POWER REGIMES AND PRACTICES OF BORDERING.

"…Throughout history, Tbilisi's city fabric has borne the imprints of various cultures, Romans (both Western and Eastern), Persians, Arabs, Turks, Europeans, and Russians in their imperial and Soviet iterations. It stands as a captivating collage, a scattered catalogue of historical urban grids. Lastly, the city serves as a repository (albeit one that is not meticulously maintained) of diverse architectural typologies and styles, spanning from ancient churches to bold expressions of brutalist masterpieces." - Ubani, Tbilisi Cityscape Research Centre

POWER REGIMES AND PRACTICES OF BORDERING.
A Post-Humanist Exploration of Tbilisi's Urban Fabric under Shifting Regimes.

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Transient Liquidities along the New Silk Road IV
Power Regimes and Practices of Bordering

Research Plan
AR3A010

Dr.ir. RA Robert Gorny

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INTRODUCTION.

Georgia is a country in the Western Caucasus. The Caucasus Mountains, the Caspian and the Black Sea are all topographical barriers to the country's extremities and have historically both protected and isolated Georgia.[1] While the mountains offer natural defence and the Kura River is used for hydropower production, the terrain also complicates urban development and has caused numerous natural disasters.[2] Because of Georgia's geopolitical position, multiple empires have conquered the country many times, from the Persians and Mongols to the Arab Caliphate and the Soviet Union.[3] All of these regimes left prominent marks on the country. Tbilisi, the economic and political heart of Georgia, has endured cycles of demolition, transformation and reconstruction. Power regimes and their corresponding bordering practices are deeply etched into the urban planning, architecture and societal rhythms of Tbilisi.
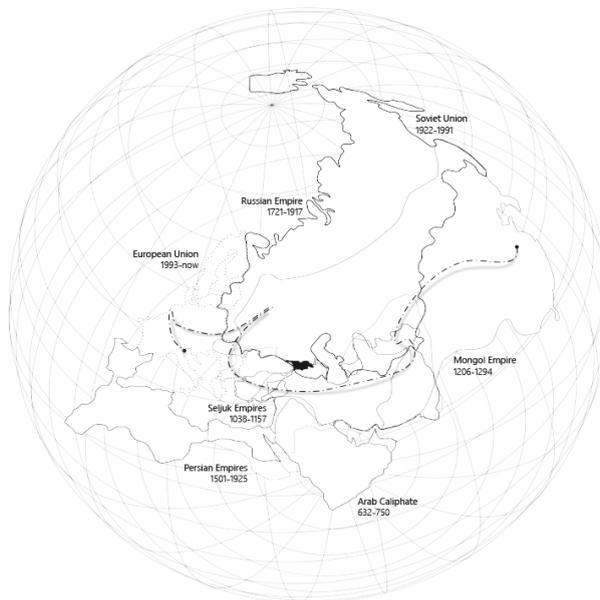
Figure 1: Empires that ruled over Georgia.

The scale and speed of technological, socio-political and environmental advancements over the past century have transformed the possibilities for global networks enabling initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).[4] The BRI represents one of the most ambitious infrastructure and economic development projects, connecting China and Europe through both land ('belt') and maritime ('Road') routes. The BRI aims to foster global trade and investment through improved infrastructure across Asia, Africa and Europe.[5]

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[1] Nana Bolashvili and Vazha Neidze, *The Physical Geography of Georgia, Geography of the Physical Environment,* 2022, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-90753-2.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation, Second Edition* (Indiana University Press, 1994).
[4] Peter Frankopan, *The New Silk Roads: The New Asia and the Remaking of the World Order.* (London: Vintage, 2020).
[5] Ibid.

These advancements enable the rapid transfer of goods and information across continents. While the ancient Silk Road once linked the East and West through trade and cultural exchanges, the New Silk Road has a broader geopolitical, economic and virtual reach, stretching as far as Western Europe, the Netherlands, from where we are writing this text.

Figure 2: Old and New Silk Road.

Georgia, situated at the crossroads between Europe and Asia, plays a critical role in the New Silk Road. However, Georgia's future is uncertain once again, the upcoming October 26th parliamentary elections in Georgia with the *Foreign Agents Bill* as the main focus could significantly alter Georgia's importance on the trade route between East and West.[6] The EU has opposed the bill, which requires foreign-funded organisations to register as 'foreign agents' and might deter foreign investment, whereas Russia is highly in favour of this new Bill.[7] Besides this political law, Georgia faces a difficult choice between integrating with the norms and values of the European Union or drawing closer to Russia. This duality is deeply felt in the political landscape, causing tension between residents and sparking mistrust in the government. Natalia Tatunashvili and Ani Chorgolashvili, Georgian architects and researchers at Ubani, a non-profit organisation focused on exploring the built environment and the landscape of Tbilisi, commented during a video call with us on the current political landscape and said: "Every problem you can imagine, we have it."

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[6] Cory Welt, "Georgia's Parliament Passes 'Transparency of Foreign Influence' Law," *Congressional Research Service* (CRS INSIGHT, May 28, 2024),
https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN12368#:~:text=The%20legislation%20requires%20nongovernme ntal%20organizations.and%20expressions%20of%20concern%20by.
[7] Ibid.

Tbilisi's history can be understood through distinct regimes that imposed their visions of order onto the cityscape dealing differently with the given context. Simultaneously, counter-movements of people taking power and architectural remnants of older regimes testify to the city's resistance. This research aims to understand how different power regimes, ruling empires, the landscape and residents, have shaped the (built) environment of Tbilisi and how practices of bordering—whether physical, political or ideological—have been manifested throughout its urban development. The primary questions are:

1. How can a post-anthropocentric perspective help us read the country's history?
2. How have successive power regimes inscribed their ideologies into the urban fabric of Tbilisi?
3. In what ways do the current and historical bordering practices manifest in the city's urban landscape?

To answer these questions we will produce a multi-layered map titled 'Power Regimes and Practices of Bordering', which will visualise the different empires, their planning paradigms and bordering practices in time. Through the practice of mapping, we hope to reveal particular spatial and ideological qualities imposed on the city by its governing power regimes.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

By creating a map with the title *Power Regimes and the Practices of Bordering*, we aim to examine the relationships between political regimes and the spatial practices that produce borders. Alongside the cartographic work, we tasked ourselves with creating a theoretical framework to understand the specific topics of our exploration better.

Post-Anthropocentrism.

In this research, post-anthropocentrism or post-humanism provides a critical lens through which we analyse the (built) environment of Tbilisi, focusing on the dissolution of the human-centred approach to power and urban planning. Rooted in concepts developed by thinkers such as Rosi Braidotti and Bruno Latour, post-humanism rejects anthropocentrism and emphasises the interconnectedness of human and non-human actors in shaping space and society.[8] [9] In line with post-humanist thought, landscapes are understood as dynamic entities shaped by the interplay of processes. The notion of the 'ever-changing landscape' in this research includes both environmental and infrastructural elements, recognising the city as a living organism where human and non-human forces are always in negotiation and co-constitute with one another.

In the context of Tbilisi, a post-anthropocentric perspective allows us to understand the city as a product of not only human decisions but also of non-human forces like the Kura River, the mountains, winds and natural disasters. Empires that ruled the region utilised the natural elements in different ways; like establishing borders and reshaping their practices of control to fit the landscape but also as entities to be manipulated.

Power Regimes.

'Power regimes' often refer to how political entities—empires, states and their ideologies—impose control over territories and populations. The term 'ideology' was first used by Antoine Destutt de Tracy during the French Revolution to refer to the science of ideas, but its meaning evolved over time.[10] Karl Marx redefined ideology as a system of beliefs that justifies and perpetuates the ruling class's power, often masking social inequalities. In urban spaces, these ideologies are not merely abstract concepts; they materialise in the city's architecture, infrastructure and borders.[11] Ideologies are spatial organisers, embedded in the very fabric of the city. For instance, in Soviet-era Tbilisi, the ideology of collectivism and equality was expressed through standardised housing blocks and communal public spaces, reflecting the regime's effort to promote social unity and reduce visible distinctions between different classes. While holding the potential of

[8] Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013).
[9] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[10] Antoine Destutt de Tracy, *Éléments d'idéologie* (1801).
[11] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (Progress Publishers, 1968).

displaying various expressions of ideologies, from democratic to autocratic, we should expand on our understanding of 'power regimes', since it is generally agreed that a 'regime' is a mode of rule and/or management of an ideology.[12] We embarked on a journey exploring the optics of various theorists on the topic of power.

To Foucault—one of the most prolific thinkers in theorising the idea of power, power is intrinsically related to and exercised through control. In the 1975 book *Discipline and Punish*, he argues that in modern days, power is embedded in social structures through disciplinary mechanisms, not only in prisons (as exemplified in his theories on the Panopticon) but in other institutions as well.[13] Schools, corporations, hospitals—all operate under systems of control through varying levels of surveillance and oppression.

Moreover, to Foucault, power is intrinsically intertwined with space—its organisation and management. His concept of *quadrillage* (gridding of space) theorises how authorities divide and regulate space to ensure control.[14] Originating from practices in urban planning and military strategy, *quadrillage* involves segmenting areas into grids, allowing for surveillance, regulation and equally dividing people. The grid—whether in the layout of streets, the design of institutions or the partitioning of social groups—becomes a tool of governance, ensuring that power can be exercised in a more subtle, effective and pervasive manner.

Foucault's view on power is largely shared by Slavoj Žižek, a contemporary Slovenian philosopher, who argues that power operates not only through visible, direct acts of violence but also through ideological systems that shape how individuals perceive reality.[15] It modulates unconscious ideologies, making forms of domination invisible by embedding them in how people understand the world and themselves. American philosophist, Judith Butler, emphasises in her book *Gender Trouble* from 1990 how power shapes not only society but the formation of individual identity.[16] In her book *The Psychic Life of Power* from 1997, Butler expands further on this theory, adding that individuals are not merely constrained by power but are also produced by it, as power operates at a psychic level, internalising norms that forge the self.[17] In this way, it becomes imperceptible. The process of internalisation makes individuals both subjects of power and agents who further perpetuate it. This reveals the dual role of power, on one hand disciplining and the other constituting identities.

In contrast to classical theorists who often perceive power primarily as a mechanism of control and domination, Hannah Arendt, an influential German-American historian and philosopher, offers a more nuanced understanding that emphasises the collective dimensions of power. She relates the one-dimensional understanding of power disseminated by thinkers before to violence. For Arendt, power is not simply an attribute of states or institutions. Instead, she conceptualises power as a product of collective action in the public sphere, highlighting the importance of human interaction and dialogue. According to her, true power arises when individuals come together to act, sharing a common purpose and

[12] Alexander Diener and Joshua Hagen, *Borders: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2012).
[13] Michel Foucault, *Discipline And Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Vintage, 1979).
[14] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France* (New York: Picador, 1978-1979).
[15] Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. (London: Verso, 1989).
[16] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1990).
[17] Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life Of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford University Press, 1997).

fostering a sense of community.[18] This perspective reframes power as a form of public freedom—a space where individuals can collectively assert their agency and influence the world around them.[19] In this sense, power is deeply related to the active participation and resistance of individuals, rather than merely a force imposed by authority.

Although many thinkers relate the idea of 'power' to (systemic) violence, our understanding of the word transcends the mere force of domination. In the context of our exploration, power is not a singular phenomenon. Its expression shifts according to the discussed context. Our concept of power departs from the anthropocentric narrative of humans as the only agent capable of asserting power over another. It recognises non-human actors who can co-produce heterogeneous power dynamics and counter-movements of resistance. Political entities and citizens, as well as the environment and technology, co-produce heterogeneous power dynamics in the context of Tbilisi.

Following the non-anthropocentric understanding of power, we claim that prehistoric topography was the first power regime of the area. While not always the most dominant, the environment's regime is the longest-standing actor in Tbilisi's power struggles.

Practices of Bordering.

We define Bordering Practices not only as spatial practice but also as social and ideological mechanisms that define inclusion and exclusion. Similarly, borders can also foster connection between two different parts. The Belt and Road Initiative brings a new wave of bordering practices that are less about physical demarcation and more about infrastructural connectivity and economic corridors. Borders, in this context, are not just physical walls or demarcations but also social constructs shaped by political, economic and cultural ideologies. Tbilisi, as a city with a long history of occupation and transition between regimes, offers a rich terrain to investigate these practices; please see Chapter 4, *Findings* for more in-depth information on this topic. By adopting this broader understanding of borders, the study reveals how both natural landscapes (mountains, rivers) and man-made infrastructures (roads, railways) play key roles in defining how territories are controlled, accessed or resisted.

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[18] Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970).
[19] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (University of Chicago Press, 2019).

METHODOLOGY.

The production of our map consisted of several key steps. We started by reading academic papers on Tbilisi's urban history that provided us with a general understanding of the city. The information was then synthesised into a timeline, highlighting the key moments when regimes shifted and how these changes impacted the urban planning of Tbilisi. Simultaneously we collected historical maps—sourced from archives, Facebook groups and books—from different periods. Translating the maps' legends revealed a variety of socioeconomic or political interests and intentions of the authors. One example of this is the French map of 1782 which introduced references to ethnic groups within the city and marked places with an economic nature such as shopping streets and bazaars, and can therefore be classified as a socio-economic map aimed to position Tbilisi as a trading city for European merchants.

The collection of city plans that we used to produce our map ranges from the first French portrait of Tbilisi in 1671 published in Jean Chardin's 1811 *Voyages Du Chevalier Chardin en Perse*, through developments under the Russian Empire and Soviet master plans, to recent images displaying strong capitalistic inclinations.[20] We transformed and abstracted the data into one 'similar language' and finally overlaid these maps to visualise the difference in spatial organisation. Georeferencing and overlaying the maps facilitated the overall understanding of the urban development of the city in time, while the timeline helped to link each transformation back to its political actor. In this chapter, we will explain how we studied the concepts explained in the previous chapter.
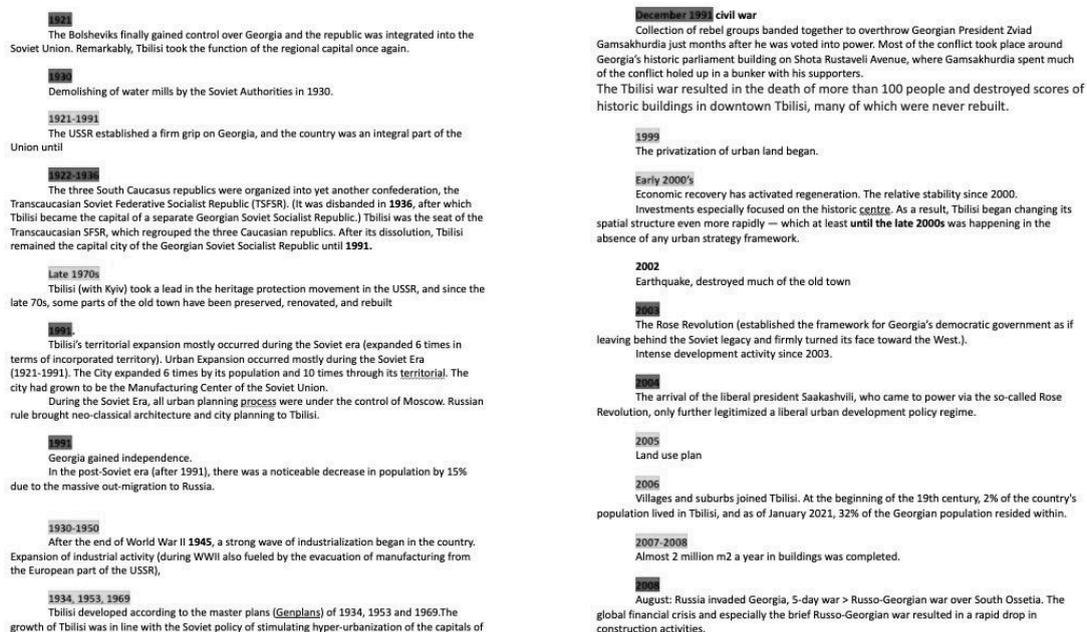

1921
The Bolsheviks finally gained control over Georgia and the republic was integrated into the Soviet Union. Remarkably, Tbilisi took the function of the regional capital once again.

1930
Demolishing of water mills by the Soviet Authorities in 1930.

1921-1991
The USSR established a firm grip on Georgia, and the country was an integral part of the Union until

1922-1936
The three South Caucasus republics were organized into yet another confederation, the Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (TSFSR). (It was disbanded in **1936**, after which Tbilisi became the capital of a separate Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic.) Tbilisi was the seat of the Transcaucasian SFSR, which regrouped the three Caucasian republics. After its dissolution, Tbilisi remained the capital city of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic until **1991**.

Late 1970s
Tbilisi (with Kyiv) took a lead in the heritage protection movement in the USSR, and since the late 70s, some parts of the old town have been preserved, renovated, and rebuilt

1991.
Tbilisi's territorial expansion mostly occurred during the Soviet era (expanded 6 times in terms of incorporated territory). Urban Expansion occurred mostly during the Soviet Era (1921-1991). The City expanded 6 times by its population and 10 times through its territorial. The city had grown to be the Manufacturing Center of the Soviet Union.
During the Soviet Era, all urban planning process were under the control of Moscow. Russian rule brought neo-classical architecture and city planning to Tbilisi.

1991
Georgia gained independence.
In the post-Soviet era (after 1991), there was a noticeable decrease in population by 15% due to the massive out-migration to Russia.

1930-1950
After the end of World War II **1945**, a strong wave of industrialization began in the country. Expansion of industrial activity (during WWII also fueled by the evacuation of manufacturing from the European part of the USSR),

1934, 1953, 1969
Tbilisi developed according to the master plans (Genplans) of 1934, 1953 and 1969.The growth of Tbilisi was in line with the Soviet policy of stimulating hyper-urbanization of the capitals of

December 1991 civil war
Collection of rebel groups banded together to overthrow Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia just months after he was voted into power. Most of the conflict took place around Georgia's historic parliament building on Shota Rustaveli Avenue, where Gamsakhurdia spent much of the conflict holed up in a bunker with his supporters.
The Tbilisi war resulted in the death of more than 100 people and destroyed scores of historic buildings in downtown Tbilisi, many of which were never rebuilt.

1999
The privatization of urban land began.

Early 2000's
Economic recovery has activated regeneration. The relative stability since 2000.
Investments especially focused on the historic centre. As a result, Tbilisi began changing its spatial structure even more rapidly — which at least **until the late 2000s** was happening in the absence of any urban strategy framework.

2002
Earthquake, destroyed much of the old town

2003
The Rose Revolution (established the framework for Georgia's democratic government as if leaving behind the Soviet legacy and firmly turned its face toward the West.).
Intense development activity since 2003.

2004
The arrival of the liberal president Saakashvili, who came to power via the so-called Rose Revolution, only further legitimized a liberal urban development policy regime.

2005
Land use plan

2006
Villages and suburbs joined Tbilisi. At the beginning of the 19th century, 2% of the country's population lived in Tbilisi, and as of January 2021, 32% of the Georgian population resided within.

2007-2008
Almost 2 million m2 a year in buildings was completed.

2008
August: Russia invaded Georgia, 5-day war > Russo-Georgian war over South Ossetia. The global financial crisis and especially the brief Russo-Georgian war resulted in a rapid drop in construction activities.

Figure 4: Selection timeline historical events Tbilisi.

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[20]John Chardin, *Voyages Du Chevalier Chardin en Perse, Et Autres Lieux de L'Orient, Enrichis D'un Grand Nombre de Belles Figures en Taille-douce, Représentant Les Antiquités Et Les Choses Remarquables Du Pays*, 1811.

Post-Anthropocentrism.

The maps aim to visualise the entanglement of human and non-human elements in the construction of Tbilisi's landscape. Adapting the non-anthropocentric approach, we treated the landscape and the built environment in a homogenous fashion to prevent showing the landscape as a mere background. The reading of the map coded in three different scales reveals information sequentially. The first scale, observing the map from afar, showcases the original power regime—the environment. The mountains are prominent and the map is oriented according to the flow of the Kura River. The meandering changes of the river are mapped, together with the wind conditions (used for the advantage of man-made planning). The goal of the map is not only to show how power regimes used natural features to impose control but also to acknowledge how nature has resisted or subverted these efforts.

Power Regimes.

To map power we decided to abstract all 3 actors—landscape, planning paradigms of regimes and counter-movements—by using the following drawing techniques: the gird, line, square and point. The grids are used to show the urban layout imposed by different rulers, by reducing the planning paradigms to abstract grids, we bring them to the same level, allowing for a comparison. For each planning paradigm, a different grid with different line thicknesses is used to be able to separate the periods. Throughout our investigations, we studied realised and unrealised plans since both carry information vital to understanding the ambitions and ideologies of the various power regimes. The axes in the urban layout, which were, for example, used for organising parades and manifesting power, are highlighted as thick lines. The squares, or how we represented them as brackets, are settlements of the urban sprawl in the 90s following the topography, which can be seen as a more organic and uncontrolled development than the imposed masterplans (grids).[21] Moments of resistance, when people take the power into their own hands and oppose the ruling empire, are mapped and represented as points—buildings, streets, squares or actions that became sites of protest or defiance against these regimes.
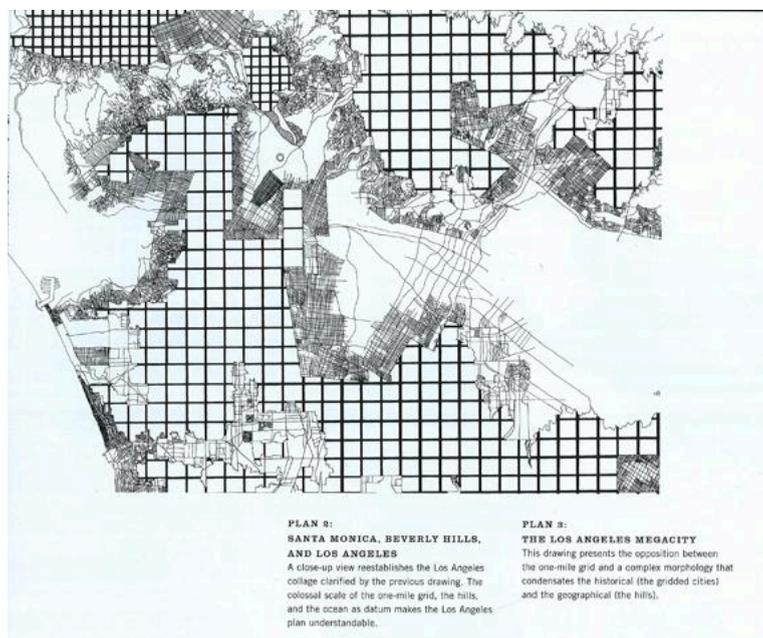
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[21] Mariam Tsitsagi e.a., "Tbilisi through time", Georgian Geographical Journal, 7 march 2022, https://doi.org/10.52340/ggj.2022.758.
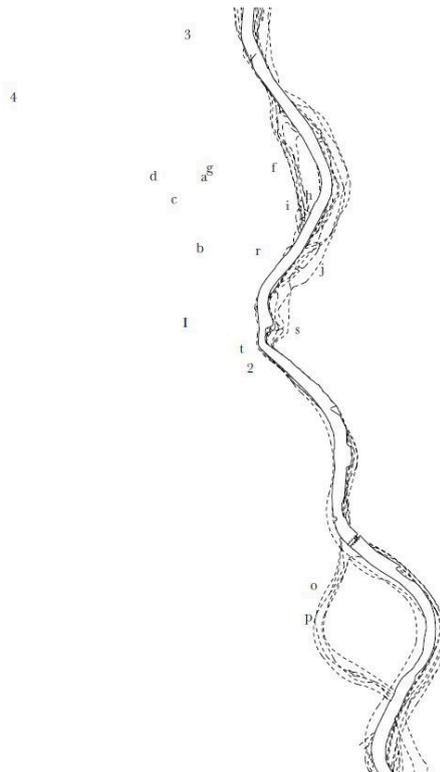
Figure 5: Close up river and countermovement locations.

As a graphical reference, we used the 1999 book *X-Urbanism* by Mario Gandelsonas, an American Architect and Theorist, who is known to read cities through the use of grids.[22]

PLAN 2:
SANTA MONICA, BEVERLY HILLS, AND LOS ANGELES
A close-up view reestablishes the Los Angeles collage clarified by the previous drawing. The colossal scale of the one-mile grid, the hills, and the ocean as datum makes the Los Angeles plan understandable.

PLAN 3:
THE LOS ANGELES MEGACITY
This drawing presents the opposition between the one-mile grid and a complex morphology that condensates the historical (the gridded cities) and the geographical (the hills).

Figure 6: Image from book *X-Urbanism*.

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[22] Mario Gandelsonas, *X-Urbanism: Architecture and the American City* (Princeton Architectural Press, 1999).

Practices of Bordering.

The concept of bordering practices reveals itself through the layered mapping of Tbilisi's urban fabric. The map will visualise how different empires have used natural landscapes and infrastructures to create and maintain borders and serves as a narrative, illustrating how political power has continuously shaped the city's spatial limits. The Belt and Road Initiative reconfigures Georgia's geopolitical borders, turning the country into a key node in a global economic network and simultaneously as a geopolitical buffer zone between the EU and Russia.[23]

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[23] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987).

FINDINGS.

Post-Anthropocentrism.

Throughout the centuries, human-environment interactions had various expressions. Our mapping brings forward how different regimes acted on Tbilisi's landscape and how the landscape impacted them in return. The first settlement of Tbilisi was the fortress of Narikala, based on Tbilisi's advantageous topography to oversee and control the surrounding territory. This and the later expansion of Tbilisi in the valley between the two mountains as a strategic opportunity for defence can be seen as a symbiotic relationship between humans and the environment. During and after the Middle Ages, the city grew out of the fortifications in the valley, sprawling towards other plateaus. In these times, the river was used as the main form of infrastructure. Whereas, later regimes, like the Russian Empire, overruled the original environmental condition. Enforcing their ideologies through technology, mountain slopes were flattened, interventions in hydrologic networks emerged and a new lake, functioning as an agricultural reservoir, was built. However, it should be pointed out that these adjustments to the landscape are strongly related to the new emerging technological advancement.

Furthermore, our map also clearly highlights how Soviet and Capitalist ideologies make different use of the landscape. During the Soviet era, urban planning prioritised equality and communal living, resulting in long, horizontal axes (without relation to the context and shrinkage of the urban forest) that levelled out at the foot of the mountains, reflecting a society without a distinct upper class. In contrast, the emergence of capitalist ideals caused individual housing to move increasingly higher up the mountainside, to the point where Tbilisi's famous TV tower couldn't be viewed without a residential building disrupting the skyline. In our map, we display precisely these moments of tension between ideology, in the form of planning paradigms, and topography—each wanting to dominate and rule the other. This dualism between landscape and urban development takes a different form in each power regime; from following the topographical lines in the historical centre and the expansion of the city during Tsarist Russia to the Soviet period using rigid grids that were being broken by the mountains at the edges of those developments and the post-independence period climbing up the mountainsides.

Figure 7: Close up map 90s urban sprawl..

Power Regimes.

Our research reveals that Tbilisi is an urban palimpsest, where layers of power regimes have shaped its built environment and left behind traces; from imperial citadels to Soviet boulevards. Overlaying maps from different eras uncovers the shifts in urban planning that correspond to the ideologies of each ruling empire. During both the Russian Empire's and the Soviet era's rule, urban planning was employed as a strategy of control. Under the Russian Empire, Tbilisi's organic, chaotic growth was reshaped to a layout that asserted imperial authority. In the Soviet period, this spatial discipline became even more pronounced, with mass housing blocks, monumental squares and state-run institutions serving as tools for homogenisation. However, where there is power there is also resistance.

Tbilisi's old centre, with its narrow, winding streets, resisted the imposition of control through order. These organically developed areas, difficult to regulate, became spaces where counter-narratives and resistance to both Russian and Soviet domination thrived.

Figure 8: Close up how different grids meet the topography.

Practices of Bordering.

Albeit the fact that Tbilisi experienced devastating invasions, the new ruling powers always made use of the old, existing foundation. Because of this the ancient urban fabric is still present and extensions of new neighbourhoods are made following a chronological order. This makes it rather easy to trace and date the different urbanistic models applied to the city. How newly added neighbourhoods connected to the existing structure, how the grids meet, is mostly by adapting the outline of the existing and implementing the new fabric onto this, like a "collage", as Natali Tatunashvili and Ani Chorgolashvili called it, in the before mentioned video call with us.

Tbilisi's bordering practices were not merely physical but often social and linguistic. For instance, certain neighbourhoods were defined not by walls but by the social classes and nationalities that clustered together, creating invisible borders. The language barrier, as seen during the colonisation by Germans, is a prime example of such an intangible border. Nevertheless, in another video call, this time organised by the Borders & Territories studio of TU Delft, Tiblisian architects Ioseb Andrazashvili and Vano Ksnelashvili pointed out to us that the urban sprawl of the 90s, before going up the mountainsides as mentioned earlier in this chapter, also penetrated the existing urban fabric. Because "[people] were filling the voids rather than climbing up the mountains," existing borders between neighbourhoods became more obscure, a form of dismantling established borders.

If borders internally were established between different classes of citizens within the city, external borders were constructed by militarised regions with neighbouring states, making Georgia function as a buffer zone. In 1860, under Russian rule, an infrastructural development occurred, marked most notably by the introduction of the railway. Running across the city, parallel to the river, the train tracks became the city's artificial spine. These new forms of bordering and spatial governance, tied to neoliberal economic policies and global infrastructure projects like China's Belt and Road Initiative, continue to shape the city's landscape and implement a form of economic and political control. Yet, these borders are constantly crossed and redefined through migration, trade and conflict, reminding us that bordering practices, though imposed, are never fully fixed.[24]

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[24] Étienne Balibar, *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

CONCLUSION.

Through our findings, it becomes clear that the interplay between power and space is a dynamic, ongoing process, with past regimes leaving enduring residues that have become part of the city's (urban) fabric. This notion resonates with Bergson's idea of the "persistence of the past," highlighting how historical influences continuously shape the present landscape.[25] The city's evolving structures, from the Persian Empire's fortifications to Soviet-era residential blocks, reflect not only the visible control exerted by various regimes but also the ideological imprints left on its citizens. In today's globalised, post-Soviet Georgia, the concept of borders has undergone a profound metamorphosis, reflecting new dimensions of power. The city's boundaries are no longer solely defined by physical geography but by the fluid flows of capital and information that traverse them. This shift encapsulates a broader narrative of how power reconfigures itself, illustrating the complex interplay between urban space and the myriad forces that shape contemporary life in Tbilisi. The 'Power Regimes and Bordering Practices' Map raises important questions about the future of Tbilisi and other cities along the New Silk Roads. As global systems of power become more interconnected, how will cities navigate the competing demands of different regimes? How will the built environment adapt to new forms of control, whether digital, economic or environmental?

While this research provides an overview of Tbilisi's power regimes and bordering practices, it is limited by time constraints and the existence and availability of historical maps before 1671. Future research could delve deeper into other periods or engage more directly with residents' perspectives on how these borders affect their daily lives.

Through our study, we came across three principles that are the base of every map. A map is an action, representing the human instinct to give an order to what we know.[26] A map is a selection, it conveys a message and selects elements significant to its author. A map is a subjective interpretation, with the potential for manipulation. Therefore, we should acknowledge the subjective view that we have as European students while examining Tbilisi's historical maps.[27] When using abstraction as a tool, one should be aware of its reductionist qualities resulting in the loss of diverse representation. We however still decided on the method of abstraction to compare different periods of planning paradigms by bringing them on the same level. To solve the problem of losing information, we decided to integrate the so-called 'zoom plans' for every planning paradigm that we represent in our map. These zoom plans show in more detail the urban fabric, corresponding to the line thickness of the planning paradigm they belong to (six in total). The grid serves as a 'rule', representing the planning of each power regime, an example of what 'escapes the rule' are informal settlements.

The research is now translated into a 2D map, by going on-site and doing field research for two weeks we hope to fill this flatness with the voices of the city's residents. For example, Betul Aniker will investigate sites like the club *Bassiani* and how people use

[25] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1990).

[26] Alessandro Baricco, "La mappa della metropolitana di Londra," in *Sulla verità* (Rome: Mantova Lectures, 2017).

[27] Balibar, *We, The People Of Europe?: Reflections on Transnational Citizenship.*

movement as resistance, whereas Isa Schlesinger will trace decay. New input will be documented via photography, film, drawings, interviews, mappings and more. The collective research is also used as a starting point for individual theory essays. Daria Pietruczynik, for example, will connect Tbilisi's ever-changing past to the topic of loss and Luna van Arendonk will try to understand the city's liminal state between a Soviet past and European aspirations by examining the loss of sulphur healing traditions.

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