a landscape-based strategy for the integration of marginalized Roma settlements through a sequence of public spaces

> Robin de Louw
Introducing

^ fascination

^ the contemporary city dialogue
“When I was a little boy, I knew I wanted to become an architect. Not just an architect, but a ‘good’ architect. I dreamt of designing gorgeous spaces in the most beautiful places of the world. I imagined these spaces still being there, long after I died, and my name had became well known.”

However, growing up and learning about the differences between my Western world and the other 90 percent, made me realize I wanted to leave more than just beautiful things.
“I met a nice couple in Guinea Bissau [...] They showed me how they live in a 16 m2 room in one of the compounds of the village.

I went to all the IKEA stores in The Netherlands [...] I found a fabulous 16 m2 showroom of which I was sure it would fit perfectly in their room“

“I flew to Africa to be able to help unpacking the boxes I had sent them to refurnish their room. Ana and Tinko were happy, they invited all their friends and family to come and see. I felt I had saved them.”

Fig. 1-1_ Ana, Tinko

^ Katinka Simonse on her world saving intervention #2
Fig. 1-2_ Their 16 m² multipurpose bed room

Fig. 1-3_ A 16 m² multipurpose bed room in Ikea
Fig. 1-4_ Villagers and family helped Ana and Tinko with the delivered boxes with modular furniture

Fig. 1-5_ Their new 16 m² multipurpose bedroom according to Western standards
The city is a fine example of a complex system. The fragments of the city can only be understood through the whole, and the whole is more than a simple sum of the fragments. (Pickett, 2013).

“The city” is a cultural object. Every city is characterized by centralities and marginalities.

Many places in the city that had been defined as ‘others’ have gradually become subjected to a process of radical segregation that is likely to climax in the ethnical stigmatization of communities and places (Auyero, 2007).

Fragmentation and segregation

“The new urban question”
“we”, “you” and “the Roma” - forced evictions in Varna (Bulgaria), summer 2014
Defining
> Spatial planning under Communism in Bulgaria
> The political landscape and it's consequences for the Roma
Fig. 1-7: Europe: European Union Member States are visualized in grey.

Fig. 1-8: Bulgaria: Varna is the largest city and seaside resort on the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast and the third city of the Republic of Bulgaria.
“Throughout its history, communism was modernity’s most devout, vigorous and gallant champion – pious to the point of simplicity. It is also claimed to be its only true champion... it was under communist, not capitalist, auspices that the audacious dream of modernity, freed from obstacles by the merciless and omnipotent state, was pushed to its radical limits: grand design, unlimited social engineering, huge and bulky technology, total transformation of nature.”

Zygmunt Bauman, 1991

The spatial planning system was centralized, technocratic and subordinated to national economic interests (Hirt, 2005).

Spatial plans were just the local translation of state economic plans. Urban planners therefore were mainly ‘technical executors’ of state goals at the local level.

Systematization: social engineering

Contemporary urban challenges are rooted in the technocratic traces of the communist spatial planning system.
Defining > The political landscape and its consequences for the Roma

Eastern-European Roma culture: Roma have been a dispersed ethnic population which was spread all over Europe since their arrival in Europe in the thirteenth century (Gropper, 1975). Its internal economy has been build around self-employment, preserving old expertise while achieving new skills to adapt.

The collapse of communism has put a theoretical end to the programmatic governmental efforts to ‘integrate’ the Roma in Bulgarian society without acknowledging cultural characteristics of Roma culture. The Roma in Communist Bulgaria: forced socio-cultural processes have put an end to their culture, sedentarisation process. Gradually losing the defining characteristics of an ethnic group.
Since the beginning of Romani studies, the nomadic lifestyle is considered to be the structural and defining characteristic of their culture.

Dancing bears had been a part of Balkan Roma culture with roots going back to the first millennium AD by the migration of the Roma towards Europe from India.
Domestic animals are part of the family. This can be traced back their Indian roots, where cows are considered sacred.

The Romani people have long acted as entertainers and tradesmen. Most Romani music is based on the folk music of the countries where the Romani went through. It is an important cultural expression providing income.
At the beginning of the 1960s, the communist authorities started with settling the nomadic Gypsies in fixed settlements. Even if they were provided with houses, the Gypsies continued to live for a time in a tent pitched in the yard, with the house used as a stable for the horses.

Roma worked in agriculture to a greater extent than in the pre-communist era. Romani were employed particularly as day or seasonal workers at state farms, leading to seasonal work migration. This enabled them to earn a living.
Especially urban Roma lost their ethnic identity. They were forced to completely abandon their traditional occupations, social behaviour and cultural expressions in order to technocratically align themselves with common Bulgarian culture.

In the new economic and social context, Roma who still practised their old crafts were forced to take up modern professions and occupations. Blacksmiths found a new role in heavy industry and construction.
Although the ban on a nomadic lifestyle ended with the fall of the Communist regime, there are few traditional Roma communities with preserved old trades, language and ethnic and cultural characteristics.

Relocation to resettlement sites has been a model for the integration of Roma under communism, as aspect of the systematization program, meanwhile it appears to be a still applied policy model even in post-communist Bulgaria.
Fig. 1-19. The urban landscape in Eastern Europe is characterized by clusters of Roma communities living under primitive housing conditions with heavy seasonal exposure and natural hazard.

Fig. 1-20. Clearance and redevelopment of Roma settlements to meet modern, western housing standards lacks acknowledging the specific characteristics of the Roma culture.
But to what extent is the ‘systematisation’ program under Communism actually different from contemporary integration models?

Fig. 1-21_ conceptual models for the integration of marginalized communities
Spatializing

- The contemporary urban landscape of Varna
- The historical development of Varna (model)
- The challenges of the contemporary urban landscape of Varna
Spatializing > The contemporary urban landscape of Varna

Fig. 1-22. The municipal district of Varna and zoom showing the urban structure of Varna.
The contemporary urban landscape of Varna

Fig. 1-23 panorama view towards the northern part of Varna, around 1990
The contemporary urban landscape of Varna

Fig. 1-24. Aerial view over the urban landscape of Varna around 1980
Spatializing > The historical development of Varna
Spatial fragmentation is in co-existence with social segregation. This conceptualizes that urban fragmentation can work as accentuated segregation that is materialized in space through barriers.

(Thullier, 2005)
Fig. 1-27. The four socio-spatially segregated Roma communities of Varna and its position in the landscape.
The Roma communities and its position in the landscape

Fig. 1-28. The Roma community of Kamenar, located on the Franga Plateau (resettlement community)
Fig. 1-29. The Roma community of Maksuda, located in the Franga Dere (original community)
Fig. 1-30. The Roma community of Chengene Kula, located on the descending terraces of the Franga Plateau (resettlement community)
Fig. 1-31. The Roma community of Rozova Dolina, located in the Avren Dere (original community)
The contemporary relation of the city with its landscape

Fig. 1-32. The inaccessible, industrial waterfront of the port of Varna

Fig. 1-33. The Primorski Park adds a high value to the social life of Varna’s citizens, at the same time its dense structure limits the connection of the city with the Black Sea.

Fig. 1-34. The waterfront along Lake Varna carries potential as metropolitan park structure, but the railway is making it inaccessible for citizens.

Fig. 1-35. The inner-city relation with the natural landscape is highly artificial.
Fig. 1-36. This tourist map by the “Institute for Research and Design Cartography” in 1979 shows the envisioned ‘Western’ park on the location of Maksuda. It has never been realized.
Approaching
^ Europeanization of the Bulgarian Spatial Planning system
^ EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies
^ The significance of public space in the fragmented city
^ The Operative Landscape Approach
^ The Cultural Enclave and The Corridor
The European Spatial Planning agenda

National Development Plan

National Strategy Referent Framework

Spatial Planning Act

Operative programs

financed by EU Structure Funds

Regional Planning Act

The Regional Plan for the Development of North East Region for the Period 2014 -2020


Municipal Development Plan of Varna Municipality for the period 2014-2020

Europe 2020 strategy

EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies

Bulgaria 2020

National Strategy Roma Integration of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020)

Action Plan for Implementation of the National Strategy Roma Integration of the Republic of Bulgaria

6 Regional Development Plans

Regional Planning Act

28 District Development Plans

264 Municipal Development Plans

Fig. 1-37_ Hierarchy of planning structures in Bulgaria. Europeanisation has added a new layer above the national planning system of Bulgaria.
The EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies defines four essential topics to promote social-economic integration of Roma within an overall process of non-discrimination of minorities in the society.
The EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies defines... The Development Strategy for Varna published by the Municipality of Varna in 2013 has not been published together with a specific strategy on Roma.
Implementing the National Strategy for Roma Integration

Fig. 1-41_ The demolition of illegal Roma settlements with bulldozers
Fig. 1-42_ Relocation of Roma in modular housing concepts

Fig. 1-43_ Interior of an illegally constructed house which will be demolished
Fig. 1-44_ Interior of a new modular house
Approaching > The significance of public space in the fragmented city

The idea of the city as a cultural object argues a specific human dimension on the concept of public space, thus public space is more than just physical state-owned space.

From a cultural point of view, public space is the core of the symbolic life of a city as this is where the experiences and daily activities of its inhabitants converge. Public space is the physical representation of community life and the community expression of contact among individuals (Janches, 2010).

*Fig. 1-45_Public space as the forum for integration*
Approaching The Operative Landscape Approach

If public space is the medium for integration, then the landscape is our canvas...

The operative landscape approach defines the landscape as a constantly evolving medium that takes notion of programmatic and ecological dynamics and uses landscape to direct communities to an inclusive whole by incorporating change over time and maintaining an active project agenda (North, 2012).

...so this approach can provide the clues to a landscape-based reorganisation of the socio-spatial fragmentation of the city of Varna

Fig. 1-46. The metaphorical turtle: the city is an integrated structure of life, work and mobility together
Approaching > The Cultural Enclave and The Corridor

approach during communism: supposed exclusion > inclusion

current approach: acknowledged segregation > inclusion

proposed future approach: acknowledged segregation > integration

Fig. 1-47_ Graphical representation of terms considering the 'integration' of minority in a majority
From conventional in-situ upgrading towards a landscape-based approach in which the formalized neighborhood is a Cultural Enclave with urban significance using landscape features as binding element.
Exploring

^ Maksuda as Cultural Enclave (model)

^ The urban drainage system as Corridor
Exploring > Maksuda as Cultural Enclave
Fig. 1-49_ Stages within the development of Roma settlements in Maksuda
Fig. 1-50_ The city within the city

Fig. 1-51_ Graphical representation of Maksuda based on the settlement distribution

Fig. 1-52_ The most important consideration is that the community is able to develop its structures themselves (Llieva, 2003).
The landscape and use of public space

Fig. 1-53  Aerial view over Maksuda
Fig. 1-54. The northern part of the Franga Dere crossing maksuda is relatively small and forested.

Fig. 1-55. The gully gradually widens towards the valley, the descending hills become steeper and less stable.

Fig. 1-56. Instable and polluted edges mark the landscape just before the drainage system becomes canalized.

Fig. 1-57. The last part of the gully is canalized and used as an open sewer leading to Lake Varna.
The socio-spatial structure of Maksuda

Fig. 1-58. The local economy starts to mix with the urban economy on strategic locations
Fig. 1-59. The local economy is often not directly visible...

Fig. 1-60. ...for non-locals
More traditional Roma crafts are still being practiced and have the potential to define a strong ethnic identity in the Cultural Enclave.
Small horse fields have been created in the valley.
Fig. 1-64. The valley provides public space to meet and connect with others. This man is collecting valuable scrap in the city center with this trolley.

Fig. 1-65. Asphalt is limited in the neighborhood, this dead-end road in the valley is used as playfield.
Fig. 1-66. The connection between inside and outside is strong. Streets function as living room and every space is used, so are the roofs which are used as balconies.
Fig. 1-67. There is a big range in streets, but most are unpaved and lack trees.

Fig. 1-68. The streets are used for all kinds of ceremonies.
Exploring > The urban drainage system as Corridor
Varna may have all the components of an inclusive city, but it currently lacks the connective tissue to tie it all together.
Fig. 1-69 Section showing the urban drainage system in the “Black Sea” zone
Fig. 1-70. Collage expressing the identity of the “Black Sea” zone
Fig. 1-71: Section showing the urban drainage system in the "Primorski Park" zone.
Fig. 1-72_Collage expressing the identity of the “Primorski Park” zone
Fig. 1-73_ Section showing the urban drainage system in the “business and culture” zone

- Business and culture zone
- Naval Academy
- Sports and culture center
- Sport stage
Fig. 1-74. Collage expressing the identity of the “business and culture” zone
Fig. 1-75. Section showing the urban drainage system in the "systematization neighborhood" zone.
Fig. 1-76. Collage expressing the identity of the “systematization neighborhood” zone
Fig. 1-77  Section showing the urban drainage system in the "ring road" zone
Fig. 1-78. Collage expressing the identity of the “ring road” zone
Fig. 1-79 Section showing the urban drainage system in the "mixed residential neighborhood" zone
Fig. 1-80_Collage expressing the identity of the "mixed residential neighborhood" zone
Fig. 1-81 _ Section showing the urban drainage system in the "brown field zone"
Fig. 1-82_Collage expressing the identity of the “brown field” zone
Fig. 1-83_ Section showing the urban drainage system in the “Maksuda” zone
Fig. 1-84. Collage expressing the identity of the “Maksuda” zone
Fig. 1-85. Section showing the urban drainage system in the "Lake Varna" zone
Fig. 1-86. Collage expressing the identity of the “Lake Varna” zone
introducing
defining
spatializing
approaching
exploring
analyzing
designing
developing
reflecting

Frameworking
^ Maksuda as Cultural Enclave
^ The urban drainage system as Corridor
A twofold approach to Maksuda as Cultural Enclave: urban farming model for integration and a street-led approach to in-situ upgrading
The local NGO Hillendarseki uses a farming model for the integration of Roma in Varna.
Fig. 1-89. The Corridor uses the drainage system as spatial framework to generate new urban mobility within the communities and the surrounding landscape. Maksuda is integrated as subcentrality in the socio-spatial structure of Varna. A continuous park structure connecting communities and landscape.
introducing
defining
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frameworking
designing
developing
reflecting

Analyzing
^ Contextual Maksuda (model)
Analyzing > Contextual Maksuda
Designing
^ Mapping (model)
^ Sections
Designing > Mapping
Fig. 1-90_ Section 1, existing situation
Fig. 1-91_ Section 1, proposed situation
Fig. 1-92. Section 2, existing situation

undefined open space  road  'ravine'  gully  'ravine'  undefined open space
Fig. 1-93_ Section 2, proposed situation
Fig. 1-94. Section 2, zoom Agricultural terraces

Fig. 1-95. Section 2, zoom Community Stairs
Fig. 1-96_ Section 3, existing situation
pedestrian entrance  buss lane  defined meadows with livestock  fluctuating gully  defined meadows with livestock  path  settlements

Fig. 1-97 Section 3, new situation
pedestrian entrance  buss lane  defined meadows with livestock  fluctuating gully  defined meadows with livestock  path  settlements

Fig. 1-98, Section 3, zoom Community center and meadows
Fig. 1-99 Section 4, existing situation
settlements  buss lane  new settlements  small gully  settlements

Fig. 1-100_ Section 4, new situation
Developing

^ Strategic development plan revised (model)
Developing Strategic development plan revised (model)
existing campus

segregated Roma community

existing social farm

experimental farming

selling food on local market

generating new flows, movements and connections by PPP’s with the revitalized urban streams as socio-spatial integrative corridor

parkway

grand promenade

- existing campus
- proposed new campus
- existing social farm
- segregated Roma community
introducing

defining

spatializing

approaching

exploring

frameworking

analyzing

designing

developing

Reflecting

^ thesis statement
Socio-spatial clustering seems to be an inevitably present element of the urban landscape, but it is not generally rejectionable. This thesis provides a strategic socio-spatial development framework within which segregation is socially acceptable and may be differentiated from that which is undesirable. The thesis makes a statement on how something different can be something equally valuable.