RICE UNIVERSITY

University Urbanism
A proposal for productive disagreement

by

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Thesis Statement

Monumentality can be seen as a culmination of consensus. However, when consensus is not present, furthermore, when disagreements construct the dialog, the architecture that mediates this dialog becomes a monument itself. Walls, dividing territories and cities around the world, have become dreadful monuments within our collective imaginary. Imposed separation lines, they reinforce the differences between ethnic groups and become long-term markers of a failed dialogue.

This thesis takes a spatialized model of disagreement, the university, and constructs a new urban typology able to mediate conflicted zones through notions of programmed monumentality. It challenges a border condition and actively erodes a hard line within a city by strategic insertions of “encounter-platforms” for the two communities.

Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus has been scarred by historical events that have created a series of unique conditions throughout the city fabric. A swatch of land running from East to West and varying in width between 3 m and 18 m has been imposed to split the city in two ethnically uniform halves. This thesis proposes an International Erasmus University inside the Green Line breaking the four-decade-old stalemate between the two communities. With students acting as effective diplomats, the exchange of ideas and opinions will aim to dismantle the firmly established psychological division between the two communities. The project creates a series of urban and architectural interventions in the city in order to stitch the unproductive separation of the territory, by proposing a series of programmatic nodes in place of the original market street. The new typology reinvents the city center and implements new points of interaction while activating the decayed urban fabric around the Green Line. The demilitarized zone is then turned into a park for the city and the university which facilitates the ease of pedestrian traffic from the two originally divided cities.
Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Troy Schaum, Eva Franch-Gilabert and Albert Pope and everyone who helped during the completion of this thesis.
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Stage III: Plan
New University Organization

Spine/Line Organization

Venue/Sports Spaces
Theaters/Cinemas

Point Organization
Common Spaces
Work Rooms

Field Organization
Class Rooms
Typology of University Dynamics

Living on Campus
Living on Campus
Living on Campus
Living on Campus

Social Activities
Cultural Events
Academic Life
Academic Life
Academic Life
Social Activities
Cultural Events
Academic Life
Academic Life

Chambers of social activity in US universities
Spines of social activity in European universities
City university or university as a city

Unipole
Competing City
(DVA, Berkeley, Duke)

Enclave
Inter-dependence
(Rice, Columbia, IIT)

City University
Mega Block
(FIT New York, LSE London, La Sorbonne Paris)

City Campus
Particle Field
(NYU, Parsons, SVA)

- Dining
- Cultural Activities
- Living Quarters
- Social Activities
Stage 1: Platforms for mutual observation

Stage 2: Sensory proximity

Stage 3: Platforms for interaction
Sensory Proximity

Restored circulation and new centrality
Unfolded section through the former green zone, now a continuous university which become the stage for a new type of community interactions in the capital city.
University Urbanism

a proposal for productive disagreements
The Cyprus Problem

867,600 Greek Cypriots with 778,700 living in the Government controlled area.

88,900 Turkish Cypriots
160,000 Turkish Immigrants settled in the past 15 years

Cyprus Immigrants:
37,000 Greeks
27,000 Britons
10,000 Russians
6,000 Maronite/Lebanese
2,000 Armenians
Conflict Resolution Tendencies

Turkish-Speaking Cypriot tendencies

Civil War in Cyprus - Turkey invades Northern Cyprus

€1,100 GDP per capita

Greek-Speaking Cypriots tendencies

Cyprus enters EU divided

€19,581 GDP per capita

Economist Intelligence Unit gives 40% chance of solving conflict

1974

2004

2009

2010

2020
Europe
Member States
Non-member countries
Countries on track to full membership

Germany - the biggest European country and EU backbone
Population: 82.06 million
GDP: 3.810 trillion
Population under poverty line: 11%

Turkey
Population: 76.8 million
GDP: 798.9 billion
Population under poverty line: 20%
Turkish-speaking Cypriots

^jcosia - Old city walls and new town

The Last Divided Capital of Europe
Total Population: 309,500
2008 Census

UNFICYP Green Zone population: 183 (UK troops)

Turkish-speaking Nicosia population: 84,893

Decaying urban fabric due to proximity to the Green Zone

Greek-speaking Nicosia population: 224,500
Nicosia City of Icons and Extremes

Panagia Phaneromen Church
Selime Mosque - St. Sophie Cathedral
Sultah Mehmed II Library
Kokkino Horio Local Market
Pheneromen School
Old Municipality
Agiotissa Cathedral
Modern Suburbs
Great Inn
The UNFICYP controls the buffer zone with patrols in vehicles, on foot, on bicycles and by helicopter. In addition, a mobile unit stands ready to respond to emergencies within the buffer zone which occur frequently.
Green Line Permeability

- Agios Dometios/Metehan Border Crosspoint: May 2004 / mostly vehicles
- Blockades throughout the length of the Green Zone
- Ledra Street Border Crosspoint: April 2008 / pedestrians
Evolution of a Demise: Dividing Nicosia
Nicosia 1960

Fragmented fabric
Centralized system
Radial Growth
Centripetal Circulation
Nicosia 1975

Linear strip + Fragmented fabric → Fractured fabric → Sprawling Expansion
Nicosia 1985

Linear strip

Hollow core

Closed System

Impervious / no-flow
Nicosia 2009

Nicosia Walled City

Linear strip

Hollow core

Closed System

Impervious / no-flow
### City/University Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>City before Division</th>
<th>City after Division</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Proposed Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fractured</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hollow-core</td>
<td>Centralized</td>
<td></td>
<td>Contained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed/Stagnant</td>
<td>Radially Expanding</td>
<td></td>
<td>Densifying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow</td>
<td>Blocked</td>
<td>Centripetal</td>
<td>Orchestrated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:**
- Linear
- Hollow-core
- Closed/Stagnant
- Flow
- Centralized
- Orchestration
Park as a mixing chamber between university and city
3. Cyprus and the European Union
6. International Aggression and Violations of Human Rights - The Case of Turkey in Cyprus, Van Coufoudakis (University of Minnesota, 2008)
7. Boundaries of Cooperation: Cyprus, de Facto Partition, and the Delimitation Of Trans Boundary Resource Management (February 14, 2001)
8. Content, OMA/Rem Koolhaas (Taschen; May 1, 2004)