Built and social intervention in informal settings | Strategies and tactics from a global south’s experience

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Readings:

- Discipline and Punish by Michel Foucault
- The Birth of the Prison by Michel Foucault
- The Production of Space by Henri Lefebvre
- The Open Man and Animal by Giorgio Agamben
- Remnants of Auschwitz by Giorgio Agamben
- Homo Sacer by Giorgio Agamben
- Sovereign Power and Bare Life by Giorgio Agamben
- Infancy and History by Giorgio Agamben
- Architecture and Violence by Simone Brott
- Reading Kant's Geography
- Architecture for a Free Subjectivity by Simone Brott
- Beyond Foucault
- The Power of Life by Giorgio Agamben and the Coming Politics
- Jacques Rancière and the Contemporary Scene
- On Politics and Aesthetics
- The Politics of Aesthetics by Jacques Rancière
In the spirit of Cedric Price the project started with the belief that a building is not necessarily the best solution to a spatial problem.

The project attempts to uncover a second history of architecture, one that moves sharply away from the figure of the architect as individual hero, and replaces it with a much more collaborative approach in which agents act with, and on behalf of, others.

In all the examples on this website, there is a transformative intent to make the status quo better, but the means are very varied, from activism to pedagogy, publications to networking, making stuff to making policy - all done in the name of empowering others:
- Appropriation
- Dissemination
- Empowerment
- Networking
- Subversion
Appropriation
This can include the taking of another's property for one's own purposes (either legally or illegally, short-term or long-term), or through highlighting abandoned or unoccupied space.

Dissemination
This is about the way knowledge is distributed, how it is spread and to whom, as well as the opening up of discussions for a wider debate.

Empowerment
Allowing others to 'take control' over their environment, being participative without being opportunistic; something that is pro-active instead of re-active.

Networking
This can be a way of working where a core group of people expands according to each project and the expertise it requires, or a core group that builds its projects around its networks; these are hardly ever static groups and they are highly interdisciplinary and collaborative in nature.

Subversion
A tactic / strategy that uses existing policies, guidelines, buildings, etc. for purposes other than those they were designed for.
Decolonization, on the contrary, seeks to unleash a process of open-ended transformation toward the goals of equality and justice. It looks for and finds cracks where potential for transformation and reuse of the existing dominant structures, architectural infrastructural and legal, could be found. It is a sometimes confrontational, at other times cunning approach to the reality of occupation and dispossession. Decolonization is a counter apparatus that seeks to restore to common use, to fantasy and play, what the colonial order had separated and divided. The goal of decolonization is the construction of counterapparatuses that find new uses for the abandoned structures of domination. These uses are sometimes pragmatic and at other times ironic or provocative challenges. As such, “decolonization” is never achieved, but is an ongoing practice of deactivation and reorientation understood both in its presentness and in its endlessness.
Aims | DESIGN DISSENSUS / PRODUCTION of SPACE

Grounded in Jacques Ranciere’s aesthetic ontology and specifically the concept of *le partage du sensible* and the political underpinnings of spatial production (Lefebvre and Foucault), this operational framework poses that design should be embedded in the processes of deepening democratic practices by revealing power relations through *dissensus*.

the CRITICAL whereas particular methodologies need to emerge in order to ensure that production does not evolve naively within a bubble nor fails to address the political dimension of agency

the POLITICAL whereas *design* is seen as a political act that underpins a critical agency for creating alternative ways of dealing with architectural and urban design interventions

the SOCIETAL whereas a reinvigorated ethical shift in the designing of spaces through engagement enables social justice and the irreducibility of participatory discourses as truly emancipatory praxis
Strategy, as understood from centuries of military engagement and martial history, refers to operations at the large geopolitical scale and over the long term; in contrast, tactics are the short-term, on-the-ground actions that serve the overall strategy.

Everyday language conspires to conflate the two, but the distinction is meaningful.

“[A tactic] takes advantage of "opportunities" and depends on them, being without any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up its own position and plan raids. What it wins it cannot keep. This nowhere gives a tactic mobility, to be sure, but a mobility that must accept the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse” (De Certau)

http://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/tactical_urbanism_vol_2_final?mode=window&backgroundColor=%23222222
Towards a design abacus

Indeed, the vitally and the multiplicity of what we appreciate as “architecture”, its artifact and vehicle of communications, its discourses and polemics, its institutional and pedagogical frameworks, its mode of production, representation and narratives, and its intrinsic limits when adapted to the kinetic, unfinished, and provocative nature of scenarios of informalities, transitions and contingencies of the Global South, are inseparable from this multifaceted array of what I call a **diachronic criticality**.

Thus, the design process is simultaneously the production of physical form, the creation of social, cultural and symbolic resources and also, critically, the outcome of a facilitative process in which enablement, activism, alternatives and insurgence and resistance becomes a central idea.

Central in the promotion of a design (architectural or urban) that has a narrative with moral, social and political significance there is a need for a **poetics of knowledge** (Ranciere and Corcoran, 2010) an operation that shows all discourses to be specifiable, not by forms or self legitimization, but by they poetic operations with which they establish the visibility of objects and make them **available to thoughts**.
Dissensus

For Rancière, proper order will always be interrupted by impropriety which, despite being focused on critical writing and ‘literality’, served to set the stage for his provocative conception of politics and for his constant and insistent defence of democracy as dissensus, as scandalous.

“Politics is generally seen as the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, [it denotes] the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles and the system of legitimizing this distribution” (Ranciere, 1999:28).

For Ranciere the essential aspect of politics: the affirmation of the principle of equality in the speech of people who are supposed to be equal but not counted as such by the established policing of the democratic community.

Thus, political struggle occurs when the excluded seek to establish their identity, by speaking for themselves and striving to get their voices recognised as legitimate and heard. Politics is thus a struggle between the established social order and its excluded part, which has no part.

For Rancière then genuine political (or artistic) activities always involves forms of innovations that tears bodies from their assigned places and free speech and expression from all its reduction to functionality (Corcoran, 2010).
The partition of the sensible | Le partage du sensible

‘le partage du sensible’ (the partition of the sensible) refers to the way in which roles and modes of participation in a social world are determined by establishing possible modes of perception referring to what is apprehended by the senses (Plato’s attempt to sustain the order of the city through the order of discourses and the difference between the *phone* and *logos* can only be determined by politics).

In other words the partition of the sensible will make this logos audible where another will only produce phone making possible. Real genuine politics emerge when these distinct partitions will come into conflict, into subversion.

Ranciere defines aesthetic as “a delimitation of spaces and time, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise” (Ranciere, 2010: 13) and for him artistic practices (despite his direct reference to literature, film and movies and fine art, we can extend it to architecture) are forms of visibility that can themselves serve as interruption of the given partition of the sensible and therefore work on aesthetic is work on politics.
Towards a design abacus

Re-constructing design, urban and architectural, as a *dissensus* in Ranciere’s worlds (Ranciere and Corcoran, 2010), seems an inevitable initial step. What this call is a reorientation between *politics and aesthetics* through what he called “redistribution of the sensible”.

For Ranciere genuine political or artistic (used here in a generic sense encompassing architecture as well), always involves form of innovations that tears bodies from their assigned places (both physically as well as metaphorically), and free speech and expression from all form of functionality.

In other words design *dissensus* provoke a *disruption in the order of things, which is not only or simply a reordering of the relation of powers between different groups* (which imply resistances) but new subject and heterogeneous objects challenging the *perception* and the *representation* of cultural, identity and hierarchical forms.
Towards a design abacus

**Retrospective**: where efforts focus on identifying and analyzing discursive and non-discursive elements in order to decipher/depict the implicit nature and production of space (rhetoric, policies, actors);

**Descriptive**: where efforts focus on representing physical and non-physical elements that are present- ‘mapping’ the visible and latent with the intention of uncovering windows and opportunities for strategic Design capitalization;

**Possibility**: exploration that hinges on present potentials, social practices, and material/immaterial spaces in a feasible, yet strategically future-adaptive manner;

**Alternative**: the obligatory action, especially in extreme cases of polarized visions that threaten local contingents, to challenge through a continuous dialogue with the conflictive nature and dynamism of the (re)production of space(s)
Towards a design abacus

No-Design recalls Giddens’ notion of refrain. Stemming from inappropriate design implementation, the idea cautions against assumptions and immediately jumping to object-driven design responses while hoping to avoid being complicit of dominant systems (economic, political, professional). This calls for “abandoning” craftsmanship and imaginative skills, forcing one to consider and prioritize the dynamics and processes of collective claims. This could be seen as the ultra-preliminary aspect of a process or a consistent convicted humility.

Research stresses that without completely abandoning creativity, imagination, and craftsmanship skills, agents (students) can render the invisible, visible by employing a particular way of thinking, communicating, and reflecting that articulates and explores windows of opportunity. These can expose potential catalyst interventions and collectively-derived design proposals within situations of uncertainty, instability, and uniqueness.

Critique calls for the critical deployment of imagination and craftsmanship skills in order to question and understand complexities of contested situations. This highly convicted and reflective positioning offers options of speculating, mobilizing, and demonstrating the potential of informed spatial alternatives that contribute to inclusive transformation.

Resistance directly responds with the intent of reducing unjust domination. Here there exists a condition of possibility in which design becomes a convicted emancipator using craftsmanship and imagination to promote opposition through feasible alternatives. It collectively questions spatial production not as objective provision, but a strategic arena for accommodating the convergence of policy, aspirations, struggles and the future.
## DISSENSUS DESIGN

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<td>Stemming from negative design practice imply, <strong>not to build</strong> and to avoid being complicit of the dominant systems. The brief is itself design so it has to be redesigned or discharged. Abandoning the craftsmanship and the imaginative skills it force to re-think only social situation and processes.</td>
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<td><strong>Design as RESEARCH (evidence/dissensus)</strong></td>
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<td>Without abandoning creativity, imaginations and craftsmanship skills is about making the invisible visible, the audible transformed in comprehensible and communicable speech. Design is thus becoming a research oriented demonstration that what appear simple a form or a space is a shared feel of good or evil.</td>
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<td><strong>Design as CRITIQUE (demonstration and precedence)</strong></td>
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<td>As a redefinition of urban is demanded from movements and oppositions another design is demanded, conflictive zones are thus opened and should be conceived as new starting point for utopian intervention. Using the craftsmanship and the imaginative skills it force to make the contribution unfolding such conflicts and promoting alternative spatial situations</td>
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<td><strong>Design as RESISTANCE</strong></td>
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<td>A condition of possibility in which design is become emancipator in his potential of reducing domination fostering a critical consciousness over space production. It promote resistance through feasible alternatives. Questioning of space, its imagination and its production as not merely an objective provision, but an arena carefully designed to accommodate the convergence of political constructs, social needs, aspirations, struggles and the future</td>
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REDEFINING THE NOTION OF SCALING-UP IN DHARAVI: RECOGNIZING UNIQUENESS WITHIN THE MULTIPLICITY

1. Challenging the DRP in Dharavi (versus Dharavi) for acting in the division of nagars, recognizing their uniqueness within the multiplicity.

2. Making a determination as to the differences in characteristics of each nagar in terms of tangible and intangible costs, challenges and stakeholders in the process, in order to tailor the type of intervention.

3. Interventions must consider and promote the following as consequences and implications of investment & possible outcomes limited within the respective region:
   - Response to basic needs of inhabitants and capacity to support a high proportion of the entire population, including the transient group.
   - Long-term maintenance and sustainability.
   - Prevention of future security.

4. The financial aspect of the interventions should seek to avoid the expenses cost in terms of the factors of the funders, most likely to reduce the costs generated towards the community as much as possible.

5. Interventions should focus on both private and public, recognizing the multiple potential common spaces and venues in the upgrading process.

6. Locations and reference cases serve to exchange the knowledge produced in specific interventions among the nagars.

ACTORS

NAGARS CLASSIFICATION

PROJECT
DEFINITION & IMPLEMENTATION

EVALUATION & EXCHANGE

RESTORATION & EXCHANGE

STRATEGIES
## Description

### Kumbharwada

Kumbharwada is the centre of the pottery activity. The potters form a very compact community, established in the area since the XVIII century, and their income is relatively high. Between 1000-1500 families reside in Kumbharwada.

### Shatadi Nagar

Shatadi Nagar is a recent settlement, established in the 90's on a dumpground in the peripheral area of Dhurvari. Hygienic conditions are extremely poor. Most of the population is shanty and there is a large population of transient workers. Loosely organized within Dhurvari and a sense of community is lacking.

### Shahu Nagar

The neighborhood's peripheral to Dhurvari, but close to the Mahim Dargah station and well connected to the rest of the city. There aren't strong social ties.

### Chandra Bazaar

Chandra Bazaar is located in the very centre and home to the biggest market of Dhurvari. The population density is very high and visitors flow into the area everyday to do business.

### Social Nagar

Social Nagar is densely populated, which brings problems of overcrowding and infrastructures decay. Its community is cohesive and willing to engage actively in a project to change the current situation.

### Localisation

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### Intervention

Following discussions with the Alliance, members of the local community decided to combine their resources to build a new mini-mill. The ground floor hosts a market area and pottery workshops with the necessary electrical infrastructure. The upper floors are occupied by flats, with a few local offices, and others rented out. The revenue thus generated is reinvested in the maintenance of the structure and in the upgrading of the working areas of the potters.

The project is carried out by the Alliance and financed by a GUF grant. It consists of a mixed-use project for temporary resisters who pay at lower rates – to allow the maintenance of the structure. It comprises improved facilities that are used by Shatadi residents, and a space for community-based activities.

A private investor built a multi-storey residential block for sale. Shatadi Nagar has been chosen due to its convenient location. The families displaced for the new block were provided lower flats built by the same developer, which also takes care of their employment in the public sector of the region. The project is contextualized with support from the Municipalities that works on the improvement of the sanitation system.

Given the centrality of Chandra Bazaar, the Alliance teamed up with the best location for an information centre on matters about the development of Dhurvari. An internal developer is charged with the project for the community to reside and some spaces are rented out for events.

### Image
SCALING UP

"Public space continues to be reserved by public whose values and demands are in competition in the political arena that is the city." (Soja, 1996)

SCALING UP

We will plot the change between 2 blocks, involving these residents. If the development is successful it can be repeated between other blocks. The design for each unit can vary.

REPORT AND DESIGN RESPONSE: ELEPHANT AND CASTLE
RECLAMING REGENERATION

FUTURE DHARAVI: HOUSING DEVELOPMENT + EXTENSION OF THE PUBLIC SPACE
Sending a message to the city from the inside out

Tales Market

The use of a design initiative in collaboration with local academic communities to design and build market stalls that would showcase the distinctiveness of the collective identity of local community.
Site specific design
site visits and community activities enable smoother access to the programme

Housing not houses
mixed use development projects including infrastructure, cultural features, etc.
Figure 4.4 Representation of how densification can provide housing in restricted land availability or more opportunities of land for various communities.

Figure 4.5 Image of interstitial space within the community becoming productive.
Place de la Résistance