embracing the incomprehensible postmodern urban society allowing for civil urban places in a nonlinear approach - the case of Yongsan
the open ended city

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allowing for civil urban places in a nonlinear approach

- the case of Yongsan

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PROLOGUE
acknowledgements
After years of study this thesis is the final product of my master Urbanism at the TU Delft. Several years ago I started the bachelor Architecture & Building Engineering in Groningen at the Hanzehogeschool with the idea of becoming an architect. However soon I found out that I was more interested in the bigger scale, the more strategic approach and the multidisciplinary character of urbanism. As such when I achieved my bachelor I started my masters at the TU Delft in Urbanism.

When someone told me about the mastertrack Vertical Cities Asia it instantly had my interest. What primarily attracted me was the emphasis on the large scale, the idea of unprecedented opportunities in fast-developing Asia, within a competition driven studio. Also the extensive cooperation in teams with architecture students seems very interesting to me. In retrospect I learned a lot from this cooperation, but also the numerous guest lectures and guest critics giving us a great input with regards to our project.

Although I know that this project for the most part is my own effort but of course I could not write this thesis on my own. Therefore in the first place I would like to express my special thanks to my colleague students Stef Bogaerds, Claudio Saccucci, Jan Maarten Mulder and Sam Liew. We did a great job, but at the same time we had a lot of fun. We all became friends. Moreover the ideas we explored and expressed in the submitted design for the competition formed a strong base for my thesis and without our strong concept I would never had got to this result.

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Erjen Prins, June 2013
"The novelty of our times is that the periods of condensed and accelerated change called ‘revolutions’ are no more ‘breaks in the routine’...They are no more brief intervals separating eras of ‘retrenchment’, of relatively stable, repetitive patterns of life that enable, and favor, long-term predictions, planning and the composition of Sartrean ‘life projects’. We live today under condition of permanent revolution. Revolution is the way society nowadays lives. Revolution has become the human society’s normal state” (Bauman 2003).
The world is changing fast, developments and trends succeed each other mindbogglingly fast. They all contribute to the far-going process of globalization, and are at the same time a result of that rapidly changing world that is globalizing. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2000) globalization should be understood as a historical process in the realm of human innovation and technological progress, in which nation-states are becoming interdependent to a high degree. Horton Guyford Stever (1972, p2) points out that technological progress (especially in the fields of transportation and telecommunication infrastructure) has resulted in a compression of time and space that has spread the influence of human activity across the world. He argues that our society is oriented on countless systems (such as economic systems, urban systems, ecological systems, educational systems, etcetera) that, due to the compression of time/space, are becoming increasingly ‘non-linear, feedback systems influenced by each other’s forces and fluctuations’. This leads to an increasing integration of nation-states by political, economic, cultural, sociological and environmental means.

According to the IMF globalization is ‘a phase in history of mankind that refers to the extension beyond national borders from 1980 up till now of the same market forces that have operated for centuries at all levels of human economic activity’ (IMF-staff 2000). Thomas Friedman (2005) however, divides the history of globalization in three phases so far. The first phase, Globalization 1.0, is from 1492 to 1800, which, he states, ‘shrunk the world size large to a size medium’. This constitutes the period in which countries were looking for resources through imperial conquest. The second phase, Globalization 2.0, is from 1800 to 2000, in which the world shrunk from a size medium to a size small, primarily guided by big companies looking for cheap labor and markets, so-called off shoring and outsourcing. Globalization 3.0 started 2000 and lasts up until now, is shrinking the world from a size small to a size tiny. This represents the stage of globalization in which individuals and small groups are the dynamic forces. Moreover, and quite importantly, these individuals not merely come from Western countries but also, and increasingly, from emerging countries. Emerging countries like China, India, Brazil, Russia and South Africa are undergoing rapid economic growth and have become big players on the global market. According to a report of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), China will even overtake America in 2016 as being the world’s biggest economy. These developments have a big impact on all the systems in our system-oriented society in which everything is interconnected. This is leading to reforms in the emerging countries in order to put an emphasis on education, research and development (or knowledge). These countries make the shift from an agricultural, to a manufacturing, to a service economy.
This change in the global field has as a result, as Friedman puts it, that the world is becoming flat, or actually is flat already. With this he means that all the knowledge that is available is within reach of everyone around the world. So when one wants to play in this global field in order to become meaningful, it doesn’t matter where you come from as long as you are connected to the Internet.

Obviously, this shift from manufacturing towards an emphasis on knowledge goes hand in hand with increasing prosperity among citizens in emerging countries, resulting in the rise of the middle classes. People are getting more opportunities in interfering in global issues as an individual through collaborations with everyone around the world through fast telecommunication networks. This is what Friedman points to as Globalization 3.0. Moreover, as they dispose of more money they have the opportunity to act abroad. Studying, doing business, but also tourist trips are part of this new lifestyle. People all around the globe are integrating in the flat world.

Cities in this respect play an important role, as they are the driving forces behind economies, the economic engines of the world, overtaking nation-states in being the fundamental economic unit (Fishman 2008, XII). The economy of cities are transcending national borders to excessive degrees, resulting in entities that house many opportunities. This is why economic growth goes hand in hand with urbanization: flows of people migrate from the countryside or from abroad to the larger metropolitan areas. Fortune-seekers as well as businessmen, students, and of course tourists. Cities in this respect are the driving forces behind the act or process of globalizing.

At the moment more than 50% of the world population is living in urban environments. The prediction is that this percentage will increase in the following decades resulting in more than 70% of the people residing in urban areas by 2050. This growth will primarily occur in less developed and developing countries in Africa and Asia, since countries in those regions are by far less urbanized. These continents however, are also the most populated regions, and one has to imagine that these numbers are percentages. As the overall population of the world is still growing, the absolute number of people living in urban areas will be far more dramatic. The world population today is above 7 billion, predictions for the total population in 2050 varies from 9 billion to even 11 billion, from which 70% in urban environments. As you can imagine this is putting a lot of pressure on the environment. Besides, the prediction is that the following decades will be dominated by the advent of a rising middle class in emerging countries, which will have more money to spend. Their living standards will rise, ranging from food and drink to materialist objects leading to a similar magnitude of wastes and pollutants as the use of resources will
also excessively increase (Friedman 2008; Burgess 2004a, p12).

According to a field listing of the Central Intelligence Agency on urbanization, 47% of the people in China live in urban areas of a population of 1,34 billion and India just passed the 30% with a population of 1,24 billion. Opposed to Western Europe and North America where urbanization reached a fair equilibrium, with 80% percent of the people on a total population of 0.8 billion residing in urban environments, this is striking. The annual growth rate of cities in China and India is therefore obviously much higher [2,5%] than in the developed countries [<1%] [CIA 2012].

According to Friedman the enhanced access to the internet (and other kinds of media) results in a desire of copying lifestyles, especially the American one. However, we all know the American lifestyle is one of excessive consumerism that is putting a huge pressure on the environment. A world with an emerging middle class in emerging countries living an exorbitant affluent lifestyle is in need for a more sustainable use of resources; a green revolution is inevitable (Friedman 2008). Michael Jenks argues ‘with more than half of the world’s population living in urban areas and consuming more than 80 percent of the world’s resources, achieving sustainable urban development is fundamental to achieving global sustainability’ (Raman 2010, p63).

Following this, as urban areas are being designated the most important elements in current economy and consists of more than 50% of the world population, we should stress the importance of building sustainable cities. With respect to the urban situation, cities are regarded as being the core-elements of a sustainable future. For some it may seem implausible as cities are also recognized as entities of consumption of resources, creation of pollution, poverty, inequality and incubators of crime. However, cities are also the places where innovation occurs, where economies flourish, and where the problems of urbanity lie. Moreover the city in itself contains one of the most important features of sustainability, if carefully applied, namely density (Dempsey and Jenks 2010; Jenks 2004). As Jenks argued ‘cities may have problems, but they are not necessarily problems in themselves’. Ricky Burdett and Philipp Rode (2008, p23) add to this that cities are ‘also the places where problems can be solved’.

The concept of the widely accepted compact city responds to this feature. The compact city emphasizes the assumed positive effects on the environment of urban compaction (Dempsey and Jenks 2010; Raman 2010). The main benefit of urban compaction is that it will lead to reduced distances, resulting in reduction of vehicle emissions. It could also provide favorable conditions for urban facilities like public transport (metro, train, tram), education (school, universities), healthcare (hospitals, doctors), commerce (markets, shopping centers) etc.
streets, malls) and waste disposal, since it is able to reach many people on a rather small geographical scale.

The process of urbanization is however influenced by various complex globalizing interrelated factors and it is not merely an issue of meeting peoples' housing demands and providing their primary facilities. The contemporary urban problematic is about achieving holistic sustainable environments in which the rather indefinite expression of ‘sustainability’ requires harmony in the inextricably connected triad of social equity, economy and the environment. This triad is always rooted in the space of a place, the local, within the global context. This triad is the fundament of every society. However, this also indicates that every person dealing consciously on a professional level with urban environments needs to be aware of this triad as the solution in achieving sustainable urban environments lies within embedding harmonically all issues concerning this. It needs an in-depth understanding of the context of a place. Since society is in a continuous process affected by many individuals from different professions and cultures with different perceptions, the context of place is highly complex. In fact it is too complex for total control. As sustainable urban environments are built upon this complex triad the complexity also counts for the urban to a large extent. Considering the above, I argue that the process of the urban is more a matter of guidance and adaptation than control. Effective urban design has more to do with the designing processes that shape our cities, rather than designing the entire project. For this one requires cultural and political understanding, social sensitivity, and grasp of the nature of cities, etcetera. Meaningful urban interventions need an in-depth understanding of the current condition of a society one is dealing with.

In a world that is urbanizing to a large extent, the concept of the compact city seems quite relevant, but I argue that more complex issues will arise as the process of urbanization continues. In obtaining a holistic strategy for future cities one has to be aware of the Zeitgeist. Zygmunt Bauman (2001, p5) argues that ‘city and social change are synonymous... Change and city may, and indeed should, be defined by reference to each other’. This is in line with the thoughts of Lefebvre who is arguing in his prolific ‘The Production of Space’ that ‘space is a social product’ (Lefebvre 1991, p26). So the environment is undergoing a fierce change both physically and socially. A continuously changing society needs a continuously changing approach on the lived space. At this very moment we live in a globalized society resulting in (among others) an extensive urbanization and a changing social environment. This has a huge impact in the way we should conceive the city in order to obtain sustainable urban environments; in other words to preparing it for the future. With this
in mind I started my investigation on the current condition of society and its consequences on space and place. At the moment this condition is dominated by globalization with all its implications resulting in movements and counter movements. What are the consequences of the vast urbanizing environments on peoples lives and what is the role of the urbanist in this respect. What do we all have to take in consideration when coping with contemporary urban environments? The compact city seems to be a good starting point but what are the underlying implications of the contemporary urbanizing society.
THEORY
“‘To dwell’ is culturally determined. Every period has its own fascinations, his own hierarchy, his own ordering, like every region or country. We constantly shape in a different way the various aspects of ‘to dwell’, embedded in culture as a whole” [Kuenzli and Lengkeek 2004].
In the introduction I discussed how current society is dominated by global processes and how this is resulting in a flattening of the world. This is leading to cities that are one-folded in appearance, in civilization. The world is getting flat, cities are becoming generic.

Recent decades has resulted in cities that look similar to a certain extent. But this is not a new phenomenon. Over time people have always brought along their culture in their discovery and conquests of the world. The reach of this was always limited by their physical scope. For example with the discovery of America, according to Friedman in the beginning of Globalization, the first thing the Europeans did was imposing their Christian culture. A culture of neo-styles arose, referring to the Ancient world. An ancient revival which already conquered large parts of Europe from the 12th century until the 16th century, known as the Renaissance. The European settlers brought along Christianity everywhere around the globe. They imposed their European culture on their colonies in a forced and explicit manner. Today the conquests of physical space inhabited by indigenous peoples is practically over. However, the power of imposing has taken on proportions that have never been shown. It has evolved in something much more powerful in being a tool for companies in branding their product. The new mode of imposing occurs not only explicitly but moreover - and probably more dangerous because it is uncontrollable - implicitly. This is the power of marketing. Imposing is still done by politics, in for example dictatorial regimes, but with the advent of capitalism and especially the consumer-society, imposing has become ubiquitous particularly in civilized free-market societies. The new world leaders are the global companies.

On the other side, a different much bigger group has the possibility to raise their voice and offer up their thoughts to world as individuals with the advent of telecommunications in recent decades through the use of Twitter or other social media. The only essential requirement is a connection to the Internet. This new form of exchange of cultures is beginning to become at a high degree incomprehensible. With the beginning of Globalization 3.0, the time has come where the exchange of cultural values on a whole has become ubiquitous.

These changes all appeared because of technological developments. And since ‘to dwell’ is culturally determined, technological developments also had its reflections on the city. As such I will emphasize on the approach of the city in terms of how we conceived it through history. What were the driving tendencies in modernity that marked changes in the approach to the city? I think it is crucial to understand the contemporary in order to apply conscious and significant urban design or architecture, or actually every profession that deals explicitly with the construction of society. And as today is constructed on elements from the past it is important to set up a framework that positions the
current society in time.

Modernity has been described to have begun around 1789 (year of The French Revolution) onwards, which marks its existence with the emergence of among others the Industrial Revolution in Europe, modern forms of government, Humanism, Liberalism, the emergence of science, urbanization, and very importantly the increasing compressing relationship between space and time. Before the rise of modern forms of government, society was primarily governed under the authority of local councils led by the aristocracy and the church. Cities in Europe were autonomous islands, clearly demarcated, in the middle of vast natural landscapes and only relying on the surrounding countryside for the supply of food and commodities. They fell under the reign of a monarch that possessed land won by conquests or obtained through heritage. Monarchs possessed larger amounts of land, often including multiple cities. However, after the death of a monarch these states easily could collapse. They were not really sustainable entities compared to the cities that just kept on going: cities until the end of the Middle Ages were rather independent of the monarch. This changed when both parties were looking for enhanced support from each other. The monarch wanted more certainty, for this they needed an ensured income resulting in the form of national taxes, in exchange local authorities got protection by the powerful monarch. This resulted in mutual dependency where both authorities were involved in decision-making, which can be seen as the first symptoms of the modern state (Quispel 2000).

Nation-states were becoming stronger and stronger. The emerging modern state became meaningful as soon as national authorities possessed of sufficient financial resources in order to become military independent from the aristocracy. The rise of a national army was important because of its potential for enforcing a more active domestic policy. However this shift in sovereignty was not only initiated by means of a political strategy. On the contrary, that period characterized in a cultural movement known as The Enlightenment. The Enlightenment could be seen as the fundament for the modern society, or Modernity. A shifting emphasis from religion to science and ratio, towards a society based on the principle of equality. The Enlightenment period culminated in a radical change in which the feudal system was replaced by a democratic system constructed on the principles of equality. This shift led to the collapse of the traditional European city that was ruled by an independent authority of aristocrats and the church. Instead nation-states were being ruled by the bourgeoisie in the form of a democracy.

The process of modernization contains of complex interdependent changes in the scope of demographic, economic, institutional, social and cultural aspects.
At the end of the 18th century the Industrial Revolution emerged, being a prolific component in the process of modernization. This industrialization led to a huge influx from people towards the city, the process of urbanization. This resulted in overcrowded cities that were not constructed on handling this influx of people. At the same time this also meant a dramatic change in the sociocultural environment (Quispel 2000). According to Bauman (Bauman 2001, p110) modernity was the beginning of the history of time. Before modernity there was less notion of time. ‘Far’ and ‘long’, and ‘near’ and ‘soon’ meant nearly the same. Human power was the indicator of everything in human practice. The synergy with horses and oxen didn’t change a lot to this respect as it was not significant enough, moreover this order didn’t develop for centuries. Modernity established a new order of time in which time took a significant stand in science, but more important in human practice. This new order emerged with the invention of initially the steam engine, but the human practice changed with the construction of the vehicle. The deployment of something other than the power of human or animal muscles was groundbreaking and marked a huge shift in human history. As Bauman puts it, “time has become the problem of the ‘hardware’ humans could invent... modernity is the time when time has a history”. The new order in human practice also exaggerated the inequalities among humans. As ‘wetware made humans similar; hardware made them different’. People who could afford more, were able to express this in terms of speed and the conquest of space. Time to be money, in which space is the value and time is the tool. ‘Velocity of movement and access to faster means of mobility steadily rose in modern times to the position of the principal tool of power and domination’ (Bauman 2001, p9). These developments in the 19th century resulted in the emergence of capital and labor, in which both parties were standing in front of each other, with their vested interests. At the same time the agreement was of necessity for both parties, meant to last forever, a relation of mutual dependency. Capital needed labor to increase production and profit, labor needed capital to gain an income. However according to Marx labor was the ultimate victim of capital as it ended up as a commodified object within this mutual dependency. ‘They were forced to hand their very selves over to the capitalist in return for recompense at a minimum level of survival’ (Kalekin-Fishman 2006, p526). To Marx this was a direct result of capitalism as ‘the worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates’ and therefore ‘labor not only produces commodities; it produces itself’ (Marx 1975, p29). He argues that labor functions merely as a tool within the process of production, the worker nothing more valuable than the machines in the factory. The worker being a
dehumanized chain within the process, ‘the product of labor is labor which has been embodied in an object... [L]abor’s realization is its objectification’ [Marx 1975, p29]. For Marx the more effort a worker puts in a product the more the product appropriates his life. Therefore one can say that capital or the bourgeoisie is directing the lives of the workers by means of production to such an extent that the worker is alienated from his own humanity.

However when speaking about alienation, we should be rather concise and careful in the use of this expression, as over time ‘alienation’ gained of numerous different definitions and approaches. During the 19th century the one of Marx is the most prevalent but this definition of alienation has altered over time, especially in modern times where it takes in an important position, I will return to this later.

The Fordist factory is known as the pinnacle of the 19th century factory, or as Bauman designates it of the era of heavy modernity. Henri Ford understood that the mutual dependency between capital and labor only could exist in optimum when both parties would benefit from each other. Both have their vested interests, but what bonded them was the transaction of buying and selling.

Ford introduced changes in the agreements with his employees in order to enhance the bond between employer and employees. He came up with the 8-hour-work-day and doubled the wages of his workers to allow them to buy his own product. Although that is what he explained, the true reason was that he wanted to bond his employees to his factory for their lifetimes, keeping them satisfied so that they would remain willing and eager to work for him. They even build whole communities around factories. Also this was more a tool of power than it was initiated as a service towards the employees. It was about connecting both capital and labor together in a mutual dependency that lasted a lifetime [Bauman 2001, p144].

As capital was the driving force behind the economic growth in which, due to the obvious need for labor, the whole society was involved, politics were also inextricably connected in this. The prime responsibility for the state was to keep capital fit in order to sustain a growing economy. As labor was a key-element of industry one of the goals of politics was to keep the workforce satisfied. Of course there were also playing more ideological humanistic concerns, but they were not the main priority of politics. Keep things - the labor – satisfied and from revolting in order to let capital flow.

Workers themselves were also aware of the power of uniting. With the formation of labor unions in the 50s of the 18th century, the working class possessed a strong instrument. Furthermore they founded political parties that formed the
socialist counterpart to the bourgeois classical liberalism of the capitalists. The unions were led primarily by laborers themselves. As unions were looking for reforms based on improving labor-conditions, reformations had in general a rather direct impact. Middle class and intellectuals, like Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, were more inclined to the socialist parties. They sought for more structural reforms in society with regards to class struggle on the long term (Palmer et al. 2002, p590).

Classical liberalism was meant to stimulate individual competition. However with the advent of labor unions and large corporations organized as monopolies, trusts and cartels, the state of society lacked the required conditions on which classical liberalism was constructed, namely individual competition in a free market. The rise of ‘the unions, socialist parties, universal male suffrage and a sensitivity to social distress all obliged political leaders to intervene increasingly in economic matters’ (Palmer et al. 2002, p609). This resulted in a new form of liberalism in which politics were forced to intervene more in economic matters to satisfy the demands of organized labor. A modern perception on the welfare state, with an increasing role for the government was taking shape (Palmer et al. 2002, p609-610).

The era of heavy machines and massive factories, of the conquest of space and life-long mutual engagement among employers and employees is called by Bauman ‘heavy’ or ‘solid’ modernity.

‘The might of the economy as a whole was measured by the volume of mined coal and smelted iron, the might of the individual ‘captains of industry’ by the size of their factories, heaviness of machinery and the numbers of laborers amassed inside the walls of industrial plants (Bauman 2003, p13).

As pointed out before, the Industrial Revolution went hand in hand with dramatic urbanization. The rapid urbanization resulted in appalling living conditions in cities. Ford provided good living facilities and good wages for its workers, but this was not the practice of many other employers. Amsterdam for example had to cope with a dramatic density of 600 inhabitants per hectare in 1880, without nearly sufficient facilities (Pont and Haupt 2009). For the first time in modern history, professionals drew the connection between poor living circumstances (lack of access to daylight, fresh air, clean water, insufficient sewerage) and social unrest. This was obviously also a result of the emergence of unions and socialist parties that functioned as strong instruments for the workforce. Altogether this signaled a modern perception on town planning wherein politics became very influential. Social housing for example became a widely introduced measure.
The modern perception on town planning in the 20th century meant that capitalist states pursued a policy based on determinism. They believed in a control of society, a totalizing top down view in which design was able to construct the social space of a society. This was, as pointed above, a result of the tensions between capital and labor in the 19th century. The epoch of the domination of town planning by the state and public institutions lasted until the 70s of the 20th century. Housing acts, resulting in social housing, but also new forms of town planning emerged. Modernist urban forms like The Garden City by Ebenezer Howard and Radiant City by Le Corbusier being the most significant. Both concepts, although very distinct in urban form, used more or less the same principles in a reaction to the overcrowded unhealthy disorienting traditional city. In the first place they used a mathematical approach of density in relation to urban form in order to control the huge influx of people. Second they focused on a clean and healthy environment in which the issues of lack of daylight, polluted air as well as water and insufficient sewerage were addressed. Thirdly, the public space took up an important position. As the dense cities, from their point of view, didn’t have sufficient public space, the two concepts advocated a public realm in which the green urban landscape took in an important position. This third aspect also constitutes the significant difference in both concepts. The Garden City advocated low dense urban settings (new towns) with 75 persons per hectare, with lots of green in which living (neighborhoods) and working (industry) were separated. The concept of Radiant City stressed on reaching high densities up to 1000 inhabitants per hectare replacing the unregulated disorder of street life in the old city. The towers were stamped on a grid surrounded by vast green urban spaces replacing the ancient disordered urban tissues, a tabula rasa. These urban concepts were never realized in their purest utopian form, however many urban developments in the twentieth century were based upon them. The principles of both are present in Post World War II urban developments in satellite cities and suburban areas. The Radiant city building types of Le Corbusier became very predominant in housing estates all over the world, from Chicago to Moscow. It was realized in the suburban growth for the middle classes, resulting in inward-looking mono-functional buildings like shopping malls, gated communities, schools and hospitals totally ignoring the ‘disordered’ street life.

Environmental determinism was one of the stark underlying criticisms as a response to the idea of a top-down controlled society that was very present during the epoch of solid modernity. Environmental determinism meant, when changing an environment, human behavior will change and could be used as a reaction against social unrest, as a tool of power (Dempsey et al. 2012): the
social engineering of society. According to Richard Sennett (2009) there is always a need for some measure of determination, however in closed systems, as he calls the modernistic developments, the structures are so rigid that they cannot react on changing conditions in society. The city should be understood as a process rather than a rigid form. The commonly accepted observation is that over-determined form is used by regimes of power in order to control human society. Sennett states: ‘The technologies that make experiment possible have been subordinated to a regime of power that wants order and control... in the grip of rigid images and precise delineations, the urban imagination lost its vitality’. The advent of bureaucratic regulations during the whole 20th century resulted in urban planning, which has ‘disabled its local innovation and growth’ (Sennett 2008, p290). This situation of regulations and straitjackets, a top down approach, creating housing estates built according to the Corbusian principles unfortunately is still very present in current society, not only in our Western world but especially in fast growing urban settings in the developing world.

After World War II several reactions against the modernistic urban plans emerged. In line with the shift from an industrial-manufacturing based economy towards a service economy that also changed the social relations between capital and labor. Bauman calls this the melting of the solids, or from heavy/solid modernity to light/liquid modernity. ‘Solid modernity was the era of mutual engagement, fluid modernity the era of disengagement of elusiveness or those free to move without notice, who rule’ (Bauman 2001, p120). It was the advent of software capitalism. Bauman opposes the model of Microsoft as the new to the old model of Ford. Microsoft is the model in which the employee has got infinite possibilities; one doesn’t know where they end. Contemporary companies like Microsoft are constructed in a way that they could easily respond to the changes in human demands. Opposed to the modernist deterministic approach, the epoch of fluid modernity recognizes the indeterministic nature of world and chance becomes a significant variable (Bauman 2000, p136). One cannot predict nor control the outcome of developments. The growing of the city should be seen as a process in which all systems that constructs a society (which are infinite) are interrelated. It was never possible to fully control society, but in the current world that is liberated from the solid state of society, resulting in a fluid society in which the freedom of the individual is central, ‘the level of complexification has risen’ (Hauptmann 2006).

Due to increased prosperity after the World War II in the Western world society changed in the twentieth century from a producer to a consumer society. Prosperity brought along an increasing middle class, at the same time mass production made things affordable for this middle class. Multinationals were becoming serious powers on a global scale. Imposing by means of accurate
marketing, as stated before, became prominent and evolved into something that is now omnipresent. The market responds to the demands of the consumer and as the consumers desires of today are infinite, it is a never-ending process. The generic shopping street or mall are the perfect representations of the response of the market towards the prosperous individuals: everything what a person ‘needs’ in one long strip of commerce. The need for consuming has shifted from a necessity to a leisure activity. Market research is one of the main tasks of companies to anticipate on the changing desires, which come with mind-boggling speed, of humans in order to survive in the fierce corporate world.

This all is a product of the melting of the solids. People want to live their own life, they don’t want to be bound to one place or live under the guidance of one leader. Security was given up in order to enjoy increased freedom, freedom to purchase, to consume and to enjoy life. Herbert Marcuse stated the following:

‘The problem we are facing is the need for liberation from a society which develops to a great extent the material and even cultural needs of man - a society which, to use a slogan, delivers the goods to an ever larger part of the population on. And that implies we are facing liberation from a society where liberation is apparently without a mass basis’ [Bauman 2000, p16].

People feel liberated now that the choices one can make are infinite. Furthermore with the advent of globalization and the flattening of the world this does not only count for the Western markets but also and increasingly for emerging markets.

With the melting of the solids the explanation of classical alienation as posited by Marx and other 19th century thinkers started to alter. Caused by the change from a producer to a consumer society, alienation took (and still takes) on new forms (Kalekin-Fishman and Langman 2008, p508). Being alienated means actually feeling lost, not in the physical sense, but moreover in a spiritual sense in terms of functioning ‘other’ than fully human (Kalekin-Fishman 2006, p523). Melvin Seeman wrote the influential paper ‘On the meaning of alienation’ (1959) about this in which he defines five different states of ‘being’ within the framework of ‘otherness’ or alienation.

Powerlessness: “A person suffers from alienation in the form of ‘powerlessness’ when she is conscious of the gap between what she would like to do and what she feels capable of doing” (Kalekin, 2006)

Meaninglessness: ‘ We may speak of high alienation, in the meaningless usage, when the individual is unclear as to what he ought to believe - when
the individual’s minimal standards for clarity in decision-making are not met.”

Normlessness: The inability to identify with the dominant values of society.

Self-estrangement: To be something less than one might ideally be if the circumstances in society were otherwise - to be insecure, given to appearances, conformist’.

Social isolation: ‘The alienation in the isolation sense are those who, like the intellectual, assign low reward value to goals or beliefs that are typically highly valued in the given society’ (Seeman, 1956)

In the 20th century alienation to a larger extent became a subject in a broader philosophical context, especially in phenomenology and existentialism. They describe alienation as the inadequacy of the human being in relation to the world. The human mind sees the world as an object of perception and is distanced from the world, rather than living within it. Seeman argued that with the advent of sociological studies on alienation, sociology exposed the dissolution of the bonds from the point of view of an individual. It exposed that the individual was forced to act at a distance from life, from their community. The melting of the solids in post world war society was about the emancipation of the individual. As the individual is unpredictable individualization made the world more incomprehensible and therefore increasingly complicated. As such Felix Geyer, who is one of today's leading figures in exploring the issue of alienation in contemporary society, remarks that complexification requires a reinterpretation of alienation. Opposed to classical alienation advocated by Marx which is about the workers being unfree, Geyer stresses the issue of contemporary alienation of the individual being too liberated, which is also one of the main concerns of Bauman in his book ‘Liquid Modernity’. David Harvey also says that alienation in the classical sense doesn’t exist anymore because in this definition the individual is alienated from a ‘coherent self rather than a fragmented sense of self’. He argues that the modernist approach towards future projects was significantly about creating a better future, while postmodernism accepts or embraces more or less its inabilitys and ‘schizophrenic’ and ‘fragmented’ nature. The same applies for the subject, Harvey quotes Jameson: ‘alienation of the subject is displaced by fragmentation of the subject’.

Due to developments in the field of telecommunication and the Internet we are not stuck to a certain place. Decisions can be made everywhere on the globe because of the reduced time of transferring information. This has reached its natural limit because of the electronic signal. The electronic signal has sped up decision making everywhere to almost zero delay. So, one is no longer bound to
the resistance of space in order to make decisions. Resulting in a new elite, a nomadic elite that is flying across the world in order to do business or politics and at the same time can make important decisions. Nomads are the rulers of the world. This is contrary to societies centuries ago that were built upon communities. Strangers or nomads were seen as intruders in earlier societies. Bauman compares contemporary society with a caravan-site. A caravan-site is open to anyone who has enough money to pay the rent and guests come and go. The site caters for a place to set up camp, electric sockets and water taps. Each caravan-owner has its own itinerary and time schedule and wishes to be left alone. When they want to leave they can leave. Nothing much on the site will change (Bauman 2000, p24).

Contemporary cities are acting in a similar way: people come and go, nothing much changes since no one is really bound to a particular place, group or system. Due to this, social systems are much weaker as they used to be and changes in these systems will have less impact on the overall dynamic. The chance of the system collapsing is less likely because other people can replace the certain position that was left empty more easily than before. In the Middle Ages for example communities were much stronger and strangers were seen as intruders as they were able to disrupt a social system. They first had to win confidence, if not they were expelled from the city. Social systems were more solid then, so to say rigid and therefore less likely to adapt to change.

Strangers can be seen as intruders when enter into strong socially coherent communities, not only as ethnic minorities but a similar process can also take place in companies. On the other hand, strangers also bring in new ways of looking at things, which can lead to innovative solutions or perspectives. For strangers, and particularly for the newcomers among them, nothing in the city is ’natural’ or taken for granted by them (Bauman 2003, p6).

Liquid modernity is about infinite possibilities, the urge for freedom, political deregulations, and elusiveness. However this also puts an increasing pressure on the individual. The individual’s freedom of choice expects a lot of the individual himself, he stands alone. One is expected to successful to be meaningful. The objective is not interesting; it is the desire and the road to success that is important. ’To refuse participation in the individualizing game is emphatically not on the agenda’. On the one side this is liberating, but on the other side, and this is the critique of Bauman, it is frightening, oppressive and therefore not liberating at all since there is no final objective and the individual is supposed to succeed (Bauman 2000, p34). Due to the liberation of the individual the powerlessness of alienation has evolved into the issue of the individual’s unprecedented possibilities. Furthermore the erratic actions of the individual are impossible for the outsider to comprehend, resulting in the
individual being both the alien as the spectator of alienating behavior. Meaning that the alienated is lost and is unable to adapt in a world without a clear conception or conformity. This observation takes in a very important position in my conclusive chapter 3 on the condition of the postmodern urban society. The shift from heavy to light modernity, from a producer to a consumer society had its reflections on the morphology of the city, its city form, how it functions. The complex system that is the city changes along with changes in society, with whom its has an interdependent relationship. With the introduction of the car, cities had to transform in order to open it for this new faster way of moving. Technological development in the Industrial Revolution led to rapid expanding cities because of urbanization, resulting in overcrowded and unhealthy situations. As stated above, this led to the rise of new urban concepts in which human health and the car became significant factors. At the same time the belief arose that governments were able to constitute society from a top-down approach, which led to increased interference by governments based on determinism. But cities were still growing according to the traditional concentric model, namely from the old medieval centers outwards. The current-day urban problematic assumes that society isn’t that predictable. We cannot fully control the growth or the decline of cities. Considering how contemporary society is more complex than ever, due to the increasing unpredictability of individuals behavior, we shouldn’t aim for taking control on this. Modernism showed that designing rigid homogenous structures didn’t allow for change and do not seem to be sustainable. On the other hand the more informal urban settings or urban environments that allow for flexibility opposed to the manufactural approach of the modernistic developments are today perceived to be the more viable and vital urban environments. This is constituted through time as those urban environments that are more willing to adapt to changes and do so more easily, here the urban tissue is able to act as an ongoing process. You can compare those urban environments as ecological habitats in which survival of the fittest, evolution, plays an important role. ‘As the world urbanizes, cities are being globalized...contributing to a major reconfiguration of the social and spatial structures of urbanism and creating the most economically and culturally heterogeneous cities the world has ever known’ (Burdett and Rode 2008, p54). As stated in the introduction, recent decades have been characterized by rapid urbanization resulting in huge urban agglomerations all over the world. This has put a lot of pressure on as well the local as the global scale, from an economic, social and environmental point of view. The typical contemporary postmodern city differs from the traditional city with its explicit city-centre, public spaces that are composed of squares and lines, churches, the old city wall, a city park, distinct
neighborhoods, and a rather coherent social life. The postmodern city exists out of multiple centralities connected by networks and it contains city districts that are related to their neighboring districts, but not to the neighbors of their neighbors. Postmodern cities don’t have a clear city form and can’t be seen as one entity,. In many cases this obviously has to do with their size, since postmodern cities consists of a huge and ever-increasing amount of people. Postmodern cities are infused with capitalism, not only to allow for many possibilities in the exposure of brands, and not only because they are the most vital organs in current-day economic system, but more because they are in itself a brand, a representation of the consumer society we are living in. Cities brand themselves as being a product (Paris, New York). Postmodern cities (or more accurately agglomerations) are incomprehensible due to the invasion of ”strangers” and its lack of coherence in city form, which makes it extremely difficult for people to understand the city. Postmodern cities are inhabited by consumers and designed for consumers. The postmodern city doesn’t let itself be determined. It shall not be guided, is multi-interpretable, and defined by the user who paradoxically also acts in ignorance. The city is inhabited by consumers, strangers, a growing middle class, an ongoing desire. Earlier I mentioned the caravan-site, where strangers come and go. This is a fairly good metaphor for one group of users of the city who find themselves in the upper tier, the nomadic elite. The upper tier is usually connected to global communication and to a vast network of exchange, it is open to messages and experiences that embrace the entire world, and this group is growing with the further development of globalization. At the other end of the spectrum segmented local networks (often ethnically based) rely on their identity as the most valuable resource to defend their interests, and ultimately their being. The first group is the group that live ‘in the place’, but they are not ‘of that place’, not spiritually but also quite often not bodily when they travel or move away. The second group ‘is doomed to stay local’ (Bauman 2003, p17). The postmodern city consists of both groups.
society and space

You need only to think for one minute, before confessing that Euclidian space is the space in which buildings are drawn on paper but not the environment in which buildings are built—and even less the world in which they are lived [Latour and Yaneva 2008, p82].
‘Space’ is often considered as the physically perceived space, constructed by the physical objects and elements that define it. In mathematical terms it is defined as the space conceived on the three dimensional Cartesian coordinate system complemented in modern algebra with a fourth dimension called time. This Cartesian notion of space however is purely abstract and not lived by people in their daily routines.

For a long period space was merely part of the domain of mathematicians. They constructed all different kind of abstract spaces, which clearly had little to do with the physical and social reality of space. This issue led to the inheritance of this spatial problematic by philosophers (Lefebvre 1991, p4).

With the inheritance of the spatial problematic by philosophers, spatial theory gained a mental component. Space conceived as an idea (the mental reality) constructed on the surface (the physical reality). The conceived/mental space that is directed by politicians, architects, urbanists, philosophers etcetera, is the space that disposes of an idea, superimposed in the real world on the physical space.

But here, it seems, lies a crucial point. Because how is it possible to superimpose something that is a representation, subjective and decodable (mental space), one-to-one onto something that is real, objective and empirical without losing the idea. To Lefebvre this felt like a paradox. Lefebvre alleged in his prolific La production de l’espace (1974), translated in English in 1991, that space coexists of and is constructed on not only physical and mental components but also on a social component. He stated that ‘(social) space is a (social) product’ (1991, p26), ‘every society - and hence every mode of production with all its sub-variants... produces a space, its own space’ (1991, p31). Space is constructed on the triad of physical, mental and social forces - in which social space is not referred to as a socialized space, but as a space produced by social forces.

So every single moment society produces its own [social] space. Most of the time these changes are not perceptible as they happens gradually, sometimes these changes are evident. Most of the time this happens only at a local scale but sometimes also on the global scale. I was talking about the invention of the car in the first chapter for example, which changed the whole perception of time. Such a development has a major influence on a global scale, as well as on the local. It did not only change our perception of time, the feeling of freedom and mobility, it also changed the physical environment with the construction of sufficient infrastructures. By which I want to emphasize is that, according to Lefebvre, space is not only a representation of society, but space is society, it is the stage on which changes are happening but at the same time also where change is evoked. Even though this is a rather imaginative example, the actual production of space is omnipresent.
As I mentioned in the first chapter, conscious urban design and architecture is only possible when having an in depth understanding of how a certain society is constructed, from the global to the local scale. When designing it is fundamental to understand how people think about and act in a space and place in a certain society. As every change in society on every scale has an impact on the way we live, one has to be aware of the present-day situation. So one must attempt to discover what the people’s needs are, how they live, where they interact and how this relates to the space and place, but also how this all came into being. It is a bit the hardware versus software story. One can build a computer (hardware) that will work properly and will last for a couple of years, which is fine, but it won’t be revolutionary. If one is really trying to achieve something significant one has to understand the underlying structures that built something (the software), one has to be able to make changes in the software in order to achieve enhanced meaningful performance. In this chapter I will expatiate about how a society in general is constructed, the underlying structures, and how these affect the urban based on Lefebvre’s theory on the production of space and the Virtual/Actual theory by Gilles Deleuze.

Because of the work of Lefebvre a different way of thinking arose in sociology with regards to space. Until then space in social theory and philosophy was constructed on two components, a physical one and a mental one. In which the ‘epistemology has inherited and adopted the notion that the status of space is that of a mental thing’ (Lefebvre 1991, p3). Lefebvre critiques the gap that occurred between the epistemological thinking on space as a mental thing and the subject, the cogito. He states that:

[A] particular theoretical practice produces a mental space which is apparently, but only apparently, extra-ideological. In an inevitably circular manner, this mental space then becomes the locus of a theoretical practice which separated from social practice and which sets itself up as the axis, pivot or central reference points of Knowledge’... The quasi-logical presupposition of an identity between mental space (the space of the philosophers and epistemologists) and real space creates an abyss between the mental sphere on one side and the physical and social spheres on the other (1991, p6)

This deficiency in theoretical practice on the thinking of the production of space necessitated Lefebvre to come up with a new concept on how space is constructed to close the gap between theory and practice. Until then the production of space, in theory, was still only constructed by a physical and a mental component in which social activities are occurring. For
Lefebvre however the actual construction of space needed a third component. He points out that ‘relations with two elements boil down to oppositions, contrasts and antagonisms’ (Lefebvre 1991, p39). You can imagine that this dualism also occurs when superimposing the mental space on the physical space. According to Lefebvre space is not only the theatre where things emerge, when considering space as a social product it is much more than that. Space itself is also the place that evokes things. It is not only the space for representation (of a society), it is also the representational space. After all it is rather implausible to fold an idea onto the real without thinking of losing [parts of] the idea. There has to be a third component affecting the other components in order to complete the actual production of space: the social space. Lefebvre argued that the production of space is a reciprocal ongoing process between mental, physical and social practices. All three do not act separately from each other but instead act in a complex interplay in which space is being produced. Lefebvre introduced the trialectics of space in order to avoid a distinct categorization of the three components (Leckie and Given 2010, p228).

The three components of this triad are defined by Lefebvre in spatial terms as follows (1991, p38-40):

**Spatial practices** (perceived space): The spatial practice of a society secretes that society’s space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction, it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it. From the analytic standpoint, the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space.

**Spaces for representation** (conceived space): Conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers, social engineers as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent - all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived... This is the dominant space in every society.

**Representational spaces** (lived space): space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’, but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who describe and aspire to do no more than describe. This is the dominated — and hence passively experienced — space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate.

This trialectic offers the opportunity to approach social space as a social product in which the individual is always able to move from one interconnected realm to another. That does not necessarily mean that the space one encounters is
a coherent space (1991, p40). Lefebvre merely exposed the actual production of space by 'bringing the various kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis together within a single theory' (1991, p16). This triad closes the gap between the mental and the physical with regards to the production of space. Whether a space is coherent or not, the triad is showing the general forces that constitute a space.

Lefebvre poses with his theory that the social component of space that emerges primarily in the lived space exists of an infinite number of social spaces and is inextricably connected with the production of space. Moreover, as this space is primarily guided by individuals who by themselves perform in multiple social groups, it is a highly complex space to grasp as the individual is unpredictable. The dialectic relation within the spatial triad results in an awareness that the production of space is in an ongoing changing condition, which, because of the addition of social space, began to create an awareness of its complexity and elusiveness.

The triad should not be considered as a strict categorization of the three realms, which is exactly what Lefebvre want to avoid. On the contrary, each component of the triad is concurrently active in the different realms of the physical, mental and social, constantly being in reciprocal interaction.

In his expound on the production of space Lefebvre formulated four implications on the reciprocal nature between the components of the triad. The first one states that because of the ongoing production of space, natural space (authentic unaffected space) will disappear. The second implication is that by means of its ongoing process of production, every society produces its own space. The third one states that 'if space is a product, our knowledge of it must be expected to reproduce and expound the process of production' (Lefebvre 1991, p36). In this third implication he introduces the trialectics of space. He elaborates on the actual production of space, so how the perceived - conceived - lived experience meet and interact. The fourth implication emphasizes the importance of the history of space, 'of its production qua 'reality', and of its forms and representations, which is not to be confused either with the causal chain of 'historical' (i.e. dated) events or a sequence, whether teleological or not, of customs and laws, ideals and ideology, and socio-economic structures or institutions [superstructures]' (Lefebvre 1991, p46). Lefebvre takes as an example the code of linear perspective that emerged during the renaissance. This code’s history takes us back to the cities of the Greeks, Romans, Vitruvius and later the Renaissance onwards, as the historical traditional city with its rich symbolism until today still contains of enchanting cityscapes and is often perceived as comprising of the most precious and pleasant urban qualities. This rich code of Western culture is a rather imaginative code, however these
codes also appear on a much smaller scope, less noticeable. Lefebvre points that:

*The state was built on the back of the old cities, and their structure and code were shattered in the process. Notice that a code of this kind is a superstructure, which is not true of the town itself, its space, or the 'town-country' relationship within that space. The code served to fix the alphabet and language of the town, its primary signs, their paradigm and their syntagmatic relations... It is clear therefore, that a spatial code is not simply a means of reading or interpreting space: rather it is a means of living in that space, of understanding it, and of producing it. As such it brings together verbal signs (words and sentences, along with the meaning invested in them by a signifying process) and non-verbal signs (music, sounds, evocations, architectural constructions)* [1991, p48].

The production of space with its innumerous amount of variables is a complex interconnected process. In his third implication Lefebvre formulates: ‘The ‘object’ of interest must be expected to shift from things in space to the actual production of space’ [1991, p37].

Here I saw a link with the Virtual/Actual theory of Gilles Deleuze. His ontology on space expresses this interpretation of space as the actualization of space, the continuous process in which virtual (not to be confused with ‘virtual reality’ known in computer simulations but meaning real virtuality) or possible non-metric spaces that surround the actual or real metric spaces affects the actual space and eventually becomes the actual space [Deleuze 2007, p148]. Deleuze argues that from all ‘virtual/ possible outcomes only one or a few become regularly actualized’ [Delanda 2005, p83]. The actual is the outcome of an infinite number of virtuals and their actualizations. In effect, the actual is continuously surrounded by virtuals that on their part are surrounded and affected by a higher order of virtuals and so on and so on. Both types of particles emerge on the plane of immanence where he describes the actual as the particle ‘that falls from the plane like fruit’ (2007, p150). For Deleuze a purely actual object doesn’t exist since it surrounds itself constantly with the virtual (actualization is also part of the virtual) affecting the actual. He is basically saying that the virtual and actual coincide, relating to each other like a mirror where the object becomes virtual, the image actual. This is all happening on a fundamental split in time in which the virtual transforms in the actual [2007, p151]. This moment is crucial to understand as being the intermediate space in between the virtual (non-metric) space and actual (metric space) that constitutes the change resulting in the real space [2007, p86].

The transition from the virtual to the actual is a rather complex process and
is best explained within the context of mathematics with regard to non-metric (topological) and metric spaces. Metric spaces are the spaces that define a length between two points on a Euclidean system. Non-metric spaces express everything else that is not built on these terms. For example in the mathematical differential in geometry, the ‘differential’ is expressing the moment of change on a specific point of a metric function. It expresses the degree of change, which could alter dramatically between two points of a metric function. The bigger the amplitude [the top] in the metric function the steeper the line in the differential function. The metric space should be compared with the actual where the non-metric space is the virtual. Reflecting it on the ‘real’ world this means that in spaces with much interaction, so with a lot impressions, for example in the city, the virtual expressed as a differential is showing a steep line. The transition from virtual to actual is going extremely fast and in great numbers, and thus a lot of change is occurring. When one is standing in the middle of nowhere the interaction of virtuals and actuals will be much less intense. There where less is going on, the differential will show less change [Delanda 2005, p84].

So the topological space contains all the spaces in which social processes are shaped that compose the actual systems. The degree of conversion between the virtual and actual has to do with the degree of interaction or intensity. The intermediate space, so the space for actualization, is intensive, the intense space. This is another concept in Deleuze’s ontology of space that deals with the differences in intensity of a certain variable for which subsequently an average is constructed. A concrete example would be two glasses with the same amount of water, one is 30 degrees, and the other is 50 degrees. Put them together and their average temperature will be 40 degrees (intensive), not 80 degrees obviously. Although the volumetric amount will be the sum of both volumes (extensive). The intermediate space is intensive and is acting in between the virtual and actual space. Manuel Delanda summarizes the construction of Deleuze’s ontology as follows:

‘the virtual, the intensive and the actual would constitute the three spheres of reality, with virtual multiplicities [complex differential spaces] constraining and guiding intensive processes which in turn yield specific actual entities. The opposite movement, from the actual to the intensive to the virtual, would also be constantly happening, guaranteeing the independence and immanence of multiplicities’ [2005, p86].

The process of actualization is one of transience, where the virtual becoming actual in a reciprocal process in which the continuous period of actualization
happens in the shortest thinkable amount of time. At the moment of actualization the subject that is being actualized is already affecting the virtual. During actualization the virtual image of the past is preserved and the present image of the actual that passes are distinguishable (2007, p151). The process of actualization moves constantly from past to present. According to Lefebvre this is constructed as follows:

*The historical and its consequences, the diachronic, the etymology of locations in the sense of what happened at a particular spot or place and thereby changed it - all of this becomes inscribed in space. The past leaves its traces; time has its own script. Yet this space is always, now and formerly, a present space, given as an immediate whole, complete with its associations and connections in their actuality [Lefebvre 1991, p37].*

Every element affects every single element in a specific place. Images from the past affect images from the present and vice versa. The production of space is simply too complex to fully grasp, since it happens all the time resulting in unpredictable outcomes.

**The production of space and the planner**
The quote from Bruno Latour and Albena Yaneva at the beginning of this chapter perfectly expresses the problematic of the architect, urbanist and all other professions involved in conceiving the city (or urban) within the context of the production of space. In the theory of Lefebvre the realm of this group is primarily acting within the conceived space, or in spatial terms the spaces for representation. But as explained the production of space is not merely coping with this space, on the contrary.

As discussed in the first chapter, architectural and critical theory and practice in the twentieth century was manifested in the social engineering of society. Policymakers, architects, urban designers and planners were all acting from the philosophy of a totally controllable society. A top-down regulated way of addressing urban issues in which social problems were believed to be solved by the spatial sphere, the conceived space. Even though this idea of society also led to the rise of not only the welfare state in order to prevent social unrest, but also for example social housing. Still in their attempts at achieving complete social engineering of society they simply went to far.

Latour and Yaneva criticize that in conceiving the city we approach it as a Euclidean space complemented with a fourth dimension of time (2008, p2). Buildings and cities on paper are seen as static objects, often presented in
beautiful images. However these images are drawn in a utopian reality on a specified time seen through the eyes of the creator. The creator is drawing a virtual reality in the near future, but certainly on a specified time, as a picture. But isn’t it the idea of a building to last for at least 50 years and for an urban environment to last much longer, meaning that capturing an urban environment at this specific point in time is rather uninformative and surreal? The difficulty of conscious design is to try to understand the city’s ‘forces and factors’ by means of extensive research and transforming them in order to do sensitive design, while the research on which the design is based will be outdated in even one decade (Hauptmann 2006, p1).

The problem of the architect is that he has a limited set of tools that, even though the tools have evolved and increased greatly in recent decades due to the developments in computer technology, still does not include predicting the future, which makes an architect in a way as ignorant as he ever was. This limitation is one we have to cope with forever. The powerful visualizing tools we work with today can do no more than the ones used by for example Leonardo or Dürer (Latour and Yaneva 2008, p8). What should ease the feeling of the uselessness of urban design simply is that this doesn’t have to prevent us in obtaining sustainable, vital, and viable urban environments and prepare them for the future as we live in a world full of examples of beautiful urban environments, from those with a high density of inhabitants to those with a low density. Latour & Yaneva and Richard Sennett all point to the possibilities that emerge with new technologies, but that we unfortunately don’t use the tools creatively enough (Sennett 2008, p290). Sennett claims that the city has ‘lost its vitality, a sense of time, not time looking backwards nostalgically, but forward looking time: the city understood as a process, its imagery changing through use, an urban imagination image formed by anticipation, welcoming surprise’. My approach to my design is rather the same: the emphasis of perceiving the city as a process has vanished in the twentieth century. And it is true that the tools of representation for architects have not changed that much, even though technology did. What strikes me is the lack of notion of the city as a process amongst architects, despite all the critic on modernism. Architects can change society, and they do, as everyone does, but neither they nor anyone else will ever have control of it.

Architects are human beings and thus also a part of the lived space, but as an architect they live from above and afar. What you see is that the architect moves from the lived space to a space looking in from above in their designs. He designs from a bird’s-eye-view, or as Lefebvre calls it: ‘shifting from lived experience to the abstract, projecting this abstraction back onto lived experience’ (2003, p182). He calls it a second-order abstraction that creates an
'illusory sense of affirmation: the return to real life'. The city simply is not a strictly controlled and predictable environment, the city is constructed on conceived elements that functions as a whole in an ongoing dynamic process. The different elements on which society is constructed have to deal with each other in the urban system in the process of the virtual becoming actual, and vice versa. Therefore Lefebvre prefers to speak of 'the urban' rather than of 'the city' because the latter describes something that is created (Hauptmann 2006, p9). All components of the urban are constantly interacting with each other and therefore buildings aren't static objects. What we should change in conceiving the urban is primarily the approach towards the city. It is about seeing it as a process and therefore also approach it as a process by using more adaptive strategies in urbanism. Perhaps computer technology can play a part in this, as Sennett and Latour both see as a possibility if we use them in a more creative way. I agree with these two scholars, and I think coding in computer technology has very interesting features where the component of chance can be surprising and interesting, even though both I and many of my fellow students never learned to work with it. But more importantly I find that there is a lack of awareness among architects about the need for a different approach. So maybe that is the first thing education and architectural theory should address.
contemporary society

Richard Sennett: ‘The image of the community is purified of all that may convey a feeling of difference, let alone conflict, in who ‘we’ are. In this way the myth of community solidarity is a purification ritual... What is distinctive about this mythic sharing in communities is that people feel they belong to each other, and share together, because they are the same... The ‘we’ feeling, which expresses the desire to be similar, is a way for men to avoid the necessity of looking deeper into each other (Bauman 2000, p180)’.
In the previous chapters I went upon a journey to attempt to describe some of the occurrences that shape modern urban society. First I spoke about the stages of modernity that shaped our history, and in the second chapter I discussed the actual production of space, namely try and determine the elements that affect and change a given perceived space. Since the production of space is dependent on elements from both the past and the present, a good understanding of the origins of a particular society is essential when dealing with spatial issues. The previous chapters serve as an introduction to this chapter, in which I will elaborate on the condition of current society. So what are the factors that drive people today, and do these affect the way we live in cities.

As I stated in the first chapter, we are facing dramatic urbanization, resulting in extensive and unforeseeable spatial and social issues. Some of them have already emerged, others we can somewhat foresee, many have yet to come. As will be concluded in the next chapter, we have to search for new strategies in approaching the city in order to let it deal with the unpredictable or unforeseeable. In these new strategies we have to incorporate the social and spatial issues we are facing at the moment; the ones that have already emerged and the ones we can somewhat foresee. In this chapter I will elaborate on these current issues, or more precisely I will portray the current condition of the social space. For this I will use the extensive analysis on human life by Zygmunt Bauman in his book Liquid modernity (2000) in which he discusses the driving forces that were key in shaping the contemporary sense of shared human life. Since I’ve already discussed past forces, I will dedicate this chapter solely on the condition and issues of contemporary society in order to grasp the nature of the present. Furthermore I will end this chapter with my own perspective on the current urban condition, with reference to the discussed theory in this and the previous chapters.

With liquid modernity Bauman is referring to current (post-modern) society. He opposes liquid/ fluid modernity to heavy/ solid modernity. Heavy or solid modernity is referring to the Western society of the 19th century with its factories full of heavy machines and labor, the class society, a ‘forced’ but true commitment to the local, the family and the class, the era of security. Subsequently the twentieth century was marked, according to Bauman, by the melting of the solids that led to the rise of the liquid modernity.

He uses the metaphor of liquid and solid because he believes that their qualities perfectly represent the characters of the two eras. Liquids are fluid, which implies that they are continuously changing as the molecules are not stuck to one place: shaping them is easier than keeping them in shape. Fluids do not
stick to any shape for long and are constantly ‘ready (and prone)’ to change. Unlike solids that, due to their fixed molecular structure, is able to keep the shape. For solids time isn’t an important variable, as it constantly keeps in the same shape, while for liquids time is essential (Bauman 2000, p1-2). When reflecting this metaphor on society you see the same kind of qualities in the distinction between solid and fluid modernity. The molecules in a solid object are bounded, while those in liquids are elusive, very much like the production of space or the process of actualization. The increasing complexification and unpredictability of society has everything to do with the melting of the solids. The 19th century solid modernity was bounded in institutions, neighborhoods, families, social classes, mutual engagement and security, while in current society the most important themes are the individuals ‘freedom’ (or individualization), deregulation, nomadism, elusiveness, desire, personal responsibility and insecurity. In the first chapter I mentioned the striking example of the distinction between the Fordist factory and the company of Microsoft. The first phase of the melting of the solids was the untying of economy and affected extant institutions such as the Fordist factory, politics, culture and more. The melting of the solids gradually evolved and eventually led to ‘the redistribution and reallocation of modernity’s melting powers’ by affecting family, class and neighborhood. This is happening at this very moment in history. ‘The liquidizing powers have moved from the system to society, from politics to life-policies - or have descended from the ‘macro’ to the ‘micro’ level of cohabitation’ (Bauman 2000, p7). Furthermore it is perceived by power as one of its major tools of control. The less bonding there is in society, the less organized and controllable it becomes.

The compression of time/space is a major factor in the melting of solid modernity. Physical movement has become much easier and faster in recent decades then in the 19th century. Enhanced public transport routes connect the different cities or metropolitan areas within a few hours with fast trains or airplanes, which are operated daily basis. Not only do modern forms of transportation connect metropolitan areas, the economies within these metropolitan areas also depend on the sufficiency of the local infrastructure, resulting in the so-called ‘network’ cities. The most important change however, is the invention of the electronic signal that has made the ‘speed of movement has reached its natural limit’ (Bauman 2000, p9). In the 19th century space was a limitation in the processes of decision-making, trading or acting where today this limitation has been lifted by the electronic signal.

‘Heavy modernity kept capital and labor in an iron cage which none of them could
escape. Light modernity let one partner out of the cage. ‘Solid’ modernity was an era of mutual engagement. ‘Fluid’ modernity is the epoch of disengagement, elusiveness, facile escape and hopeless chase. In ‘liquid’ modernity, it is the most elusive, those free to move without notice, who rule.’ [Bauman 2000, p120].

Today everyone who possesses a Smartphone and has access to the Internet is part of the world where time is released from the ‘space of places’. This space is called the ‘space of flows’ by the sociologist Manuel Castells. People act in both spaces at the same time, resulting in being physical close to someone though remaining far away spiritually. Both spaces rely on each other, as they are both part of society.

The compression of time and space in both the ‘space of places’ as well as in the ‘the space of flows’ results in an increasing numbers of people who engage in nomadism over sedentarism. Modern nomads (the businessmen and politicians) fly from airport to airport and are the ones that hold the most power in today’s world. The opening of borders in favor of free trade in the European Union for example, simplifies the life of the nomad and creates a stronger economic block. According to Bauman it has become ‘the meta-purpose of politics’. At the same time it also opens up opportunities for tourism, which is of great importance in todays global economy.

Where Ford in the 19th century wanted to bond his employees to his factory for life by keeping them satisfied. Power today wants everything to flow freely and therefore (social) bonds are in the way. Power in this sense does not merely mean political power, but also corporate power. This all sounds rather negative, as if ‘power’ doesn’t have any humane principles, as if it is our biggest enemy. Well maybe it is, maybe it isn’t, but this is not the point I am making. I am not accusing power of acting irrational; I am only exploring what is going on at the moment in society, and ultimately how that affects the urban.

As such ‘power’ [what’s in a name] has the biggest might and therefore is most capable to exploit situations, in this case the loosening of bonds. Which is, from my point of view, accepted by the people in Western society as everyone wants to be free - free to go, to choose, to act, to consume - with all the consequences that entails. Take for example consumerism, or the urge for buying things, well not specifically the urge for buying, but the urge for desire. And companies are very good in responding to these demands; they are actually the forces that create the demands. Introducing new versions, new technologies, updates and so on to keep everyone hungry for the latest product.

In the era of liquid modernity the world has become the realm of infinite possibilities. Which according to Bauman isn’t as welcoming as it seems (2000,
as this kind of freedom isn’t that liberating at all. Due to all the infinite possibilities we feel lost in a space filled with countless opportunities. We are given the responsibility to make the right choices, and we don’t want to fail by making the wrong decisions. But people have problems with responsibility, even when it is their own life. It makes them vulnerable, insecure, it frightens them, not only because we don’t know what to choose but also because of the countless missed, and to be missed, opportunities. To put it another way, the dissolution of the social bonds and everything that it entails is leading to an increasing individualized society, resulting in a society where ‘individualization is a fate, not a choice’, for everyone to deal with. Produced according to the trialectic of Lefebvre, with a reciprocal conception in which society (power) is shaping the people while people react upon it within their daily actions. These daily actions are now in fact actions by alienated individuals, which means that there is a decreasing form of unity. This makes things diffuse and increasingly unpredictable. From a distance this may not seem at issue, but it is. The dissolution of the bonds leads to the blurring of the real. Due to this cities are becoming more and more incomprehensible or multi-interpretable.

Individualization, incomprehensibility and freedom are both causes as well as results of the invasion of the stranger in the urban society, of nomadism. One of the trademarks of the stranger is the fact that he sees things differently in environments new to him opposed to the settled living there. Therefore the nomad is able to notice problems that for the settled are not that obvious (Bauman 2003, p6). The settled have adapted their lives to it and are not able to perceive it in any way. However as Bauman argues, ‘strangers are not a modern invention, but strangers who remain strangers for a long time to come are’ (Bauman 2003, p6). Strangers are the less predictable actors in the urban environment. People are acting individually while belonging to social groups that primarily consist of these individualized strangers, where they are not strangers to each other but to the urban society they are living in. Referring back to the definition of alienation in contemporary society, which is about feeling spiritually lost or ‘other’ within a multitude of options or possibilities, the invasion of the stranger in contemporary society means in principle the invasion of the alien or the fragmented self.

Thus, cities at present are invaded by strangers resulting in an increasing incomprehensible urban environment and the dissolution of the social bonds. ‘Sense of community’ is for many people an unknown concept in contemporary cities. But what are the terms and conditions of today that are necessary to live together in harmony. For Sennett the answer to this question lays in another skill, the skill of being tolerant to each other, or as Sennett calls it ‘civil’, within
the concept of civility. ‘Civility is the activity which protects people from each other and yet allows them to enjoy each other’s company’ (Bauman 2000, p95). Civility acts within the realms of the social space in the urban society, and it needs the physical space to be designed in such a way that it will stimulate the interaction among different social groups.

The city of today basically consists of two social groups, the upper tier and lower tier. The upper tier consists of the people who are connected to the space of flows, while the lower tier merely is connected to the space of places and this tier is often regarded as the more ethnically based one, where identity and origin play an important role: a global and a local group. The global group, or upper tier, may be ‘in the place’, but they are not ‘of that place’ - certainly not spiritually, but also quite often, whenever they wish, bodily (Bauman 2003, p16). This group is the one that consists of the stranger.

‘Civility’ has everything to do with the urge for a harmonic cohabitation of both groups, a rather difficult quest, as many urban environments are constituted the other way around. Most urban settings are constructed to leave the stranger out, from both the upper tier as the lower tier. It is a tendency of the desire for homogeneity: eliminating the differences seems to be the desired result. The more successful this quest is, ‘the more threatening the difference appears and the deeper and more intense is the anxiety it breeds’ (Bauman 2000, p106), an anxiety that can be seen in the rising level of xenophobia, making the above basically a self-fulfilling prophecy. All as a result of the dissolution of community feeling, leading to a rather forced search for community.

Probably the most extreme embodied form of the search of community is known as the gated community. The gated community is actually a fortified object within the urban tissue. People from the same class, with the same interests live together in an urban environment that could be seen as an artificial community which is a ‘privatized, enclosed, and monitored space for residence, consumption, leisure and work’ since it contains all primary needs and more (Caldeira 2005, p329). People who can afford it (middle and upper class) can buy a place in this realm isolated from the urban society by walls and fences and is secured 24 hours a day. Security is probably the most important feature, in the upper tier’s dream of independence and freedom. These gated communities are primarily present in societies where social segregation is a well-known issue. The gated community is merely enhancing this problem.

As such it is not surprising that these societies are ‘associated more often with danger than security’ (Bauman 2003, p29). As the fortified enclaves are not leading to an organic growth of harmonic cohabitation since there is no ground to enhance the skills of people getting more ‘civil’. Being civil has by all means everything to do with the ability to interact with people from different
social groups. In the era of liquid modernity it is more important than ever to stimulate the interaction among the different social groups. In this individualizing world where nomadism is prevailing over sedentarism we must offer the opportunities to enhance our civilizing skills. We need open and tolerant urban spaces that will stimulate the diversity, heterogeneity and civility of the urban society, instead of ‘interdictory’ spaces inhabited by the global elite, ‘the landmarks of disintegration of the locally grounded’ (Bauman 2003, p31). Bauman also calls it the stimulation of the mixophilia over the mixophobic. At the end the city is the place where all the different social groups come together, the place where experiment between these different social groups can occur within the context of a free society. It is where the different values among groups can be learned, discussed, negotiated and adapted, hopefully resulting in a more viable urban environment. But for this we need the right urban conditions.

In the era of liquid modernity, the urban is dealing with rising levels of complexification. Dramatic urbanization, the invasion of the nomads, a growing middle class and the urge for freedom are the main causes of this current changing urban condition, as well physically as socially. As cities are acknowledged to be the most important organs of nation states, and as the urban consist of more than 50% of the current world population, the urge for both city and people to be or have a sustainable living environment is significant. Considering that sustainability for me is a synonym for livability, for the degree of sustainability has to do with the degree of harmony within the interdependent relationship between social equity, the environment and the economy. Pointing at Lefebvre’s ‘social space is a social product’ the understanding of the Zeitgeist and the forces that constructs society are significant in order to understand and deal with the urban society. Individualization and the dissolution of social bonds are the main consequences of the current global issues of nomadism, freedom and the rise of the middle class. These are global issues that have a local impact. The quest for professionals dealing with urban issues is to find ways to embrace these recent processes and find new ways to unite the newly formed social relations/groups that emerged from this new global situation in contemporary urban models and architecture. The following chapter will address this, but for now I want to conclude with my perspective on the postmodern urban condition.

Camillo Sitte regarded the city as a work of art in his influential Der städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen in 1889. Not with respect to the architecture alone, but as a value-laden concept representing the social ethos
of the time: the city as the carrier of cultural, political, economic, social and technological values. Even though this conception of the city was already accepted, the significance of the thinking of Sitte and other 19th century theorists was the notion that ‘the nature of the link between art and society has always been, and should be spiritual’. The awareness of the city being the representation of the Zeitgeist in the architecture of the city (Wagenaar 2011, p185).

By accepting that society is constructed through an evolutionary process, and subsequently that the city and art are a representation of society, it leads to the conclusion that art and the city evolve together with society. This was (and still is) an accepted philosophical construct. Sitte agreed, even though he left art out of the equation. He thought that architecture was the utmost natural carrier of the cultural values of the Zeitgeist. However he noticed that the art of architecture was suffering from fast changes in society that were caused by technology and science. He realized that cities then were expanding like machines; this went so fast that culture wasn’t able to catch up with that. He wrote his influential, almost urban encyclopedia in order to ease and speed up designing according to the spiritual cultural values of the time (Wagenaar 2011, p187).

Sitte considered the city as a work of art, where I consider the city as an abstract work of art, which I will explain.

Cities or urban agglomerations are more than ever incomprehensible from not only the physical, but also the social and philosophical points of view. Not only the city itself but also the people moving through the city became extremely incomprehensible and unpredictable.

The postmodern city of today differs in many ways from the traditional city as I explained in chapter one. The traditional city acts in a more regional or local environment (instead of a global) and is built on strong social bonds: the city as a work of art Sitte was referring to.

Postmodern cities, or more accurately urban agglomerations, are incomprehensible due to the invasion of “strangers” but also due to its lack of coherence in city form, which makes it even more difficult for people to understand the city.

In the 20th century the idea arose of the social engineering of society. Cities were dramatically expanding and big expansion plans were needed quickly. The fast way of constructing had become possible due to technological advances, but the notion of the social engineering of society made architects and urbanists believe they could design a city in such a way that after realization it would act as an exact copy of the way they conceived it. The design drawn on
the drawing board was the one-on-one representation of its final built result. This makes the city a figurative and determined one, which isn’t abstract at all. A utopian idea, but as we know now this is never the case as the city doesn’t act the way it is conceived, which is indicated in the previous chapters by the theory of Lefebvre.

In the era of the traditional city, as observed by Sitte, the city was much more comprehensible, thus predictable. Maybe therefore it seemed as if the city and society could be controlled from the top down: the traditional cities were simply easier to manage. But with the emergence of urbanization and the shift from solid to liquid modernity cities have become increasingly incomprehensible. To clarify: I am arguing that the city always had a level of abstraction since society is dynamic, but with the changes in 20th century society the urban society is heading towards higher levels of abstraction. What we consider as the postmodern urban condition today the level of abstraction of the urban will only increase further.

But how to understand the city as an abstract work of art. Sitte called the city a work of art with regards to conceiving and perceiving the city as one. How is this reflected in the city as an abstract work of art, both in its conception and perception?

The first question needs to concern itself with what abstract art exactly is. Abstract art is not an image of the truth or as The Encyclopedia Britannica informs us: ‘abstract art, also called nonobjective or nonrepresentational art, is painting, sculpture or graphic art in which the portrayal of things from the visible world plays no part’. Kandinsky is in general considered as the first painter who drew strictly abstract paintings. In 1910 he painted an untitled work that is regarded the first modern abstract painting, mainly referred to as First Abstract Watercolor. His discovery of meaningful total abstraction was propelled by the quest to capture a visual language of colors, lines and shapes using conventional painting techniques, freed from distracting recognizable objects in order to express general ideas and evoking deep emotions. For Kandinsky however music was the sole and utmost form of abstract language evoking this. He wanted to attain this level of abstraction, although he knew this was impossible since music for him was a superior art due to its inherent abstract language (McMullen).

For me using the idea of music is also the most convincing one in conceiving and perceiving the city as an abstract work of art. Not only because of its apparent abstraction, but also because time a much more essential role in city and music plays than in a painting, which is in essence a static object. As an example I will use the live performance of a jazz band. ‘Live’ because
every moment is unique to the particular spectator, experienced on the spot. It is extremely actual in a certain place and time, but as I will explain it is also surrounded by many virtuals, much like being present in a city. I use jazz because this genre of music is extremely interactive, unpredictable though constructed on a fixed structure, therefore I think jazz is the one who illustrates my point the best.

Jazz is a genre that has gotten hold of many jazz standards through the years of the genres existence. Jazz standard is a musical composition known by many musicians and listeners. Most of them are collected in books, the so-called ‘fake books’. A composition in such a book merely consist of a musical stave (G-clef) including key-indication, a melody line and the chord progression, generally noted on a single page. Jazz musicians who want to perform a jazz standard have to construct their own arrangement corresponding to their typical orchestration. After finishing the arrangement (and practicing) an ensemble is ready to perform their personalized version of the jazz standard.

In the arrangement you can do whatever you want, there are no rules. However, in order to capture a song (which is the idea when performing a standard) one has to stick to certain fixed elements. These are the chord progression and the melody line. Rhythm, key, speed and orchestration are less important variables for sticking to the origin of the standard, but essential for the ‘sound’ of the ensemble.

The chord progression is fixed, like a framework. On top of the chord progression there is the melody, which is also fixed most of the time, until the instrumentalist[s] start his/their improvisation. From this moment no one knows what is to come. It is completely unpredictable even for the instrumentalist.

The production of space is much like a live concert. The musical space of the performance consists same as society of mental, physical and social components. The mental is presented in the conceived jazz standard and the personalized arrangement, the physical is the perceived sound and the acoustic and social component is the music as it is interpreted and affected by the mutual relationship between the instrumentalists and the spectators. The final product is constructed on the complex interplay between the three spheres. During the live performance the space is constantly changing, as a process within a complex social interplay between spectator and performer, both affecting each other and therefore both insecure about what to expect musically. The abstraction of music is reflected in the fact that everyone has his or her own interpretation and own imagery by hearing music. The improvisation of jazz makes it even more abstract because until a split second before a note is played no one has an idea of what exact note will be played,
for the spectator but also to a certain extent for the performer. Moreover every single individual in the room has their own interpretation of the space he is part of (spiritually and physically): everyone is living the music in their own truth.

But what makes the city as abstract as this musical performance? Due to the invasion of the stranger in urban society the social bonds are dissolving. With liquid modernity, Bauman emphasizes that in this era of globalization many people don’t really belong to the place they are actually in, and the number of people that don’t belong to a place will only increase. They are physically present, but they don’t know the place or space they are in on a spiritual level. Everything is new and therefore their virtual images are constantly adapting in order to meet with the actual images. When I move for the first time to a certain city for example, I perceive the objective physical part of the city, namely the built environment. At the same time I am constructing an image of the spiritual, the atmosphere, or the subjective social part. I can be sure that in the upcoming period I will have to adapt this subjective image, since it is constructed on first idealized impressions. At first I may like it, I can feel attached to it, but I also know that if I stay there for a couple of months more, or even some days, I have to adjust my thoughts of the place (this will go rather automatically) as I am not yet seeing the ‘truth’. The later thoughts on the city won’t correspond with my initial thoughts of that place. At the end it will take years, probably decades before one truly understands a specific place. This will only occur when one is undeniably rooted in that place, when one has become a significant part of that place. In the era of liquid modernity however the opposite is happening. The truth is far away and constantly disordered by other strangers or fragmented selves which means that the urban society is heading towards total abstraction. My first sense of the place will be an idealized one, since all virtual images are idealized images. But the more you are familiar with a space or place the closer your sense of it will get to the truth.

Moreover as many people nowadays are walking and living in places they don’t really know, the true meaning of a city is starting to become more and more vague. Postmodern cities are being inhabited by strangers with false truths, who are constantly adapting their thoughts onto the city. The longer they inhabit the city the more they will understand the city. At the moment they enter the city however, they are already part of the city (physically and spiritually), and thus also part of the truth. This means that these strangers are influencing the true meaning, with their own unclear thoughts on the city. So with the influx of strangers into the city a new truth occurs, but this truth is simply that there is not one truth anymore. Instead, everyone is living with his or her own truth. Resulting in an abstract piece in which anyone can have his
or her own interpretation of the city. The initial idea of the city has been faded: the postmodern urban society is inhabited by alienated individuals. As I’ve said: everything in a space interacts with each other, beginning with the actual and virtual images of the individuals, resulting in urban societies in which one general truth cannot exist. Everyone has his or her own perceptions and truths. As this extremely fast ongoing process is all pervasive, there is no time to construct social bonds and therefore the current urban society is becoming increasingly incomprehensible and abstract. It is like an abstract work of art that should evoke deep emotions according to Kandinsky, and it should have a different meaning for every individual. Or a high degree of multi-interpretability so to say.

The spiritual subjective space is changing constantly, opposed to the built environment that changes very slowly. Due to developments resulting in time/space compression, the meaning of the city has changed dramatically. This means that we have to obtain a design not as a figurative entity functioning the way it is conceived by the architect, but as an abstract entity that in the end will be defined by its users, spiritually as well as physically. So without the environment changing physically, the design of the architect will still evolve over time, as it changes spiritually due to its context and its users after that it has been built and will even affect the city after it has been demolished, all due to its mutual interaction with its context. At the moment it is being demolished its spiritual presence will decrease until it is negligible, since the actual isn’t there anymore and the virtual isn’t able to extract information from the actual. Urban agglomerations are breathing organisms that develop over time and that are continuously changing. They are constructed on processes rather than on patterns. The approach towards the development of the city should be constructed more by means of a process than the deterministic modernist approach. Especially in contemporary society that rapidly changes there is a need for easy adjustment in order to cope with future changes. The role of the urban planner of today and the future is one of guidance, of enabling opportunities and providing the needs. I argue that the postmodern city is incomprehensible; it is defined by its users (to a large extent strangers) that make the city an abstract entity due to their incoherent interpretation, not unlike the abstract sounds of a jazz ensemble. The only way to design a postmodern city is by obtaining a framework that holds the opportunities for freedom and flexibility, like in jazz music. The city can grow around this framework (preferably in small designed steps). The time of big master plans is over, in the abstract work of art that is the city that will be interpreted in many different ways, leaving not one truth, as no one knows one truth. The postmodern urban society nevertheless can, and should, cater for good places
to fulfill people need to other people and a sense of community and coherence. This however shouldn’t be achieved by constructing enclosed and inverted fortified enclaves within the city structure. We shouldn’t ignore the other, but we should find ways for cohabitation with regards to the new emerging social relations. Cater for places in which we can strengthen our skills of being civil.
Cities are meant to be places which concentrate different races, social classes, ethnicities, life-styles; the mixture of difference has seemed to writers on cities from Aristotle to Hannah Arendt to stimulate people in crowds. It is more largely the very essence of an open system that difference should provoke; again from Aristotle to Arendt, the ideal public realm has appeared one in which people react to, learn from, people who are unlike themselves [Sennett 2009, p13].
In the previous chapters I have outlined the implications of globalization on the perception of space, so to say the global causing the local and vice versa, which has resulted in my emphasis on the city as an abstract work of art.

In order to cope with these changing social relations our approach to the city should change as urban planners compared to the deterministic regulated approach of the 20th century. Modernism in architecture and urban planning is still very present, especially in emerging economies. This is interesting since time has proven that modernism doesn’t result in the desired level of sustainability - in the definition of the triad I previously defined - or viability known from the traditional cities, which are constructed more as a process over time. Although I am aware that the issue of the dramatic urbanization has resulted (and still does) in fast and cheap ways of constructing, compared to the more gradually evolving cities of for example the Renaissance, but we can simply not continue to systematically neglect the spaces we live in. We need more innovative urban experiments untied from the regulated and homogenous modernist approach in order to find new ways to construct urban society quickly but sensitively. The modernist developments have shown to not have been economic at all since they are not sustainable and often end up being demolished and rebuilt within a period of 30 years. Postmodern developments should be designed in a much more sensitive way. As modernism is known as the international style, postmodern urban developments should be more local. Instead of ignoring its context, postmodern urban planning should embrace its context and (re-) create the authenticity of that particular place. Local architecture should respect the ground it is built upon.

Previously I argued that we should approach the urban as a process rather than a pattern and I advocated designing spaces accessible to anyone in order to enhance our ‘civil’-skills. So no inwards oriented private entities that interrupts the indeterministic, incomprehensible, therefore surprising urban society, but open public spaces accessible to anyone rooted in the processual nonlinear and continuously changing urban society, resulting in a complex urban tissue that allows for integration and civility. The design of the urban is a holistic and complex process, going through all scales from global and regional strategies, to the placemaking of the place. Contemporary strategies should focus on the networks, on the connectivity from the global to the local and on the convenience of moving through the urban society from one place to another.

There are movements with a special emphasis on the actual design of the places where the people live, spurred by the ideas of visionaries like the urban sociologist Jane Jacobs and the urbanist William H. Whyte. The main idea behind this movement is called the placemaking of the place. Placemaking
strikes a balance between the physical, the social and even the spiritual qualities of a place. It is more about creating a vital place rather than a design. The question rises how to create high dense and humane places and where to address the issues posited in the previous chapters. As such it will be about ‘civility’, authenticity, density, the city as a process in order to tackle and deal with issues concerning the individualizing society caused by the rapid urbanizing environment and the conquest of the nomadic elite. To put it simply it is all about obtaining meaningful places in the present-day urban society that cater for flexibility and adaptability in a nonlinear approach, opposed to the rigid linear structures of modernism, that will allow people from different backgrounds to live civil and tolerant together in a sustainable urban society that is an abstract work of art.

In the introduction I posited the concept of the compact city. The compact city is a contemporary accepted urban design concept putting emphasis on the assumed positive effects of the city on sustainability in using among others density as a planning tool in order to achieve urban compaction (Raman 2010; Dempsey and Jenks 2010; Prins 2012). Rod Burgess (2004b) defines the concept as follows:

*To increase built area and residential population densities; to intensify urban economic, social and cultural activities and manipulate urban size, form and structure and settlement systems in pursuit of the environmental social and global sustainability benefits derived from the concentration of urban functions.*

Urban compaction leads to the resource conservation and so the reduction of vehicle emissions due to reduced distances. Furthermore high density contains of feasible conditions with regards to urban facilities, which are able to cater for a wider range of people on a smaller geographical scale as well on a micro-economic level as a macro-economic one. So in essence density contains the right attributes to increase environmental and economic sustainability. However sustainability, as I posited, is not only about the environment and economics: social equity is also a very important feature of the sustainability of a place. However, density in itself doesn’t provide the solution for the sustainable compact city, keeping in mind the appalling circumstances in the extremely dense 19th century cities.

Raman showed in his research (2010) that density is less important than the design and layout of a place with regards to social interaction. He stipulates that design can mask a certain high density which could lead to crowding, but it can also lead to its opposite, to desertion. The livability and as such
the sustainability of a place has to do with the harmony within the reciprocal relationship between density, layout and the facilities of a place. His research is in line with the ideas of Jane Jacobs in her book ‘The death and life of great American cities’ (1961) in which she opened doors to a more typo-morphological approach in architecture and urbanism advocating dense, mixed urban form, mixed program, inspiring public spaces, safety and leisure as having a positive effect on the social interaction within a preferable density of 525 inhabitants per hectare in order to achieve a viable and vibrant urban life. This book was a sociocratic reaction against the technocratic approach of the modernists, who she blamed for their inhumane naive rational approach to the complex city. The mixed character of a dense place, which she advocated, should result in the crowding of people and activities in a vital, joyous, pleasant and surprising urban setting and so one should search for urbanity. Her vision on the city is still mainstream in urban environments where the focus lies on livability instead of profit that in time will result to be more sustainable and therefore also economically more interesting environments.

Jacobs’ approach is about crowding people in order to achieve interaction. This lies at the basis of Sennett’s vision on civility. He once said in his book ‘The fall of public man’ that a city is ‘a human settlement in which strangers are likely to meet’ (Bauman 2000, p94) complemented by Bauman with ‘strangers are likely to meet in their capacity of strangers, and likely to emerge as strangers from the chance encounter which ends as abruptly as it started... the meeting of stranger is an event without a past. More often than not, it is also an event without a future’ (2000, p95). For Sennett the crowding of people requires the rather specific type of skill of being civil, which means ‘the ability to interact with strangers without holding their strangeness against them and without pressing them to surrender it or to renounce some or all the traits that have made them strangers in the first place’. This is the skill that we have to learn in an era in which the social heterogeneity of the urban society on a whole is reaching levels we have never seen before due to the invasion of the stranger, but also an era wherein certain parts of the city have become largely homogeneous and therefore isolated from the city due to the conquest of the stranger communities of ethnic minorities (Bauman 2000, p106), resulting in an increasing reciprocal fear from as well the outsider as the insider. So in order to obtain common civility we need places that cater for this civility. Which means places where people can express and enjoy themselves in the presence of strangers, but these same places should also presents itself to the people as being a common good, a place catering for intensity, diversity and change (Bauman 2000, p96). Places open to anyone for living, working and
leisure, all in order to enhance the social interaction. If cities are constructed as a close-grained fabric, than people from all different kinds of social groups will meet. Instead of urban planning being about zoning (which dominated the 20th century practice of urban planning) it should be about mixing. Sennett advocates the open urban system opposed to the closed urban system. The closed system is like the rigid linear modernist system of over-determined forms that has ‘paralyzed urbanism’ according to Sennett, while the open system is non-linear, built like cities from earlier times that are proving to be more flexible, sustainable and stimulating (2009, p1). The social contrast to the closed system is not the free market, nor is a place ruled by developers the alternative to Brittle city... The contrast to the closed system lies in a different kind of social system, not in brute private enterprise but rather in a social system that is open rather than closed’ (Sennett 2008, p293). Closed systems are not able to alter, and are therefore not able to adapt to the ongoing changing society. But since we know what we don’t want, do we know what exactly we do want? Well, the pitfall of the closed system is the over determined form, the utopian thought of controlling society. The open system avoids this over determined form, not by refusing rules, but by questioning what the rules should be. This has to do with urban policies, with rules that open up the environment rather than stabilize it. Rules that in themselves change when corresponding with the existing context. So policies with different variables that can adapt and change due to the interaction with the existing context, since rules can change during the development of an urban area. This will lead to more process-oriented urban planning, where experimenting with and adapting the rules over time is essential. The notion of context is essential when considering the just built elements as being a real part of the context and therefore altering and influencing the buildings which have yet to come, so ‘evolving over the course of time in a dialogue with material changes’ (Sennett 2009, p6). Which means that instead of using masterplans as blueprints when designing the urban, we should use masterplans as guidelines in correspondence with policies and the changing material context. We should strive to stimulate urban growth, to let it evolve over time like a rich habitat resulting in chance variation, socially as well as physically, step-by-step (Sennett 2008, p293)

The differences in the changing material context will be the most visible on the edges of neighborhoods, since that is where two different kind of urban spheres will meet and interact. These areas are zones with high intensity levels (as explained in Deleuze’s concept on the virtual and actual) when compared with the centers of neighborhoods or cities for example. It is in fact quite comparable to the shoreline of a lake where water meets solid land. This is
the place with the richest habitat where most natural selections and biological activity and diversity happen. It is the place where changes emerge, where things are influenced by one or another. Therefore in the urban society these edges, or the places of transition, are to a large extent interesting with regards to the establishing of a more tolerant urban form. Instead of designing from the center we should focus on the edges. Not by designing harsh boundaries as we see in the gated communities or in 6 lanes highways piercing the urban fabric. We should focus on creating porous borders. The emphasis on soft borders is not only relevant for neighborhoods or cities themselves but should also be applied to the scale of the facade of the building. Both Sennett and Bauman mention the example of the glass facade. The glass facade seems to link the inside with the outside, but in reality it blocks all the sensitive interaction resulting in a hard boundary. One merely sees what is inside (although even this can be blocked by reflections), but smelling, feeling and hearing cannot occur between the spaces. Sennett however, does praise the work of the 19th century architect Louis Sullivan who used the plate glass in a more invitational and flexible manner. It invites people to get in, functioning as porous walls like a membrane. According to Sennett this is what 21st century buildings should evoke and what would make them truly urban. He even suggests the wall as an actual choice for design in the open city. Not as a boundary but as a porous edge. If it is meant as an urban element, constructed as a demarcation of two spaces or of private to public, or as a simple constructional element. A wall in the open city should be a porous one, not like the guarded fences and barriers of the gated communities, but be truly integrated in the complex urban tissue. With the emerging heterogeneity but simultaneous segregation in contemporary urban society, the emphasis on the design of the urban should be put on provoking difference and accessibility through all scales in order to let people react and learn from the others instead of evading each other and thus enhance the skill of civility and tolerance in a city of openness (Sennett 2009, p13). Designing the city is actually like a live jazz-performance. The jazz arrangement is the structure and the artists take care of the improvisation, which could go anywhere. The role of the urban designer is about designing the structures that allow for the possibility of the city, ‘rather than to design the city itself...there can be no single designer of the city because the design of the city is not a finite process; rather it is continual and unending’ (McCullough 2008, p3). To clarify, I do not mean to imply that the city shouldn’t be designed and that urban planners and architects should leave the city to their own devices. We should still strive to obtain the right conditions for humane and viable living.
This is incorporated in the smallest scale in which the urban designer acts and where they have the most affiliation with architecture. This is the grey area in which both architects and urban designers act and is filed under the art of placemaking, as explained above.

This thesis is about the urge for high dense viable living environments and how to stimulate an urban society in which sustainability (in the broadest sense) and cohabitation in a physically and socially changing world are the key issues. Until now I haven’t elaborated on the actual implications of high density on the public space. For this I would like to refer to a review paper I wrote in 2012 with the title ‘High, dense and humane’. Although I have covered the most essential elements of that paper, I still think it is an interesting addition to this thesis. Among other issues addressed, I elaborated on the placemaking in between tall buildings. As Al-Kodmany (2011) argued, there has been plethora of research on tall buildings, but research on the role of placemaking in between tall buildings is scarce. In this paper I distilled 6 main points to take in consideration when designing in high dense urban environments. I will highlight these points (Prins 2012).

1. Human scale
The human scale is an overarching global element in the design of livable environments. All ancient civilizations respected this human scale, unless the building was meant for something bigger than humanity, something ethereal. Nevertheless, in many urban developments of the 20th century we completely lost the sense of the human scale. In between the enormous skyscrapers surrounded by 6 lane roads in most of the central business districts we cannot feel attached. We feel small and insignificant, we cannot identify with the space. Therefore we need design that can hold on to the same densities and at the same time consists of more humane dimensions. This has to do with the difference of perceived density and physical density.

2. Location
You have to take in consideration the impact of a tall building on the surround area. In Hong Kong a tall building will have a less significant impact on its environment than a tall building in a small fishing village.

3. Outdoor spaces
Private outdoor space in dense environments is generally limited, and thus properly functioning viable outdoor spaces are of significant importance. As argued before, public space is in general an essential space since it caters for social interaction and recognition. Therefore especially in the postmodern
urban society, where we increasingly need interactional spaces, there is a
demand for an inviting public space.
In the first place outdoor public spaces should be close to home in order to get
people familiar with and attached to it. Easy passive access is necessary, as
outdoor spaces need to be a physical space that functions as an actual edge in
order to enhance the heterogeneity of a place.
The number one rule for a successful public space is that it needs people.
This sounds obvious, but people attract more people so you have to take
care that people will stay in that place. As such public outdoor space needs
to be inspiring and inviting. In using green, seats, fruit trees and water the
legibility of the space will increase (Gehl 2010; Whyte 1980; Jacobs 1961). But
also café’s on the ground floor, street artists, playgrounds and other attracting
and programmatic elements will benefit the outdoor space. In the urban
morphology one has to think of plazas, narrow streets, surprising intimate
corners and street furniture and sculptures. All these elements composed
with having in mind the human scale.

4. Building Access
Tall buildings need a clear relation with the ground, and should have
pedestrian friendly entrances. The ground floor, and especially the buildings
point of access, should always stress the ground-floor connectivity, unlike
the modernists approach of the vertical city. In commercial areas this can of
course easily be accomplished by adding commercial programming with a
clear relation to the street or plaza. In residential areas this should be stressed
by easy access to the front door and for example the gradual transition from
private to public.

5. Tower Base
In order to emphasize the human scale the use of tower bases is extremely
important. Tower bases are important in order to mitigate the impact of tall
buildings on the ground place. The tower could be built on top of the base with
a small setback. The perceived density will then be less than the actual density.
Furthermore, since people don’t look up while walking on the streets, there
should be an enhanced emphasis on the articulation on the tower base. ‘By
using setbacks starting from a height of 25m, the presence of the tower can be
masked... [As such] the main goal of the base is to represent in a visual way a
low- or mid-rise building typology’.

6. Critical Regionalism
The sixth point I want to address is about culturally sensitive design. Due to
globalization cities are becoming increasingly homogenous and soulless, starting from the modernist era with the international style. Several postmodern styles responded to this by stressing a more sensitive and authentic approach. The philosophy of placemaking for example is about local and sensitive design. The urban society should respect the urban, cultural and environmental context. Kenneth Frampton wrote a prolific paper on this called Towards a critical regionalism (1983). In this he stresses the use of environmental elements, not in an explicitly but more implicitly, focusing on the sensory and unconscious (almost spiritual) perceptions of the body with regards to the experience of a specific area.

In this chapter I stressed the need for a holistic approach of the urban society going through all scales in order to address the issues stated in the previous chapters, which I more or less summarized in my emphasis on the urban society as an abstract work of art. In the following chapters I will continue with my design for a neighborhood in Korea. This design will both act as a representation and a solution of the postmodern urban society since I will address the issues stated above.
DESIGN
the case Yongsan
In the following chapters I will elaborate on my design that reflects the theory set out in the theoretical framework. The case behind this thesis is prescribed in the TU Delft studio Vertical Cities Asia (VCA) which is part of the international student Vertical Cities Asia competition organized by the University of Singapore (NUS) and concerns the housing of 100,000 people living and working in an urban setting. The competition is organized for five successive years starting from 2011 onwards and is part of a conference on the debate of the present-day issues regarding fast urbanizing cities in Asia. Every year the organization appoints a different site accompanied by a relevant theme. In 2012, the year I participated, an area in the city-district of Yongsan in Seoul was the chosen location. That year’s theme concerned the relevant issue of the rapid aging Korean society.

The competition is part of an international conference that is responding to the dramatic urbanization happening in emerging countries in Asia. At present, the urbanization has resulted in 50% of the global population residing in urban settings. This number is expected to increase up to 75% in 2050 on a total global population much higher than the current number. As the rate of urbanization in the Western world reached equilibrium with almost 80% of the population residing in urban areas, greater changes will primarily emerge in regions with lower percentages of urban residents, which are emerging countries on the highly populated continents of Asia and Africa. This illustrates the necessity of a critical debate on the causes and consequences of these changing dynamics in a globalizing world that will have major consequences in affecting social, economic and (geo-) political relations. Which are among others the things I discussed in the previous chapters. The VCA-conference allows people to debate but also to inform each other about one’s specific field of research concerning the subject.

The student competition is the main feature of the conference. This is about introducing students from all across the globe to the issues of rapid urbanizing societies, making them aware and letting them experience the impact and scale of the emerging issues, however the somewhat abstract nature of the brief, lets them be creative in introducing urban concepts without being limited by regulations and vested interests of all different kinds of stakeholders.

The graduation studio VCA is part of both the urbanism and the architecture department. Students from both departments were put together in four design-teams. The first semester was merely dedicated to the final submission date of the competition. Two teams from Delft were allowed to submit a design in June. These projects were presented in Singapore at the NUS in the first week
of July last year. My team had the honor to represent Delft with our plan "The Open Ended City". Our team consisted of Jan Maarten Mulder (architecture), Claudio Saccucci (architecture), Samuel Liew (architecture), Stef Bogaerds (urbanism) and I. Together with the other design entry from Delft 'Life Time City' we both achieved first prize in the competition.

The jury consisted of renowned academics and practitioners in the international urban design and architectural community:

Joaquim Sabate - Professor Urban & Regional Planning, University of Catalonia, Barcelona
Tan Cheng Siong - Architect, Urban Planner, ArchUrban Architects Planners Singapore
Tunney F. Lee - Emeritus Professor, Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Rocco Yim - Executive Director, Rocco Design Architects Limited Hongkong
David mangin - Architect, Urban Planner, Seura Architectes Urbanistes

Each university was allowed to submit two designs. The involved universities were:

Asia
National University of Singapore
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Tongji University
Tsinghua University
University of Tokyo

Europe
Delft University of Technology
ETH Zurich

North America
University of California at Berkeley
University of Michigan
University of Pennsylvania

Every successive year the competition brief asks for a design of 100,000 people living and working on 1sqkm on a specific site with a specific theme (the first year they chose Chengdu, China; and this year they chose Hanoi, Vietnam). The number of 100,000 people is not based on real-world critical demographic
Competition Brief

In the second of this series of competitions, the theme of “Everyone Ages” will be explored. Population aging is unique in Asia given the speed at which it is occurring and the immense social and economic changes that the region is experiencing at the same time. All across Asia, the number of people age 65 and above is expected to grow dramatically over the next 50 years. For the region as a whole, the population in this age group will increase by 314 percent - from 207 million in 2000 to 857 million in 2050. Changes that occurred over 50 years in the West are being compressed into 20 to 30 years in Asia.

The competition seeks innovative design solutions for a balanced environment in urban life addressing and anticipating the challenges of a rapidly aging society. It encourages new positive approaches to aging society that identify opportunities for maintaining capacities and well-being over the life course. Concepts such as “active aging” and “aging in place” with new approach to accessibility, social care and support for elderly are expected to affect design solutions and programs which exceed the standard community club repertoire and incorporate a range of opportunities to activate the elderly and bring them back to workforce, and to develop appropriate environments, especially the built environment, for both older and younger generations, which is crucial to successful aging within the community.

Key issues of concern are: how to create an influential imagery and new concepts of living reflecting the de-stigmatized stand on elderly and aging; how to encourage ‘active aging’ and build up the competency and ability of the elderly to stay independent by providing holistic approach to supportive environments; how to allow ‘aging-in-place’ through inclusive and integrative design.

The objective of the competition is to seek a holistic solution or a new urban paradigm for a rapidly growing Asian city which also faces the issues of sustainability and quality of life that also addresses the increasing aging population in Asian cities.

The design is about a high intensity and density Asian city that addresses its growing aging population. The design should consider the following issues holistically and integratedly.

Sustainability - The design should examine a closed loop paradigm, ecological and resilience attributes in their solution.

Quality of life - The consideration for inclusiveness and sense of community.

Technical Innovation - The appropriate and innovative use of technology and technique.

Relationship to context - Sensitive consideration of the place, climate and cultural context.

Feasibility - The rigor of the research and criticality of design in addressing the issues.
research figures but is rather an arbitrarily chosen number. Comparing it with a few of the most dense urban agglomerations like Hong Kong, Mumbai, Dhaka and Karachi this number exceeds all of them (although the numbers of the big urban agglomerations are not taken on a scale of 1sqkm but on the scale of the whole agglomeration). So this number of 100,000 is taken as a maximum, to allow us to deal with the most extreme conditions. However the arbitrariness of this number also resulted in it being interpretable in numerous ways, as long as it could be justified by a good argument. Although in our research we always stuck to the absolute number of 100,000 people per sqkm, our concept is not about creating an urban area of any fixed density as I will elaborate further on.

Although the initial masterplan of The Open Ended City, which is our submission for the competition, is constituted and submitted as an actual urban solution for the specific area, it contained essential elements that in my opinion are extremely relevant in the global debate on the growth of contemporary cities in the globalizing world. For me this signified the starting point for an in-depth research on the changing urban environments and all the consequences that it entails as elaborated in the previous chapters. As this concerns global issues affecting the local and resulted in my emphasis on the city being an abstract work of art which I complemented with general urban implications and strategies for the contemporary city in chapter 4, my design of the Open Ended City evolved from a design specifically for Yongsan in a case study with regards to the in depth research posed in the previous chapters. Resolving issues concerning specifically Yongsan is still part of the design but in this case merely illustrating the need for sensitive and authentic design in my broader concern of how to cope with 21st century postmodern urban societies.

Briefly, the final design is a representation of the postmodern urban society addressing the issues discussed in this thesis, it is a reflection of the very nature of the postmodern experience, figuratively and spiritually as well as literally, concerning present-day global issues reflected on the local. The postmodern experience is one of feeling dislocated, de-centered and lost. Resolving issues concerning Yongsan and Seoul is part of the design but on a much broader level it draws attention to the need for a more critical local and sensitive approach. This thesis is centered upon taking a position within the current debate on the approach towards the indeterministic 21st century urban society as opposed to the deterministic modernist approach rather than about resolving Yongsan as a localized site. It is about defining my approach, methodology and strategy with regards to global issues embedded in the culture and environment of a specific place and space, using Yongsan as a case study.
mapping Yongsan
Since 1960, Asia, the largest and most populous of the continents, has become richer faster than any other region of the world, in particular the eastern half of Asia comprising ten countries: China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand and in the middle part India, have turned in a superior performance, although variations in achievement can be observed here too. The worst performer was the Philippines, which grew at about 2 percent a year (in per capita terms), about equal to the average of non-Asian countries. China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand did better, achieving growth rates of 3-5 percent. This impressive achievement is, however, still modest compared with the phenomenal growth of Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan, known as the ‘Four tigers’ because of their powerful and intimidating economic performance’ (Sarel 1996). In a period of 30 years, from the 60s to the 90s, the Four Tigers turned from an undeveloped country into a developed country, notably for maintaining exceptionally high growth rates and rapid industrialization. By the 21st century, all four developed into advanced and high income economies.

Asia’s economy on a whole is growing fast but there are distinct differences between economies of the single countries as claimed above. This you can among others conclude with regards to the level of urbanization in each country. It is well-known that economic growth goes hand in hand with urbanization. It implies the conversion of rural land to urban uses (residential, commercial and industrial) as regional economies transition from an agrarian-based economy to an urban economy based on industry and services.

‘This process occurs in urban areas of developing countries undergoing structural economic changes as well as in ex-urban (or peri-urban) regions of developed countries that are impacted by economic growth of proximate urban areas’ (Irwin 2004). As such, at present the urbanization in Asia primarily appears in the expanding economies of developing countries like China, India, The Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. In China for instance this is happening at such a pace that fairly unknown megacities are facing big problems since the architects are complaining that the cities are growing faster than they can design them, with all the consequences that entail (Hulshof and Roggeveen 2011). On the other hand countries like South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan have already succeeded in becoming highly advanced service economies and reached equilibrium, in terms of economy as in terms of urbanization.

During their economic development towards becoming top trading cities in the world their cities grew excessively. Seoul metropolitan area (including Incheon and Gyeonggi) contains more than 20 million people which ranks them
fig.1 Urban population related to urbanization rate (CIA Factbook, 2012)

fig.2 Yongsan situated in Seoul
number 2 behind Tokyo, as the world’s biggest metropolitan area. However since the Korean economy reached equilibrium the city proper of Seoul (10,000,000 people) stopped growing. In fact from 1990 the city declined with 900,000 inhabitants. This decrease will continue slowly, although this is a bit misleading since the suburban jurisdictions of Incheon and Gyeonggi from the Seoul metropolitan area are expected to continue their growth. But the pace in which this occurs is not comparable with the Korean urbanization rates of the 60s, 70s and 80s or the rates of the current emerging Asian markets, which goes much faster. The annual rates of population growth of the developed countries (USA, United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Japan and Germany) are much lower then the annual rates of population of the emerging economies (China, Indonesia, Malaysia, India). However those countries still have a rather high percentage (except for Malaysia) of a population living in rural areas (figure 1). What you can conclude from these figures is that the growth of the urban population in the developed countries has stabilized and the growth of the urban population in developing countries is rapidly increasing.

This also reflects on the different (urban) strategies municipalities have to deal with. An emerging country has to deal with a high demand for new housing in urban areas. Unfortunately in a lot of cases this has to happen at such a pace that it leads to insufficient and inadequate living environments. In developed countries the urban strategies are more focused on enhancing the living conditions of the population, since there is no immediate need for big urban developments. Municipalities consequently can focus on the realization of sufficient housing, public spaces, communal facilities, infrastructure and public transport to create a sustainable environment that is beneficial for social inclusion.

This distinction is fundamental regarding this year’s competition brief and last year’s brief. Since last year’s task was to come up with a complementary urban model that was able to tackle the problems of the heavily expanding Chinese urban agglomeration Chengdu. This year we had to cope with a far more contextual environment in which we had to come up with an urban model that was able to deal with and strengthen the existing conditions without neglecting its qualities or opportunities whilst allowing for a certain amount of flexibility within the plan so that it can cope with unforeseen scenarios in the future.

Economic prosperity
The chosen area for this year’s competition was situated in the geographical heart of the capital of South Korea, Seoul (figure 2). As stated above South Korea has undergone a dramatic economic growth from the 60s to the 90s
‘The East Asian miracle’

fig. 3 shifting economy (K.C.I.S., 2009)

fig. 4 urbanization process South Korea (K.C.I.S, 2009)
from an undeveloped country to a highly developed country in which emerged a shift from a rural based economy to an economy based on industry and services. (figure 3). Simultaneously with this economic growth people started to migrate to the city which caused a vast urbanization process (figure 4). The influx of people into cities was a result of the push by the government into the manufacturing sector, with factories located near cities, and people moving to get higher wages. Today, South Korea is the world’s largest shipbuilding nation; it also ranks first in terms of semiconductors and displays, it ranks second in terms of mobile phones and fifth where the steel and automobile industries are concerned. Furthermore Korea’s stands as a powerhouse in terms of information technology as demonstrated by its vast IT-related production and exports, development of world-leading technology, and also the wide use of internet and mobile telecommunication devices within the country (K.C.I.S. 2009). This economic prosperity resulted in a GDP that at the moment ranks 15th in the world (Worldbank 2012)(figures 6).

Spatial consequences
Rapid population growth in urban areas led to a housing shortage and spiraling land prices in cities. With the rising land prices and a marked preference for modern lifestyles, the rate of people living in apartment buildings has continued to increase (K.C.I.S. 2009) (figure 5). In order to solve the housing shortage problem and stabilize the housing costs, the government started to increase the supply of land available for residences and the building of small housing units. Big infrastructural interventions were inevitable to reconnect the city. These two spatial developments, initiated by the government, had major consequences for the spatial experience of the city. As you can see in figure 7 the urban morphology and form changed exorbitantly. The city grew as did the economy, resulting in an extremely vast urban landscape wrapped around the mountains.

A well functioning developed economy needs well functioning infrastructure, this is reflected in the extensive metro system, rail road-tracks and wide six lane roads piercing and demarcating the urban fabric, internally connecting the city. The vastness of the city is so extreme that even when standing in the television tower on top of a mountain the only two things you see are mountains and buildings engaged in an endless sprawl out into the horizon. The urban fabric characterizes an extreme heterogeneous architecture, executed in a completely disordered nonlinear way. Like a typical postmodern urban environment Seoul consists of multiple centers, it is indeterminate, fragmented, full of surprises, completely incomprehensible and connected by networks. Ambiguous, as you feel physically somewhere inside but at the same
PERCENTAGE OF APARTMENT HOUSING IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN 1975:

1%

400,000 APARTMENT UNITS ARE BUILT EVERY YEAR IN KOREA THAT IS EQUAL TO THE 3.5% OF THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK.

100% RATIO OF HOUSING UNIT PER HOUSEHOLD (2005)

MORE THAN ONE MILLION APARTMENT UNITS IN SEOUL.

53% OF KOREANS LIVE IN AN APARTMENT COMPLEX

source: Korean statistical information service 2007

'With rising land prices and a marked preference for modern lifestyles, the rate of people living in apartments buildings has continued to increase.'

2005

52.5%

1975

1%

Housing / people living in apartments

Source: Facts about Korea - Korean Culture and Information Service (2009)

fig. 5 percentage people living in apartments in Seoul (K.C.I.S., 2009)

fig. 6 Timeline Korea
time lost and therefore in an abstract sense outside.

At present, the infrastructure and the rebuilding of apartments happens every 30 year has a strong influence on the urban tissue. This is because of incentives for landowners to rebuild and make money (woon 2012). However there is an awareness of a need and possibility for change, since the city is undergoing a dramatic metamorphosis. Figure 8 is showing how an age-old creek is filled up in the 60s in order to ease up the traffic by creating a huge road piercing the city. After four decades they realized that sometimes the advantages of a vital public space outweighs the connectivity of the city in terms of livability. They realized a small artificial stream through the city on the exact location of the old creek.
'With rising land prices and a marked preference for modern lifestyles, the rate of people living in apartments buildings has continued to increase.'
Percentage of apartment housing in residential buildings in 1975: 1%

400,000 apartment units are built every year in Korea, which is equal to 3.5% of the existing housing stock.

100% ratio of housing units per household (2005)

More than one million apartment units in Seoul.

53% of Koreans live in an apartment complex. Source: Korean statistical information service 2007

With rising land prices and a marked preference for modern lifestyles, the rate of people living in apartment buildings has continued to increase.

52.5% in 2005

1% in 1975

Housing / people living in apartments

Source: Facts about Korea - Korean Culture and Information Service (2009)
fig. 8 reorganisation of the public space
Education
The remarkable progress of Korea would not have happened without the outstanding performance of its school system. One key to this success has been the policy of attracting top graduates to teaching, and then training them rigorously early in their careers. Another reason, but this one is more critical and could also work counterproductively, is the emphasis that is put on the education of the children. “From the beginning of childhood, the importance of money and achievement are emphasized by the parents, so they feel that unless you are successful in school grades and a good job, good prestigious college, you’re not successful” stated by Korean child psychologist Dr Kang-ee Hong (Williamson 2011). Moreover a school day that lasts more than 14 hours is not unusual. At its worst, this single minded pursuit can result in sleep-deprived teenagers, anxious parents, and stressed out families (Barber 2010). The pressure put on the students is very well illustrated by the halt of daily routines of people going to work on the day of the ‘final test’. This test is extremely important for the Koreans as the result determines which university you will attend. Because this is considered an extremely crucial moment in one’s life, all daily practices are suspended for one day in order to take care that students are on time to do the test. So a lot of pressure has been put on the children to perform well.

Workforce
In line with this pressure on education the workload on people is also fairly high. From all the OECD-countries the people from South Korea have the longest working hours, 2190 hours a year (figure 9). In an interview of Forbes with Lee, a civil servant in South Korea, Lee told that he wakes up at 5.30 to commute to work at 8.30 a.m. and then works until about 9.00 p.m., 6 days a week and that he gets 3 vacation days each year. The amount of days of each year is limited in relation with other OECD countries. According to Michael Breen, author of The Koreans in an interview with Forbes, “the Korean culture is an authoritarian corporate culture. It is very bad form to leave the office before the boss does, so people will hang around doing nothing, and then when the boss leaves, they feel free to leave... Because of all of that, people don’t have much of a life” (Olson 2008).
Furthermore it is striking that the rate of women in the workforce in South Korea is rather low compared to the same OECD-countries (figure 10). In Korea there is still a quite conservative approach to the division of men working outside and the women taking care of the children and the household. This phenomenon is probably still deeply rooted in the culture which has its origins in Confucianism in which the women have a subordinate role.
fig. 9 working hours a year (OECD, 2012)

fig. 10 women workforce (Korea 2020, 2010)
Social consequences
Korea has to deal with a lot of people who are suffering from certain physical or mental problems. Game, nicotine-, porn- and alcohol addictions are very common problems. Also the rate of women undergoing plastic surgery is striking. The pressure on the education system and the workforce are seen as the big causes of these social issues which even led to a remarkable high suicide rate (figure 11). This rate is the highest in the world.

Aging
Due to the economic growth the life expectancy of Korean people has grown excessively. This is a direct result of better living standards and improvements in health and medical services. Obviously this is very positive but it also involves a social issue emerging in a couple of years namely an aging population. As you can see in figure 12 11% of the population has an age above 65. This number will eventually increase to 38% in 2050. This implies that 2,8 persons in the workforce has to take care for one person of age 65+. At the moment this number will be around 6,4 per aged person.

Health services
Medical advances has led to a rise of the life expectancy of people. Also infant mortality occurs far less than in the past. The health expenditure increased from 1985 with 85.000 won (€ 60) to 840.133 (€ 560) won per capita in 2003. The healthcare facilities are rather well organized. Number of beds per person in relation to other OECD countries is rather high. However in the future, when they have to take into account a higher percentage of elderly people, this number probably has to increase. For instance in comparison to Japan, which already has to cope with an aged population, they are lagging.

Globalization
A final aspect I want to introduce is the one of globalization. The built environment is by its very nature a product of its broader socio-economic in which it is commissioned and designed. It plays the key role in providing a culturalised framework for economic transaction as is the case in most large scale developments which aim to redevelop areas to create surplus land value. Spurred by what has been dubbed the Bilbao effect, developers and
fig. 11 suicide rate compared to income and emphasis on education

fig. 12 shifting demographic (kostat 2012)
City planners have come to see iconic architecture as playing a central role in attracting such investment in the form of tourism and big money. Resulting in the production of architecture that is in favor of visually consumable forms. The architect is often depicted as the middleman or mediator between the client intent on maximizing profit; and the citizens of the city, who are unable to discern what is truly ‘meaningful’ or ‘good’ for them. As such, the architect’s role is one that is as much about satisfying many different parties with just as many different agendas; as it is about materializing a vision for a piece of architecture.

In Asia, where they are seeing strong economic growth, the issues of profit and icon are ubiquitous. In the case of Seoul the ‘profit’-issue is present as Seoul is known as the city of apartments and apartments are often seen as the most profitable typology for land owners. The ‘icon’-issue is present in the case of the masterplan by Daniel Libeskind in Seoul for, not completely a coincidence, the same project area as this competition, Yongsan. In this new masterplan so-called starchitects are invited to design extremely high and excessive-looking towers to bring recognition and status to the city of Seoul as it aims at positioning itself as one of the top-trading cities of emerging Asia. Unfortunately in both issues the place-making of the public realm is almost not taken into account.

The example of Libeskind shows dangerously many similarities with Plan Voisin of Le Corbusier (figure 13 and 14). The question is whether this is the right way of preparing the city for the future. Both proposals totally ignore the city which, especially in this strong contextual environment that functions comparably to a complex ecosystem, in my opinion needs a much more sensitive approach. I think when dealing with this kind of rich contextual environments requires the most conceivable caution. Furthermore I think that urban developments as the one of Libeskind for Yongsan are not beneficial for a well-functioning public realm, as it is neglecting the human scale which is so important for a vibrant, livable and sufficient urban area.

Seoul a typical postmodern urban agglomeration
Asia is undergoing rapid economic growth. As a result there occurs mass migration from the rural areas to the city which implies major consequences for the urban but also, due to the expanding city, for the surrounding natural environment. For this there is a need for new urban models, a new approach for qualitative growth.

Mass migration and all its consequences are pertinent issues primarily in the emerging countries like China, India, Indonesia and Thailand. However in the case of Seoul the circumstances are somewhat different since economic
Fig. 13 renders Libeskind plan (image is a picture of the render by the author in Seoul).
growth and its resultant migration to the city already have taken place in the 20th century, from the 60s to the 90s. Seoul then had put a lot of effort in constructing enough cheap but affordable housing and sufficient large-scale infrastructural projects to connect all the parts of the sprawling city.

With regards to my theoretical research on the condition of the postmodern urban society Seoul fits perfectly as it contains all the characteristics of a postmodern urban society. Within a short period of 40 years the economy and the urban of South Korea grew excessively resulting in a fully developed country competing on an economic level with the biggest markets, with Seoul as its most important financial centre. The city breathes capitalism including the associated architecture representing international and corporate capital. Big downtown developments consisting of hotels, offices and expensive residential units all housed in fancily designed skyscrapers. This is about exposure and the flaunting of one’s status. Like the masterplan of Libeskind.

Not only is the economic condition and accompanying urban fabric typically postmodern, also the emerging social issues emanating from the increasing pressure on the workforce and education is characteristic for developed postmodern urban societies.

The concept of the design addresses the Korean issues mentioned in this chapter. However that is just a part of a bigger whole. The ambition of the design is to create a postmodern urban environment with an atmosphere that from a physical and abstract point of view, represents the city as an abstract work of art.

This occurs on three levels. First on an abstract level, the design is a symbolic representation of the current global social condition, in which the interdependent relationship of the global affecting the local is fundamental, so putting emphasis on the stranger residing in local atmospheres and the emerging renewed social relations.

Second, on a physical level, in which I embrace the 21st century social condition and therefore come up with a model creating an environment that in a way even tries to exacerbate the increasingly complex urban condition in a physical sense but therefore also in an abstract sense. This project is about nonlinearity, chance and change in an environment that tries to grasp the authentic local atmosphere. Representing the indeterministic nature of society.

Thirdly, this model is not merely a representation of the condition of the urban society it is also a critique and contains a holistic solution for a sustainable urban society. It is an approach opposed to the 20th century modernistic
fig. 14 Libeskind Masterplan compared to Plan Voisin
one, which is still very present in so-called capital postmodernist urban developments, like the masterplan of Libeskind. This is very well illustrated by recent news reports on the designation of the Libeskind plan, as recently reported on archdaily on the development of this project: ‘The collapse of the project is still speculative, as it is unclear how the next round of loans that are to mature in June will fare’. The economic crises obviously also has its effects on Korea. A lot of money has already been spent on a project that is primarily about ego instead of intelligence and at the moment only exist on paper. Society is unpredictable, most top down masterplans by their very nature do not take this into consideration. This means that there is a need for a new way of masterplanning, of qualitative growth, based on phasing and as such able to adapt to changes; especially unforeseen economic setbacks. The plan I propose does take this into consideration. On a whole all the issues I am addressing and the solutions I am generating according to this threefold solution are beneficial and an essential part of my solution for a sustainable and holistic urban environment that is extremely contemporary and in opposition to plans such as Libeskind’s proposal.
the urban model
Postmodernism is not like modernism that represents a specific movement. Postmodernism is merely the period that responds in several ways to the modernist movements in a myriad of opposed movements. So the term ‘postmodernism’ primarily designates a period rather than a movement. For example within architecture it both involves the architecture representing global and corporate capital as that it involves an enhanced emphasis on the local or on the environment.

However the architecture representing global capital may seem to be postmodern in form and function, the approach to the city for me is still very modernistic. As it does not address the theory positioned above. In my opinion urban developments should be embedded in a sensitive way within existing urban structures. Especially when dealing with urban interventions concerning inner-city conditions. Therefore every urban intervention should be constructed based on in-depth analytical research with regards to the spatial and social character of a place. In the previous chapter I discussed the social issues. In this chapter I will elaborate on the specific qualities and insufficiencies or the main characteristics that constitute the nature of Seoul, and Yongsan. I will introduce my urban model which is addressing both the issues concerning the emergence of the postmodern urban society as that it represents the true nature of this society. In my opinion the urban society needs an increased emphasis on respecting existing local conditions, as such the urban model is addressing the social and spatial issues and characteristics that constitutes Seoul and Yongsan, the location of the case-study.

In order to address the issues stated in the previous chapter the urban model aims for the following aspects:
1. **Strengthen, build and organize neighborhoods to allow for convenient distribution of shops and amenities, prioritizing walkability.**
2. **Integrate the elderly into society by letting them run day care services that free the women to work.**
3. **Mobilize the women into the workforce.**
4. **Facilitate places for leisure-seekers in order to find distraction after a day or week of toil.**

In order to address the postmodern issues and allow the urban model to represent the true nature of the postmodern society it aims for the following aspects:
1. **Preparing the city for qualitative growth over time by approaching the city as a process, addressing the indeterminate nature of the city.**
2. **Facilitate places that strengthen the interaction between the local dweller and**
fig. 15 mobility radius through time

fig. 16 assemble program
activate different age0groups
grid + centers
the stranger, places that strengthen the skills of civility.
3. Instead of aiming for more comprehensible cities, aiming for cities that are incomprehensible, multi-interpretative and therefor resulting in highly intense spaces.
4. Designing the neighborhood from zones of transition, so from the edges rather than from the center.
5. Look for existing qualities and characteristics in the city and on the site to realize a design that merge in the existing urban tissue.

Neighborhood
As people grow older, their ability to travel long distances diminishes, their world grows smaller and smaller (figure 15). It is therefore a priority that functions and amenities be placed within a walkable radius of 5 minutes (400 meters), so that people are able to continue living in one neighborhood their whole life without having to move to an elderly home once they get older. Furthermore when dealing with high densities in which many people have to be provided with food and goods on a rather small scale assembling functions enhances the sustainability of a place, as well socially as economic as environmentally, following the concept of the compact city.

This idea of the neighborhood is being explored through programmatic circles which are not a formal gesture, but rather a means to organize programs in a meaningful way which would provide for the needs of an ever aging population in a walkable 400m radius. In order to organize the neighborhoods we introduced a grid (figure 16).

This grid should not be interpreted as a rigid structure, instead it is a guiding principle which is part of an urban system that allows for enough openness to result in surprising and unpredictable outcomes (on this I will elaborate later on). It is a top down guiding principle allowing for a certain but necessary handhold in the design, not only with regards to the organization of the urban but also with regards to accessibility and therefor safety.

With regards to the density of the neighborhoods the neighborhood-model in essence can cater for the demanded density of 100.000 inhabitants per square kilometer, however this density number is variable and definitely not fixed. The urban environment on which the generic model is superimposed should respond to the demand, character and context of a place on a certain time. In principle the density-number is affecting the atmosphere of a place but it shouldn’t affect the livability of a place. Through all densities it should function properly.
fig. 17 empty main street (CBD)

fig. 18 intimate market street (by author)

fig. 19 informal vs. formal streets
Streets of Korea
On our visit to Korea, the most fascinating and lively places were the streets. The streets were varied in their appearance, but the most interesting ones had many informal stalls spilling out from their allotted space, selling a wide variety of stuff ranging from clothing and electronics to fried skewers of meat and warm spicy soup.
The contrast between the main roads and the back streets was astonishing. While the main streets were mostly empty and barren, just the next street off from the main street was full of life, little stalls, many people gathering together to watch performances and play games.
Due to their smaller plot sizes, it allowed for small shops owners to configure their shop fronts in distinct ways that added a certain richness to the streets. The variety in the alignment of shop fronts and small businesses also allowed for different informal gathering spaces and for people to have spontaneous events. The streets are the prime spaces for public activities. The presence of squares like in the European cities was limited and more formal in character (figure 17-20).
fig. 21 open chunks in city fabric (school yards)

fig. 22 Connect school yards to streets
Hybrid centers

However, taking a look at Korea at a more zoomed out urban level (figure 21), it became clear that amongst the tightly knit urban fabric of Seoul, there were open plots of land. These open plots of land appeared to be the playing fields of the schools. This was an interesting feature because it was not just an opportunity for a new form of integrated/mixed program utilizing the existing open space, but also because of the high priority that Korean society places on education; which really made a case for it to become the heart of these communities. Serving as a catalyst for urban regeneration and growth, these centers will attract more people to live in surrounding areas while serving the people and facilitating exchange.

These open patches were of particular interest, as they are the main form of public space that people congregate in and where activities happen. By connecting these open chunks of space to the informal activities that happen along the street, then a new form of public space could be created in Seoul (figure 22). The schools could therefore take on a greater and more diverse role in serving the community around it. By upgrading the schools into multi-functional hybrid centers, that provide not only education but also day care services that are provided free by the elderly, after school programs, sporting and cultural activities such as drama and performing arts classes, and many community based activities.

The Hybrid centers will serve as the heart and catalysts of the neighborhoods, supporting the education of the children, giving more opportunities to the lives of the elderly and mobilizing the women to work if they so wish. The hybrid centers create more opportunities for the elderly to be well integrated in society, as they are given responsibilities in providing day care services and programs for children.

Integrating the hybrid centers in the urban tissue is not solitary a spatial integration. In transforming them in hybrid centers it is much more then that. Hybrid centers cater for communal activities and amenities for all age groups. Transforming the schools in as well the programmatic center of the neighborhood as the spatial center makes it a special place in the neighborhood.

In the figures 23 and 24 you see the transformation of schoolyards in a spatial and programmatic way.
fig. 23 integrating daily habits different age groups in hybrid centers
fig. 24 Hybrid center integrated in the urban tissue
fig. 25 Primary vs secondary roads
The urban model
In figure 25 you see that these secondary streets are not merely more informal in function, they also seem to be shaped more organically, by the landscape. In contrast you see the wide rigid and forcing primary 20th century road structure permeating the urban settlements. The transition from primary to secondary roads is rather harsh and abrupt, going from forceful, wide and straight infrastructural developments to site-specific roads shaped by the underlying landscape.

The spatial analysis indicates that these secondary more organically shaped roads cater to the more informal and therefore more lively urban activities with regards to the congregation of people and therefore an enhancement of the social interaction among the urban dwellers. An interesting feature which we incorporated was the integration of the open urban plots of the school yards into the urban tissue by connecting them with the informal routes of the neighborhood.

This resulted in the model illustrated in figure 27 which is a diagrammatic representation of the urban situation in the city of Seoul. This is the model I basically use for my approach on conceiving the neighborhood.

Referring to Sennett’s emphasis on the design of edges, and his focus on creating public spaces that caters for more civility, as such no inwards oriented urban settlements but open neighborhoods enhancing the social interaction between different social groups of urban dwellers, can give the streets an even bigger importance. Streets can function as a barrier, it can functions as an element of transition, or it can function as an integral part of a neighborhood. For me the informal streets as indicated by the diagram can be much more than just a lively active urban element that connects and embeds the hybrid centers within the urban tissue.

These streets are more then simple lines connecting the schoolyards within a neighborhood. They are part of a continuous system that goes beyond the edges of the neighborhood itself and in itself transcends the idea of merely being a connector and caterer of liveliness. The informal route is moreover a symbol of the sensitive approach of my design as it is connecting the cores of the neighborhood (or so to say the hybrid center which respond to the social issues in Korean society), with the event core and as such the city of Seoul in a physical sense as in a social sense, while it is constructed and designed on very local site-specific features allowing for arbitrariness. Furthermore it breaks down the rational grid structure and therefore gains the welcoming incomprehensibility of the project, but on this I will elaborate later.
fig. 26 interpreting the edges
Instead of designing and putting emphasis on the real centre of a neighborhood I want to focus on the edges and the modes of transition. This probably will result in more incomprehensible cities from a spiritual point of view, but on the other hand it will strengthen our civil skills. After all, postmodern cities are considered to be multi-interpretable and incomprehensible, as stated in the previous chapters. My aim is not to design a more comprehensible urban model, my aim is to design a more civil urban model, in an abstract work of art, even putting emphasis on the increasing incomprehensibility of the city. Not aiming for community, but aiming for tolerant cohabitation creating inspiring and surprising multi-interpretable environments. Considering the postmodern social condition one to deal with or even obtain it as a chance rather than a problem, consequently resulting in a representation of the current society.

In figure 26 you see several options of perceiving or interpreting the urban neighborhood when designing streets as elements of places for transition within an urban structure. As such one should avoid designing streets as barriers. The main roads are especially important for the easy connection of the several areas. The secondary roads will be acting as places for social urban activities. But this I will illustrate when focussing on the actual case-study. Furthermore because of the interplay between the formal [primary] and informal [secondary] roads the definition between the borders of different urban districts is blended. Everyone who enters [the strangers] or lives [the resident which could also be a stranger] in the neighborhood will have its own interpretation of the organization of the neighborhood, as such resulting in highly intense spaces or zones of intense transition and fusion.
fig. 28 positioning of Yongsan in Seoul

fig. 29 Yongsan and the park designed by West 8 and Iroji architects
Spatial analysis Yongsan
Yongsan is a district in the geographical center of Seoul situated between the three Central Business Districts/ commercial centres in Seoul, namely Jongno, Teheran and Yeouido, and is well connected to them with the current metro system (including proposed new lines) and the proposed monorail. It is located next to a US military base that is going to be transformed into a large park designed by West 8 and Iroje Architects. Due to its central location and proximity to the new park and the Han River, YongSan is in a prime location for leisure activities, providing an escape for people located nearby and in the other centers (figure 28).

Experience of the site
In February, our studio visited Yongsan in Seoul, the experience on the ground was very different to all the research that was conducted prior to the trip, mainly using google earth and google street view. We, the group, discovered that the “site” was not one cohesive site at all, but rather separate patches of urban tissue that happened to be located within a boundary line that was determined in the competition brief. As such, there were some areas that had old scraggly buildings and other areas with new high rises. The contrasts were great and varied. We traveled on foot around the site to determine key architectural moments within the area. The built fabric that we found on site can be classified into a few broad categories:

1. New highrise towers
2. Old low rise shophouses
3. Locally significant places of congregation
   ie. Electronic market, National Museum, War Memorial
   Train station.

Train Station
The train station is a very large and dominating building within the landscape of the site. Its sheer size and presence blocked the connection between the east and west part of the rail way and was more of an obstruction between the two sides rather than a connector. The design propose to create a better east and west connection by opening the ground floor to allow for a visual connection from both sides, that would serve to unify Yongsan and integrate the two halves (figure 31).
fig. 30 preservation of buildings

fig. 31 places of congregation in Yongsan.
Preservation of Buildings
This proposal seeks to preserve and re-use the buildings on the site that had architectural significance. These included the museums and electronic market that had cultural value to the people living around the area and the broader population of Seoul. Many of the newer higher rise towers that are structurally sound and can accommodate large amounts of people, these will also be preserved and re-used.

Preservation of Infrastructure
In addition to preserving buildings, the roads are also going to be preserved, this will maintain the crucial flows of traffic that connect YongSan to its surroundings.
At times, roads are widened to allow for the new influx of traffic and people that would accompany the new high densities that are to be accounted for. The preserved objects and infrastructure on the site are indicated in yellow in figure 30.

Preservation of Atmosphere
By analysing and investigating the conditions that surround the site, it was possible to understand the textural qualities that make a city interesting and livable. The atmospheres were a result of the variety of building heights, width of streets, and the varying amounts of open space that were present in the city fabric.

Situating the neighborhoods
The site was suitable for the placement of 4 neighborhoods on it, each with a walkable radius of 400m, a 5 minutes walk from the center to the perimeter of each neighborhood [figure 32].
The average F.A.R. of all four neighborhoods will be 5.0. Thus the assigned F.A.R. to every single neighborhood can be higher or lower, depending on the existing situation and the preferred atmosphere. To give a certain notion, an exact F.A.R. of 5.0 means for a community that it should accommodate 50,000 people working and living encompassing an area of 500,000 sqm.

Connecting to its immediate context
Each neighborhood will be formed and shaped by the existing conditions on that particular part of the site. It will reinforce the connections that are present and strengthen the links that it has to its surroundings, i.e. the park, the Han river, the adjacent architectural fabric. Resulting in four differentiated neighborhoods as a direct result of four different critical adjacencies [figure 33].
fig. 32 Event Core

fig. 33 neighborhoods responding to context
With the placement of the radius of the neighborhoods on the site the primary roads are permeating the circles rather than acting as a border. In this situation the neighborhoods are transcending the forcing structure of the primary roads. As a result the edges of the neighborhoods overlap each other in the habitable environment, which results in conflicting spaces of the two neighborhoods. These spaces however are according to Sennett the spaces that will cater for the exchange of singularities and therefore result in unpredictable and rich zones of transition and fusion. Sennet explains it with the zones of transition in the ecological habitat where land meets water (figure 35).

Event core
Yongsan will primarily be catering to two large user groups: The residents of the neighborhoods and strangers (people could be both) that will come to enjoy outdoor activities, for work, visit friends, go to the park as well as the water sports that will be happening along the newly invigorated river front.

As Yongsan becomes the point of arrival for the two main outdoor destinations, it is important that there are interesting cultural programs, entertainment and shopping areas that are strategically placed to encourage people to linger and have a good time.

The event core, will serve as a mixing ground and a place of exchange between the residents of Yongsan and the leisure seekers, creating an exciting environment with its own unique blend of warmth and vibrance. This event core is situated at the edges mentioned above. As you can see in figure 34. The event core is so to say the informal route that is fully ignoring the main roads of the district of Yongsan. It is an edge going inside Yongsan and interrupting regular structures. Hence I can also apply my diagram for the neighborhood on the
fig. 35 fertile zones of transition where water meets land
fig. 36 the urban model superimposed on Yongsan
scale of the district. In figure 36 you can see the different areas that occurs and as such the importance of the design of the roads in the perception of these spaces. The eventcore functioning as the informal route that subsequently is connected with the informal route on the scale of the neighborhood (figure 37). This latter is in my opinion important in the current condition of the postmodern urban societies that are interconnected through all different kinds of networks.

Unfolding the neighborhood
I argue that a development of an healthy urban environment is in a harmonious mutual relationship between topdown designated elements and bottom-up initiated desires. Spaces initiated from the mental space, shaped by the social space unfolded in the physical space. Allowing for complexity, unpredictability and incomprehensibility. The city as a process.

The main idea of the neighborhood consist of topdown elements that allow for

fig. 37 connecting the neighborhoods with the informal route
fig. 38 grid configuration

fig. 39 grid superimposed on neighborhoods
adaptation and change through unpredictable future developments, events and desires.

In the following paragraphs I will elaborate on the unfolding of the neighborhood. The neighborhood in this thesis is an urban model to assemble functions within a walkable distance, create opportunities in which the elderly, women and children benefit from each other, create civil places for coherence and social interaction, connect it with its context and treat the city as a process. With regards to the latter two I didn’t elaborate yet on how the neighborhood is tackling these issues.

The grid
First of all the generic model of the neighborhood is built on a grid-system. This grid as you can see in figure 38 is a rigid structure that divides, in a hierarchical system, the neighborhood in more or less even plots. Several configurations are possible.

This system is constructed after an in depth analytical research on other famous dense urban grids like Barcelona, New York, Portland, Vancouver, London, Amsterdam and Berlin. From these studies we investigated the height of the buildings, the density of the environment, the width of and hierarchy between the different kind of streets and dimensions of the buildings blocks, the sidewalks and the percentage of public space compared to the percentage of [semi-]-private space. This resulted in the grid in figure 39.

But as I said, this generic rigid grid is merely used as a tool for designing the actual neighborhood. The actual configuration of the streets of the neighborhood will be a product of the grid corrupted by the existing conditions. In figure 40 you see the transformation of the configuration of the streets after superimposing the grid on the existing conditions.

The unfolding of the configuration of the streets and building blocks leads among others to a rather sensitive approach of the design. Existing streets may sometimes need to be widened a bit, but on a whole we try to respect the old structures. This also gives the possibility to develop the neighborhood step by step. So putting emphasis on the conservation of the streets and upgrading them when necessary in order to meet to future demands. In figure 41 you see the roadstructure. In figure 42 certain roads are highlighted in yellow which is indicating the fixed roadstructure. These are permanent elements that needs to be executed in order to interconnect all the elements. The roads in between, which are basically the tertiary and service roads are rather arbitrary and should be considered as a scenario. This is one of the main elements of the concept. As we cannot predict the future, architects nowadays should come up with more intelligent and dynamic masterplans that are able to adapt to future
fig. 40 site corrupting the grid

fig. 41 roadstructure
developments or events. Therefore this masterplan consist of fixed and non-fixed elements that are constructed on policies. Policies in this respect are based on density, program, plot coverage and maximum heights of buildings. Every neighborhood has its own policies in order to constitute a certain distinct atmosphere. It is functioning like the structure of a jazz-standard. Furthermore the actual design of the buildings blocks can be easily adapted to surrounding qualities. As you can see in figure 33 and 41, all four neighborhoods have their different characteristics based on the underlying and surrounding context. The neighborhood by the park responds to the green area but also to the urban main road piercing the site. The buildings block adjacent to the main road are high dense while towards the park the buildings blocks in a way dissolves (figure 46). At the edges with the park the building blocks contains of more green public space related to the dense edge at the side of the main road. The ‘organic neighborhood’ at the other side, has a much more organic configuration within the building blocks itself. This is responding to the existing organic structure of the building blocks. However due to the demand of densification, roads need to be widened and buildings need to be scaled up. Therefore the existing urban structure isn’t sufficient anymore. For all four
fig. 43 FAR nad program bar Yongsan

Fig. 44 FAR and program bars different neighborhoods
neighborhoods the existing conditions were analyzed, from which is tried to derive the spatial quality and atmosphere of every single neighborhood.

Density, program and flexibility

Based on the conclusions generated from the analysis on the distinct areas, policies were set up. As I already mentioned the total density of the masterplan of the Open Ended City is responding to the competition brief of 100,000 people working and living per sqkm. However in order to maintain a certain atmosphere within a neighborhood rules with regards to density are used as a tool in order to take care of this. The density and program bar of the different neighborhoods varies depending on contextual and programmatic features (figure 44). Therefore the organic and park neighborhood can have a lower density than the demanded one in the brief.

As stated this design responds to the demands in the competition brief of a F.A.R. of 5. However the main point of the design is that it doesn’t construct a final image like a blueprint. The proposal is actually a guideline of how to use the generic idea of the neighborhood when superimposing it on the actual site. How to deal with existing conditions and set up policies that meet existing conditions and are able to retain the qualities and atmosphere or authenticity of a place. A guide that allows for a gradual process. The aim is not the suggested F.A.R. illustrated in figure 43, but could be lower or even higher. Depending on future developments. This proposal is about a gradual process, resulting in something no one can predict, going step by step like a breathing urban habitat. The only aspect that really needs to be taken care of is that the urban environment in all its configurations entails the sufficient primary and secondary facilities and as such is self-sufficient.

With regards to the facilities the main elements are the hybrid centers. These centers are the cores of the neighborhoods and are fundamental nodes in the urban tissue of the design on every scale. Other important elements are the roads as the roads are the lines that connects the nodes but also connects them with the bigger and smaller scale.

The primary and secondary roads are fixed and thus allow for some elements on the site to be permanent, maintaining the flows of traffic that will pass through Yongsan to the surroundings CBDs. However, the tertiary roads can be modified and reconfigured in the future, which will allow blocks to be enlarged or reduced according to the needs of the people living in the area. The rules for each neighborhood will guide the growth of the area and result in different possible variations within the block structure, shown in figure 45. Flexibility within the urban blocks, allowing for a gradual growth. The city as a process based on policies. In figure 46 you see the basic policies assigned to the park
fig. 45 possible configurations within a fixed structure
neighborhood.

Park neighborhood
In explaining my urban model I am zooming in on the park neighborhood, which is located as indicated by the red box in figure 42.

In figure 47 you see that in our initial design the informal routing is integrated as a closed circular system in the center of the neighborhood connecting the hybrid centers. As argued before I don’t want to design an inwards oriented urban society but an open one, allowing for different flows of people.
fig. 47 urban model superimposed on park neighborhood
meeting each other at unexpected places. For this the informal routing on the neighborhood scale needs to be integrated with the larger scale of the eventcore. Especially as people from outside Yongsan will start to reside in the event core, and especially them I want to involve in the core of the neighborhood as illustrated in figure 47. Introducing an informal route like that will again result in the blending of the edges. Or actually I am pulling an edge, from the eventcore straight to the core of the neighborhood, ignoring the main roads. Multiple urban districts will appear defined by the user himself.

The informal route is a fundamental element in the design of the neighborhood. It is the public realm that allows for civil urban activities, or better said the place for very local activities and interactions. Therefore this informal route is more than just a pink line going through the blocks. The informal route is shaped on extremely local characteristics, namely the differences in height of the ground as the park neighborhood is constructed on a small hill between two tops (figure 48). The primary and secondary road structure are piercing rather forced the different urban districts, on the contrary their is the informal route. This informal route owes its organic shape to the underlying contourlines of the landscape. The implementation of context in the design as a phenomenological element is essential in the approach of critical regionalism. As the secondary (fixed) roads are ignoring the underlying landscape the informal route follows literally the path of least resistance. Going around the two tops connecting the hybrid centers, the eventcore, the museum and the several urban districts by going through the core of the neighborhood (figure 50).

The informal route is corrupting the building blocks of our initial design which were based on the grid we introduced. The informal route is piercing the building blocks. But actually it is more than just piercing the blocks, it is a symbolic element that represents the merging of the different social groups. Groups of people (strangers) coming from the eventcore are meeting local people actually in the middle of their own opened up building block. At the same time §there are evolving surprising places due to the informal route that is interrupting the rigid grid structure. The informal route connects the several urban districts within the neighborhood without following the secondary roads and therefor really is able to connect the cores of the neighborhood. As such I want the crossings with the informal route and the secondary roads to be designed as if there is no hierarchy in any direction. A clear materialization of the pavement of the different urban elements will be important in order to obtain a sense of distinction.

Corrupting the initial design with the informal route based on the landscape resulted in the following transfiguration of the urban elements shown in the figures 51 and 52.
fig. 48 contour lines underlying landscape

fig. 49 informal routing shaped by contour lines landscape

fig. 50 informal routing + secondary fixed road structure
The triangle-district
Zooming in on the triangle as indicated by the red square in figure 53 I will elaborate on the actual configuration of the buildings and the different modes of atmosphere. I already discussed the grid and the accompanying building blocks, however in this scale we have to deal with the buildings itself. Here the flexibility and placemaking aspects really plays a part, it is about designing the urban society.

The urban model I introduced is as I said a representation of the postmodern urban society as well spiritual as physical. It is a model which is critical on the deterministic or say modernistic approach in which many present-day
fig. 53 map park neighborhood
Softscape
In order to mitigate the urban character of the dense environment but also with respect to the adjacent park there will be lines of green permeating the urban environment of the park neighborhood. At the edges with the park the neighborhood characterizes in a more open dissolved green atmosphere, towards the main road the character of the neighborhood will be much more urban (figure 54). As you can see the secondary roads are aligned by a row of trees on equal distances. This will result in a nice linear perspective, emphasizing the linear character of these roads.

fig. 54 map park softscape
Hardscape
The neighborhood consists of 4 distinct types of spaces which are all materialized and used in a distinct way. On this I will elaborate in the following paragraphs when zooming in on the triangle as indicated by the red square. This map gives you a first indication of the different zones in the neighborhood (figure 55).
fig. 56 view on the Gouden bocht in Amsterdam by Gerrit Berckheyde 1671 - 1672

fig. 57 analysis urban environment Yongsan
developments are designated, including the glamorous urban design by Libeskind for Yongsan. This critic on those developments is best shown in this zoomed-in scale. And this I want to illustrate with the painting of Amsterdam (figure 56). In this painting you see the diverse canalhouses in Amsterdam. In between the canalhouses you see open plots which yet have to be executed. This is a process that goes over time, step by step. At present all the plots are built up.

These open plots say precisely what I am pointing at, as every single plot is designed as a single entity. Why not aiming for the same kind of approach. Single plots designed separately from each other on a fixed structure.

In seoul you see that this city also consists of many singly designated plots instead of manufactural homogenous built environments (figure 58). In my analysis on several urban environments you see the extremely heterogeneous morphology of the city.

In figure 57 and 58 you see one of the examples I analyzed in order to investigate the relation of the buildings with the streets. First of all there is no sidewalk, the road is aligned with the facade of the buildings. Second there is no relation with the ground floor and the street. The streets are a sort of cocoons in the urban tissue. Except where there is commercial activity on the ground floor, those are the places where interaction occurs. And by my own experience in Seoul perceived as the most vital and lively places (figure 59 and 60).

Furthermore there are no gardens or outside private spaces, merely very
fig. 59 analysis streets Yongsan (pictures from naver maps)

fig. 60 diagrammatic representation of the relation of the building with the streets
narrow alleys in between the buildings, that most of the time are built with their back against each other.

In the design of the triangle I focussed on several of these aspects. First of all the design and morphology of the buildings. These buildings should be designed in my opinion one by one, guided by policies over time. These policies can vary from height of buildings, to setbacks, to the placement of entrances, programmatic policies etcetera. Responding to the issues of the day and the context. Thus these policies are not fixed but change over time. This is actually what is happening in another very lively district in Seoul called Hongdae, which is being investigated by Next architects. Their findings can be read in their book Seoulutions [Reuser 2012].

I think in a city like Seoul such an approach is very possible. This could result in an image shown in figure 64. In the triangle-district there are basically 4 kinds of spaces. The first space is the space of the fixed secondary roads (64). The second space is the informal route that pierces the building blocks, which I already discussed [figure 65]. The third space are the streets constructed by the grid which are more or less perpendicular on the informal route. These are the tertiary roads of the roadstructure and are the ones to which the buildings open up [figure 66].

With reference to the analysis in the figure 57 as the scale of this urban area is much bigger than the investigated areas I also introduce the noticed very narrow alleys in the analysis in this urban model. As the scale in this design is a bit bigger I had the opportunity to scale up these alleys and therefore create this third space, the interior space of the building blocks [figure 67]. All spaces are accessible for all urban dwellers, however there will be different modes of privacy in the perception of the four spaces on which I elaborate on the following pages [figure 62]
fig. 61 map triangle district
fig. 62 indication distinct spaces neighborhood
fig. 63 overview on possible configuration park neighborhood, a view on the hybrid center, informal route, secondary and tertiary roads
The four spaces

1. Fixed secondary roads
   The figure below is showing a possible image of the expected atmosphere when the total area is designated in the determined FAR of 3.8 of the secondary fixed road. As you can see the buildings have a diverse character with commercial program on the ground floor. Halfway the road you see a crossing. This is the place where the informal route crosses the secondary road. That is the most obvious crossing to go from one district to the other. However there are more openings within the building blocks itself in order to cross the secondary road. Shortcuts primarily used by residents of the districts.

fig. 64 view on fixed road structure
2. Informal route

The informal route is distinct from the other ‘places’ that it is constructed on the underlying landscape, it is ignoring all other designated structures. It is representing the secondary roads as noticed in the analysis of Seoul. The informal route is not a shopping district, it is accessible for cars and actually functioning as a route for interconnecting the districts, same as the rigid secondary road structure in the park neighborhood. In the picture below you see an image of this idea. Along the route there are open patches for urban activities. Furthermore it is distinct from the other in places with regards to materialisation, but on this I will elaborate later.

fig. 65 view on informal route
3. Tertiary roads
Tertiary roads are constructed on the grid, these streets are 8 to 10 meters wide. They don’t have a sidewalk. The image below is showing the long side of the building block. The long side caters for most of the commercial program. At the end of the this road you see the informal route which is perpendicular on this road. All the long sides of the building blocks are ending at the informal route.

fig. 64 view on tertiary road and indication materialisation
4. Interior spaces
Below you see the smallest in perception and (probably) in use most private spaces, although they are open to anyone. These spaces have an even more diverse, arbitrary and capricious character compared with the other three spaces. Seoul is a city that surprises all the time, these interior spaces are the most mysterious, surprising and unpredictable spaces. It could evolve in a dump of garbage but at the same time it can develop as a gathering place for the locals or even transform in those creative pop-up clusters. It is a new kind of urban typology that emerged from the expansion and intensification of the urban spaces in presentday situations in Seoul.

fig. 67 view on interior spaces and indication materialisation
fig. 69 sectional perspective A-A'

fig. 70 sectional perspective B-B'

secondary road, informal route, tertiary road, interior space, interior space
Hybrid Center
The hybrid center is situated at the tip of the triangle. The main gathering point in the neighborhood. Here there are two main flows, one going from the park the other from the informal route. I introduced a sort of open pocket on the informal route. This open pocket could be perceived as a plaza where all the different flows of people integrate. Moreover this pocket goes beyond the triangle as it is crossing the secondary road. This you can see very well in figure 63. The secondary road is therefore not blocking the flow of the informal route and as such not functioning as a boundary. This is however not the only place where there is an opening in order to cross the street. Although it is the most explicit one, I want all the building blocks to be permeable at a few places. Especially for the locals this will result in interesting shortcuts.

Materialisation of the hardscape
The distinction between the three spaces will be made in materialization and accessibility. All spaces are accessible for everyone on foot. By car merely the interior spaces are not accessible. The informal route is also for cars, as it is connecting the rigid secondary roads with the very local informal route and therefore basically also is secondary road. With regards to the materialization of the pavement the tertiary and the interior urban spaces will all have the same materialization (figure 62), The whole area in between the secondary roads and the informal route constitutes of a uniform materialization. So no distinction in sidewalk and road. The informal route however will have a distinct materialization going beyond the edges of the triangle. The secondary roads are being covered by asphalt. In the sections in figures 69 and 70 I indicate the materialisation for each distinct area on which I elaborated above.
Tower

Although the park has a more pleasant low dense character opposed to the highrise neighborhood at the south, it also consists of towers. Of course this is all depending on the demand, it is possible to integrate towers within the pleasant green character of the neighborhood. However in order to lessen the presence of the tower, these towers should be positioned on a plinth with a setback. This is beneficial in order to obtain the human scale, the setback should at least emerge at a height of 20 meters (figure 71).
Programmatic

In the analysis of the building blocks I noticed that commercial program was primarily situated on the long sides of the building blocks. I am piercing the urban blocks with the informal route on the long side opening up the inner part of the building block, in essence this means that the opened up short-side doesn’t provide for program. However I am aware that in an urban development which is process-based, as a designer I cannot say that there shouldn’t be any commercial program on the short side as it doesn’t fit in my concept. These places are too interesting for commercial activities. However I want to emphasize the use of the long-sides for commercial program. This will also lure people to move away from the initial path, the informal route and eventually even move through the building blocks. I want new people to get lost and local people to move through their neighborhood choosing their own routes (figure 72)
Density
The configuration of the design of the park neighborhood showed in this thesis has a F.A.R. (or F.S.I.) of 3.7.
The G.S.I. is 0.40. This number will be slightly lower compared with the other three neighborhoods as the park neighborhood dissolves in the park and therefore consists of more open plots.
However the plinth in the whole masterplan has an average height of 6 layers, this represents a F.A.R. of 2.2-2.5 with a G.S.I. number of around 0.40 - 0.45. The towers take care of raising the density number to the demanded amount, in the case of the park neighborhood a F.A.R. of 3.7 (figures 73 - 74).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARK NEIGHBORHOOD</th>
<th>grundoppervlak</th>
<th>lagen</th>
<th>totaal torens</th>
<th>totaal m²'s</th>
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<td>1212000</td>
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<td>20x20x60</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>84000</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| education         | 4.7%          | 96.980 |
| health            | 2.8%          | 57.775 |
| culture           | 2.5%          | 51.585 |
| retail            | 5%            | 103.170|
| office            | 17%           | 360.778|
| hotel             | 3%            | 61.902 |
| residential       | 85%           | 1341.210|
|                   |               | 2063.400|

site area 550,000 m² (ongeveer)
FAR: 3.7 (ongeveer)

fig. 73 density-numbers
towers + plinth = FAR 3.7

plinth = FAR 2.2

plinth = FAR 3.7

plinth = FAR 2.2

fig. 74 sections including + density
Phasing
My goal is to construct an urban model that will generate an urban realm where there is not a single reality from an abstract or subjective point of view. An urban realm that consists of highly intense spaces due to the presence of innumerous different kinds of people, so innumerous perceptions of the place. Therefore I introduced a model that is able to adapt to change, is constructed on chance and is therefore nonlinear. But which also results in tolerant spaces, spaces that are able to let people interact, and therefore creating a space that is civil.
In figure 73 you see a possible scenario for the process which is about the gradual growth and transformation of the city. The growth always begins with the existing current situation, subsequently the placement of the hybrid centers and the execution of the first designated plots. Then densification and transformation can occur.
Furthermore, as this urban proposal is not a fixed design the density-number is variable and as such undetermined. The F.A.R. of 3.7 as stated in the previous chapter is merely responding to the brief of the competition. This urban model is about nonlinear growth and transformation, about adaptability. In every form and density it should function properly. If not, then this urban model should be flexible enough to adjust and thence become a viable urban neighborhood. Therefore the phasing diagrams in figure 75 are just an indication of a possible growth-scenario.
fig. 75 possible phasing of the execution of the neighborhood
EPILOGUE
conclusion
The world is in continuous change therefore our approach on conceiving the lived environment should also change. In this thesis I explored the consequences of current changes in global society and how this is affecting our perception, demands and use of the space.

The postmodern urban society has an emphasis on sustainability. As urban environments are the most populated entities with more than 50% of the global population residing in urban environments, we have to put emphasis on building sustainable cities. The rather indefinite expression sustainability for me requires harmony within the inextricably connected triad of social equity, economy and the environment.

In this thesis I stressed the importance of understanding the current changing social situation caused by globalization, urbanization and individualization. This is a global situation affecting local settings. An increasing group of global oriented people is acting in very local environments. Due to the invasion of this group, which is basically consisting of nomadic individuals, newly volatile social relations are emerging with a result that former strong social bonds are disintegrating. This is an observation and as such as an urban designer we have to find new urban strategies dealing with this situation.

A second aspect I am addressing is the indeterministic nature of the urban environment. Sustainable environments are not only responding to current situations, they are also able to adapt to future changes. Cities are dynamic objects determined by the user and conceiver. As the user, or the individual, is extremely unpredictable the conceiver acts in ignorance. Therefore all professions who are dealing with the conception of the urban society has to be aware of this. To a certain extent we can determine the needs for the people of today, but we cannot for the people of tomorrow. Moreover today’s society is increasingly incomprehensible because of the disintegration of the social bonds. Due to a growing middle class and the emergence of the internet all over the world an increasing number of people will have the opportunity to act more than singly in their local environment.

So the social situation on the globe is getting more incomprehensible. This however is also occurring in the physical urban situation. Not only individuals are indistinct, also the extremely expanding cities in developing countries are becoming extremely indistinct. Therefore ‘Urban agglomeration’ is a more accurate indication than ‘city’.
In the aim for sustainable cities we have to explore urban models that cater for civil and tolerant urban places. Open urban environments opposed to inwards oriented closed entities. Therefore I want to stress the importance of designing the urban from edges, the most vital places for intensive interaction and exchange of perceptions, rather than the centers. In our approach obtaining harmonious and tolerant cohabitation in a global situation in which social bonds are disintegrating and new social relations, although more volatile, are emerging. As such conceiving urban strategies that cater for civil urban places in order to enhance the social interaction among the local and the global is critical.

International architecture embodied by 20th century modernist developments and postmodern corporate architecture representing global capital should be avoided when designing sustainable humane environments. Sensitive design where generic approaches become specific sensitive architecture. Therefore we have to put emphasis on the local qualities and respect existing urban structures in the globalizing world.

Furthermore we should stress the indeterministic nature of society by designing masterplans not as a blueprint, but as a guide towards the future, which enables adaptation to inevitable changes. A processual approach rather than a fixed rigid design. Flexibility in the design but also in the future transformation of the urban.

In this thesis Yongsan, a district in Seoul, is the case study representing from an abstract as well as a physical point of view the indeterministic nature of the postmodern society, addressing the issues of today but also allowing for changes in favor of the city of tomorrow, rooted in the existing complex urban tissue and sense of the place. This project is about emphasizing the urge for civil places rather than creating strong social coherent places. It is about obtaining a contemporary urban environment. Within this concept it is articulating the schizophrenic character of as well the city as the individual. As such this intervention represents but also enhances the true nature of the postmodern urban society. The postmodern society being inscrutable conscious about its schizophrenic and unbalanced character. It is a layered design which is representing from a social and abstract point of view as well from a spatial point of view the postmodern experience. The informal route is the embodiment of the postmodern nature as it is designed on the very local shape of the landscape, at the same time connecting the core of the neighborhood, the hybrid centers, with the scale of the event core and eventually also the city, corrupting the conceived system of the grid and therefore opening up the
building blocks, but at the same allowing strangers to enter the neighborhood. Resulting in an edge that is going inside, but actually functioning more than just an edge. It as an urban place, a typology, a zone. Allowing for intensive interaction, resulting in high amounts of virtualities and therefore obtaining for the most excessive, multi-interpretable, incomprehensible spaces but also the most civil places in an era of increasing volatility.

However this proposal is not merely a representation and a critic, it also contains of a solution, a solution for cohabitation in the urban society. In the first place in catering for civil places, in the second place in creating a human-scale environment that is able to adapt and transform and in the third place because the design is rooted in the spatial qualities of the locale, with special emphasis on the phenomenological character. Opposed to rigid urban plans. All in all a holistic and, very important, a sustainable solution.
reflection
In retrospect, this graduation project can be divided in three phases. The first phase is obviously marked by the competition of the first semester. The second phase starting from September 2012 was about the investigation, positioning and constructing of the theoretical framework and the third phase is about reviewing the initial design with respect to the theoretical framework and about acquiring a concept in which both phases are reconciled within a holistic plan.

From a scientific methodological or scholarly point of view this thesis is constructed on a rather unconventional and maybe even weak method with regards to the methodology course educated at Delft. However in so doing the final result became unclear for a long time and therefore eventually resulted in an urban model that could only have been discovered by following the unpredictable path that is taken. Without ever being aware of this it somehow reflects the point that has been made in this thesis with regards to the approach of the city considering it as a process resulting in an unpredictable outcome. For a large part this has to do with the atypical educational program of the studio, which is distinct from other urbanism studios as it involves both students from the urbanism and architecture master cooperating in teams. Opposed to the other urbanism graduation tracks in which one has to do their complete project individually.

Furthermore the first deadline, at the end of the first semester in June (P2), every attending group had to have a finalized masterplan. In the other urbanism-master tracks one has to hand in and present a thesis plan at the P2. The thesis plan is about introducing the site, present some initial analysis, but most importantly present the problem statement, the applying methodology and the theoretical framework obtained by an extensive literature review. I was allowed to hand in the thesis plan in the beginning of September because the first semester was so focussed on the submission for the competition that there was no time to simultaneously write the thesis, but moreover there was no time to read literature in order to acquire a solid theoretical framework for the thesis plan.

The competition is responding to the dramatic urbanization in Asia and all the consequences that it entails. The masterplan we submitted for the competition was constructed on an extensive spatial and socio-economic analysis, furthermore we introduced a strategy and concept that responded critically to the current trend in global architecture that tries to grasp on the so-called Bilbao-effect, which is very present in current global architecture. The latter is the critical note in our project in which we compare this current trend in architecture with the rigid modernist plan of Ville Radieuse of Le Corbusier, we introduced a flexible urban plan that responded to the existing
qualities of the site, as explained in the thesis. This, not very unsurprisingly, distinguished our plan from the other participating teams with exception of the other participating team from Delft. However this critic wasn’t underpinned from a theoretical point of view. As such from the moment we came up with this I knew this was going to be the subject on which I wanted to put emphasis in the subsequent individual part of the graduation. Which was primarily about understanding the global condition of society, or more accurate about understanding how cities and the use of cities are changing due to developments and processes and the resulting change in the behavior of people. Focussing on the interdependent relationship between the physical and mental components and the social component. This relationship is a pioneering perspective within sociology on the production of space in 1971 posed in the prolific work of Lefebvre ‘The Production of Space’. According to Lefebvre every space produces its own space, constructed on elements from the past. For me this understanding resulted in a research on the condition of current society. In order to enhance my understanding of the contemporary global condition I read the extensive analysis ‘Liquid modernity’ on current society by Bauman. He describes in a very concise way the driving forces of today’s global trends and developments and the resulting social changes on a local scale. These two books functioned as the main sources on which I based the theoretical framework in which I argue to consider and approach the city as a process, a continuously developing and complex ecosystem. In the submitted design for the competition we introduced the flexible strategy that is able to adapt to unpredictable future changes. With the theoretical framework that I posed in the individual phase I explored and argued why we should approach the city as a process by doing this extensive literature review. Which means that the concept of the submitted design in relation with my individual thesis basically functions as an hypothesis. At the same time this resulted in a distinctive emphasis with regards to the final product. The project started with a concrete analytical from as well a spatial as a socio-economic point of view resulting in a design specifically for Yongsan. Subsequently, with the individual part the emphasis of the project shifted to an investigation on the current consequences of the globalizing world for the local environment, with Yongsan as the case-study. The theoretical framework didn’t merely result in an argumentation for the strategy as used in the submitted design, it also resulted in a critic on our design. Critic on the submitted design has among others to do with the strong emphasis on the community in the submitted design. As I argue that you can’t design a community. Communities are strong coherent social entities within a social system. In my investigation of the current condition of society designing...
communities from scratch in a contemporary postmodern urban environment is a utopian way of thinking. In an era of liquid modernity, of fluidity, of volatility there is no solid structure to built up a community. That is why I am arguing for the design of civil places, tolerant places where people will learn how to deal with strangers and as such feel comfortable when close to strangers. Which is necessary as the stranger at present, and especially in postmodern urban societies, is omnipresent. Therefore the ‘communities’ in the submitted design I prefer to call them simply ‘neighborhoods’.

But that is not the only consequence of this new vision. In order to create meaningful civil places we have to obtain open city structures, no inward oriented closed entities, but neighborhoods that are open to anyone, designed from the edges rather than from the centers.

One of the main elements of our ‘communities’ was the informal route. However this route was an urban element connecting the very local hybrid centers in the center of the so-called community, without connecting it with the urban system of the larger scale of the event core and as such the scale of the city. Which resulted in an inward oriented route. This was an important element in our submitted design but I think that from a spatial point of view this informal route would never be able to be as strong as we suggested it would be, because it is an inwards oriented element. I gave this informal route a much more central role, treating it as an edge that is going inside the neighborhood corrupting the grid dramatically. Resulting in an urban element that connected the bigger scale of the event core with the smaller scale of the neighborhood in a very strong gesture of piercing the building blocks, as it actually opens them, and at the same time connecting all the super-local hybrid centers. Furthermore this system is based on the underlying heights of the landscape, providing a phenomenological and sensitive character. The informal route is much more than just an informal route. Actually in my proposal it isn’t so informal at all. It is basically a super formal and layered element within the urban proposal. As the informal route is constructed as a completely different system on top of the grid-system that constructs the neighborhood from a physical but also social point of view. Hence it resulted in a rather complex and layered proposal which is a representation of the postmodern city. It is symbolizing the schizophrenic character of both the postmodern city as its residents.

The emphasis on approaching the city as a process, a flexible strategy, also contributes to this idea of the schizophrenic character, as it never knows its actual character.

Postmodernism is among others about accepting the imperfections of society. Postmodernism is not about the aim for the perfect city, the utopia, as utopias are leading to rigid designs, a snapshot of a perfect society. In my opinion the
concept of community in the present condition is part of this. So or we should redefine the conception of community, like what is done with the concept of alienation, or we should consider it as a utopia. Nevertheless in my urban model I am looking for a different way of cohabitation which Sennett designated as open and therefore civil environments.

In the third phase of my graduation I had the opportunity to look into this undiscovered smaller scale of our masterplan and therefore gained the possibility to define and gave reason to the distinct spaces within the neighborhood. Which means that in this third phase I examined both the global and the local scale and coincided them. The scale in between, which is the scale of the urban district Yongsan, was for the most part set in our initial design. This scale was concerning the strategy, defining of the neighborhoods, the idea of the hybrids, emphasis on the design of the streets, (fixed and non-fixed roads), determining the grid and responding to the physical context. Which are all elements we conceived from extensive spatial and socio-economic analysis. However by means of the theoretical underpinning in the second phase and the intervention of the (in my opinion) powerfull reshaped informal route I really distinguished the individual design from the initial design. From as well an abstract or social level as a physical level. That intervention, which resulted in a layered proposal, succeeded in bringing theory and design together.

The theory in the design is all summarized in my concept of the city as an abstract work of art, and more specifically my model of the live-jazz performance. This live-jazz performance is a perfect metaphor on the production of space. Its unpredictability, its multi-interpretability, but also that everyone even the performer has to cope with this. It is at the same time constructed on a system, a very flexible but complex system. Which is a reaction on the determinacy, the idea of social engineering of society, of rigid modernistic urban plans. The room is at that moment full of strangers, each with their own perception of the space, simultaneously affecting the space with their presence but also with this unique perception. It is about affecting and being affected. This is also happening in the city. Virtualities that are affecting other virtualities. In the design this is reflected not in obtaining a clear and ordered urban environment in order to create a coherent idea of the place, which I suggest isn’t possible in the contemporary postmodern society. On the contrary I am designing places that are responding to the unpredictability of society by designing places that cater for a clash between virtualities (or individuals). This maybe will lead to a a rather incoherent social space, but at the same time resulting in very civil places as this environment is open to anyone, physically but also spiritually in terms of interpretation. Although remember that this environment is constructed on a system, as viable environments needs both a structure but
also the possibility for change in order to be sustainable for the future.

As already argued from a methodological point of view this thesis is rather incoherent. The first semester could be perceived as the hypothesis for the subsequent part of the graduation. When taking a look at my thesisplan you can see that I didn’t yet really knew what direction I was heading to. From that point I almost started with a new research in which I even didn’t look at Korea for a couple of months. After finishing the main literature I wrote a small essay on the postmodern city being an abstract work of art. From this moment I knew what my emphasis was going to be with regards to the design. As I had almost all the ingredients for my final thesis I was able to set up a structure. This structure I drafted according to the pyramid principle. This is a principle used by consultants in order to structure their thinking. But for me it also worked pretty fine. As I was able to split up theory and design and at the end plot the different headings of the theory on the primary ideas of the design [appendix I]. This resulted in a proposal that is much more layered and contains of a more academic approach compared with the submitted design for the competition. At the end I think the ratio theory-design is more or less 50-50. The final product is a layered design as I was able to conceptualize the investigated theory in a vision on the contemporary postmodern urban society and subsequently became capable to project this theory in a rather intelligent way on the design. Introducing a contemporary approach on the city. Although the path I took wasn’t the most conventional one, I think this somehow really benefitted the project. Starting with the cooperation with my teammates, as this initial proposal, which was a very strong team effort, from as well a theoretical as a designing point of view formed a very strong basis for my individual proposal. A clear design or actually framework for the transformational city.
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IMAGES
