

## Reflection P5

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Graduation studio: Methods and Analysis / Casablanca:  
Analysis and intervention in the Afropolis

Track: Architecture

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### Sidi Moumen “Scar”

/ The healing process

#### **The relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object):**

The theme of the studio concentrates on appropriate methods of analysis and design in cultural contexts that are different from our own. In particular it investigates a number of issues associated with the development of urban territory at the edge of the city of Casablanca in Morocco. These issues are primarily cultural, political, social, economical and environmental.

Sidi Moumen, lays at the edge of Casablanca and is the area I chose to study. It has developed along the last three stops of the tramway and has the characteristics of a newly developed area on the periphery of a large city. While the development consists of new multistory buildings, mainly residential as well as commercial and a few public buildings along the tramway line, at one side of it lays bidonvilles. It is established development housing in a highly concentrated manner, poor people. In between the two distinct types of developments, lays an abandoned quarry creating a gap between the two sides. It is a striking and strong spatial characteristic which separates the two different in character and composition developments.

This territory was the subject of my research for the graduation project. By addressing all the socioeconomically, political, cultural and environmental issues associated with it, the task of my project was to find the appropriate approach and techniques in confronting all these aspects in an effort to unify the two sides.

### **Relationship between research and design:**

With the phenomenon of a large empty space or "terrain vague" as my main theme, my research has concentrated first in analyzing the area of Sidi Moumen and establishing the main characteristics of it. In the next step I studied similar situations or case studies in order to understand the way the question of terrain vague has been addressed.

While the spatial composition of the abandoned quarry is accessible and it is traversed by people on either side, it is obvious that it constitutes a gap, an empty space, a boundary, a border, a buffer zone, segregating the two different socioeconomic communities. It constitutes a type of "scar" resulting in an edge which is found right in the middle of the development. It is a transitional space which with its discontinuity divides and segregates the two areas providing control and limitation to the two different territorial establishments.

This research raised the question of what is the most appropriate intervention which could be implemented in this "buffer zone", in order to eradicate the "scar" which it creates, with the purpose of joining or unifying functionally as well as visually, the two distinct establishments on either side of it.

### **The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the method chosen by the student in this framework:**

The site chosen presents a number of pressing issues associated in an urban territory on the edge of Casablanca. In particular, the phenomenon of the "scar" is tightly linked with all cultural, political, social, economical and environmental issues which are the theme of the graduation studio. Therefore a detailed analysis of the phenomenon of the scar within an urban development is very important in order to understand all the implications it could have on all the above issues, in order to address the problem with all its socioeconomical environmental aspects.

My approach was to study well known examples of scars within the cities. I have chosen that of the buffer zone of my hometown of Nicosia, and the Berlin wall, which have given me a good understanding of the problems posed by a scar and how these problems can be overcome with a proper healing process. The purpose was to utilise this acquired knowledge from the above examples, and together with the research of different ways of healing a scar, to apply the most appropriate way of dealing with the problem of Sidi Moumen.

### **The relationship between the project and the wider social context:**

The origins of "scars" within a city can vary and can have an influence on the wider social context. The causes could be socioeconomic, cultural, political, environmental, or even religious. The effect is common in the sense that they divide and segregate different communities or social groups of people.

The intervention at Sidi Moumen should not just be regarded on its own, but rather as a way of addressing wider issues associated with the phenomenon of scars within cities, which divide and segregate.

# SCAR

