



THE CYPRUS
INSTITUTE



University
of Cyprus

HOUSED by CHOICE, HOUSED by FORCE - Homes, Conflicts and Conflicting Interests

January 21 – 22. 2016

Architecture_MPS, University of Cyprus; Cyprus Institute

Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:

1. Paper / Proposal Title: Addressing homogenization of cities divided after conflict: learning from Yugoslav experiences.

2. Format: Written paper

3. Author(s) Name: Dr. Aleksandar Staničić

4. Email contact details: sindjel@gmail.com

5. University or Company Affiliation: Independent researcher

6. Abstract (300 words):

Famous architectural critic and theorist Jane Jacobs argued that fast-developing American cities are in peril of losing their main quality, heterogeneity, due to standardization of architectural forms induced by international style and conglomeration of city's primary functions. But while in Western cities the biggest threat of such tendencies was endangering certain cosmopolitan way of life, in divided and traditionally belligerent societies, such as that of former Yugoslavia, erasure of subtle ethnic attributes was often understood as form of political oppression. Modern architecture and urbanism, that supposed to be epitome of proclaimed "brotherhood and unity", inverted over time into their own antithesis, making violent homogenization of disputed territories the main

characteristic of all Yugoslav wars. Particularly affected in both scenarios were private houses whose erasure denied the very possibility for dwelling on disputed territory. Ethnically clean enclaves created in such way are encouraging cultural disparities, deepening ever more traditional antagonisms. In harshly bipolar ex-Yugoslav cities, such as Kosovska Mitrovica in Kosovo, those antagonisms are limiting housing options by preventing the return of dislocated residents into their pre-war habitat.

This paper will propose new guidelines of how to fight residential segregation, by looking into the curious case of city of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In desperate efforts to restore city's multicultural identity and widely-known tolerate climate, international humanitarian funds financed reconstruction of the Old Bridge, Mostar's iconic building, that supposed to symbolise ruination of three belligerent parties. However, activists overlooked the fact that dispersion of houses remained highly ghettoized, still driven by ethnic exclusion, de facto supporting physical and cultural division of the city. On that basis, I will argue that method of choice for restoration of heterogeneity in conflicted cities should be the "reverse modernization", where even restoration of private housing and encouraging diversity of functions would come as priority.

Keywords: urban heterogeneity, violent segregation, divided cities, "reverse modernization", restoration of disperse housing

7. Author(s) Biography (200 words maximum for all authors):

Dr. Aleksandar Staničić is an independent researcher, architectural theorist and critic, and practicing architect. He received his Ph.D. at the Polytechnic University of Milan (Politecnico di Milano) in 2014. Title of dissertation: Architecture born in violence: creative dilemma in post-urbicidal reconstructions. Experiences of Belgrade in the aftermath of 1999. War.

Dr. Staničić's interdisciplinary research interests focus on the phenomena of calculated destruction of architecture in modern-day conflicts, fabrication of identity and memory via (mis)treatment of architectural heritage in post-conflict reconstructions, mutual interweavement of architecture and violence in contemporary urban design processes and philosophical theories on semiotics and aesthetics of ruins. His most recent academic publications include: Military politics as a tool for active destruction and passive decay in the former Yugoslavian cities (Politics in the history of architecture as a cause and consequence, Istanbul, 2013), Military barracks in Serbia: Strategies and limitation for use and reuse (Le caserme: Architettura, urbanità e riuso, Milano, 2014), and forthcoming Architecture and violence: designing reconstructions after uricide, book manuscript (expected 2016).

Submit forms to: admin@architecturemps.com