Stitched space
Interpreting the patchwork logic of Prishtina

Reflection report

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Research Theme
In 1999 the Kosovo war ended and Yugoslav troops began to withdraw from the territory. A void was left where the Yugoslav government used to be. The new country received assistance from the international community to set up a new government, but in the built environment, anarchy continues. After the war there was no enforcement of planning and building regulations in the capital city of Prishtina. It was impossible to get drawings approved and according to some this situation has not changed much till today.

In Prishtina, new constructions have been interwoven with the old Ottoman city fabric. Due to the period when no municipality regulated construction in the city the spatial characteristics are the result of individual initiatives. The left over public space in the city is characterized by the stitching together of elements: Old and new, high rise and one storey, Ottoman era constructions and modern buildings. The public space is experienced as a patchwork, stitched space in which seemingly random elements exist side by side.

Research Method
Deleuze and Guattari in their book a thousand plateaus distinguish between mapping and tracing and the logic that they are based on. Tracing makes use of binary logic which is comparable to tree logic, since it branches out in a certain direction. The logic of mapping on the other hand has a rhizome structure which is capable of growth in any direction. The difference between mapping and tracing is that the outcome of tracing is predictable to a large extent where mapping on the other hand has no predefined direction or outcome.

Mapping goes beyond tracing since it does not only record existing information. The aim of mapping in this case is to produce a new interpretation from which a design strategy can be developed. The meaning of the mapping therefore is not contained in the drawing, but becomes meaningful through a performativity of reading or interpretation to design. Since the meaning of the mappings relies on future interpretation a void is created where potential can be explored. What this void is to be filled with depends on interpretation by the designer. (Evans; 2000)
The patchwork logic found in the city of Prishtina was explored through a series of mappings. The purpose of recording the experience of the spatial condition through mapping was to familiarize myself with the logic of the patchwork. After understanding the spatial logic of the patchwork it was possible to apply this knowledge to an architectural design process.

In order to record the spatial experience of the patchwork the technique of folding was used. In the drawings the virtual process of folding is recorded. The reason for selecting the technique of folding is because folding brings forth the same spatial effect as is experienced in the patchwork spatial condition. Folding produces spatial mismatches or stitches the sum of which can be read as the texture, pattern or landscape of the patchwork.

The Border Conditions studio is exploring alternative ways of analyzing the territory. This theoretical framework of the studio relies on two different ways of looking at the territory as described by Bruno Latour in *Paris: Invisible Cities*. (Latour; 1998) The first view is the Panoptic view. This view is based on the prison design by Jeremy Bentham which allows for watching all the inmates from a central point. This view is similar to the view you have from a lookout point in the city where it is possible to observe the city in its totality as a landscape or spatial pattern. The second type of view is the Oligoptic view. The Oligoptic view is a fragmentary view that focusses only on smaller stories that play out in the city. The Panoptic and the Oligoptic view are both essential for the analysis of the territory.

**Interpretation of Research to Design**

The spatial effect of the technique of folding can be experienced on these 2 levels: the Oligoptic and the Panoptic level. On the Oligoptic level one experiences the spatial effect of folding as the creation of spatial mismatches or stitches. The stitches comprise discrepancies and spatial conflicts. In the design this is translated into conflicts between parts of the library program and the articulation of stitches as borders that link these spaces. The borders between spaces are expanded to zones in-between programmatic entities. These stitches are responsible for articulating the connections between different activities inside of the building.

On the panoptic level the spatial quality that is produced through folding is a landscape of a continuous space in which space can no longer be defined as inside or outside or described in terms of linear progressions from private to public but can only be understood in terms of continuous variation in borders that connect spaces. When moving through the building the spatial experience is that of a never ending series of thresholds folding in on themselves.
In order to create space the same technique of folding was used from the mapping. The interior consists of continuous space contained by the sequence of planes. The folds are materialized as the structure of the building. This robust concrete structure of folding and intersecting planes creates a framework to be further articulated through the creation of connections between different parts of the program.

According to Gilles Deleuze everything can be made through folding. (Deleuze; 2006) By altering the scale and proportion of the folds it was possible to create a variety of spatial types that satisfy the needs of the program. Folding is applied as a technique to create everything from the steps of the lecture hall to private living rooms and open exhibition spaces, through all scales.

Reflection upon the design Method
My design process is not a direct translation of research, but is an open ended exploration of which the final result was not known at the beginning. Peter Eisenman says about the rules he uses to assist in generating his designs: “...if you could predict what the end consequences would be from the application of these indices, the process would lose its power. If you knew where a set of rules was going to lead, it would already be deterministic.” (Eisenman; 1997)

This design method which started from a fascination is productive since it leads to new discoveries which would otherwise remain concealed.

Daniel Libeskind has made a similar statement about his drawings and control. According to Libeskind true drawings cannot be controlled, not even by the authors. As soon as drawings are controlled by using techniques, the drawing becomes a simulation which is uninteresting. According to him these drawings cannot represent reality since reality has no simulation possibilities. “That is probably the most appropriate definition of what is real. What cannot be controlled is real. And the world as we know it is uncontrollable. That is the world in which architecture is developed. It doesn’t become real by participating in the pseudo-world of controlled experiments.” (Libeskind; 1996)

Relevancy of the Method
By developing the spatial logic of the patchwork found in Prishtina into a design through the process of mapping, a design was created that is an interpretation of the context. By applying a spatial logic from the context to design the project becomes culturally relevant. The design allows for the possibility for a similar arrangement of program that is currently found in the city. This order that guides programmatic arrangement is allowed to manifest itself inside the building which aims to stitch the programmatic entities together. This shows that by applying this research method it is possible to respond much more sensitively and accurately to socio-political conditions if they manifest themselves spatially. In this way it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of spatial logics found in specific contexts and therefore it becomes possible to broaden the border between architecture as a discourse on space and other fields in which logics manifest themselves spatially.

Bibliography
- Deleuze, Gilles. The Fold. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004