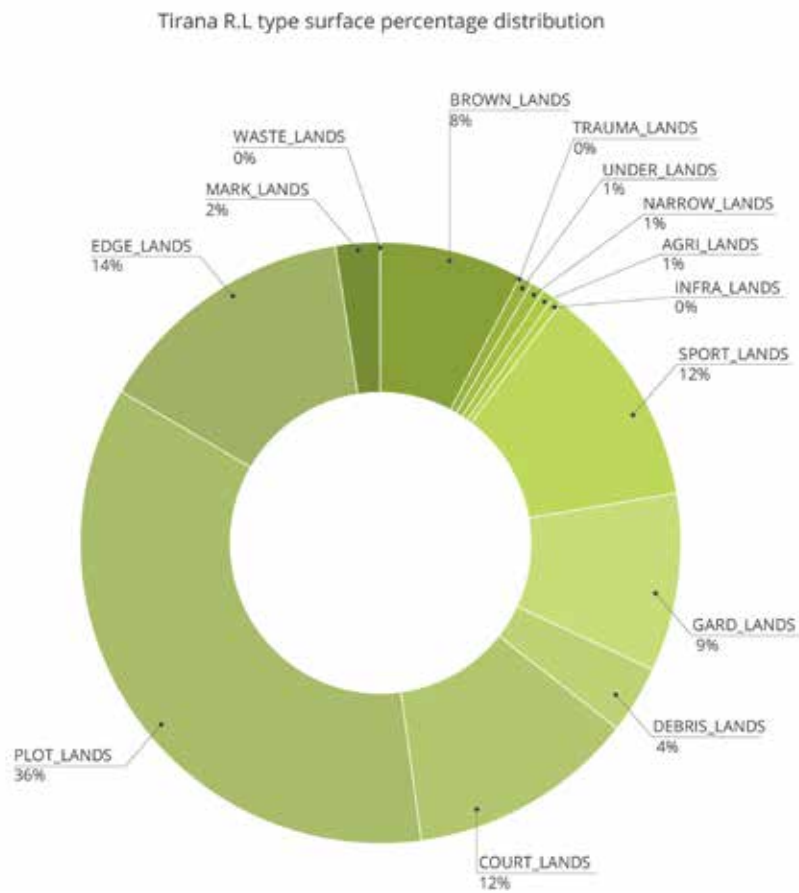
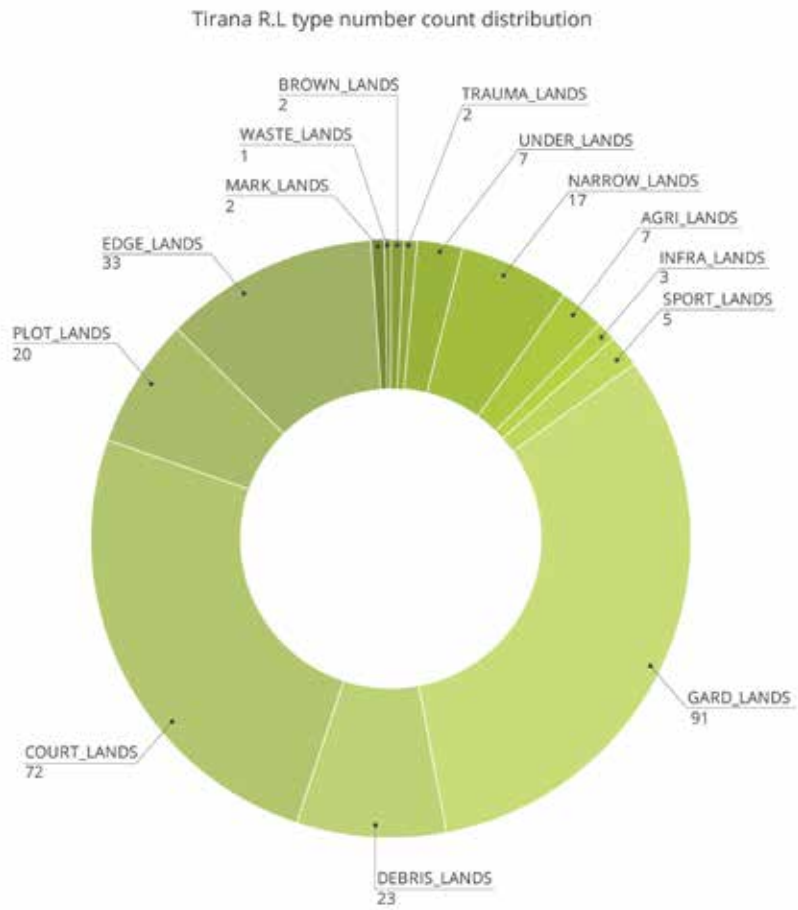
##### Observations of the results at the MACRO scale:

The results of the survey are recorded in **Appendix 7 - Tirana Residual Landscape Survey Results data spreadsheet**, p. 249.

R.L. TYP. ID	R.L. TYPE	QUANTITY (n)	SURFACE (m <sup>2</sup> )	
A	BROWN_LANDS	2	9.711	
B	TRAUMA_LANDS	2	0	
C	UNDER_LANDS	7	884	
D	NARROW_LANDS	17	913	
E	AGRI_LANDS	7	804	
F	INFRA_LANDS	3	639	
G	SPORT_LANDS	5	15.238	
H	GARD_LANDS	91	12.080	highest number
I	DEBRIS_LANDS	23	4.609	
J	COURT_LANDS	72	15.445	greatest number/surface
K	PLOT_LANDS	20	44.872	greatest surface
L	EDGE_LANDS	33	17.894	
M	MARK_LANDS	2	2.991	
N	WASTE_LANDS	1	41	
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>283</b>	<b>126.122</b>	Total R.L. surface
			<b>6.470.000</b>	Total R.L. surface surveyed
			<b>1,9%</b>	% of R.L. over total surface surveyed

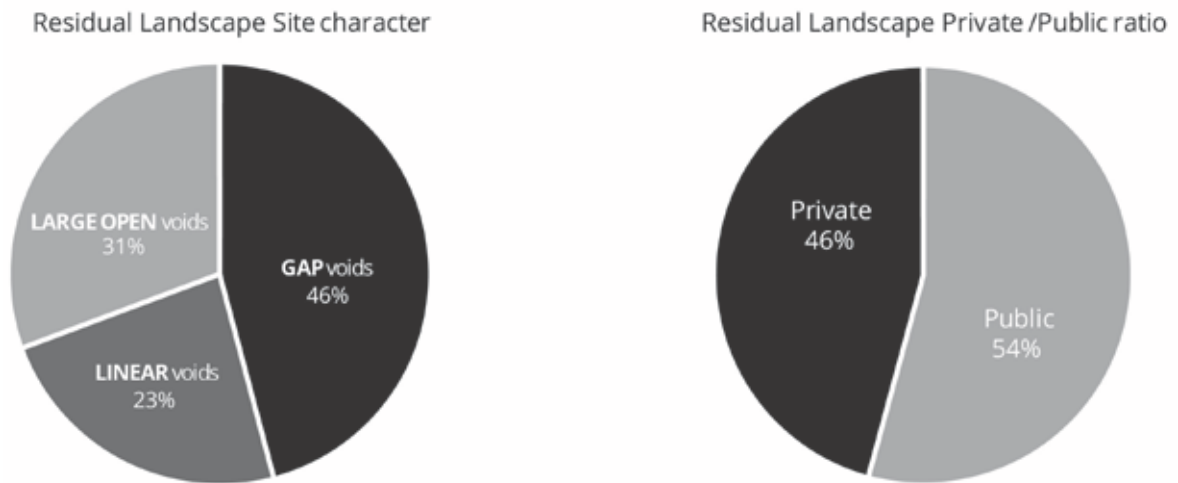
**Figure 8-22.** Table summarizing Tirana R.L. survey results. Source: author.

A total of 283 sites was recorded, with a total surface of 126.122 m<sup>2</sup>, which amounts to 1,9% of the total surveyed area within the inner ring of the city (6.470.000 m<sup>2</sup>). The recorded number of each residual landscape typology reported in the table above (Figure 8-23), indicates that the predominant types of urban Residual Landscapes present in the area are (H) **GARD\_LANDS** (abandoned private gardens) with 91 sites, and 12.000 m<sup>2</sup>; and (J) **COURT\_**lands (abandoned public space: courtyards; parks; playgrounds) with 72 sites, and 15.400 m<sup>2</sup>. However, in terms of total surface area, the higher value is found in (K) **PLOT\_LANDS** (abandoned residential sites prior to construction), which occupy a surface of almost 45.000 m<sup>2</sup> in the surveyed area. (Figure 8-22)



**Figure 8-23.** Ring charts showing Tirana’s R.L. type distribution in the surveyed area: (above) a. number count distribution; (below) b. surface distribution percentages. Source: author.

Observing the results of the survey, the first consideration that can be made is that the phenomena concerns both public land 54% (153 sites) and private properties 46% (129 sites). (Figure 8-24)



**Figure 8-24. Left** -Pie chart showing Tirana’s R.L. public-private ratio. Source: author.

**Figure 8-25. Right** - Pie chart showing Tirana’s R.L. distribution of site character percentages. Source: author.

The total surface of all types combined (126.122 m<sup>2</sup>) is equal to more than one third of the surface of the city’s official green and blue infrastructure (357.803 m<sup>2</sup>, which include rivers and lakes, parks, urban woods, urban farming, and public green space in general). This data is an indicator of the potential of these landscapes to integrate the green infrastructure of the city, and the ecological services they provide.

As far as location, 66% of the vacancies are concentrated in residential areas of the city. In fact the survey highlighted a higher concentration of residual spaces in the residential areas on the northern and southern sides of the Lana river, in the traditional socialist residential block layout, and in the mixed use (residential, commercial and services) informal areas of the city, characterized by organic street layout, a combination of newer (2000s) high rise residential flat towers (up to 10 floors), and informal dwellings (self built structures or swaths).

An unexpected finding was that these spaces hardly ever become shelter for the “undesirables”. Yet, the phenomenon appears to occur indistinctively in poor and wealthy neighborhoods, and does not appear to be linked to wealth at all. Similarly, the attitude of people towards Residual Landscapes is similar across social status and age groups. People tend to coexist peacefully with these spaces. Their apparent unproductiveness and the supposed “loss of control” over such indeterminate spaces, is actually what makes them an opportunity for informal appropriation and fulfillment that there is a diffused tendency to use the vacant sites temporarily through informal occupation. People in Tirana are accustomed to informal approaches, and in the case of residual space, this practice is usually tolerated. The resulting engagement of people with residual landscapes is silently

**negotiated** with the community or the owners<sup>29</sup>. Moreover, most of the appropriation practices indirectly benefit the neighborhood. In fact, the sites might be cleared from garbage and partially maintained. We could say that Albanians view disorganization as an opportunity to introduce life in an organized and inflexible system.

Lastly, what emerged from the periodic observation of these spaces is their **fluctuation**. During the past two years, many informal areas in the city centre have been subject to major infrastructural restructuring projects (i.e. road readjustment, addition of sidewalks, and introduction of sewage and water lines, etc.); consequently, many of the gap and linear vacancies are gradually disappearing. On the other hand, new ones are simultaneously being generated by the spaces left over from the intersection between roads and irregular plots occupied by informal constructions. Furthermore, several large, open voids have been disappearing as their state of suspension is being interrupted by new large residential developments. (Figure 8-25)

### **People's Engagement**

#### *Bridging the Vacuum. Reclamation of residual spaces in Tirana*

The character of Residual Landscapes, the fact that they are abandoned, marginal, empty, (formally) unproductive, fluctuating, and indeterminate, is what determines their potential, they are “unintended landscapes” (Glossary, p. xix). Their ecological value lies in the fact that they are refuge for biodiversity and they spontaneously provide ecosystem services; while their social and aesthetic values can be identified in their capacity to respond to both the citizens' immediate physical needs, and their psychological wellbeing, by offering places for social interaction and contemplation. Above all, thanks to Tirana's specific cultural and social context, they offer an opportunity for the establishment of a “dynamic order” in the city. These spaces act as mediators of the social conflicts generated by society's continuity and discontinuity of individualization. Engagement with these spaces already exists and is manifest in the (silently negotiated) individual tactics of informal appropriation, and the more general spontaneous approach towards Residual Landscapes' management.

Tirana citizens are slowly turning the attention back toward shared and green spaces, reclaiming public areas, and reestablishing their relationship with nature inside the city. They are temporarily reclaiming unused swathes of land and quickly and inexpensively turning them into new public spaces. Surely, strategies and tactics for the management of unused or underused spaces in consolidated urban environments should be considered also in terms of the initiative that drives the intervention (private or public), and the adopted implementation process (legal or illegal interventions, informal/spontaneous or guided/planned approaches), as the latter can determine the extent of the potential social and ecological benefit of the intervention.

The main approaches adopted in Tirana until a few years ago were mostly privately driven, and implemented illegally, both on public and private properties; the occupation of residual

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<sup>29</sup> Although private property is usually respected, if the sites are accessible and have no clear barrier they might still be temporarily occupied.

sites was motivated exclusively by individual needs (land used as a private kitchen garden, as grazing field for livestock, as a space for hanging laundry, as a garbage dump, etc.) and therefore did not necessarily stimulate social interaction, nor it was coordinated with other interventions around the city.



**Figure 8-26.** “Pocket Park”, in Tirana (AL), 2015. Source: Co-PLAN.

However, in the last three years, thanks to initiatives promoted jointly by local NGOs and foreign organizations, more hybrid approaches are being tested. In 2015, for example, the local NGO Co-PLAN, in cooperation with local schools, operated the transformation of a neglected public space in Tirana into a “Pocket Park”<sup>30</sup>, through a community engaging, participatory process<sup>31</sup> (Figure 8-26). The project was carried out in phases coordinated by the NGO, who had the task of catalyzing the bottom-up initiative of a neighborhood in Tirana. The NGO was overseeing the participatory planning process and the involvement of citizens, higher education institutions<sup>32</sup> (with students acting as negotiators between locals/neighbors, and private stakeholders/investors), and representatives of the Tirana Municipality (JANO, 2015). In the above mentioned case the process itself stimulated social interaction among neighbors, activating a communication channel between the latter, private local business owners, and the local authorities, but most importantly, it stimulated a sense of responsibility in the community (who was involved in the process of shaping interventions in their neighborhood from the very first phases of the project) and the investors, who are now both in charge of maintaining the new public space. If extended and managed in a set of coordinated actions, this approach could guarantee an ecological benefit extended to the entire city, reframing Residual Landscapes in degraded urban environments and using them to sustain and regenerate ecosystem services.

Engagement with Residual Landscapes in Tirana already exists; the mapping, classification and documentation operated in the “Tirana case study” was aimed at making them visible and determined their availability, and it was the first step to promote agency and forms of organized action (combining research institutions, municipality and the local community) to transform them into a shared resource.

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<sup>30</sup> The “Urban Pockets” program was launched by URBEGO in 2015 with the aim of developing a co-creation strategy for reclaiming public spaces in different cities around the world. The first phase of the program saw URBEGO interacting with local partners and communities in different Balkan cities, with the first community pocket park implemented in Tirana in 2015. (<http://www.urbego.org/urban-pockets>)

<sup>31</sup> [http://walk21vienna.com/?dg\\_voting\\_submission=pocket-park](http://walk21vienna.com/?dg_voting_submission=pocket-park)

<sup>32</sup> Local school of Architecture POLIS, and Goethe Institut.





### SECTION THREE. PROJECTION (*Residual Landscapes in perspective*)

*What could Residual Landscapes be in the future? (what could inhabit them; their social, ecological and aesthetic potential)*

After observing the phenomena of urban Residual Landscapes in other courtiers and in Tirana, and reviewing existing theories on their existence, a set of general consideration about their **character**, **qualities**, and **potential** and conclusions about the specific way they perform in Tirana can be drawn.



**Figure 8-27.** “Sails in a vague sea”: Images from Netflix TV show “Suburra”(2017), source Moreno Maggi 2014; and “Gomorra: La serie” (2014), source Photo by Emanuela Scarpa/Sundance TV - © 2015 SundanceTV Gomorrah.

In other parts of the western world Residual Landscapes have often become a refuge for illegal activities or temporary shelters for the “undesirables in the city”. In the US, for example, thanks to the mild weather and the liberal social policies, in cities along the West coast Residual Landscapes have become a refuge for homeless and the junkies. There are also several examples of marginal urban spaces that have become the backdrop of crime and illegality. Observing the unfinished structures of the “Citta’ dello Sport” (Sports City) in Tor Vergata (Rome) by Santiago Calatrava, especially designed for the 2009 World Swimming Championships, we can understand why they have become the perfect setting for the new Netflix crime hit “Suburra”<sup>1</sup> (Figure 8-27). The unfinished structure appears before our eyes as an unfinished “cathedral in the desert”. The half-built sail shaped structure had become a ruin even before being used: a masterpiece without a future, a “sail in a *vague* sea”. Similarly, the “Vele” (the sails) in Scampia (Naples), an immense low income urban housing project from the 1960’s completely immersed in a vast “Terrain Vague”, are the unsettling set of drug trade and score settling by the Camorra in “Gomorra”<sup>2</sup> (Figure 8-27). These Residual Landscapes, where the drug dealers hide from the police, are also the accidental playgrounds where their children play hide and seek, or learn how to handle their first gun (Figure 8-28). These spaces are generated by the loss of control over a vast area made of green open spaces, boulevards and parks, which were never maintained as planned. They witness the failure of the planning strategy: an attempt to force a specific idea of control and social segregation through design in an extremely delicate and volatile social context.

As we have seen, many of the residual spaces in Tirana are a result of the interruption of maintenance in vast green public spaces (designed during the socialist regime). However, in this context, they are not seen under a negative light, nor have they become a shelter for the homeless. One of the reasons could be the cultural tolerance towards informal uses. Albanians are an example of an innate human condition, when faced with adversity and uncertainty, communities have always found ways to re-engage with place and landscape. It would seem that every time they are faced with a trauma, they rediscover their autonomy and become inventive in a myriad of ways. Residual Landscapes are the perfect places to express this freedom because they are **ephemeral** (impermanent and reversible) **indeterminate, latent, experiential**; they constitute an **alternative** and an **index**, they are a **palimpsest** for the “staging” the future. (CORNER, 2014)

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<sup>1</sup> Netflix Tv show about the power & corruption in the city of Rome, among organized crime, politicians, and the Vatican (2017). The location in the unfinished Calatrava building is the preferred meeting place of the three main characters of the TV show; three young criminals from very different areas of the city and with different backgrounds.

<sup>2</sup> “Gomorra: La serie” (original title) is a 2014 Italian television crime drama series. It is based on the book Gomorra by Roberto Saviano and the film Gomorra directed by Matteo Garrone. The show is about the Camorra (organized crime) and it’s set in the suburbs of Naples.



**Figure 8-28.** (Top) residual space in Tirana (AL), Source: author. (Bottom) a scene from the Netflix TV show “Gomorra: La serie” (2014). Source: Photo by Emanuela Scarpa/Sundance TV - © 2015 SundanceTV Gomorrah.

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## Chapter 9. Residual Landscapes as canvas to stage the future

*Qualities and potential of Residual Landscapes & the dilemma of intervention.*

**Residual Landscapes are *ephemeral*.** They are always on the verge of disappearing, yet they always reappear somewhere else; grass is replacing the flooring, trees start growing in the middle of houses. Their transformative and transitory nature enables them to constantly readapt to the changing needs of society. The informal interventions that take place on urban residual spaces in Tirana are ephemeral too: urban tactics, pop-up street vendors and other temporary activities that engage with leftover urban space in a very short amount of time, with little financial investment, and minimum or zero impact. This kind of practice seems to comply with Beigel's intention to "leave them be" (Beigel, Florian (1997) as cited in (MOSTAFAVI, 2003, pp. 54-55)), but extending this concept to both the residual spaces themselves, and the people's informal interaction with them.

**Residual Landscapes are *indeterminate*.** Just as the indeterminacy of a sketch leaves room for different interpretations by different observers, the imprecise character of Residual Landscapes leaves room for the creative agency of citizens. Moreover, just as a sketch can be interpreted differently at different times<sup>3</sup>, the evolutionary process of Residual Landscapes is not linear, but open to external influences, and it can respond dynamically to the changing needs of societies and cities. Layered, complex, and diffused left over spaces and wastelands have much to offer to the urban dweller. It is precisely the fragmentary nature and lack of fixed meaning that render wastelands deeply meaningful.

**Residual Landscapes are *latent places*.** These marginal spaces are mysterious and they embody danger and enchantment. In urban environments which are more and more saturated and programmed, residual spaces are a refuge for the citizens, where they can be surprised by the unexpected, rediscover adventure, observe and learn from the feral beauty of urban wilderness. When spaces are abandoned, children can begin to use them as playgrounds, and through their imagination, transfigure them into whatever they want them to be. Feral landscapes offer an opportunity for escape from the over-organized, the predictable and the monotonous and, at the same time, open a window into the past.

**Residual Landscapes are *experiential*** in themselves. They are characterized by smells, sounds, and visual elements. Nonetheless, these abandoned spaces are commonly described disparagingly because of their fragmented, incoherent and messy character. However, they could equally be seen in a positive light where the same characteristics convey richness because of their complexity; the complexity derived from the very discontinuities that characterize them. Although dirty and abandoned there are particular qualities in this marginal landscape that are worthy of respect. The challenge is to find a way to re-engage with such places that will evoke a sense of continuity with their former uses, preserve their ecological value and, at the same time, leave space for the future needs of cities. This will require a shift in perception: from void to latency, from dereliction to innovation (Berlin), from abandonment to opportunity and autonomy (Detroit), from disorder to *dynamic order* (Tirana), from formal integrity to an esthetics of transience and

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<sup>3</sup> A sketch can lie in our sketchbook for many years and one day we can turn to it and it becomes the generator of a new idea. Every time we look at it, it gives us a new cue and suggests a new trajectory.

imperfection (Tokyo), an aesthetic that triggers a mixed feeling, standing between fear and refusal, surprise and curiosity.

**Residual Landscapes constitute an *alternative*.** These landscapes offer a third, intermediate condition, what Lefebvre would call “*l’Autre*” (See, 3.1 The Trialectics of Spatiality - Talking in ‘triples’, p. 19). An evolving space for social interaction, contemplation and a temporal threshold for healing. In Tirana some of these wastelands are directly associated to the memory of traumatic events (such as bunkers and escape tunnels). Their overgrown spontaneous vegetation operates a metaphorical suturing of these psychological wounds inferred by wars and dictatorships. Similarly, time and feral vegetation can heal the physical scar left on the sites by industrial pollution, material extraction, and demolition processes.

**Residual Landscapes as *index*.** By observing what kind of plants persist in a specific environment, we can learn about the activities that took place in the past. Soil and spontaneous urban plants growing in urban wastelands embody the history of the previous use of the site. However, since they are affected by the local environmental conditions (bioclimatic, biophysical and anthropic), plants and organic material present on the site can also become index of environmental degradation. (DEL TREDICI, 2010), (DEL TREDICI, 2010)(DEL TREDICI, 2014) Hence, residual spaces are also indicators of the future that awaits our urban environments.

**Residual Landscapes as *palimpsest*.** As Gandy observes “marginal spaces of spontaneous nature” offer an alternative to the dominance of “functionalist or utilitarian perspectives” towards the urban landscape. “Wastelands exist in dynamic tension with human intentionality, whether in terms of their preservation—the slowing of time—or their erasure to make way for the new.” [...] “Above all, wastelands are “islands,” in cultural, material, and political terms, which pose an ideological as well as practical challenge for the utilitarian impetus of capitalist urbanization. The “intrinsic worth” of the ostensibly useless is as much a political question as an aesthetic or scientific one.” (GANDY, 2013, p. 1312)

Residual landscapes offer a “paradoxical combination of vacancy with freedom, of absence with possibility, and of limitlessness with mobility” (MARIANI & BARRON, 2014, p. XII) But, as Gandy observed they confront us with a paradoxical choice. *Should they be left alone, or reintroduced in the productive logic of the city?* The current attitude towards urban residuality is either expressing a romantic need to return such sites to natural systems, or to reclaim and re-colonize them. Architects and Planners cannot resist the urge to change them with their plans and designs. Even Alan Berger, who acknowledged their qualities, proposes that designers re-integrate such sites into the city (BERGER, 2006), “removing their contaminants and dereliction and rebuilding them into ordered city form”. (ARMSTRONG, 2016, p. 240) But, re-colonizing them would mean erasing an important aspect of the sites’ history. Maybe leaving traces of their past status could be a viable compromise. Like Stalker’s gesture of leaving behind ephemeral traces of their walks around the empty and unnoticed urban space (using white flour or chalk on the sites, or simply re-arranging found objects), we could operate temporarily on these spaces, considering that whatever we leave behind will eventually become part of the site’s

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history (Figure 9-1). Establishing with these marginal lands a relationship similar to Sola-Morales' concept of "contradictory complicity"(De SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995). According to Helen Armstrong, such an approach would require paying attention to the continuity with former uses and existing structures (like industrial or infrastructural ruins), while introducing new activities like energy harvesting, food production and, of course, leisure. (ARMSTRONG, 2016)



**Figure 9-1.** Kid drawing on the street, Tirana (AL). Source: Co-Plan.

Last, but not least, Residua Landscapes are "antifragile" (TALEB, 2013)

### **9.1 Things that gain from disorder**

*"Antifragility", new order, and new urban development approaches.*

The concepts of resilience related to urban landscape conditions, and in the specific the adaptation of landscapes to social, political and environmental changes, acquires great importance in the contemporary discourse on human settlements, characterized by a crisis of the canonical vision of a defined city, offering new ways to interpret concepts of resilience and adaptation, and conferring new value to the spontaneity of "accidental landscapes" (Glossary, p. xix). This is particularly true for cities like Tirana, subject to fast urban growth, which results in "antagonist landscapes" (TURRI, 2008, p. 19). In general, top down approached to urban planning have proven to lack in flexibility and capacity to react and be resilient to unpredictable changes. In this regard, landscapes, including residual ones, constitute a very important asset. Moreover, Residual Landscapes bear a very specific quality, which goes beyond the concept of resilience: they are "antifragile"(TALEB, 2013).

**“Antifragility”** is a property of systems that increase in capability, resilience, or robustness as a result of stressors, shocks, volatility, noise, mistakes, faults, attacks, or failures. It is a concept developed by Professor Nassim Nicholas Taleb in his book *“Antifragile: Things that gain from disorder”* (TALEB, 2013). As Taleb explains in his book, “antifragility” is fundamentally different from the concepts of resiliency (i.e. the ability to recover from failure) and robustness (that is, the ability to resist failure).

**“Resilience”** (from the Latin *resilire*) means leaping back like a spring and therefore also moving forward without surrendering to challenges, but basically returning to the original state after a shock; while “robust” is an attribute of something that is neutral to volatility, but not elastic nor flexible. You might in fact resist failure, and in that case you are robust, but you cannot predict everything, and when it comes to random events “robust is certainly not good enough”<sup>4</sup>(TALEB, 2013, p. 8). On the other hand, if you are resilient to failure you will surely recover from the stress, but you might be weakened by it. The robust or resilient is neither harmed nor helped by volatility and disorder, while the “antifragile” benefits from them. According to Taleb’s definition, “antifragility” (the antonym of fragility) is the property of something that “gains from disorder”. Instead of succumbing to stress and volatility, it reacts by adaptation and actually improves its performance. Moreover, “antifragility” is beyond resilience or robustness and is not equal to fitness<sup>5</sup>. The resilient resists shocks and stays the same; while the “antifragile” gets better”. This property is behind anything that changes with time, like evolution, technological innovations, cultural and economic success, and the rise (and fall) of cities. (TALEB, 2013, pp. 3,4)

In his book, Taleb uses mythology and metaphors to better define the concept of “antifragility”<sup>6</sup>: among others, he refers to the Greek legend of the Phoenix, the bird that is reborn from its own ashes every time it is destroyed. The fact that it returns to its initial state, implies that it is resilient. But the Phoenix is also the ancient symbol of Beirut, a city that better fits the description of the “antifragile”. Beirut was destroyed eight times, and each time it was rebuilt not just as it was, but each time with a better shape than its previous incarnation.(TALEB, 2013, p. 33) It is interesting to notice how Tirana, has had a similar fate: the city was erased every time a new conqueror came along, but each time a new version of the city rose from the debris, while some small fragments were left behind, Residual Landscapes that remained suspended in time.

“[...] randomness, uncertainty, chaos: you want to use them, not hide from them.”  
(TALEB, 2013, p. 3)

**“Antifragility” and volatility** - Fragility is what does not like volatility, randomness, uncertainty, disorder, errors and stressors<sup>7</sup>. But in reality depriving a system of volatility,

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<sup>4</sup> There is no such thing as perfect robustness, and the smallest vulnerability with time will cause the object/system to crack.

<sup>5</sup> In fact, “antifragility” exceeds fitness, because the latter means merely being tuned to a specific environment, while antifragility implies overcompensation, being prepared for an environment with stressors of higher intensity.

<sup>6</sup> Taleb argues that the mythological metaphor that better fits the phenomenon of antifragility is the Greek Hydra: a serpent-like multi head creature that benefits from harm, since every time one of its heads is cut off, two more grow back.

<sup>7</sup> Think of the fragile objects we label as fragile, like glasses, in doing so we want them to be left alone in order and predictability.



randomness, and stressors will harm them, weaken them (like muscle atrophy when we do not move), and eventually kill them. So we might say that “everything nonlinear in response is either fragile or “antifragile” to certain source of randomness”. The fragile breaks with “time”, while “antifragility” likes volatility and time. Time is like experience for human beings: if you are “antifragile” to small errors, time brings the kind of errors that end up benefiting you.

**“Antifragility” and predictability** – Fragility can be measured, risk is not measurable. Whoever claims he can predict risk is just fooling himself. The Black Swan<sup>8</sup> problem indicates the impossibility of calculating the risk of consequential rare events and predicting their occurrence. This is true of all complex systems, where an extremely large number of interdependencies and nonlinear responses<sup>9</sup>, makes it impossible to predict future trends or events. By looking at single parts of the problem, or reducing everything to a linear problem, we would be operating a dangerous and deceptive, and misleading simplification. Again, we can refer this concept also to manmade complex systems like cities, which are not totally predictable, they tend to develop cascades of chain reactions that elude predictability and can end up causing outsized catastrophic events. Cities have a life of their own, and we cannot be so presumptuous to expect to drive their evolution and move things around like puppeteers. But we can allow for “antifragility” to define our strategies instead, and in terms of cities this means welcoming a mechanism by which the system regenerates itself constantly, by using random event, volatility, and errors in the long run. And this leads me to the question: *where can these events take place in cities where most of the surface is covered by and inanimate, flatbed of programmed surfaces, and where to compensate a malfunction or a shortage in the system the mean reaction time is in the order of years?*

I believe that, in order to guarantee the survival, evolution and health of our urban environments, we should be aiming at “antifragility”. In the programmed, flat systems of traditional city planning, error and unpredictability were undesirable because the system was closed and fragile, and was not designed taking into account volatility. On the contrary, bottom-up approaches “thrive under the right amount of stress and disorder” (TALEB, 2013, p. 5). Many things such as society and cultural behavior are apparently created and driven by man, but they actually grow on their own and reach some kind of self-organization. They are not biological systems per se, but they do behave like them, they multiply and replicate (TALEB, 2013, p. 56). Natural biological processes - which have been around for four billion years and have allowed for the survival of the planet and life on it - love randomness, error and unpredictability, and the key to their thriving is, in fact, variability. Ecosystems are “antifragile” in so much as they can learn from mistakes and evolve; stressors are information, and it is thanks to the information they provide that a system can improve and evolve. In an “antifragile” system error is used as a source of information. Similarly, some man-made systems like cities are complex like natural processes, and therefore characterized by severe interdependencies. In a complex system

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<sup>8</sup> Black swans are large-scale unpredictable and irregular events of massive consequence. (TALEB, 2013, p. 6)

<sup>9</sup> Nonlinear means that if you double the dose of something you don't get twice the initial effect.

there is no such thing as a cause to a certain response; there are a set of unpredictable interconnected cascading behaviors

As we mentioned in the second chapter, “just about anything that matters can be mapped or classified into three categories”. In Taleb’s definition the “Triad” is composed by: fragile, “antifragile”, and robust, which represent different degrees of exposure to disorder. In the **fragile** extreme of this range, mistakes are rare and large when they occur, hence irreversible; in the **robust** extreme, we can find the neutrality to mistakes, but also, “no pain and no gain”. While in the middle, “**antifragile**” condition, the mistakes are small and quickly overcome (Figure 9-2)<sup>204</sup>. This kind of map of exposure to disorder and volatility spreads across domains, such as culture, health, biology, political systems, technology, socioeconomic life and, urban organization. In urbanism this triad places Le Corbusier and modern planning practices and rules on the far left side of the scale, as fragile with low exposure to volatility; and Jane Jacobs in the middle, as an “antifragile approach based more of virtue than on principles or rules. An approach open to uncertainty, chaos, entropy, disorder, stressors and time!” (TALEB, 2013, pp. 20-21)

EXTREME I	OTHERNESS III	EXTREME II	Category
FRAGILE <i>(mistakes are irreversible and they harm the system)</i>	ANTIGRAGILE <i>(mistakes make the system stronger)</i>	ROBUST <i>(neutrality to mistakes)</i>	<i>(response to volatility and mistakes)</i>

(See Figure 3-1, p. 19)

**Figure 9-2.** “Antifragility” seen through the “tripartite definition of conditions”. Source: author.

## 9.2 Emergent Behavior: ORDER+ANARCHY

*Setting the grounds for a re-evaluation of Residual Landscapes’ role in the city.*

Current trends in management of the urban landscape appear to be shifting the attention from a holistic and programmed approach towards the territory, to a localized and site-specific approach centered on the specificity of each urban fact. Since Jane Jacobs published “The Death and life of Great American Cities” in the 1960’s, people started noticing the failure of the orthodox planning practice - planning based on sorting out and bringing order from above - and the attention shifted to small scale dynamics (like spontaneous neighborhood clustering). This new attitude caused a paradigm shift, affecting also the approach towards urban design, and conferring a new role to landscape, which started becoming a model for urban process, the most suitable medium<sup>10</sup> for managing and guiding the contemporary urban conditions and the future development of cities(WALDHEIM, 2006). Landscape Urbanism focuses on what is referred to as a “performative” urbanism that relates to the informal ways people can negotiate or perform in the use of common lands.

<sup>10</sup> “Landscape is an open system, it is a Medium uniquely capable of responding to temporal change, transformation, adaptation, and succession”. These qualities recommend landscape as an analog to contemporary processes of urbanization and as a medium uniquely suited to the open-endedness, indeterminacy, and change demanded by contemporary urban conditions. As Allen puts it, “landscape is not only a formal model for urbanism today, but perhaps more importantly, a model for process.” (WALDHEIM, 2006, p. 39). See also (CORNER, 2014, p. 292)

## Organized complexity and Informal Intelligence

“[...] the discipline of ecology suggests that individual agents acting across a broad field of operation produce incremental and cumulative effects [feedback mechanisms] that continually evolve the shape of an environment over time”. (WALDHEIM, 2006, p. 29)

In the 70's Mathematical Biology started demonstrating how a higher-level order of intelligence can form out of relatively simple component parts, affecting not only the scientific disciplines of brain science and software design, but also the world of urban studies (JOHNSON, 2002). Theories about complexity of self-organizing systems<sup>11</sup> related to cities, explore how bottom up behavior and positive feedback loop mechanisms can generate complex structures without the need for a “master planner calling the shots” and dictating the plan form above (JOHNSON, 2002, pp. 14, 40). Science of complexity and self-organization applied to urban studies demonstrate how it is the interaction between people in the streets that creates emergent systems like cities, where knowledge and intelligence are created<sup>12</sup>.

If we apply the concept of organized complexity<sup>13</sup> to our understanding of the dynamic relationships and agencies of process of Residual Landscapes, we can begin to identify a higher level order of positive feedback mechanisms operating in the urban ecosystem: an “emergent behavior”, a “mix of order and anarchy” (JOHNSON, 2002, p. 38), a “space which expresses neither power nor submission to power”<sup>14</sup>. (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 11)

### 9.3 Strategies and Tactics

*Appropriation strategies and uses: formalized approaches (agency) vs. informal engagement (tactics); bottom up approaches; Urban Acupuncture; Citizen's participation and other stakeholder's involvement; Impermanence and reversibility.*

Landscape Strategies can ensure the survival and resiliency of a system. Strategies can be dynamic, open and flexible, this means that they can adapt to changing circumstances (CORNER, 2014, p. 285). A resilient system must be both robust and open - if we accept Taleb's new term, we could say that it should be “antifragile” - to ensure survival in an evolving open system. James Corner identifies in “fitness Landscape” – healthy (physically fit) and synthetically symbiotic (or “fitting”) - the characteristic that guarantees adaptation.

Approaches towards abandoned, vacant space can be grouped into **formalized approaches** (agency) and **informal engagement** (tactics). Strategies and approaches for the *management* of unused or underused spaces in consolidated urban environments can be distinguished also in terms of the initiative that drives the intervention (private or public), and the adopted implementation process (legal or illegal interventions,

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<sup>11</sup> Referred to the “Systemic complexity” that in “The condition of the working class in England”, Engels recognizes in Manchester, a pattern that emerges out of uncoordinated local actions.

<sup>12</sup> See also “Emergence in landscape architecture” by Prof. Rod Barnett (BARNETT, 2013).  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=820vwFYR2IU>.

<sup>13</sup> According to “organized complexity” theory “many interrelating agents [that] create a higher level behavior”, a distinct macro behavior, “[...] forming a specific pattern over time” (JOHNSON, 2002, p. 48).

<sup>14</sup> Translated from the Italian: “Uno spazio che non esprime né il potere né la sottomissione al potere”.

informal/spontaneous, or guided/planned). These factors can determine the extent of the potential social and ecological benefit of the intervention.

**Formal strategies** implemented over time in response to changing environmental, social, political and economic conditions, can promote agency (RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1), p. 178). These strategies might be applied by the municipality, professionals, research institutions or NGOs, through forms of organized action<sup>15</sup> that promote community engagement. According to Doron, engagement with these spaces would actually require a whole new practice; he believes that:

“Whether architects and planners can engage with the space where their sovereignty is suspended, and what architecture will arise, is a question that maybe only architects and planners could give the answer to. Maybe, for several reasons, it could not be done in the practice itself, maybe a new kind of school, or an architecture and planning laboratory, need to be created, where the tactics of suspension can be produced and tested”. (DORON, 2000, p. 262)

“Urban Acupuncture” (Jaime Lerner) for example, revitalizes a “sick” or “worn out” area and its surroundings through a simple touch of a key point. Just as in the medical approach, this intervention can trigger positive chain-reactions, helping to cure and enhance the whole system. Through a process that acknowledges, welcomes and embraces the multiple visions that managers, inhabitants, planners, politicians, businesses, and civil society have of their city, and establishing co-responsibility for its spaces, strategic punctual interventions can create a new energy and help the desired scenario to be consolidated.

Considering that landscape evolution is not fully predictable and controllable, **informal engagement** and bottom up approaches seem to represent the most suitable tools to deal with the temporal and unstable aspects of city evolution, flexible enough to continuously respond and adapt to the needs of people in relation to their environment. Residual spaces can be used tactically. “Tactical urbanism” is a recently developed concept, often used to refer to low-cost, minimum effort, temporary interventions that improve the livability and aesthetics of local neighborhoods. Tactical approach can include deliberate, phased approach to instigating change; the offering of local ideas for local planning challenges; short-term commitment and realistic expectations; low-risks, with possibly a high reward (Pfeifer, 2013). In more general terms, it offers low cost, adaptable processes whereby the urban landscape becomes an open laboratory for people to test out their diverse ideas.

To understand the true potential of landscape interventions operated in residual areas left behind by cities, industry, tourism, and agriculture, we can turn to a number of successful temporary landscape projects on abandoned or neglected public space. Most of them are spontaneous initiatives by private citizens and communities, or forms of organized action promoted by municipalities or local organizations. To mention just a few: “Harappa Ondi” (Tokyo, JP)(RAHMANN & JONAS, 2014 (1)); the “Living Innovation Zones” (LIZ)<sup>16</sup>,

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<sup>15</sup> Or promoting initiatives such as “impact investing” (investments made into companies, organizations, and funds with the intention to generate a measurable, beneficial social or environmental impact alongside a financial return).

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.sfliz.com/>

“Pavement to Parks” program<sup>17</sup>, and the “POPOS” (Privately Owned Public Open Spaces)<sup>18</sup> initiatives (San Francisco); “Post-It City”<sup>19</sup> (EU); “Esto no es un solar” (this is not an empty site) (Zaragoza, Spain)<sup>20</sup>; “Place au changement”<sup>21</sup> (FR); “meanwhile gardens”<sup>22</sup> (UK); “skip gardens”<sup>23</sup> (UK); “Urban pockets”<sup>24</sup>; “Urban Tactics”<sup>25</sup>; “pop-up Urbanism”<sup>26</sup>. All the above mentioned initiatives have in common a contained scale and the provisional nature of the interventions, but, most importantly, they all act as catalysts of public life.



**Figure 9-3.** “Residual space and contradictions”. Cow grazing on a traffic island at a roundabout in Tirana (AL). Source: author.

Similarly, the previously mentioned EU funded project “Shrinking Cities” (2002–6), directed by Philipp Oswalt and Klaus Overmeyer, who were also founders of “Urban Catalyst” (2003), encouraged new ideas for temporary land-uses for abandoned spaces. Derelict landscapes were used as open laboratories for experiments, including urban farming, guerrilla gardening, ad hoc co-operatives, and vigorous art and music installations. In the Front Studio Architects “Farmadelphia”<sup>27</sup> finalist project to the “Urban

<sup>17</sup> <http://pavementtoparks.sfplanning.org/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://sf-planning.org/privately-owned-public-open-space-and-public-art-popos>

<sup>19</sup> Giovanni la Varra. <http://www.ciutatsocasionals.net/englishEXPOCOWEB/textos.htm>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.estonoesunsolar.es/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.collectifetc.com/realisation/place-au-changement-chantier-ouvert/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://meanwhile-gardens.org.uk/>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.globalgeneration.org.uk/skip-garden-and-kitchen-1/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.urbego.org/urban-pockets>

<sup>25</sup> <http://tacticalurbanismguide.com/>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.popurbanism.org/>

<sup>27</sup> <http://frontstudio.com/farmadelphia/>

Voids: Grounds for Change” competition, the architects propose a transformation of Philadelphia in which that city’s vacant and abandoned lots are turned into a thriving agricultural zone. Decrepit buildings are transformed into farm structures and farm animals are free to roam the city. In Tirana this happens spontaneously (Figure 9-3).

In the Shrinking Cities, “Reinventing Urbanism” design competition, artists, architects, filmmakers, journalists, and social scientists selected from twenty-three countries, proposed different forms of realization on derelict sites in the city. The project was divided into 5 fields of action, and related themes: “Retreat or De-Urbanization”, included shutting down dying cities or walling off abandoned apartment buildings instead of tearing them down; accepting the areas as feral to be left to develop hardy survival ecosystems. “Re-appropriation”, included appropriating empty space to develop mini-economies through recycling or guerilla farming. “Reorganization”, essentially involved developing new concepts for the way societies and communities can operate, idealistically drawing from the contributions of different cultures as well as reinvigorating the self-organizing cooperatives and supportive skills that were used in the 1970s to empower women. Detroit’s community gardens are good examples of this. “The Rules”, explored the idea of a game, which involves a new set of rules for urban actors/players to achieve a different type of urban living. “Identity and Communication”, involved celebrating a new identity derived from innovative self-help enclaves, and developing imaginative media to communicate the optimism and autonomy associated with this Re-invented Urbanism. (OSWALT, 2006)

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## Chapter 10. Conclusions and Recommendations

*Working with the indeterminate to generate a hybrid dynamic; loose guidelines + city sanctioning (support for standards and regulations); definition of general strategies for temporary landscape interventions.*

If we consider informal uses, the spontaneous and creative approach people have towards these apparently unproductive spaces, as **natural forces**, they acquire even more richness. Then, Residual Landscapes can begin to be considered as “*frammento condiviso di una coscienza collettiva*”<sup>1</sup> (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 57), where a different kind of growth and development occur: unlike economic systems where growth and development result in (and are aimed at) accumulation, in biological systems growth refers to transformation and evolution processes (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 55). In this sense Residual Landscape is a “*paesaggio globale in divenire*”<sup>2</sup> (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 63), the common space of the future, and residual spaces represent an opportunity.

Citizens in Tirana are slowly turning the attention back toward shared and green spaces, reclaiming public areas, and reestablishing their relationship with nature inside the city. They are temporarily reclaiming unused swathes of land and quickly and inexpensively turning them into new public spaces. The observation of such spontaneous spatial solutions adopted in the in between, abandoned or neglected spaces in Tirana, and the identification of a new level of order in the emergent system that characterizes Tirana’s urban condition, can contribute to a new understanding of contemporary urban processes. In a broader sense, the attribution of an aesthetic value to indefinite spaces, the acknowledgement of their positive environmental and social impact on the urban ecosystem at large, and the establishment of a new relationship between order and self-emergence in urban environments, constitute the basis for reframing the contemporary urban design discourse.

### 10.1 A new approach: MANAGING residual landscapes

Leaving these spaces suspended and freed from canonical and rational organization logics, preserving the lack of formal regulation, sustaining their “otherness”, allows for the establishment of a hybrid dynamic between nature and city. Even if we do “almost nothing”, and embrace the individual actions and the way people engage them spontaneously, these spaces will keep contributing to the growth and development of our cities.

The new perspective on urban Residual Landscapes presented in this research suggests the possibility of a future **open-ended operational mode** of urban development, as opposed to fixed traditional top-down planning approaches. The lessons learned from the observation of residual space spontaneous behavior and existing informal occupation strategies, could be the starting point for outlining a method to operate within highly planned and programmed spaces, following **loose guidelines**, leaving room for a **margin of**

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<sup>1</sup> Translated in English: “shared fragment of a collective conscience”. The phrase is used by Gilles Clément referring to the “Third Landscape”.

<sup>2</sup> Translated in English: “a constantly developing global landscape”.

**indeterminacy** to increase the flexibility and “antifragility” of urban environments (Figure 10-1).

Associating the concept of “antifragility” to the Residual Landscapes of a city like Tirana, is also useful to address aspects that concern the way these areas could be regarded and managed in the future. First of all, in order for such areas to endure this quality, they ought to be protected from surface imperviousness and heavy artificialization. This justifies the first task taken over by this research - to analyze, evaluate and acknowledge the ecological potential of the sites, and set up a monitoring tool (database) for the sites. Procrastination is a way to let events take their course and give the administration the chance to accommodate the changing needs of the city, before committing to irreversible interventions. In the mean time, these landscapes can take care of themselves and exercise their “antifragility”. (TALEB, 2013, p. 122)

Secondly these Residual Landscapes should remain free from the existing over centralized land management tools. They should be handled by the smallest possible unit that can manage them with efficacy and, in my opinion, this unit consists in the people embedded in the communities surrounding such spaces. By saying this I am by no means implying that there should be total de-regulation, nor that people should be able to “do as they please” - as they often do now; but rather I propose to define “soft boundaries” within which people can operate freely, while still guaranteeing the ecological benefit of urban Residual Landscapes.

EXTREME I	OTHERNESS III	EXTREME II	Category
NON-INTERVENTION  <i>(Let them be)</i>	TEMPORARY INTERVENTION respecting the spontaneity of the R.L.  <i>(Guide them)</i>	PERMANENT INTERVENTION and reintroduction of R.L. in the productive logic of urban space.  <i>(Put them to use)</i>	<i>(approach)</i>

(See Figure 3-1, p. 19)

**Figure 10-1.** The approach alternative (*otherness*) towards R.L. seen through the “tripartite definition of conditions”. Source: author.

### A dynamic platform

Lastly, these landscapes should no longer be considered as single units of land, but rather as an infrastructural network, where each unit contributes to the “antifragility” of the urban system as a whole. “*Ogni rottura nel tessuto delle maglie può essere considerata come un’opportunità di comunicazione tra i ‘vacuoli’*”<sup>3</sup> (CLÉMENT, 2005, p. 40) and reframe them in a broader system projected in space and time, using the indeterminacy of spontaneous landscapes as a germ for possible futures. At the urban scale or, as Girot would call it, at the “intermediate scale” in landscape architecture - “this is where many

<sup>3</sup> Translated in English: “Every break in the urban fabric is an opportunity to connect these landscape fragments”.



urban fragments come together and often contradict the overall natural congruity of a site.” These spaces can be seen as “network of small, dispersed, yet interconnected spaces” (GIROT, 2005, p. 30). Hence, the performance potential of Residual Landscapes lies in the creation of a network of urban spaces that can contribute to the physical and psychological wellbeing of citizens, for instance through the creation of green corridors for the stimulus and preservation of biodiversity.

### **Loose guidelines + city sanctioning**

The peculiar character of temporary suspension and availability to transformation of such indeterminate spaces, their instable, dynamic, heterogeneous and chaotic character, makes them suitable as opportunities to test new strategies for occupying and managing the urban landscape. Like in the approach adopted by the “planetary gardener”, Gilles Clément - first observing and leaving room for the plants to develop spontaneously, understanding and, only then, acting to steer their evolution (CLÉMENT, 2011) - future urban landscape approaches contemplating residual spaces in Tirana, could include loose guidelines, whereby individuals respond to simple rules and the rest is left to individual creativity and intelligence.

Drawing inspiration from the attitude towards residual urban spaces observed in Tirana, the Municipality could define new tools for monitoring the sites and managing them with a margin of indeterminacy, following these recommendations:

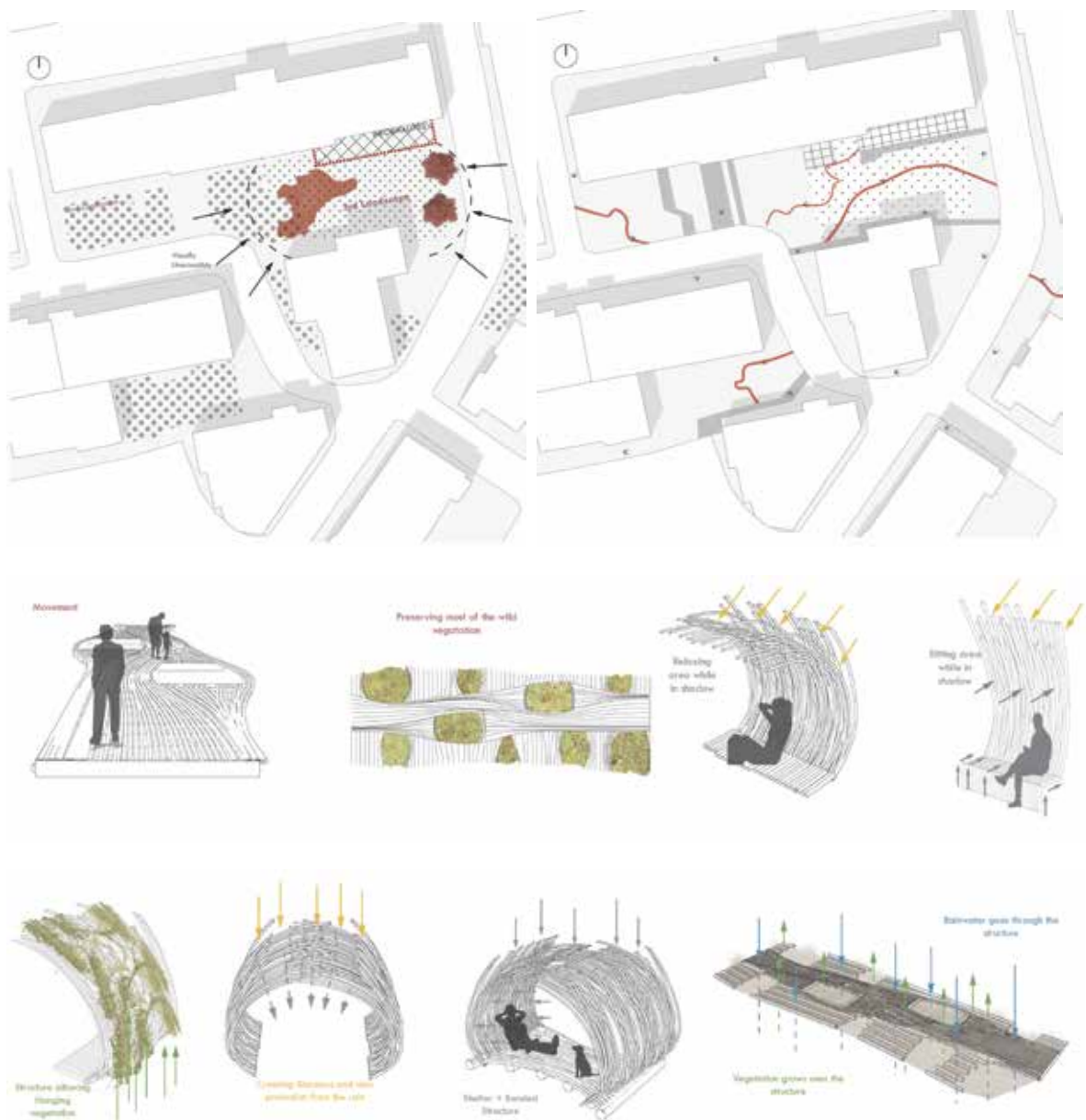
***OBSERVING*** - Observing the form and dynamism of the particular, and identifying the legibility of the whole, a new language for Residual Landscapes can be defined and made transmissible, ultimately sensitizing people. By mapping and collecting data about “Urban Residual Landscapes”, the city can acknowledge their condition of “place” and officially define a new landscape typology (URL). Their identification should by no means be aimed at reintroducing them into the formalistic productive logic of the city. Rather, it should be aimed at legitimizing and preserving their vagueness.

***UNDERSTANDING*** – By monitoring Urban Residual Landscapes, the municipality can gain insight into their evolutionary patterns and use them as an index of urban environmental conditions. Moreover, this tracking operation can guarantee the preservation of their ecological (biodiversity) and social (people’s engagement) value.

***ACTING*** – Defining a set of loose guidelines to make the sites temporarily available for the community. The scope is to guide the way people engage with them, not to predetermine a formal programmatic strategy. As we have discussed previously (8.1

Incoherence & Disorder: Tirana’s landscape, p. 159), “informal” construction is not equivalent to “illicit” construction. It is an un-programmed way to use spaces that takes place within the respect of property. Drawing from this commonly tolerated practice, informal occupation of residual spaces could take place within a legal framework that sanctions them. Based on existing models and strategies of community design (engaging community, considering also funding and finance), but also looking at informal approaches, these spaces could be made available for temporary appropriation by citizens and organizations. The latter would be able to operate freely given that they follow a set of

loose guidelines, aimed at preserving the site's ecological and aesthetic value, and encouraging their social activation. This attitude aligns with the previously discussed concept of “tending towards terrain vague” (p. 153). It also agrees with Oswald’s idea of “weak planning” and “soft tools”, when he explains that we must first “understand the specific, unique development of these cities in order to be able to intervene in appropriate ways. “Often cultural development, form of communication, and the rise of social networks and processes shape urban development more than construction itself does.” (OSWALT, 2005, p. 16) Legislative solutions for temporary lease of vacant land could include a “meanwhile license”, in line with the temporal indeterminacy, and the suspension, characteristic of urban vacancy. Moreover, considering the fact that their occupation would be temporary and low impact, these spaces would continue to be an opportunity for the generations to come, flexibility adapting to future needs<sup>4</sup>. (Figure 10-2, Figure 10-3)



<sup>4</sup> Participation of the citizens is a generational issue, the satisfaction of the people that participate is not necessarily the satisfaction of the next generations. Hence, the importance of the temporary nature of interventions on residual spaces in the city.



**Figure 10-2.** “The ArchScape. From the Wild Nature to the Third Landscape”, work by student Gent Shehu; Landscape Design Studio 2016-2017, POLIS University - Tirana (AL). Instructor: Laura Pedata.



**Figure 10-3.** Residual Landscape in Tirana. Source: author.

## **10.2 Recommendations for future development of the research**

*Results for further research and academic development. Elaboration of the Guidelines: best practice recommendations for temporary/semi-permanent landscape; Online platform.*

The research findings could be used by the local government to set up an agency to monitor and manage urban Residual Landscapes in the future – possibly defining a legislative framework to temporarily or semi-permanently appropriate public/private abandoned spaces. This would give citizens the possibility to operate temporarily, and legally, in public spaces, while contributing to the regeneration of underutilized areas of the city and guaranteeing the environmental sustainability of the new projects. Also private stakeholders are indirect potential targets of the above-proposed initiatives, as the system would give them the opportunity to locate and temporarily reclaim residual urban spaces. Any individual could temporarily occupy the identified area following loose guidelines, benefiting their businesses/activities, the community and the environment at the same time. Moreover, by favoring the involvement of private stakeholders and citizens - who can make financial, time and resource investments on these areas – the Municipality would guarantee that these areas are maintained as part of a network of valuable urban landscapes that contribute to the wellbeing of the community and the environment.

A future development of the research could invest in the definition of an interactive online platform/app for gathering information, monitoring, and collecting funds and resources to manage the Residual Landscapes in Tirana. The platform could also provide interested proponents with logistical support - to bring together and coordinate participation and cooperation between neighbors, research institutes, NGOs and other stakeholders - and design/construction guidelines, aimed at facilitating the implementation process, while making sure the interventions are reversible and they respect the site's ecological qualities.

In synthesis, the potential beneficiaries of the above-mentioned initiatives would be:

- Citizens, who would have access to information about the potential sites and on the activities and initiatives that take place in them.
- Private Stakeholders, like business owners, who could benefit from a tool that gives them the opportunity to temporarily occupy private or public space operating within the legislative framework, and therefore complying with the urban regulations. In fact, while pursuing their personal interest, businesses would also contribute to the regeneration of intermediate and /or underutilized areas of the city.

## **Temporary Landscape Intervention Guidelines (TLIG)**

One of the possible future outcomes of the research could be the creation of a manual: “Temporary Landscape Intervention Guidelines” for temporary landscape interventions in residual landscapes. The main objective of the guidelines would be to offer best practice examples of how to operate in abandoned public, semi-public or private open spaces in the city, using soft tools that respect the environmental quality of the sites, while improving the social conditions of the area. Such manual could contain the a list of recommendations about implementable strategies to regenerate abandoned and underutilized areas in the city through temporary-semi-permanent landscape interventions, a selection of best practices case studies, and general design indications. The possible topics addressed in the manual could be:

- Design strategies
- Best practices
- Construction techniques
- Materials and components
- Fabrication and Installation
- Maintenance
- Local Policy Framework

Since the appropriation strategies should also guarantee human comfort and the preservation (possibly the improvement of) the environmental quality and the energy efficiency of in between and abandoned spaces in the city, the proposed interventions would have to respond to the following questions:

*What can be done with what is already on the Residual Landscape?*

*What are the ecological, economical, and social benefits provided by the temporary intervention on the Residual Landscape?*

*Who are the beneficiaries of the temporary intervention (citizens in general, neighbors, shop owners, animals, etc.)?*

A possible list of requirement aspects that ought to be considered in the temporary use follows:

- SAFETY (lighting, visibility, surfaces, etc.)
- COMFORT (temperature, humidity, shadows, daylight, etc.)
- ACCESSIBILITY (limits, architectural barriers, etc.)
- FLEXIBILITY (manageability, integrability of furniture, etc.)
- ASPECT (colors, form, aesthetics, etc.)
- MAINTENANCE (how to maintain the landscape)
- ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY (related to air, water, soil)

A possible list of activities that could be temporarily introduced in the sites follows:

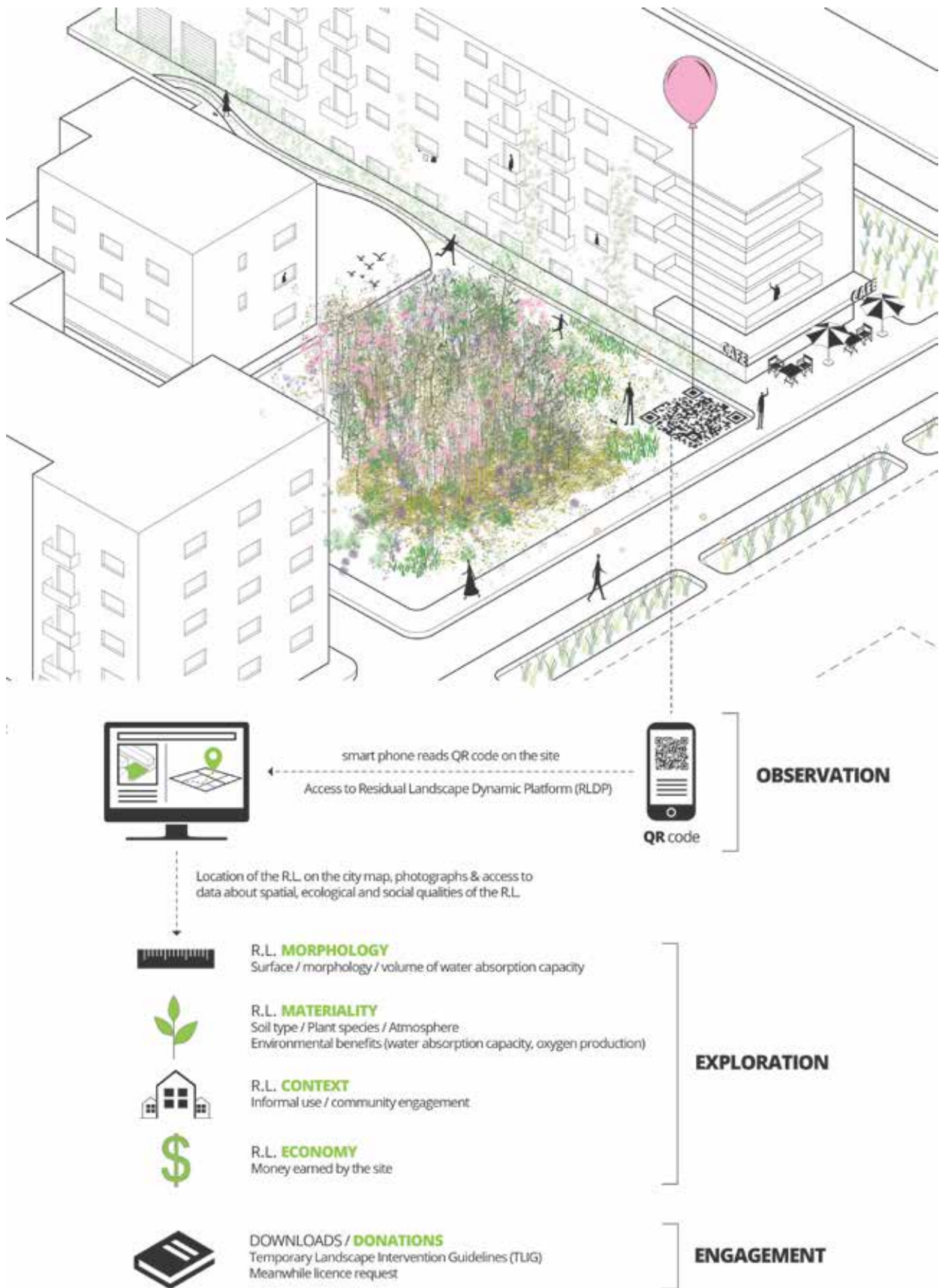
- STORING (seed bank, parking for car or bikes, water collection and storage area, waste collection)
- MANAGING (water treatment, garbage collecting, sorting and recycling, composting, shelter for homeless or animals)
- PRODUCING (kitchen garden, fruit orchards, urban farming)
- TRADING (flower market, flea market, vegetable market, garage sale)
- PLAYING (playground, camping site)
- LEARNING (workshops, courses, open talks, reading areas)
- CONTEMPLATING/DISPLAYING (open air museum, exhibition space)
- PERFORMING (concert space, outdoor theatre)
- EXERCISING (yoga classes, outdoor gym, climbing, bocce)

### **Residual Landscape Dynamic Platform (RLDP)**

In a future Perspective, and aiming at ensuring the future of Residual Landscapes in the city. After all the sites are mapped and a URL (Urban Residual Landscape) database is created, the sites could be made traceable through a QR code. The code would allow citizens and interested actors to access information about the sites online or through a smart phone application, where a dynamic and open web tool would constantly update status and information about the site. Data such as location, surface, vegetation cover, and projections of the relative environmental benefits (water absorption capacity, oxygen production) would be stored on the web database, with a user-friendly interface. Through this online platform people could upload information (including pictures or warnings) concerning the sites, or apply for a “meanwhile license” to temporarily occupy them while respecting the above mentioned guidelines (also available for download on the website). Another important component of the web tool could be the possibility for residual sites to earn money, through donations and/or temporary occupation fees. The community as a whole, or individual members, could “adopt an abandoned site”, and in doing so, contribute to the financing of maintenance costs. The site would exist in its physical form that can be visited and observed in person, and have a virtual projection on the web. This projection would allow a vertical and dynamic reading of the site: a magnified view of the site’s material detail and the possibility dig through the site, unraveling multiple layers of information. This way the virtual residual space can establish a relationship with the plot of land itself, in a way that echoes the Site/Non-Site projects of Robert Smithson<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Journalist Dan Carlinsky, makes this association referred to Gordon Matta Clark’s Fake Estates project. He affirms that the intention of the artist was to add three components to the artwork: a written documentation of the piece of land, with exact dimension and location and a list of weeds growing on the lots; a full scape photograph of the property and the property themselves. “The first two parts will be displayed in a gallery, and buyers of the art will purchase the deed to the land as well.” (CARLINSKY, 1973).



**Figure 10-4.** Residual Landscape Dynamic Platform (RLDP) concept diagram. Source: author.

## Epilog

“Redefining the contemporary landscape with all its contrasts and contradictions will establish a new value of nature in the city.” ... “It will be a landscape in mutation, a natural mirror of our civilisation, that we will all have to learn to accept, manage and cherish whether we want it or not” (GIROT, 2005, p. 32)



**Figure 10-5.** Residual landscapes in different cities. Source: author.

At first sight, Residual Landscapes in cities around the world can seem a little like shopping malls: they are “non places”, they can be found at “anytime” and “anywhere”, and they all seem to tell, more or less, the same story. Browsing through pictures of Residual Landscapes in Detroit, Berkeley, Tokyo, Sintra, and Tirana, we might find it hard to identify the “language” of these spaces (Figure 10-5). *Does this mean that Residual Landscapes have no character? Are these spaces ubiquitous?* In truth, these spaces are only apparently the same. Although the soil, the ruderal plants, and the fragments of old structures that inhabit them might look similar, they are a product of substantially different urban processes. They are generated and defined by social and political dynamics specific to a certain city, territory, or country and, as such, also the signs of the past that they hold depend on the peculiar story of each site. The similarity is therefore exclusively of a visual

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kind. It is the way people perceive and engage them that makes the difference and elevates them to the condition of “places”. People’s engagement defines their unique capacity to transform an apparently generic condition of “space”, typical a globalized world, into a local condition of “place”. Hence, the importance to acknowledge their ecological, social and aesthetic value, which highlights their potential for the urban environment’s resilience. Residual Landscapes constitute an opportunity for the future of our cities. The attribution of an aesthetic value to these indefinite spaces, the acknowledgement of their positive environmental and social impact on the urban ecosystem at large, and the establishment of a new relationship between order and self-emergence in urban environments, constitute the basis for reframing the contemporary urban design discourse.



**Figure 10-6.** Residual landscape in Berkeley (CA). Source: author.

Through a study of language and space, the present dissertation highlights that what is central, and what is “residual”, is primarily a mechanism of thought, and not solely a mechanism of “space”. Most of the examined words that identify and articulate the “residual” imply a judgment value and an intent towards their spatial, functional, and/or economic development. As an example we have seen how the word “*Terrain Vague*” indicates a desire to define and understand such indefinite spaces (*vagus*), or fill their apparent emptiness (*vacuum*); the term “Dead Zone” suggests that such spaces are no longer “alive”, implying that they ceased to be productive and useful; the word “Urban Void” defines the negative space devoid of matter; the word “Fake Estates” leads to thinking that such spaces are not authentic, and is directly concerned with their economical value (“estates”); the term “Feral” implies that these spaces have escaped from captivity or domestication, hence they might be considered illicit; the word “*délaissé*” indicates a

space left over from the rational organization of land, thus it indicates something that does not comply with recognized standards. What emerges from the research is that all the words used to describe and delineate residual spaces thus far, imply an intent and articulate a justification to take action and reintroduce them in the functional, productive, or economic logic of the urban territory. Whilst I believe that, the very quality of these landscapes resides in the absence of formal purpose and lack of management intent. These residues transcend the mechanisms of space precisely because there is a lack of consciousness about their existence, and a disclosed intention to control them. This condition sets them in a different paradigm, which calls for a suitable term to describe them. In my search for a word to define these urban residues in Tirana I chose the adjective “unintended”, which negates a judgment intent, as in Tirana these landscapes escape the mechanisms of thought and premeditation. It is in fact “by accident”, and through the spontaneous engagement of people, that such landscapes are created.

\*\*\*\*\*

## APPENDIXES

### Appendix 1 - Interview with Nicholas de Monchaux

Berkeley. May the 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**L.P** – In the Local Code project in San Francisco how did the data you collected inform the design of the sites (how did the data about water flow, solar gain and wind movement inform the design of the sites)? How did you calculate the energy performance and remediative potential of the sites?

**N.d.M** – The only data we used in the design process was thermodynamic data so water, heat island effect, physical disposition of the site. We looked at where each site was in the watershed and where in terms of the larger storm water flow and that effected the siting and scale of the storm water infrastructure on each site. And then we looked at the urban heat island and did a local solar analysis of each site to figure out where ... would have the most effect. Then in SF an NY case studies, since a lot of these sites are in areas of the cities without access to fresh produce, we looked at how to maximize the agricultural potential of each site. In LA we looked at how to maximize street edges that could be used informal community gatherings that are missing in a lot of these neighborhoods (just like food trucks, and things like that). So this was very, very basic in a lot of ways, like just how to reconfigure each site to have the best ecological and social potential.

**L.P.** It was basic, but you still had to come out with some parameters to guide the software. What are the parameters you set?

**N.d.M** – Not unlike your process, it was really a case of going back and forth between specific sites that we identified as being either representative or the [unclear word] of what we were designing for, and going back and forth within this incredibly iterative and the incredibly large role for the human designer in the process, all that the software allowed us to do is basically just elaborate design decisions made on 10, or 20, or 30 sites, to 1500. Again not so much on the question of the open-ended social data, but really focusing on the physical data, because social data is not anything you want to parametricize in the design process; that was a decision we made.

We used Grasshopper to merge the layers with information about the site and read them perpendicularly not horizontally! To calculate storm water we relied on the elevation model, because that's enough to tell us where the water will flow and collect.

**L.P** – This is what I appreciate the most, you based it all on tangible, quantitative data, which allowed you to make an argument about it. In the S.F. project, you also mention the idea to promote community design and *digital democracy* through this place based media used to engage and include communities and collect findings, etc. through an online system. Did you ever develop this aspect further?

**N.d.M** – That is part of what we are working on now, that's actually part of what the Baker funding will go to. To prototype what an interface for that would look like, how it might work. Within *Citris* (CITRIS Data and Democracy Initiative), which is an organization

here on campus, there is a larger data and democracy initiative, my colleague Ken Goldberg leads. Ken and I are working together on how to take various project that he has done around public crowd sourcing consensus - he has a project called “opinion space”, and the “California Report Card” - and we are working on integrating those into the design of public landscapes in a project that we are calling “telescope”.

**L.P.** – In the Local Code project, you also quantified the savings that would be made through the project.

**N.d.M** – In the social science and landscape literature there is a whole methodology bibliography for calculating the financial effects of landscape interventions. (See local code bibliography).

**L.P** – How do you position your research in respect to the need to consider the unpredictability of climatic phenomena and urban evolution? How could, or does, your project and methodology adapt to change?

**N.d.M** – One other part of my own intellectual background is that for the last 15 years or so I have been a visiting researcher at the Santa Fe Institute, which is a Research Centre for complex systems, which has increasingly concerned matters of the city. Part of the all inspiration of this project and if you study robustness and resilience in natural systems it tends to come from many elements working together with loose connections and not from single heroic mechanisms, and so part of the whole justification to the project, the idea of looking at these vacant sites, as places for distributed infrastructures, is the understanding that as and when we need to deal with the effects of climate change, 1000 foot level is useless against a 1001 foot flood. You have lots of traditional ways of thinking about infrastructure that are prone to catastrophic failure but if 20% of a network of 1500 sites doesn't perform at all the way you expect it to it's fine. It's in the nature of networks and city is built in networks, this was Jane Jacobs insight on the city, and Local code is about this notion of resilience, which is not just building big infrastructure, but in fact about networking small infrastructure throughout urban fabric.

**L.P** - It's good that you mentioned the words 'Resilience' and 'Robustness' because my next question is about these two words that you mention often in your book. Considering that 'resilience' (from the Latin *resilire*) means leaping back like a spring and therefore also moving forward without surrendering to challenges, but basically returning to the original state after a shock; and 'robust' is something that is neutral to volatility, but can break under a particular stress because it's not elastic or flexible. Would you think that maybe what we should be aiming at in our urban environments is 'antifragility'. Have you heard of this concept by Nassim Nicholas Taleb? According to his definition antifragility (the opposite of fragility) is the property of something that “gains from disorder”; instead of succumbing to stress and volatility (unpredictable events), it reacts by adaptation and actually improves its performance. How could this new concept influence your research?

**N.d.M** – I have never heard of this word, but I would like to get that reference from you. All words change meaning in use, and so resilience does have that origin but it has been used to promote, with that origin acknowledged by people at the Rockefeller foundation, as

meaning adaptability. Similarly robustness which originally just meant “like oak tree”, now has this meaning in evolutionary biology as something that possesses what’s called “evolvability”, which is the ability to adapt. So there may be no perfect words, there may be an assembly of words that we use, but I think that whatever world we use it’s important to have that word be trigger to what we are really talking about, which is the ability to change alongside change.

\*\*\*\*\*



## Appendix 2 - Residual Landscape Types in Tirana



**BROWN\_LANDS** - abandoned industrial site



**TRAUMA\_LANDS** - abandoned bunker



**UNDER\_LANDS** - abandoned tunnel



**NARROW\_LANDS** - abandoned passage



**GARD\_LANDS** - abandoned private garden



**AGRI\_LANDS** - abandoned greenhouses



**SPORT\_LANDS** - abandoned sports field



**INFRA\_LANDS** - abandoned gas station



**INFRA\_LANDS** - abandoned water tank



**INFRA\_LANDS** - abandoned roadside verges



**WASTE\_LANDS** - abandoned garbage collection area



**COURT\_LANDS** - abandoned playground



**COURT\_LANDS** - abandoned public space



**COURT\_LANDS** - abandoned communal space between communist residential blocks





**DEBRIS\_LANDS** - deserted house in a residential area



**DEBRIS\_LANDS** - abandoned demolition site



**PLOT\_LANDS** - abandoned parcel in the city centre



**MARK\_LANDS** - abandoned landmark, Hotel Dajti



**EDGE\_LANDS** - abandoned Lana river bank



**PLOT\_LANDS** - abandoned parcel in an informal neighborhood

**Appendix 3 - Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape Narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER**

Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER  
**"SITE\_ZERO"**



Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER  
"SITE\_ZERO"



Autumn 2013



Autumn 2015



Summer 2017

Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER  
"SITE\_ZERO"



Summer 2016

Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER  
"SITE\_ZERO"



Summer 2017

Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER  
"SITE\_ZERO"



Summer 2017

Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER  
"SITE\_ZERO"



Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER  
"LOST\_SITE"



Spring 2014



Autumn 2016



Summer 2017



Summer 2017



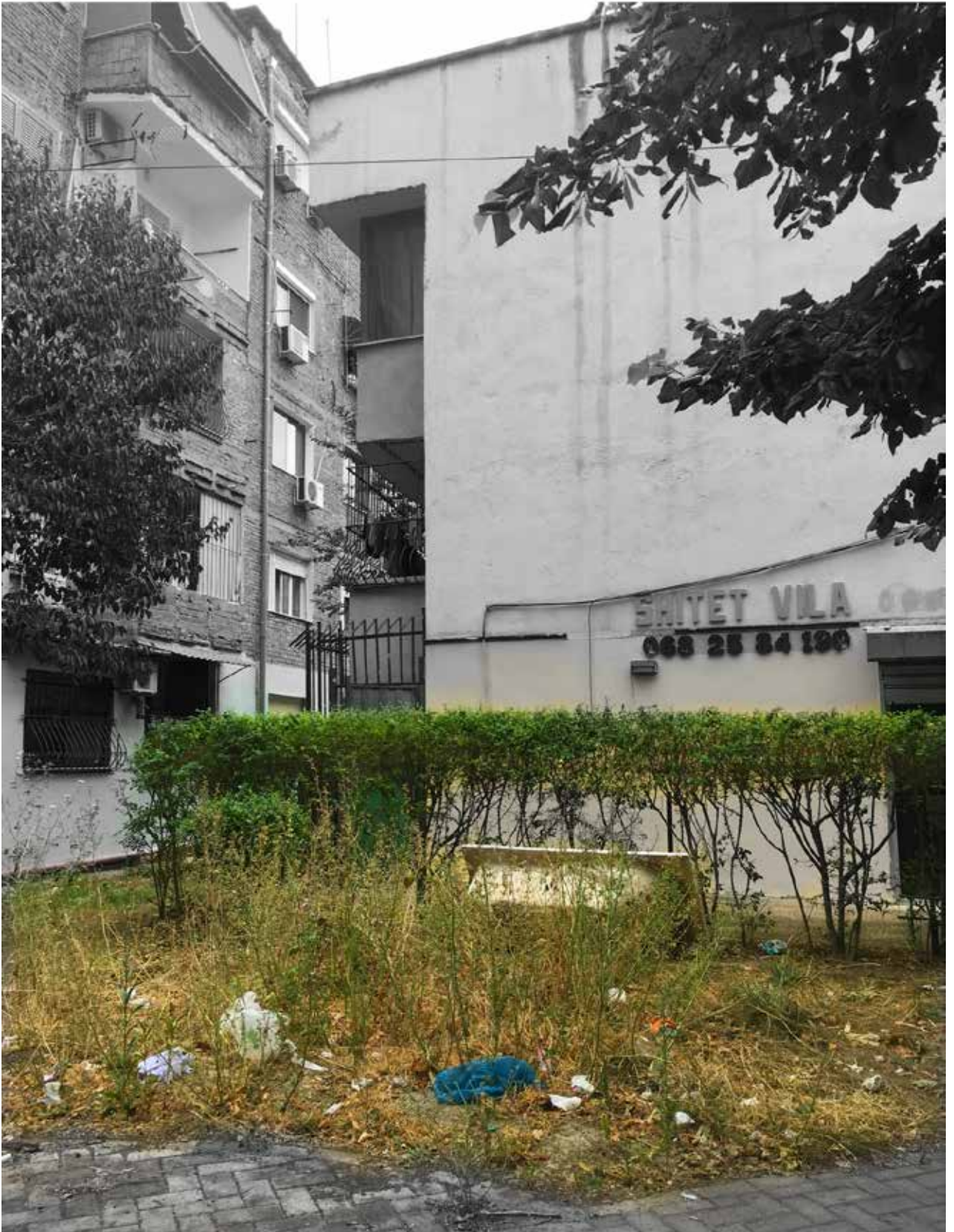
Spring 2014



Summer 2017



Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER  
**"WASTED\_SITE"**



Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER  
**"WASTED\_SITE"**



Autumn 2016



Summer 2017



Summer 2017



Summer 2017



Autumn 2017

Diary of observations: Tirana's Residual Landscape narratives of SPACE, TIME and MATTER  
**"WASTED\_SITE"**



Winter 2016



Summer 2017

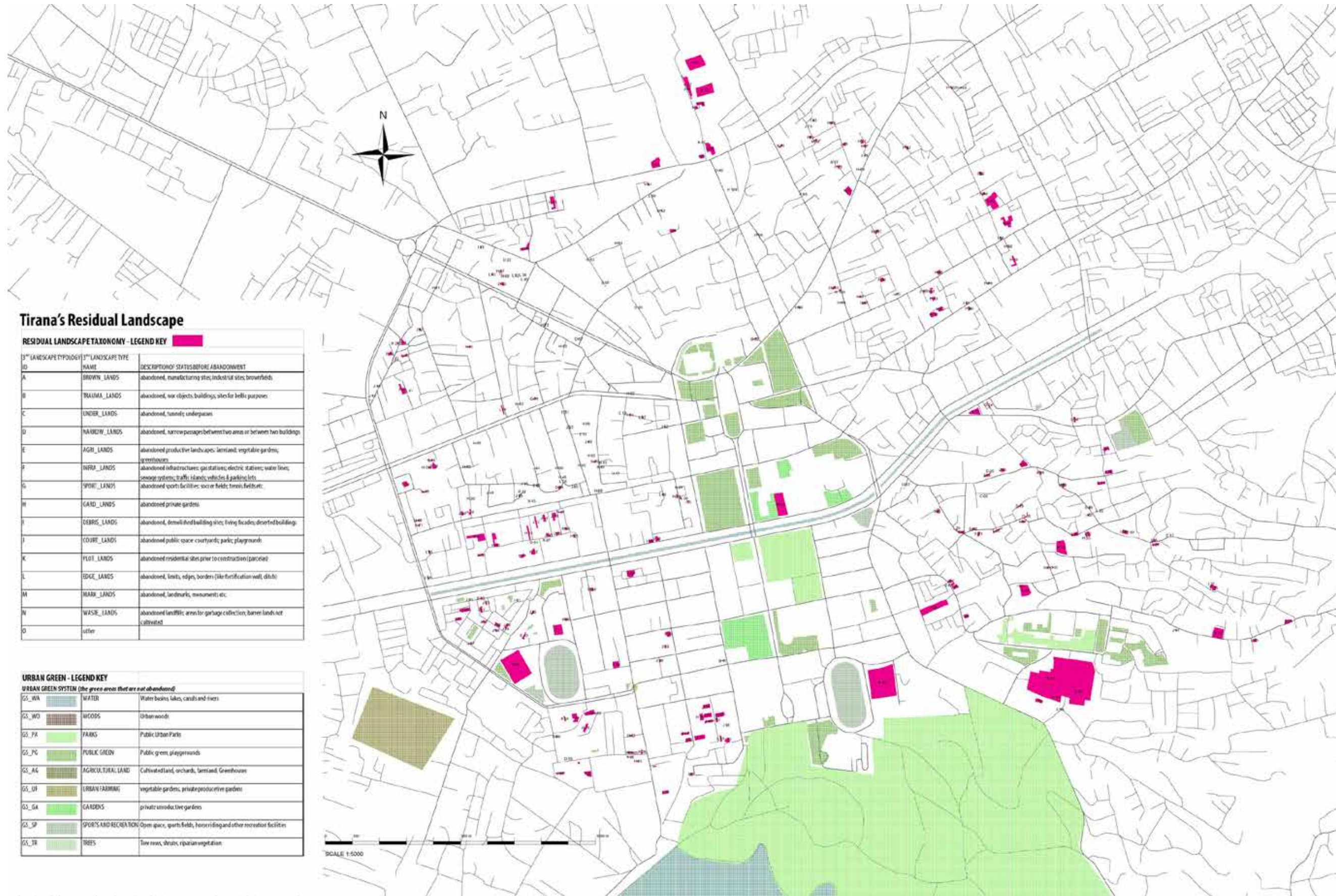


Summer 2017



Summer 2017

Appendix 4 - Tirana's Residual Landscape map



**Tirana's Residual Landscape**

**RESIDUAL LANDSCAPE TAXONOMY - LEGEND KEY**

3 <sup>rd</sup> LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGY ID	3 <sup>rd</sup> LANDSCAPE TYPE NAME	DESCRIPTION OF STATUS BEFORE ABANDONMENT
A	BROWN LANDS	abandoned, manufacturing sites, industrial sites, brownfields
B	TRUUMA LANDS	abandoned, war objects, buildings, sites for belis purposes
C	UNDER LANDS	abandoned, tunnels, underground
D	NARROW LANDS	abandoned, narrow passages between two areas or between two buildings
E	AGRI LANDS	abandoned productive landscapes: farmland, vegetable gardens, greenhouses
F	INFRA LANDS	abandoned infrastructures: gas stations, electric stations, water lines, sewage systems, traffic islands, vehicles & parking lots
G	SPORT LANDS	abandoned sports facilities, soccer fields, tennis, football
H	GARD LANDS	abandoned private gardens
I	DEBRIS LANDS	abandoned, demolished building sites, living facades, deserted buildings
J	COURT LANDS	abandoned public space: courtyards, parks, playgrounds
K	PLOT LANDS	abandoned residential sites prior to construction (parcels)
L	EDGE LANDS	abandoned, limits, edges, borders (like fortification wall, ditch)
M	MARK LANDS	abandoned, landmarks, monuments etc.
N	WASTE LANDS	abandoned landfills: areas for garbage collection, barren lands not cultivated
O	Other	

**URBAN GREEN - LEGEND KEY**

**URBAN GREEN SYSTEM (the green areas that are not abandoned)**

GS_WA	WATER	Water basins, lakes, canals and rivers
GS_WO	WOODS	Urban woods
GS_PA	PARKS	Public Urban Parks
GS_PG	PUBLIC GREEN	Public green, playgrounds
GS_AG	AGRICULTURAL LAND	Cultivated land, orchards, farmland, Greenhouses
GS_UR	URBAN FARMING	vegetable gardens, private productive gardens
GS_GA	GARDENS	private unproductive gardens
GS_SP	SPORTS AND RECREATION	Open space, sports fields, horse riding and other recreation facilities
GS_TR	TREES	Tree rows, shrubs, riparian vegetation

SCALE 1:5000

Appendix 5 - Morphology, Materiality and Context data spreadsheet

RESIDUAL LANDSCAPE DATA SHEET (morphology, materiality and context)

<i>FILED NAME</i>	R.L. ID	R.L. REFERENCE NUMBER	R.L. TYPE NAME	LOCATION COORDIANTES	SHAPE AREA	SHAPE LENGTH	SURVEY DATE	DESCRIPTION COMMENTS	OWNERSHIP	USE STATUS & DURATION	CONTEXT LAND USE TYPE	SITE CHARACTER	VEGETATION TYPE	PHOTO SKETCH REFERENCE NUMBER
<i>FIELD ALIAS</i>	3RD_LND_ID	3RD_LND_RN	3RD_LND_TYP	LOCATION	SURFACE	PERIMETER	SURVEY_DATE	DESCRIPTION	OWNERSHIP	USE_STATUS	LAND_USE	SITE_CHARACTER	VEG_TYPE	PH_REF_NR
<i>FIELD DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>Predetermined list of letters (A-O)</i> <i>Insert code and number (ex: A01, B02...)</i> <i>Selection from a predetermined list of typologies</i> <i>latitude and longitude - automatically defined by ArcGIS</i> <i>sq m - automatically defined by ArcGIS</i> <i>mt - automatically defined by ArcGIS</i> <i>date - automatically defined by ArcGIS</i> <i>comments (i.e. hard/soft scape)</i> <i>Choose from predetermined list: private; public</i> <i>type of Informal temporary appropriation</i> <i>Commercial Residential Industrial Services</i> <i>Choose from predetermined list: GAP voids; LINEAR voids; LARGE OPEN voids</i> <i>i.e. grass, flower carpet, succulents, trees</i> <i>insert code of the pictures or sketches related to the site (ex. A1_ph_01)</i>													
A			BROWN_LANDS											
B			TRAUMA_LANDS											
C			UNDER_LANDS											
D			NARROW_LANDS											
E			AGRI_LANDS											
F			INFRA_LANDS											
G			SPORT_LANDS											
H			GARD_LANDS											
I			DEBRIS_LANDS											
J			COURT_LANDS											
K			PLOT_LANDS											
L			EDGE_LANDS											
M			MARK_LANDS											
N			WASTE_LANDS											
O			<i>other</i>											

Appendix 6 - Residual Landscape Analytical Sheets samples





SCALE MIN 1:5000

The zone is located in one of the main roads of Tirana that is called "Myslym Shyri". The access is very easy and it mainly has around residential buildings. This abandoned area is empty and it has different vegetation like low grass, shrubs and trees.



SCALE 1:1000 METRIC SCALE

COURT_LANDS	LOCATION COORDINATES	SURFACE	PERIMETER	OWNERSHIP	CONTEXT LAND_USE	SITE CHARACTER	VEGETATION TYPE
J 2	N 19,81 ,87 E 41,3474	37.71 m2	79.54m	Public	Court Land	Public Space	Low grasses, shrubs, trees

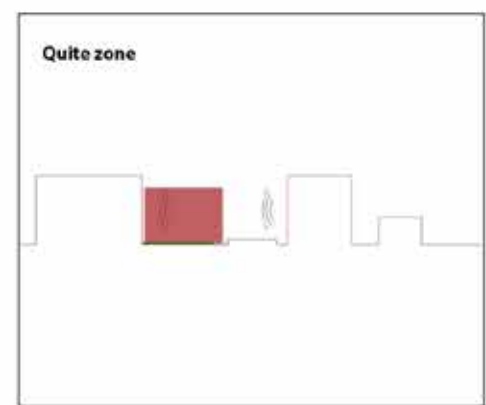


S E C T I O N

SCALE 1:500

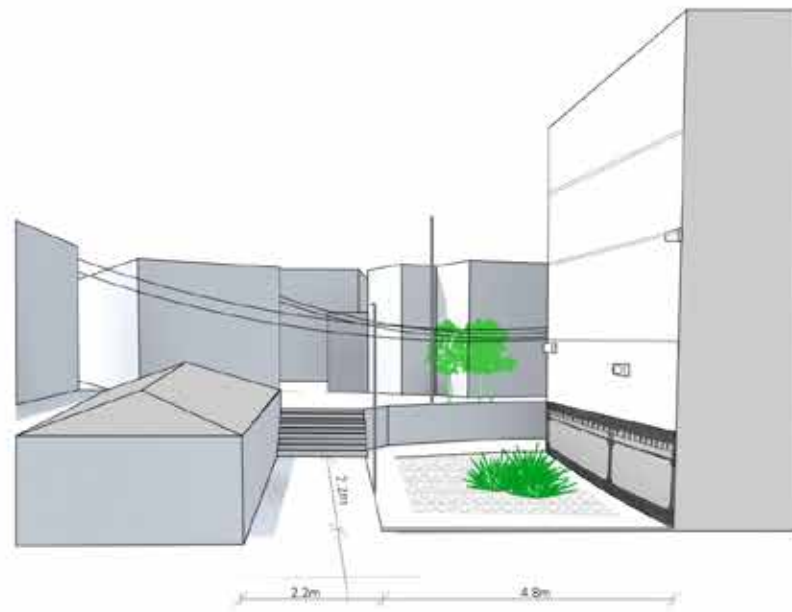


SCALE 1:500 METRIC SCALE



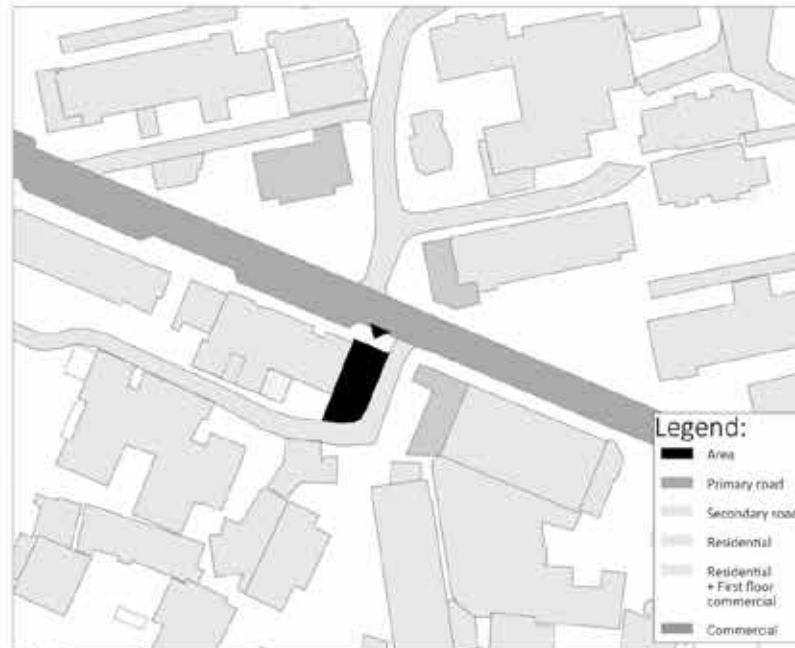
Quite zone

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE STUDIO 2016-17 - "TIRANA'S THIRD LANDSCAPE"  
INSTRUCTOR - LAURA PEDATA / ASSISTANT - ERANDA JANKU  
STUDENT: ADELA MUKO



1:2000

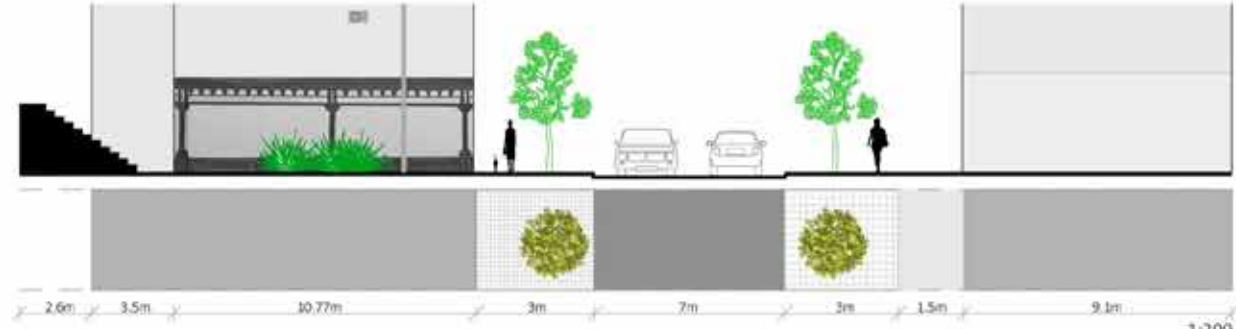
"Mine Peza" street, Zone 1  
 Around this area are all residential building and some small bussineses at the first floors. This area was a bar and now it is demolished and it is used for parking. In the sorrounding area are some vegetation, in the sidewalks are some trees and also some small gardens in the front of the road.



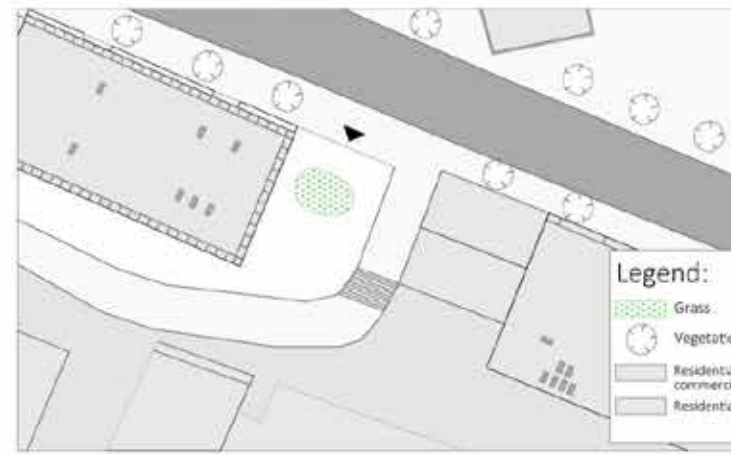
1:1000

Legend:

- Area
- Primary road
- Secondary road
- Residential
- Residential + First floor commercial
- Commercial



1:200



1:500

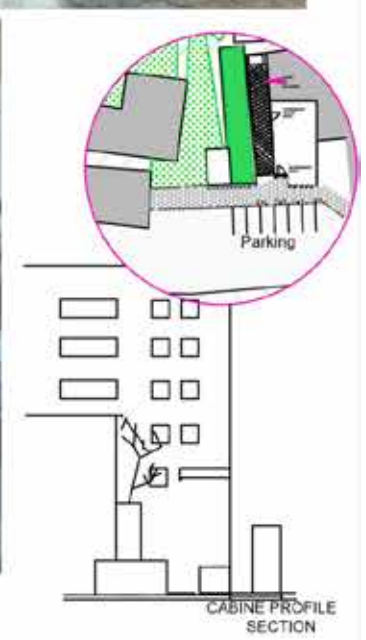
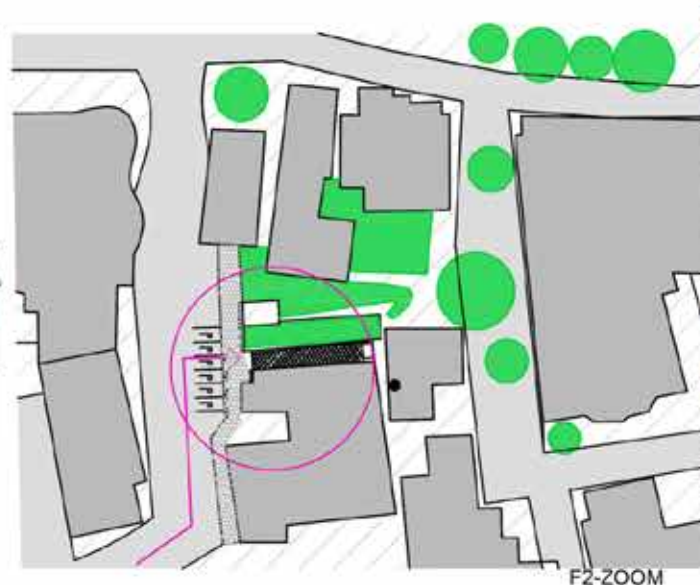
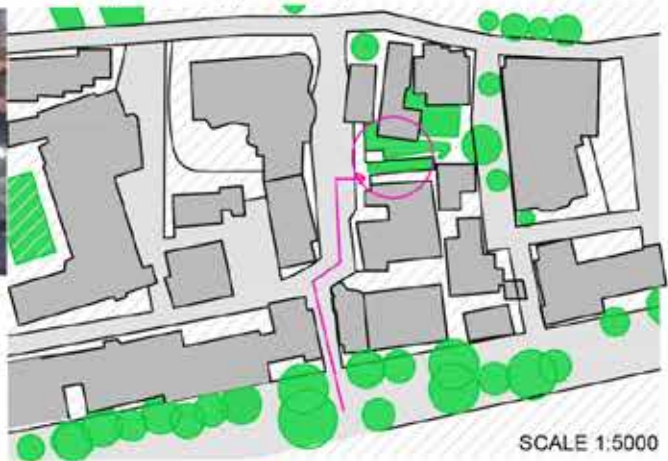
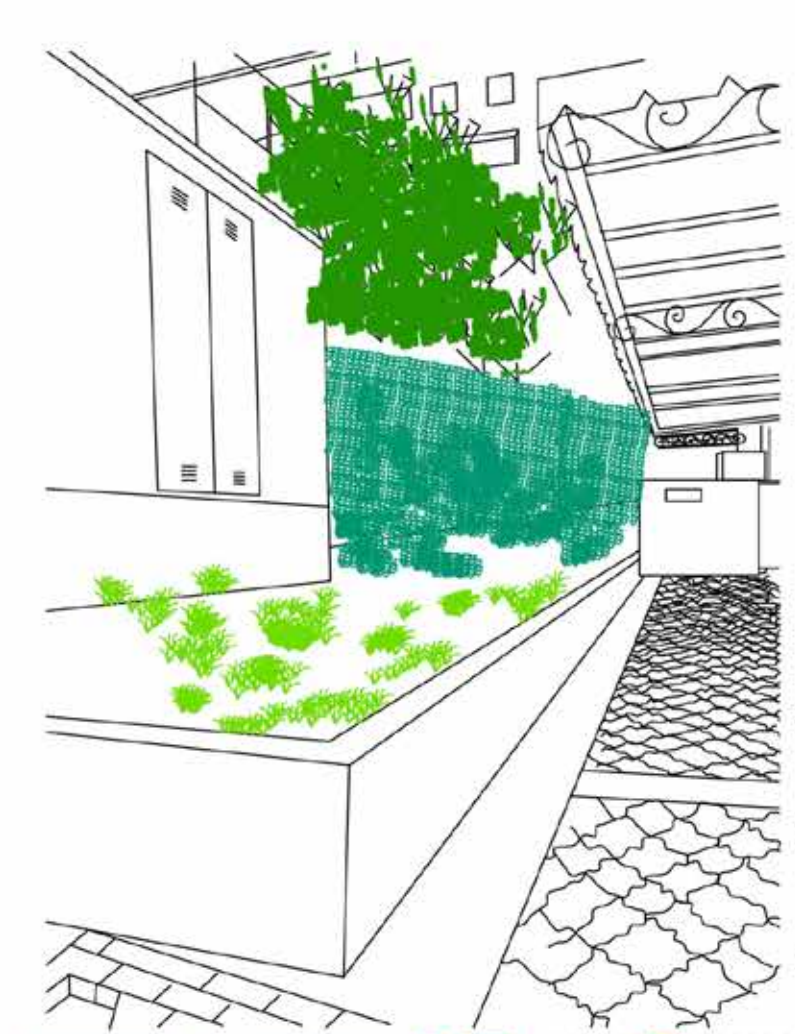
Legend:

- Grass
- Vegetation
- Residential + commercial
- Residential



DEBRIS_LANDS	LATITUDE	SURFACE	PERIMETER	PROPERTY	CONTEXT	VEGETATION	PHOTO REF.
I_03	63.355279	19.31m <sup>2</sup>	23.58m	PRIVATE	RESIDENTIAL	GRASS	K1_ph_12





F\_02 IS AN INFRASTRUCTURE THIRD LANDSCAPE. IT IS A PRIVATE AREA WITH AN ELECTRIC CABINE NEAR THE BUILDING, USED BY THE INHABITANTS THERE. THE AREA IS 3X11M WITH LOW VEGETATION. IN FRONT OF THERE IS MINI-MARKET. AROUND THE ZONE, THERE ARE A FEW BARS

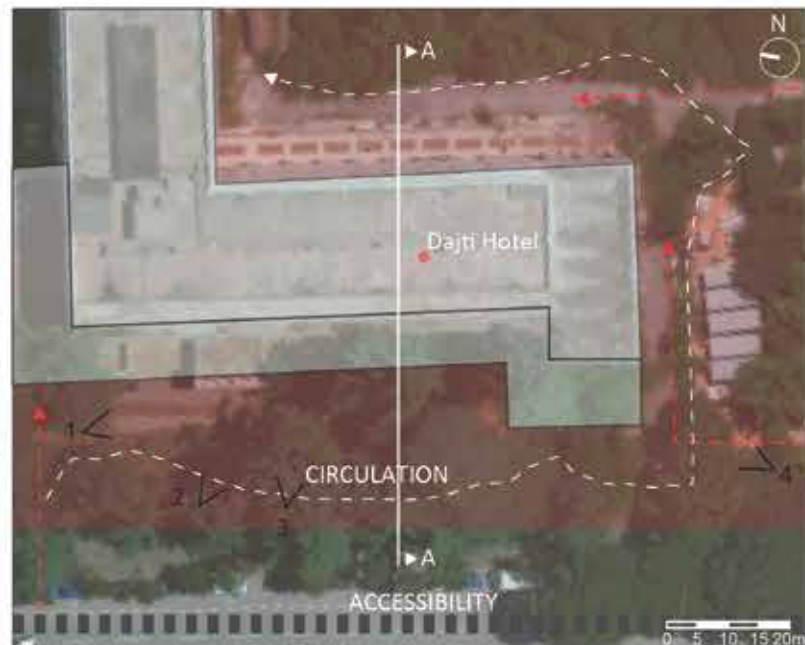
F_02 INFRA LAND	TIRANA, ALBANIA 41.324618 19.808781	SURFACE 3X11M (33M <sup>2</sup> )	14M	PRIVATE	RESIDENTIAL	LINEAR VOIDS	GREEN GRASS, LEAFY VINES
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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE STUDIO 2016-17-"TIRANA'S THIRD LANDSCAPE"  
INSTRUCTOR-LAURA PEDATA/ASSISTANT-ERANDA JANKU  
STUDENT-JONIDA JANA HYKA



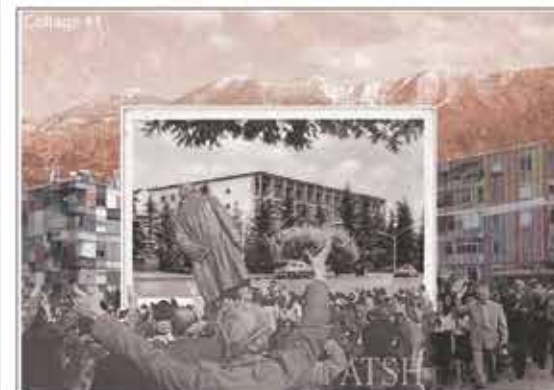
FUNCTIONS  
scale 1:5000

The site is attached with Dajti Hotel which was part of the Italian buildings of Boulevard of Zogu I. At the communist time there was a huge variation of vegetation. In the early 90's the site lost its iconic representation as with the change of the political system Dajti Hotel lost its importance.



scale 1:1000

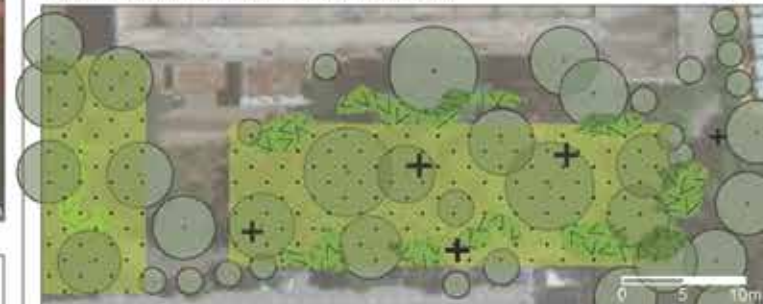
FILED ALIAS	LOCATION COORDINATES	SURFACE	PERIMETER	OWNERSHIP	CONTEXT LAND_USE	SITE CHARACTER	VEGETATION TYPE:
M_01 mark land	41.324826 N 19.819683 E Tirana, Albania	4700 m <sup>2</sup>	470m	under concession property of Bank of Albania	gardens, abandoned, monument	void space	grass, palms, pines, bush, poisonous herbs



scale 1:200 - STREET SECTION A-A



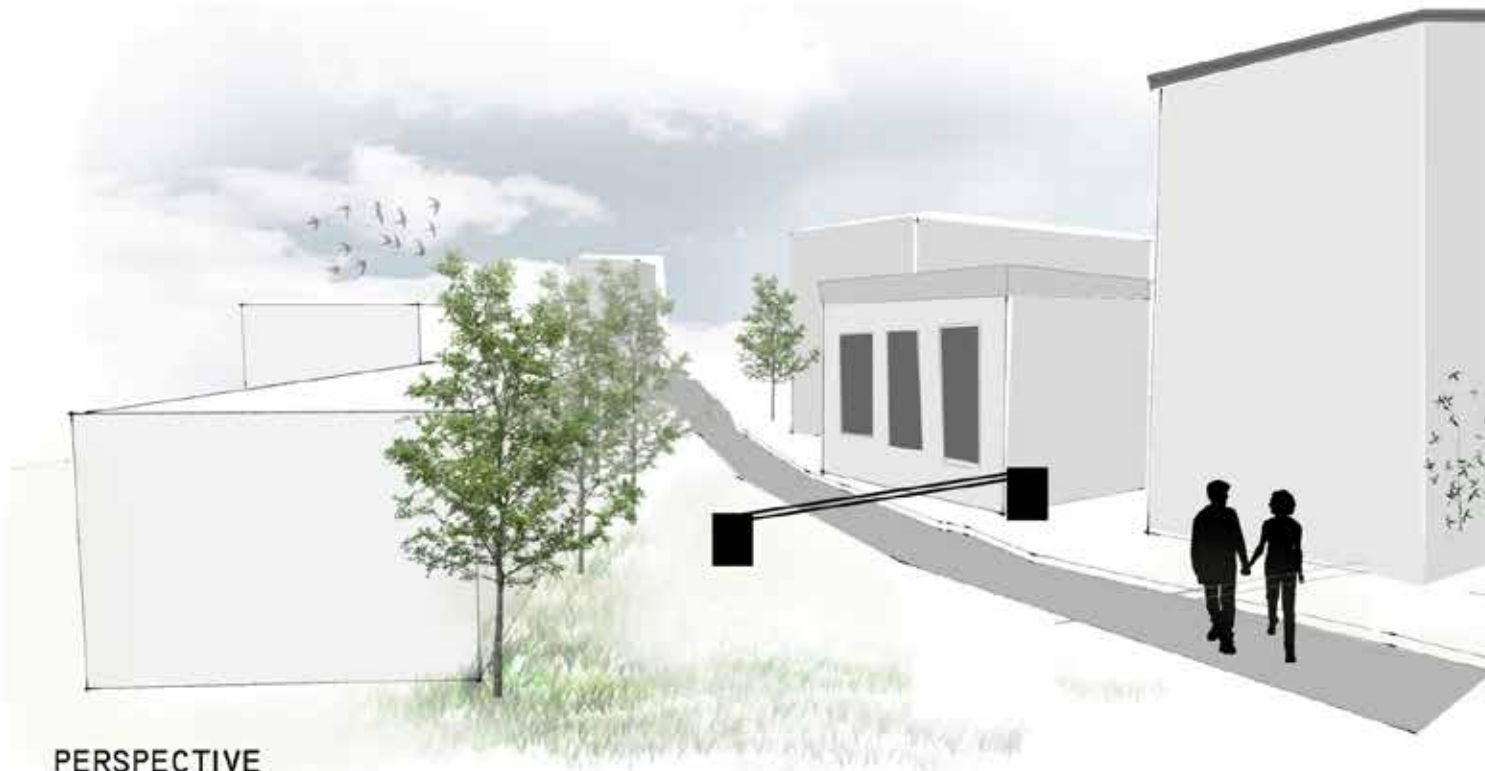
GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF COLORS



scale 1:500

	Grass	+	poisonous bushes (create itching and rash on the skin)
	Bush, Shrubs		
	Trees		

Landscape Architecture Studio 2016-17 - "Tirana's Third Landscape"  
instructor - Laura Pedata / assistant - Eranda Janku  
Xhoana KRISTO



PERSPECTIVE

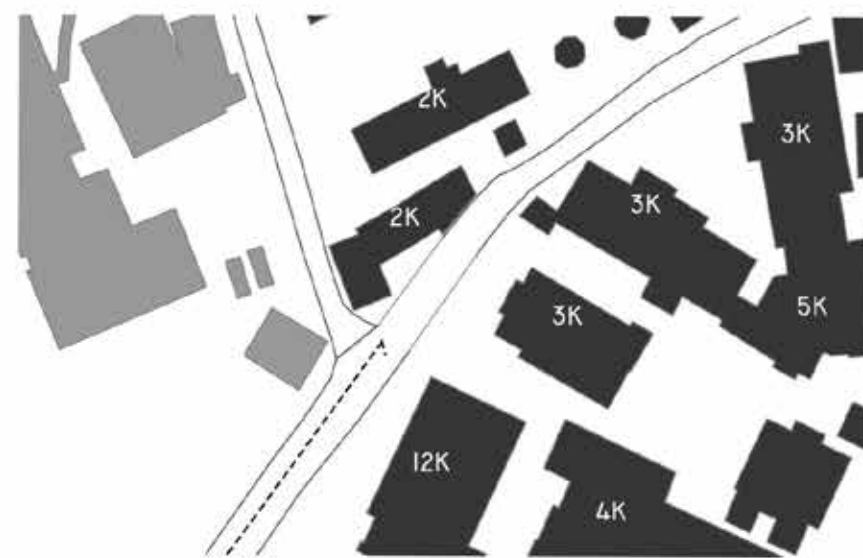


PHOTO OF SITE

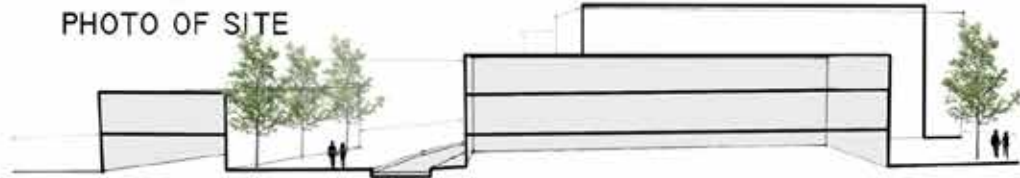


MASTERPLAN 1:5000

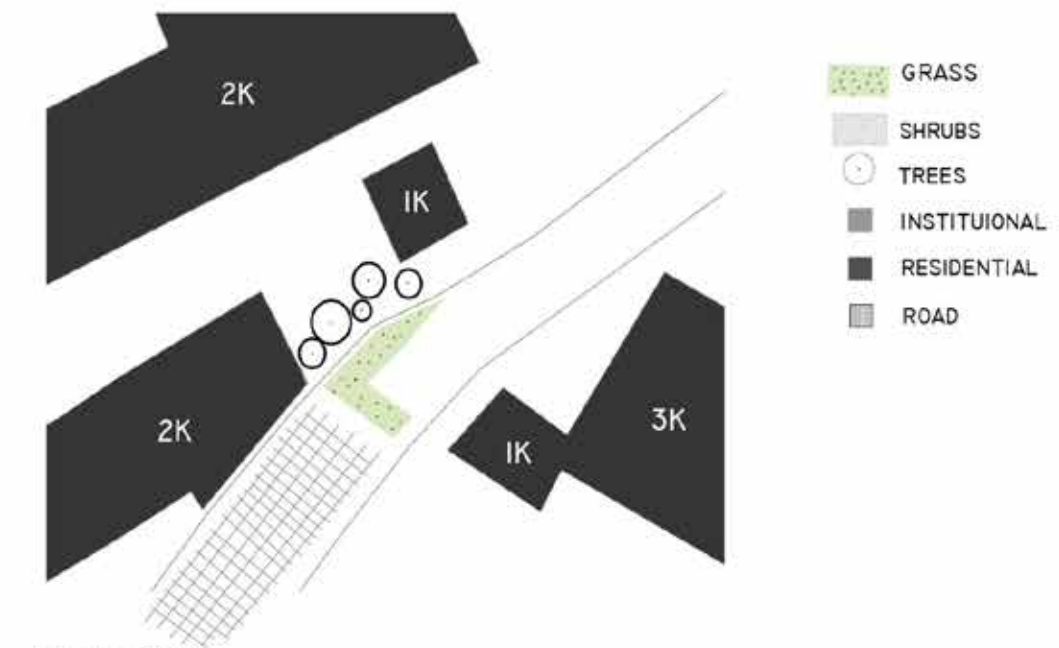
THE SITE IS LOCATED IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN PART OF TIRANA CLOSE TO THE US AMBASSY. THE PRIMARY FUNCTION IS RESIDENTIAL. THE VEGETATION IN THE SITE IS POOR. THIS NARROW IT IS CREATED FORCED BY THE SECURITY NEAR THE US AMBASSY.



MASTERPLAN 1:1000



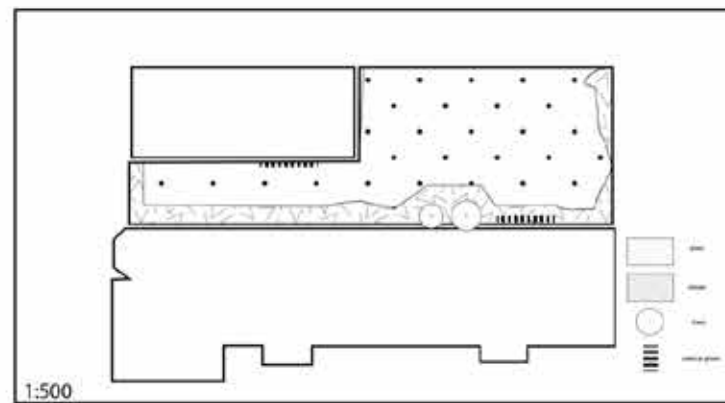
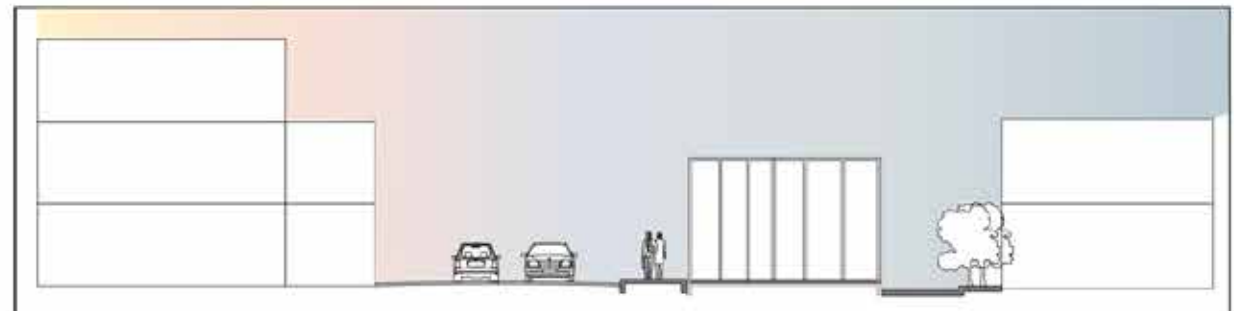
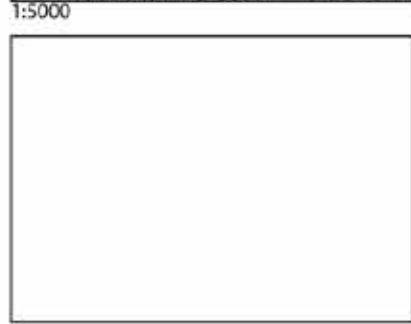
SECTION 1:500



PLAN 1:200

PHD LAURA PEDATA\_MSC ERANDA JANKU\_ARNISA LUSHAJ

D NARROW_LANDS	LATITUDE :	64M2	34M	PUBLIC	PASSAGE ON RESIDENTIAL SITE	TREES SHRUBS	I 20_15
	LONGITUDE :						



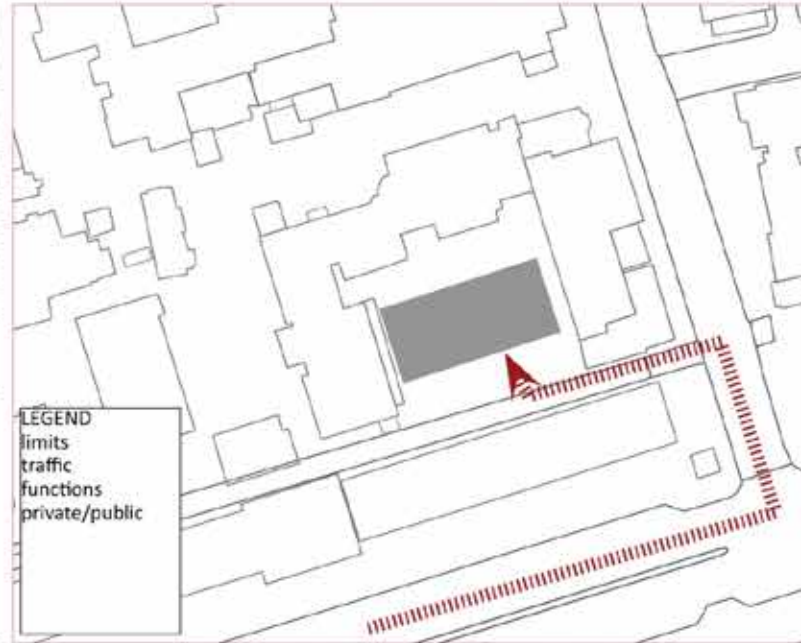
<b>G_02</b>	41° 19' 42.59"	600 m <sup>2</sup>	110 m	public space	sport area and yard of the buildings	flat topography	low grass sycamore tree dry vegetation
SPORT_LANDS	19° 48' 14.60"						

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE STUDIO 2016-17 - "TIRANA'S THIRD LANDSCAPE"  
 INSTRUCTOR - LAURA PEDATA / ASSISTANT - ERANDA JANKU  
 STUDENT - ARDITA SYLAJ



SCALE MIN 1:5000

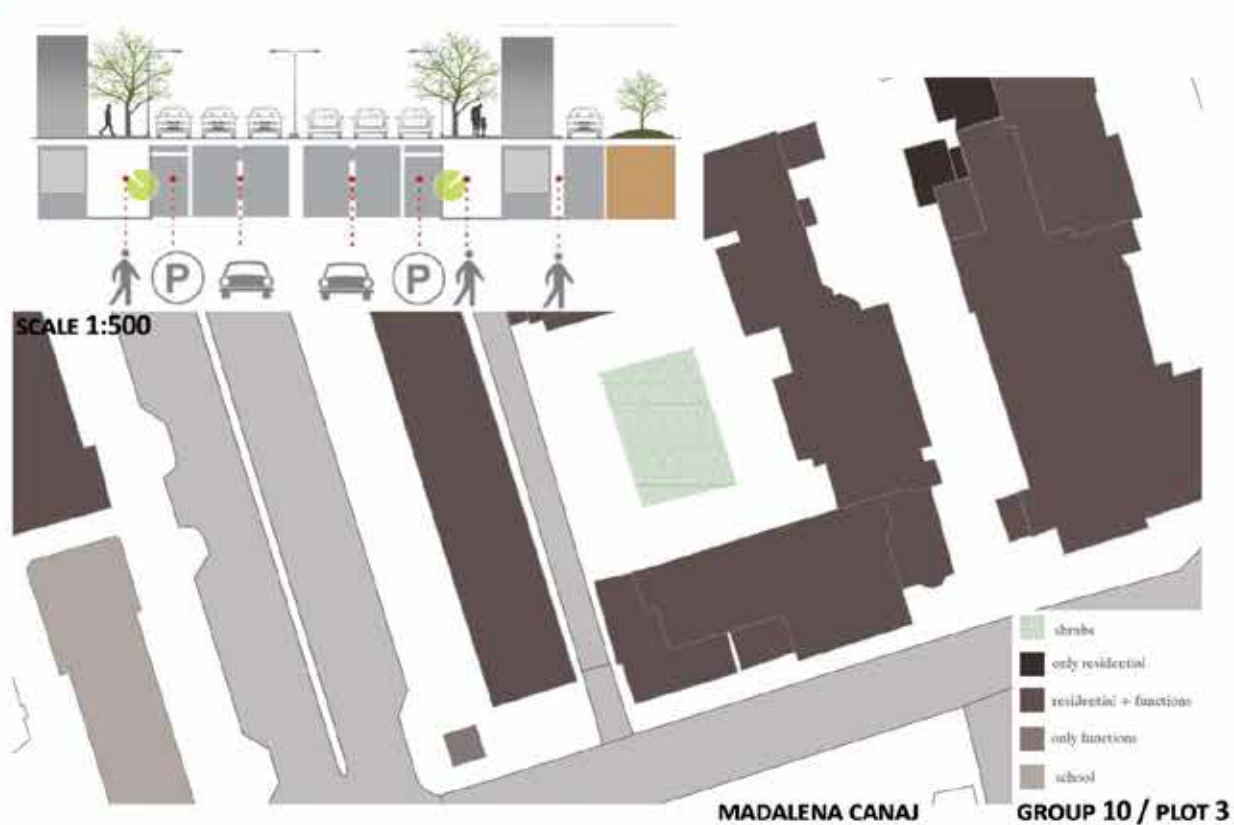
The zone is located in one of the main roads of Tirana. The access is very easy and it mainly has around residential buildings. The abandoned area is a war land as it has functioned as a bunker in socialism.



SCALE 1:1000 METRIC SCALE

LEGEND  
limits  
traffic  
functions  
private/public

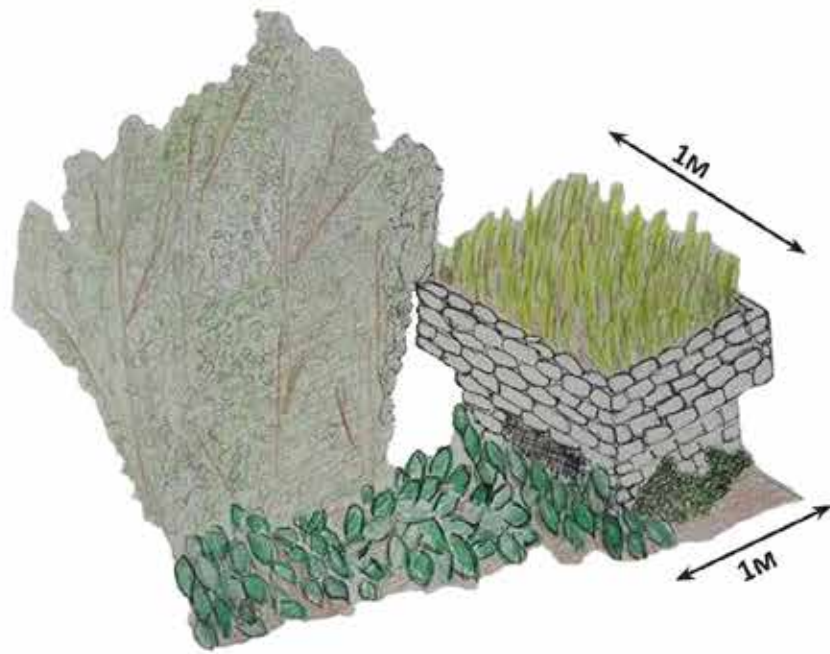
B	LATITUDE LONGITUDE	SURFACE	PERIMETER	PROPERTY	CONTEXT	VEGETATION	PHOT REF.
TRAUMA_LANDS		34.7 M2	74.7 M	PUBLIC			



SCALE 1:500

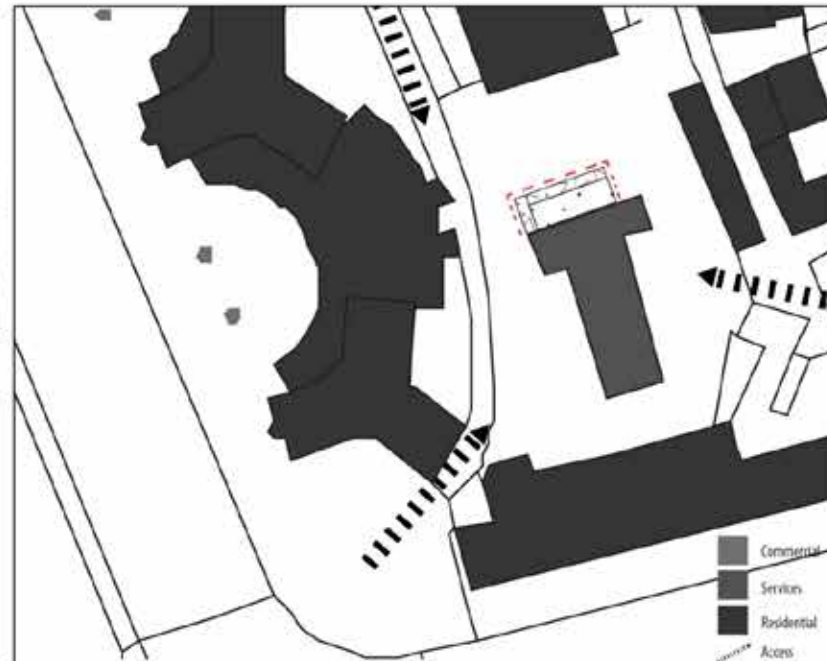
shrub  
only residential  
residential + functions  
only functions  
school

MADALENA CANAJ GROUP 10 / PLOT 3



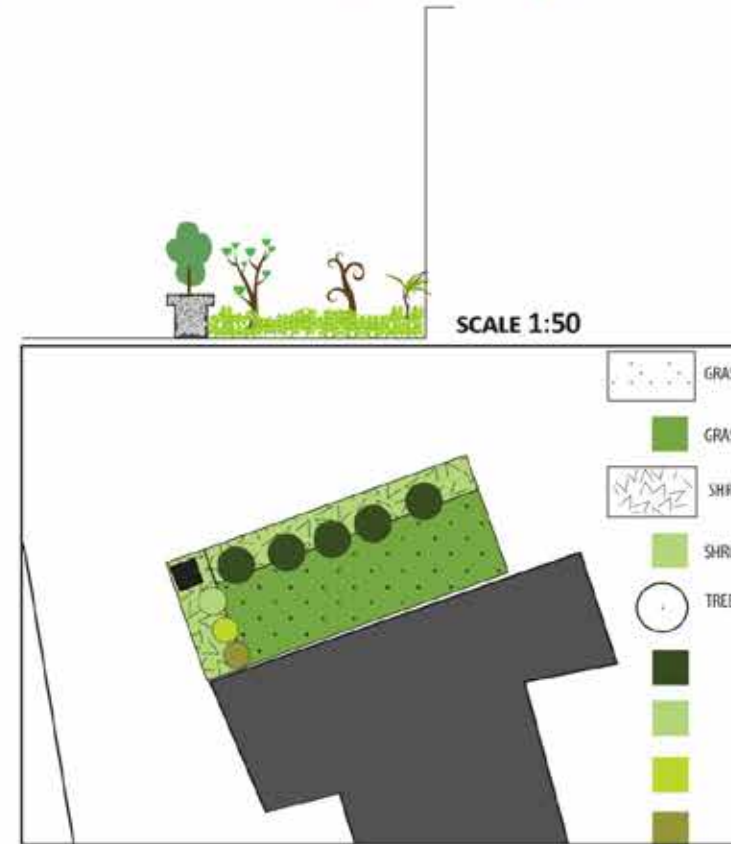
SCALE 1:5000

This 3rd landscape is located between residential and services area. These last years this 3rd landscape didn't had maintenance and is covered by wild vegetation. Most types of vegetation includes bushes, trees and moss



SCALE 1:1000 METRIC SCALE

L_01	LATITUDE	SURFACE	PERIMETER	PROPERTY	CONTEXT	VEGETATION	PHOT REF.
EDGE_LANDS	41.1329355	21.7493	23.2739	PUBLIC	TERTIARY	TREE_BUSHES	B_22
	LONGITUDE						
	19.822298						



SCALE 1:250 METRIC SCALE



LOCATION

DRITAN PREMTO

# Appendix 7 - Tirana Residual Landscape Survey Results data spreadsheet

OBJECT_ID	R_L_ID	R_L_REF_NUM.	R_L_TYPE	SURVEY_DATE	DESCRIPTION	OWNERSHIP	USE_STATUS	SITE_CHARACTER	VEGETATION_TYPE	Photo_REF_NR	LAND_USE	Shaps_Length (m)	Shape_Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
227A	05		BROWN_LANDS	2017-01-25		Private	not used	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	A_05	Industrial	273.9	2,824.7
275A	01		BROWN_LANDS			Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	A_01	Commercial	353.3	7,017.7
63C	2		UNDER_LANDS	2017-01-13	Abandoned underpass	Public	As a playground	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	C_01	Industrial	58.6	194.0
96C	03		UNDER_LANDS	2017-12-25	No comment	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	C_03	Industrial	72.9	325.8
124C	04		UNDER_LANDS	2017-12-25	No comment	Private	No use	GAP voids	Grass	C_04	Industrial	42.3	61.8
147C	01		UNDER_LANDS	2017-01-13	tunnel	Public		GAP voids	Grass, shrubs	C_01	Residential	47.2	135.4
167C	05		UNDER_LANDS	2017-07-01	tunnel	Public		GAP voids	Trees	C_05	Residential	8.0	4.0
214C	06		UNDER_LANDS	2017-07-01	air intake for tunnel	Public		GAP voids	GRASS	C_06	Residential	53.2	138.2
282C	07		UNDER_LANDS	2017-01-22	narrow passages	Private		GAP voids	shrubs, ivy, grasses	C_07a, C_07b	high density road	24.0	35.0
20D	09		NARROW_LANDS	2017-01-22	narrow passages	Public	pressing	LINEAR voids	Trees	D_09	Public_Services	48.7	844.3
21D	10		NARROW_LANDS	2017-01-22	narrow passages	Public	pressing	LINEAR voids	Trees	D_10	Residential	26.3	11.0
53D	11		NARROW_LANDS	2017-01-22	narrow passages	Private	pressing	LINEAR voids	Grass	D_11	Residential	33.4	38.4
56D	02		NARROW_LANDS	2017-01-22	narrow passages	Public	pressing	LINEAR voids	Grass	D_02	Residential	46.6	49.6
62D	01		NARROW_LANDS	2017-12-22	illegal vegetable stand every day	Public		LINEAR voids	Grass, mosses	D_01	Residential	15.3	14.5
73D	05		NARROW_LANDS	2017-12-18	Narrow path between two buildings	Private	As a passing path	LINEAR voids	Grass	D_05	Residential	44.4	128.8
91D	04		NARROW_LANDS	2017-12-22	Narrow path	Public	As a path	LINEAR voids	Grass	D_04	Residential	44.2	111.0
127D	07		NARROW_LANDS	2017-01-13	No comment	Public	As a playground	LINEAR voids	Trees	D_07	Public_Service	9.7	7.7
152D	22		NARROW_LANDS	2017-01-14	No comment	Public	No use	LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	D_22	Public_Service	2.7	2.7
159D	23		NARROW_LANDS	2017-01-14	No comment	Public	No use	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	D_23	Residential	46.4	136.4
160D	15		NARROW_LANDS	2017-07-01	narrow passages	Public		LINEAR voids	Trees	D_15	Residential	30.4	37.7
173D	19		NARROW_LANDS	2017-07-01	narrow passages	Public		LINEAR voids	tree	D_19	Residential	64.0	53.6
177D	18		NARROW_LANDS	2017-07-01	narrow passages	Public		LINEAR voids	tree	D_18	Residential	60.4	63.9
200D	17		NARROW_LANDS	2017-07-01	narrow passages	Public		LINEAR voids	GRASS	D_17	Residential	22.6	11.6
213D	24		NARROW_LANDS	2017-07-01	narrow passages	Public		LINEAR voids	MIX	D_24	Residential	59.8	82.8
215D	16		NARROW_LANDS	2017-07-01	narrow passages	Public		LINEAR voids	MIX	D_16	Residential	26.5	33.9
226D	20		NARROW_LANDS	2017-01-25		Public		GAP voids	Grass	D_20	Public_Services	20.9	22.7
													<b>913.4</b>
2E	02		AGRI_LANDS	2017-01-22	Garden	Private	Plants, Growing	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	E_02	Residential	37.7	51.4
36E	05		AGRI_LANDS	2017-01-22	Green, Garden	Private	Green, Wall	LINEAR voids	Vertical, Green	E_05	Public_Service	20.0	26.4
57E	03		AGRI_LANDS	2017-01-22	Vegetable	Public	Seeds, Plant	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	E_03	Residential	68.9	130.4
170E	08		AGRI_LANDS	2017-01-22	Garden	Private		GAP voids	tree	E_08	Residential	36.2	72.2
190E	06		AGRI_LANDS	2017-01-22	Garden	Private		GAP voids	MIX	E_06	Residential	25.6	33.1
196E	07		AGRI_LANDS	2017-01-22	Garden	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	MIX	E_07	Residential	41.4	140.4
244E	01		AGRI_LANDS	2017-03-09		Public	some parts are used to cut	GAP voids	shrubs, vegetables	E_01	residential	52.7	60.0
103F	01		INFRA_LANDS	2017-01-01	abandoned infrastructure	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	SHRUBS	F_01	Residential	146.5	303.8
207F	05		INFRA_LANDS	2017-01-25		Public	none	GAP voids	Grass	F_05	Public_Services	12.7	10.0
276F	06		INFRA_LANDS	2017-01-25	traffic island at intersection	Public		LARGE OPEN voids	shrubs, trees	F_06	residential	104.9	400.9
141G	02		SPORT_LANDS	2017-01-13	No comment	Public	illegal parking	GAP voids	Grass	G_02	Residential	48.9	509.3
146G	03		SPORT_LANDS	2017-01-13	No comment	Public	No use	GAP voids	Trees	G_03	Residential	12.0	6.1
209G	04		SPORT_LANDS	2017-07-01	sport park	Public		LARGE OPEN voids	GRASS	G_04	Residential	137.5	1,061.4
210G	05		SPORT_LANDS	2017-07-01	sport park	Public		LARGE OPEN voids	GRASS	G_05	Residential	309.8	5,500.2
277G	01		SPORT_LANDS	2017-01-22	abandoned sports field	Public	used daily to walk dogs at	LARGE OPEN voids	shrubs, trees	G_01a, G_01b	medium density road	307.7	8,527.4
													<b>15,238.0</b>
17H	36		GARD_LANDS	2017-01-22	Garden	Private	deposit, keeper	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_36	Residential	36.4	86.4
24H	28		GARD_LANDS	2017-01-22	Garden	Private	backgarden	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_28	Residential	62.0	247.0
29H	29		GARD_LANDS	2017-01-22	Garden	Private	vegetation, disposkeeper	GAP voids	Trees	H_29	Residential	33.7	40.0
27H	32		GARD_LANDS	2017-01-22	Garden	Private	slay, grow plants	LINEAR voids	Grass	H_32	Residential	34.2	57.9
32H	33		GARD_LANDS	2017-01-22	Garden	Private	slay, grow plants	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_33	Residential	25.7	41.2
34H	34		GARD_LANDS	2017-01-22	Garden	Private	deposit, keeper	GAP voids	Trees	H_34	Residential	47.2	139.1
44H	35		GARD_LANDS	2017-01-22	Garden	Private	deposit, keeper	LINEAR voids	Trees	H_35	Public_Service	74.3	319.3
60H	25		GARD_LANDS	2017-12-22	Abandoned private garden behind parking	Private	No use		Shrubs	H_25, H_25(2)	Residential	36.4	74.4
61H	27		GARD_LANDS	2017-12-22	No comment	Private	No use	LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	H_27	Residential	17.0	9.0
64H	22		GARD_LANDS	2017-12-22	No comment	Private	No use	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	No Picture	Residential	68.8	202.6
70H	23		GARD_LANDS	2017-12-18	Garden in front of abandoned private house	Private	No use	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_23	Residential	121.1	303.6
76H	07		GARD_LANDS	2017-12-18	No comment	Private	No use	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	H_07	Residential	37.7	57.9
77H	06		GARD_LANDS	2017-12-18	No comment	Private	No use	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_06	Residential	35.6	79.6
78H	13		GARD_LANDS	2017-12-18	interesting thing in front of old building, the is on the first floor	Private	As a playground	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_13	Residential	40.9	89.6
79H	24		GARD_LANDS	2017-12-22	Abandoned space in front of the first floor of building	Private	No use	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_24	Public_Service	13.1	10.3

OBJECT_ID	RL_ID	RL_REF_NUM	RL_TYPE	SURVEY_DATE	DESCRIPTION	OWNERSHIP	USE_STATUS	SITE_CHARACTER	VEGETATION_TYPE	Photo_REF_NR	LAND_USE	Shape_Length (m)	Shape_Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
831H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-22	No comment	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Grass	H_40	Residential	54.2	59.1
841H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-22	No comment	Private	No use	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_71	Residential	25.9	34.7
851H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-22	Uncontrolled vegetation inside private house	Private	No use	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_45	Residential	56.8	121.6
87H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-22	Abandoned park inside residential building	Private	People at there	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	H_50	Residential	24.3	10.1
89H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-22	Abandoned garden behind an old wall	Public	As a smoking area	GAP voids	Trees	H_44	Public Service	12.5	9.6
90H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-22	Private garden now used for street dogs and garbado	Public	No use	GAP voids	Grass	H_15	Public Service	15.2	7.2
93H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-18	Abandoned garden in front of a building that reads "Private zone"	Private	No use	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	H_46	Residential	14.1	11.7
94H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-18	Abandoned big garden behind old wall	Private	Street dogs use this	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_20	Public Service	18.0	19.6
95H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-18	No comment	Private	As a playground	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_46	Residential	20.4	6.7
96H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-18	No comment	Private	As a playground	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_41	Residential	15.2	6.7
97H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-18	No comment	Private	No use	LINEAR voids	Grass	H_47	Residential	16.9	15.1
99H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-18	No comment	Private	No use	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	H_10	Residential	49.5	82.0
100H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-25	No comment	Private	No use	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	No Picture	Public Service	32.1	62.8
101H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-25	No comment	Private	No use	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	No Picture	Public Service	66.6	228.6
103H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-25	Beautiful wild nature inside a garden and on the street	Private	As a playground	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_59	Public Service	13.9	8.2
104H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-26	Abandoned vegetation in the vehicle building	Private	No use	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	H_70	Residential	33.0	19.2
109H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-26	Wild nature inside a private garden, scared even in the streets	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	H_38	Residential	13.7	11.6
112H			GARD_LANDS	2017-11-01	Garden inside building	Private	No use	GAP voids	Grass	H_03	Industrial	12.7	7.7
113H			GARD_LANDS	2017-11-01	No comment	Private	No use	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_74	Residential	33.6	59.3
114H			GARD_LANDS	2017-11-01	No comment	Private	As a smoking area	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	H_40	Public Service	14.6	5.6
115H			GARD_LANDS	2017-11-01	No comment	Public	No use	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_51	Residential	29.5	21.4
118H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-01	No comment	Private	No use	GAP voids	Grass	H_30	Public Service	19.9	17.2
123H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-26	A garden with high density inside house	Private	No use	GAP voids	Grass	H_02a, H_02b	Residential	14.1	12.2
125H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-26	In this neighborhood there are a lot of land-scapes similar to this one	Private	No use	LARGE OPEN voids	Vertical Garden	H_72	Residential	29.1	33.2
126H			GARD_LANDS	2017-12-26	No comment	Private	As a place to sit	LARGE OPEN voids	Vertical Garden	H_73	Residential	20.7	26.0
129H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-13	No comment	Private	No use	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	H_32	Residential	15.2	12.7
130H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-13	No comment	Private	No use	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_01a, H_01b	Residential	37.5	76.7
131H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-13	No comment	Private	No use	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_11	Residential	29.5	51.5
134H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-13	The house was not abandoned but the garden in front was	Private	Kids who live in the house	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_21	Residential	32.7	46.7
135H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-13	Abandoned private in a very good location	Private	As a playground	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	H_14	Public Service	47.7	138.1
137H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-13	No comment	Private	No use	GAP voids	Grass	H_16	Residential	58.9	156.4
142H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-13	A very big garden inside house	Public	As a playground	LINEAR voids	Trees	H_91	Residential	34.9	49.4
144H			COURT_LANDS	2017-01-13	Big plants who are taking over the street	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Grass	H_92	Residential	22.6	30.1
145H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-13	No comment	Private	No use	GAP voids	trees, shrubs	H_94	Public Service	13.3	7.1
149H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-13	Abandoned garden inside institution	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Shrubs, by	H_93	Residential	20.7	12.6
150H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-13	Plants in the third floor of a building	Public	No use	GAP voids	Vertical Garden	H_95	Public Service	136.9	625.1
153H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-14	Vegetation inside a big garden in a main street	Private	As an inside garden for the	LINEAR voids	Grass	H_96	Industrial	8.8	2.3
157H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-14	The starting of a place where the landscape will soon take over	Private	No use	GAP voids	Shrubs	H_98	Residential	16.7	10.8
159H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-14	Abandoned space in main street	Private	To sit	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	H_97	Residential	97.7	82.2
161H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-14	Garden	Private	As a playground	GAP voids	Grass	H_46	Public Service	110.3	366.7
170H			GARD_LANDS	2017-07-01	Garden	Private		GAP voids	Trees	H_53	Residential	47.2	92.1
184H			GARD_LANDS	2017-07-01	Garden	Private		GAP voids	SHRUBS	H_54	Residential	25.7	39.1
202H			GARD_LANDS	2017-07-01	Garden	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	TRESS	H_75	Residential	57.1	205.0
221H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	Garden	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_56	Residential	145.1	917.7
223H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	Garden	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_57	Residential	43.0	113.3
224H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	Garden	Private		GAP voids	Trees	H_58	Residential	85.0	307.2
230H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	Garden	Private		GAP voids	Shrubs	H_90	Residential	32.5	44.7
231H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	Garden	Public		LINEAR voids	Shrubs	H_108	Public Services	30.5	14.7
232H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	Garden	Public		LINEAR voids	Grass	H_59	Public Services	52.7	53.5
238H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	Garden	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_76	Residential	40.7	103.6
240H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	Garden	Private		LINEAR voids	Vertical green	H_77	Residential	44.3	21.2
241H			GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	Garden	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_78	Residential	48.0	50.0



OBJECT_ID	RL_ID	RL_REF_NUM	RL_TYPE	SURVEY_DATE	DESCRIPTION	OWNERSHIP	USE_STATUS	SITE_CHARACTER	VEGETATION_TYPE	Photo_REF_NR	LAND_USE	Shape_Length (m)	Shape_Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
2431H	70	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		GAP voids	Trees	H_70	Residential	21.2	27.3	
2435H	37	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_37	Residential	48.9	126.4	
2439H	101	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_101	Residential	44.5	117.4	
2439H	100	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_100	Residential	25.4	40.2	
2501H	69	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_69	Residential	24.0	35.8	
2501H	68	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_68	Residential	28.1	40.1	
2501H	97	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_97	Residential	45.8	122.4	
2501H	96	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	H_96	Residential	50.6	158.9	
2501H	95	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	H_95	Residential	58.1	210.4	
2501H	102	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_102	Residential	57.6	158.9	
2501H	103	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	H_103	Residential	32.4	57.6	
2501H	83	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_83	Residential	52.2	125.0	
2501H	84	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	H_84	Residential	41.0	90.3	
2511H	85	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	H_85	Residential	207.7	1,868.7	
2621H	87	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_87	Residential	104.6	970.1	
2641H	86	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LINEAR voids	Vertical_green	H_86	Residential	25.3	26.2	
2651H	88	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_88	Residential	117.4	289.0	
2651H	89	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	H_89	Residential	32.6	60.9	
2651H	90	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	H_90	Residential	44.9	118.9	
2651H	91	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_91	Residential	07.1	25.2	
2701H	92	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	H_92	Residential	62.0	350.2	
2711H	93	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	H_93	Residential	00.7	170.2	
2721H	94	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	H_94	Residential	70.5	170.3	
2741H	107	GARD_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	H_107	Residential	51.7	139.0	
<b>91</b>													
2741H	231	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-22	abandoned building	Private	living	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	L_07	Residential	87.1	403.9	
2741H	251	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-22	abandoned building	Private	living	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	L_08	Residential	104.2	503.6	
2741H	261	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-22	abandoned building	Private	recreational	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	L_06	Commercial	36.6	91.6	
2741H	262	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-22	abandoned building	Private	living	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	L_05	Residential	39.3	89.2	
2741H	351	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-22	abandoned building	Private	living	LARGE OPEN voids	Vertical_Green	L_08	Residential	801.4	889.3	
2741H	411	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-22	abandoned building	Private	living	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	L_05	Residential	41.5	101.6	
2741H	421	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-22	abandoned building	Private	recreational	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	L_10	Public_Service	70.7	270.0	
2741H	431	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-22	abandoned building	Public	No use	LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	L_04	Industrial	27.9	35.2	
2741H	432	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-22	abandoned building	Public	No use	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	L_03	Public_Service	22.3	30.1	
2741H	1531	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-14	No comment	Public		LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	L_25		76.5	302.6	
2741H	1631	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-14	abandoned building	Private		LINEAR voids	Trees	L_25		51.2	149.4	
2741H	1651	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-01	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	L_25		60.3	141.9	
2741H	1751	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-01	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	L_27		64.9	251.1	
2741H	1801	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-01	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	L_28		24.8	38.9	
2741H	1821	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-01	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	L_30		24.8	38.9	
2741H	1851	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-01	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	L_31		19.3	22.2	
2741H	1951	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-01	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	L_24		44.4	110.8	
2741H	2011	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-01	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	L_25		34.7	68.9	
2741H	2071	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-01	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	L_35		44.4	122.5	
2741H	2201	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	L_20		55.0	189.8	
2741H	2321	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Public	abandoned building	LARGE OPEN voids	Vertical_green	L_32		60.1	230.1	
2741H	2421	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Public		LARGE OPEN voids	Vertical_green	L_33		25.3	34.4	
2741H	2631	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	L_08a, L_02b		100.0	600.5	
2741H	2631	DEBRIS_LANDS	2017-01-25	abandoned building	Private		LINEAR voids	Vertical_green	L_31		35.2	66.6	
<b>23</b>													
11J	03	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	courtyard	Private	grows plants	GAP voids	Grass	J_03	Residential	11.7	8.5	
31J	01	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	playground	Private	play vegetation	GAP voids	Grass	J_01	Residential	16.6	17.2	
41J	28	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	slay play picnic	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	J_28	Residential	13.5	7.6	
51J	23	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	vegetation flower garden	GAP voids	Trees	J_23	Residential	37.8	56.1	
61J	21	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	recreational park	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	J_21	Residential	03.1	102.4	
71J	05	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	playground	Public	play trees	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	J_05	Residential	101.1	483.9	
81J	11	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	play vegetation slay	LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	J_11	Residential	07.5	220.3	
91J	27	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	courtyard	Public	grows plants	GAP voids	Grass	J_27	Residential	35.2	59.2	
101J	22	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	courtyard	Public	agriculture	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	J_22	Residential	42.8	86.7	
111J	07	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	courtyard	Public	slay play picnic	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	J_07	Residential	05.1	86.7	
121J	08	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	grows plants flower slay	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	J_08	Residential	37.8	74.4	
131J	26	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	playground	Public	play picnic	LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	J_26	Residential	29.9	55.6	
141J	10	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	playground	Public	play recreation	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	J_10	Residential	36.3	89.0	
151J	25	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	flower garden	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	J_25	Residential	44.2	86.5	
161J	41	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	courtyard	Public	grows seeds	GAP voids	Trees	J_41	Residential	139.1	1,193.3	
191J	29	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	recreational picnic	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	J_29	Residential	115.7	543.3	
221J	30	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	slay play	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	J_30	Residential	76.0	151.3	
31J	40	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	slay	GAP voids	Trees	J_40	Residential	03.5	540.3	

OBJECT_ID	RL_ID	RL_REF_NUM	RL_TYPE	SURVEY_DATE	DESCRIPTION	OWNERSHIP	USE_STATUS	SITE_CHARACTER	VEGETATION_TYPE	Photo_REF_NR	LAND_USE	Shape_Length (m)	Shape_Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
37J		30	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	courtyard	Private	hang_clothes	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	J_30	Residential	34.1	61.5
38J		30	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	stay_grow_plants	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	J_30	Residential	50.9	50.5
39J		33	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Private	stay_grow_plants	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	J_33	Residential	90.3	251.4
40J		32	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	courtyard	Public	agriculture	GAP voids	Shrubs	J_32	Residential	64.2	241.3
43J		31	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	recreation	GAP voids	Grass	J_31	Residential	111.4	633.0
45J		34	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	courtyard	Private	recreation, space	GAP voids	Grass	J_34	Residential	87.6	365.3
46J		42	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	courtyard	Private	plants	GAP voids	Shrubs	J_42	Residential	88.5	414.9
47J		43	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	passing_park	GAP voids	Trees	J_43	Residential	84.1	251.6
48J		44	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	grass_slay	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	J_44	Residential	46.0	111.9
49J		35	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	outweto_plant	GAP voids	Shrubs	J_35	Residential	96.3	461.0
50J		36	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	courtyard	Private	space_meditation	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	J_36	Residential	13.3	9.3
52J		37	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-22	park	Public	feeding_corner	GAP voids	Trees	J_37	Residential	61.7	212.5
65J		20	COURT_LANDS	2017-12-22	No comment	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	J_20 temp	Residential	51.9	119.3
69J		02	COURT_LANDS	2017-12-18	Abandoned public space, where people walk over	Public	none	GAP voids	Shrubs	J_02	Medium density residential	115.0	504.2
71J		12	COURT_LANDS	2017-12-18	Public space abandoned and a place to park bicycles now	Public	People use it to walk over	GAP voids	Grass	J_12	Public Service	101.1	214.0
72J		13	COURT_LANDS	2017-12-18	Abandoned playground	Public	As a playground	GAP voids	Shrubs	J_13	Public Service	87.4	347.8
74J		14	COURT_LANDS	2017-12-18	Public space where people cross now	Public	To sit or play	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	J_14	Public Service	71.7	254.5
75J		16	COURT_LANDS	2017-12-18	Abandoned public space inside building with wild vegetation on it	Public	People use it as a gift	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	J_16	Public Service	53.7	146.1
85J		49	COURT_LANDS	2017-12-22	Abandoned public space in a narrow shape	Public	No use	GAP voids	Trees	J_49	Industrial	47.9	137.7
88J		48	COURT_LANDS	2017-12-22	Abandoned public space in a narrow shape	Public	People sit there	LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	J_48	Public Service	12.7	9.0
105J		52	COURT_LANDS	2017-12-26	Abandoned public space in a narrow shape	Public	As a playground	LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	J_52	Residential	20.9	26.9
107J		03	COURT_LANDS	2017-12-26	Public space with good design but still abandoned	Public	As a place to sit	GAP voids	Shrubs	J_03	Public Service	25.6	40.7
111J		46	COURT_LANDS	2017-11-01	Abandoned place where a big tree takes place	Public	As a playground or just to sit	GAP voids	Grass	J_46	Public Service	21.9	29.3
116J		53	COURT_LANDS	2017-11-01	No comment	Public	As a place to sit or smoke	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	J_53	Residential	34.1	31.8
119J		50	COURT_LANDS	2017-12-01	No comment	Public	No use	GAP voids	Grass	J_50	Residential	14.5	11.7
120J		64	COURT_LANDS	2017-12-01	No comment	Public	No use	GAP voids	Grass	J_64	Public Service	23.1	9.7
121J		65	COURT_LANDS	2017-12-28	No comment	Public	No use	GAP voids	Trees	J_65	Public Service	26.7	36.7
132J		66	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-13	No comment	Public	No use	GAP voids	Shrubs	J_66	Public Service	56.5	40.9
133J		91	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-13	No comment	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Grass	J_91	Residential	34.2	71.4
138J		15	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-13	Public space in a good neighborhood	Private	No use	GAP voids	Grass	J_15	Residential	71.4	230.7
139J		18	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-13	Just in front of a building where the first floor is used, is this abandoned public space	Private	No use	GAP voids	Shrubs	J_18	Public Service	21.4	21.8
139J		72	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-13	Public space	Public	People use it to cross	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	J_72a, J_72b	Residential	15.1	15.1
140J		09	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-13	Small but very centered public space	Public	As a playground	LINEAR voids	Grass	J_09a, J_09b	Residential	103.1	330.4
162J		88	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-01	park	Public	As a playground	GAP voids	tree	J_88	Public Service	99.9	263.5
165J		85	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-01	park	Public	As a playground	LINEAR voids	tree	J_85	Public Service	53.3	125.0
178J		89	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-01	park	Public	As a playground	GAP voids	Grass	J_89	Public Service	68.7	273.9
181J		90	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-01	park	Public	As a playground	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	J_90	Public Service	258.4	2,300.1
187J		87	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-01	park	Public	As a playground	GAP voids	TREES	J_87	Residential	89.0	480.4
205J		84	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-01	park	Private	As a playground	LINEAR voids	MDX	J_84	Residential	29.4	38.9
217J		86	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-01	park	Public	As a playground	GAP voids	MDX	J_86	Residential	51.9	167.1
219J		81	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-25	park	Public	As a playground	GAP voids	Grass	J_81	Public Services	123.4	949.4
225J		62	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-25	park	Public	As a playground	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	J_62	Public Services	200.7	316.6
234J		73	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-25	park	Private	As a playground	GAP voids	Shrubs	J_73	Residential	36.9	93.7
239J		74	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-25	park	Public	As a playground	GAP voids	Grass	J_74	Public Services	7.5	3.5
239J		75	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-25	park	Public	As a playground	LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	J_75	Public Services	42.8	105.8
244J		76	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-25	park	Private	As a playground	GAP voids	Trees	J_76	Public Services	20.1	22.3
254J		83	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-25	park	Public	As a playground	LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	J_83	Public Services	39.3	46.6
259J		80	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-25	park	Public	As a playground	LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	J_80	Public Services	45.1	120.9
267J		82	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-25	park	Public	As a playground	GAP voids	Vertical_green	J_81	Public Services	20.3	25.1
273J		82	COURT_LANDS	2017-01-25	park	Public	As a playground	GAP voids	tree, grass	J_82	Public Services	33.4	35.4
283J		92	COURT_LANDS	2017-03-09	park	Public	Used as private garden	GAP voids	tree, grass	J_92	residential	22.9	31.6
285J		83	COURT_LANDS	2017-03-09	park	Public	used as parking daily	GAP voids	grass, trees	J_83	Public Services	27.7	47.9
293J		04	COURT_LANDS	2017-03-09	park	Public	illegal parking	GAP voids	tree, grass	J_04	medium density residential	53.5	170.3
191K		04	PLOT_LANDS	2017-01-22	Parcels	Private	parking	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	K_04	Residential	45.5	74.0
301K		06	PLOT_LANDS	2017-01-22	Parcels	Private	parking	GAP voids	Grass	K_06	Residential	48.0	51.4
311K		05	PLOT_LANDS	2017-01-22	Parcels	Private	parking	GAP voids	Shrubs	K_05	Residential	50.4	58.9
54K		03	PLOT_LANDS	2017-01-22	Parcels	Public	parking	GAP voids	Grass	K_03	Residential	413.4	10,365.7

OBJECT_ID	R_L_ID	R_L_REF_NUM	R_L_TYPE	SURVEY_DATE	DESCRIPTION	OWNERSHIP	USE_STATUS	SITE_CHARACTER	VEGETATION_TYPE	Photo_REF_NR	LAND_USE	Shape_Length (m)	Shape_Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
68K	01		PLOT_LANDS	2017-12-22	Abandoned land in the middle of old buildings	Public	Used by dogs, men bring	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	C_02	Public_Service	102.2	1,075.8
122K	02		PLOT_LANDS	2017-12-25	No comment	Private	No use	GAP voids	Trees	K_02	Residential	21.5	29.9
169K	16		PLOT_LANDS	2017-07-01	Parcels	Public		LARGE OPEN voids	mix	K_16	Residential	56.4	172.7
183K	09		PLOT_LANDS	2017-07-01	Parcels	Public		LARGE OPEN voids	TRESS	K_09	Residential	147.4	1,340.3
185K	10		PLOT_LANDS	2017-07-01	Parcels	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	MIX	K_10	Residential	164.2	1,933.7
188K	18		PLOT_LANDS	2017-07-01	Parcels	Private		GAP voids	MIX	K_18	Residential	44.3	67.2
189K	08		PLOT_LANDS	2017-07-01	Parcels	Private		GAP voids	GRASS	K_08	Residential	54.1	155.3
203K	14		PLOT_LANDS	2017-07-01	Parcels	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	SHRUBS	K_14	Residential	83.7	369.7
204K	20		PLOT_LANDS	2017-07-01	Parcels	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	GRASS	K_20	Residential	150.2	1,415.5
212K	15		PLOT_LANDS	2017-07-01	Parcels	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	MIX	K_15	Residential	114.5	940.3
212K	19		PLOT_LANDS	2017-07-01	Parcels	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	GRASS	K_19	Residential	95.3	24,219.9
222K	11		PLOT_LANDS	2017-07-25	Parcels	Public		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	K_11	Public_Service	10.2	5.6
228K	12		PLOT_LANDS	2017-07-25	Parcels	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Grass	K_12	Public_Service	729.4	5.6
228K	13		PLOT_LANDS	2017-07-25	Parcels	Private		LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	K_13	Industrial	169.4	729.4
233K	21		PLOT_LANDS	2017-07-25	Parcels	Public		LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	K_21	Other	106.3	2,106.8
245K	17		PLOT_LANDS	2017-07-25	Parcels	Private		GAP voids	Grass	K_17	Public_Service	66.8	96.8
													<b>44,872.1</b>
51L	13		EDGE_LANDS	2017-01-22	border	Private	parking border	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	L_13	Commercial	60.6	114.4
58L	11		EDGE_LANDS	2017-01-25	Edge vegetation in old building	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Grass	L_11	Residential	66.5	239.7
59L	10		EDGE_LANDS	2017-01-25	Edge vegetation in old building	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Grass	L_10	Residential	57.0	108.7
60L	00		EDGE_LANDS	2017-12-22	abandoned building	Private	No use	LINEAR voids	Grass	No Picture	Residential	38.2	51.1
67L	05		EDGE_LANDS	2017-12-22	No comment	Public	No use	GAP voids	Grass	L_05	Residential	38.6	69.5
80L	08		EDGE_LANDS	2017-12-22	Edge vegetation in school yard	Public	No use	GAP voids	Grass	L_08	Public_Service	16.7	14.2
81L	09		EDGE_LANDS	2017-12-22	Edge vegetation in school yard	Public	No use	GAP voids	Grass	L_09	Public_Service	30.9	59.4
92L	10		COURT_LANDS	2017-12-22	a business	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	L_10	Residential	3.6	3.6
102L	04		EDGE_LANDS	2017-12-25	No comment	Public	No use	LARGE OPEN voids	Shrubs	No Picture	Public_Service	63.6	74.7
103L	03		EDGE_LANDS	2017-12-25	No comment	Public	No use	GAP voids	Grass	No Picture	Public_Service	29.5	53.2
108L	12		EDGE_LANDS	2017-12-26	Edge plants in the side of a building	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Grass	L_12	Residential	13.9	9.8
110L	17		EDGE_LANDS	2017-11-01	No comment	Public	No use	GAP voids	Trees	L_17	Public_Service	9.3	3.6
128L	20		EDGE_LANDS	2017-01-13	No comment	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Shrubs	L_20	Residential	76.6	126.3
143L	30		EDGE_LANDS	2017-01-13	Edge plants on a side of a building	Public	No use	GAP voids	Grass	L_30	Public_Service	13.0	9.2
145L	29		EDGE_LANDS	2017-01-13	No comment	Public	No use	GAP voids	Grass	L_29	Residential	64.0	209.0
154L	35		EDGE_LANDS	2017-01-14	Edge plants on a building	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Grass	L_35	Residential	11.7	9.9
155L	34		EDGE_LANDS	2017-01-14	Edge plants on an important building	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Grass	L_34	Residential	13.3	3.8
156L	32		EDGE_LANDS	2017-01-14	Edge plants	Public	No use	LINEAR voids	Grass	L_32	Residential	21.1	17.3
160L	33		EDGE_LANDS	2017-01-14	Edge plants on the side of a parking border	Public	No use	GAP voids	Grass	L_33	Residential	24.7	30.9
164L	21		EDGE_LANDS	2017-07-01	border	Private		LINEAR voids	mix	L_21	Residential	90.7	256.6
171L	26		EDGE_LANDS	2017-07-01	border	Private		LINEAR voids	mix	L_26	Residential	63.1	163.1
172L	27		EDGE_LANDS	2017-07-01	border	Private		GAP voids	mix	L_27	Residential	44.3	120.3
174L	46		EDGE_LANDS	2017-07-01	border	Private		GAP voids	mix	L_46	Residential	66.9	239.1
192L	22		EDGE_LANDS	2017-07-01	border	Private		LINEAR voids	SHRUBS	L_22	Residential	36.3	21.6
194L	23		EDGE_LANDS	2017-07-01	border	Private		GAP voids	MIX	L_23	Residential	22.2	20.8
197L	25		EDGE_LANDS	2017-07-01	border	Private		GAP voids	GRASS	L_25	Residential	23.7	20.0
199L	24		EDGE_LANDS	2017-07-01	border	Public		LINEAR voids	SHRUBS	L_24	Residential	61.8	142.5
205L	43		EDGE_LANDS	2017-07-01	border	Private		GAP voids	TRESS	L_43	Residential	53.9	179.4
209L	44		EDGE_LANDS	2017-07-01	border	Private		LINEAR voids	MIX	L_44	Residential	74.9	287.7
211L	45		EDGE_LANDS	2017-07-01	border	Private		LINEAR voids	MIX	L_45	Residential	35.5	28.7
281L	02		EDGE_LANDS		people use it infrequently to go down the slope	Public	used infrequently	LARGE OPEN voids	grasses	L_02	medium density residential	1,051.2	14,218.8
282L	03		EDGE_LANDS			Public	none	LINEAR voids	grass	L_03	medium density residential	242.6	834.2
287L	41		EDGE_LANDS	2017-03-09		Public		GAP voids	mix	NY	Residential	17.5	17.5
55M	01		MARK_LANDS	2017-01-22	monument	Public	walking_solo	LARGE OPEN voids	Trees	M_01	Public_Service	237.7	2,905.3
235M	02		MARK_LANDS	2017-01-25	waste	Private		LINEAR voids	Vertical_green	M_02	Residential	47.1	85.5
191N	03		WASTE_LANDS	2017-07-01		Private		GAP voids	MIX	N_03	Residential	28.4	41.5
<b>lot number</b>												<b>Total surface</b>	<b>128,122.0</b>
													<b>Surface surveyed</b>
													<b>6,470,300.0</b>
													<b>Residual land % of total area surveyed</b>
													<b>1.9%</b>



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