

WestminsterResearch

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/westminsterresearch>

Via Architecture: Post-Conflict Infrastructure and its Discursive Curve

Bhat, H.

This is a copy of the final version of an article published in the International Journal of Security and Development. 4(1), p.Art. 25. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5334/sta.fr>

This is an Open Access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license (unless stated otherwise) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Copyright is retained by the author(s).

The WestminsterResearch online digital archive at the University of Westminster aims to make the research output of the University available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the authors and/or copyright owners.

Whilst further distribution of specific materials from within this archive is forbidden, you may freely distribute the URL of WestminsterResearch: (<http://westminsterresearch.wmin.ac.uk/>).

In case of abuse or copyright appearing without permission e-mail repository@westminster.ac.uk

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Via Architecture: Post-Conflict Infrastructure and its Discursive Curve

Harshavardhan Bhat*

Post-conflict economy, rapid urbanization and the ever influential impact of global flows often drive very particular systems of post-conflict infrastructure, ignoring nuances of culture, politics and community. While a large number of analysts today contend that this is a growing symptom of the post-conflict economy, there has arguably always been a fundamental relationship between political articulation and architectural futures. The purpose of this paper is not to provide another planning parallax but to provoke the reader to reconsider habitat intervention within reconciliatory platforms and political developments today. Using the case of Kigali, Rwanda this paper seeks to pose both analytical and ethical questions. Firstly, can international development mediate with politics to engage with post-conflict habitats, considering complex backgrounds? Secondly, how does this challenge conventional thinking in planning and organization schemes that have largely driven habitat response and development in post-conflict spaces?

Introduction

The rational relationship between ideology and architecture is not a new concept within the framework of intellectual histories of violence. Yet, arguably, the contemporary situation of post-modernity – of global flows, of capital led infrastructures, of falsely perceived post-political spaces – caters to a contemporary ignorance and thereby, a contemporary history of what architecture means and how architecture should be thought about within projects of post-failure environments. It is this new politic that this paper intends to theorize further as a 'scripture' to be acknowledged and strategically used in the intervention and production

of human habitats that have experienced violence and extreme conflict. In addition, the paper uses the case of Rwanda to further elaborate the presence of this so-called 'scripture,' based on experience and connected research literature. It contends that international conflict situates itself within the drama of 'the urban' and that the tangible deconstruction/destruction of steel and concrete offers not just an opportunity for 'forensic investigation,' as researchers like Eyal Weizman discusses, but also for an epistemological rethinking of post-experience: questions such as, what happens after? How can reconciliation encompass a tangible, material, infrastructural component by retaining its democratic source? Can we design blueprints or conceptual response systems for development agendas that embody democratic design?

* Independent Researcher, Bangalore, India
harsh.s.bhat@gmail.com
harsh@criticality.is

On Straight Lines and Architectural Subversion

In his 1957 essay on 'Urban Planning and Democracy,' Lucius Burckhardt made a rather striking observation where he said, 'For dictatorship lurks behind any uniform plan: the seamless master plan is the outcome of a single will. It can never come into being while real democracy is still at work' (Fezer and Schmitz 2012). In its rather subtle irony, similar to his observation on how 'the apartment meant to suit everyone actually suits no one,' Burckhardt's text expresses an interesting dichotomy (Fezer and Schmitz 2012). Firstly, that contemporary architecture's obsession with straight lines, order and intolerance towards incident and/or eventuality creates an imposition of unwanted friction, often observed even within conventional planning methods. Decolonizing planning is yet another monolithic discourse, but the primary problem discussed is 'informality,' and that human spaces do take on human regenerations on how a space is used, negotiated, furnished, felt and politicized. Therefore, the first step towards solutions, as some recognize, is to redact the definitional opportunity of calling 'informality' a problem and taking it for what it is – a cognitive reality of essentially any human space. This is very much true of most visual experiences within the urban global south – elements involving images of markets, public spaces, vernacularity (constantly contested), a *jugaad* of utility and most importantly, a certain aesthetic conceptual above all of the commons.¹ On a metaphorical note, perhaps one of the failures of grand Soviet design was its lack of open frugality, its inability to be open for participation, metaphorically speaking – 'that the grand conclave edges of structure were indifferent to the humanitarian needs for wooden flooring.'

What makes post-conflict infrastructure a controversial parallax is its subjugated confusion as a modern discipline in placing itself either as a practice of the 'expert' versus a community and/or place-led practice. Who rebuilds? What determines a rebuild?

And whose politics articulate the rebuild of a destroyed space? What the development industry has arguably done over the past several decades is influence the development of infrastructure as per a perceived epistemology of science, of method, structure and implementation that largely does not cater to plural and/or indigenous roots. Like 'floating parliaments' in the Sloterdijkian sense, these benevolent models of intervention (/implementation) may not exactly shower upon the intervened (/host) 'the intended consequence.' The great canvas of models, anticipating political 'monkey see – monkey do' systems, hence is finally corrupted and speculation bound thanks to the complexity of diverse human societies and the inability of the agency of power in these cases to listen carefully and understand.² The politics of architecture here is nested within the blueprint of post-conflict strategy. The nature of global neoliberal capitalism today has preempted two fundamental cognitive viewpoints. The first is that in post-conflict scenarios most governments and international agencies find themselves under considerable pressure (internally and externally) to participate in the global flows of the economy. The second is essentially that the reconciliatory process and the project of collective healing is often disconnected from economic growth, capital flows and structural investment agendas that, although impact the community in certain respects (ex: employment, industry), are unable to transform into emancipators of the post-conflict experience largely conquered by strategic/alternate/vernacular design. This dichotomy stands out as a unique case in political analysis as the parallax it suggests is not an obvious point of engagement. To further expand, certain governments, for example, have taken up the neoliberal project from a strong representative direction, enabling investment in façade creation and infrastructure systems based on western models. This therefore emerges as the aspired attempt in integrating capital impact with the project of reconciliation/healing or at least as design rhetoric claims so otherwise. The impact this

has had on 'space' has been two-fold. Firstly, while this manages to produce small, isolated cases of infrastructure and glass aesthetic structures, it forgets the rest – the characters of the masses, the agrarian sector, etc., that dominate everyday life and livelihood. Secondly, it enables an opportunity of speculative forgetting or in some cases, political erasure. To expand this with a Derridian description, the 'wolf' takes on the subversive form of creating an environment in which the 'reconciliatory' process is frozen as an excuse to the agenda of neoliberal growth – the silent nature in which it happens enjoys a 'status-quo' benefit of the so called 'global consensus.'³ While it arguably increases economic inequality, the political economy project of architectural design and development empowers a 'particular' grand façade: For whose pleasure? For whose benefit? For whose emancipation? For whose utility?

On Transitions, Impatience and Ideology

When discussing wartime experiences in Germany in his book, *On the natural history of destruction*, W.G. Sebald comments:

...as Heinrich Boll acknowledged, with "what we found when we came home," proves on closer inspection to be an instrument already tuned to individual and collective amnesia, and probably influenced by preconscious self-censorship – a means of obscuring a world that could no longer be presented in comprehensible terms. There was a tacit agreement, equally binding on everyone, that the true state of material and moral ruin in which the country found itself was not to be described. The darkest aspects of the final act of destruction, as experienced by the great majority of the German population remained under a kind of taboo like a shameful family secret, a secret that perhaps could not even be privately acknowledged (Sebald 2004).

What comes from much of Sebald's texts on this matter is the behavioral mystery of post-war, recycled spatial production. 'Recycled' in the sense that space appears to feel and look like the way it was before the war, even after it is reconstructed after the war. Even through the several conscious changes that the rebuilding process took into consideration, the grand product of this re-construction was an intricate practice that was able to develop something in correlation with the collective forgetting, amnesia, aspiration and mood of the people reflecting not just of what society wanted to become (and get over) but also keep quietly nested, the quaint aesthetic of what they had come to know as their city. To contest if this was a project of memory or a project of forgetting would be an unfair price for debate, as what people manufacture after destruction is often arguably facilitated by a complex concoction, an ironical mixture of what makes us human. Most importantly, though, – what directs this politics, who directs this politics and what, therefore, determines a visually tangible result can be disastrously different from each other – acknowledging the violence, chaos, silence, energy and cohesion in its reproductive nature.

In a very interesting study on Turbo Urbanism in post-conflict Prishtina (Kosovo), Kai Vöckler is in conversation with Visar Geci where he asks, '...Can you briefly describe who works with whom and how a piece of land is developed? Is there a plan?' and in his response on 'plans' he notes:

Frequently, the decisions are made by the subcontractors, since they have the most experience. I call this "LAST-MINUTE-INSPIRATION planning." The roof is built when the money runs out. But envy also plays a big role... my neighbor has a building with seven floors, so I'll build one with nine, and I'll have more than he does! I don't understand that... Psychologists should do a study in order to understand what's going on here in Prishtina. As far as

quality is concerned....well, there's no need to wonder, since there are no rules and no state regulation. Everyone tries spending as little money as possible... (Vöckler 2009).

Visar here captures an important point of how chaos from the level of the individual to the level of the governance system relies on fragile dynamic fluidity – it is clearly never constant, the result of which is a confused post-transitional experience. The 'Turbo Urbanism' Vöckler (in association with Archis Interventions) is studying considers a combination of factors such as rapid migration, expat capital, lack of legal and policy frameworks, multiple layover stakeholders, inbuilt corruption, sovereign-like autonomous agencies with temporal authority, capital behavior, etc., and thereby turbo architecture and turbo urbanism. This example of architectural behavior displays a chaotic, yet arguably stable, phase of which will predictably generate some temporal order in the future, the processes of which still stand unfamiliar. Unlike Sebald's description of the post-war German experience, we observe a fundamentally different way by which capital perceptibly operates in 'space.' The image of cohesive reconstruction led by the collective and the image of turbo capital-led post-conflict urbanism are strikingly different. The reason this juxtaposition is as a critical moment in the development of a theory is because, beyond the factual consideration of whether it is a democratic project or not, it visually turns out as a direct reference of the relationship between power, capital and space, variables that, when combined with capital phenomena and social behavior/culture, produce two different spatial results with one similar theoretical answer: ideology produces architecture.

While the link between ideology and architecture is not a fresh philosophical concoction, the transformative apparatus that ideology re-articulates in the mechanism of post-conflict experience deserves a renewed lens. The reason I argue so is

because the capital conditions, the nature of conflict, the conceptual dilemmas in the infrastructural-social parallax are fast changing and relatively new, and thereby have little to compare themselves to, especially in this particular context, with the past. Consider the constant flux of violent design embodied in political architecture where the condition of conflict is neither past nor future, but a fluid ever-changing present – the presence of which indicates the 'flux,' a period of time that never seems to end. This is often the case with protracted conflict, intractable disputes, wars that expand and retract, destruction that is transposed and shuttled – where the degree and category of the 'post' is never apt for definition. As 'contested lands' these spaces experience constant contestation in the form of violence, decay, migration, attrition, destruction, re-categorization, expressive restriction and most importantly, an unsettled spatial context that extends human suffering to a wider degree of both time and consequential inability/pain. As in 'Hollow Land,' Weizman talks about how 'the crime was undertaken by architects and planners in the way they drafted their lines in development plans. The proof was in the drawings' (Weizman 2007). Weizman's work talks about the role of architecture in political repression and how architecture becomes both a tool of strategy and testimony at the same time. Is not architecture therefore, as Weizman's work extends upon, an opportunity to find out what really happened? This poses a range of new questions for post-conflict infrastructural research. What is the role of architectural evidence, its produced testimony, memory in the facilitation of reconciliation? Can there ever be one and should there ever be one? How can we think of reverse engineering or deconstructing architectural production from a post-development perspective in order to trigger democratic spatial production? Or do we have to rely on the visionaries of state and capital to show the way forward in this regard? While Weizman's work is based on the Israel/Palestine issue, I think the

recognition of architecture as a tool of the political master both in a pre-conflict and in-conflict perspective premise is critical in building toward credible concepts of what happens after. To theorize this further, one will have to clarify that while infrastructure can embody an architectural agenda, 'infrastructure' can remain exclusively away from an architectural politic. This is why rethinking an architectural epistemology is critical in order to avoid the thoughtless sanitization of infrastructural directives.

Can We Imagine Alternatives?

The neoliberal seduction, its disruptive force in the imagination, as markers of 'development' is not an easy force to talk about in its disruptive sense. To consider neoliberal architecture as an emancipator of post-experience is to consider a cognitive attachment with contemporary capitalism itself. The use of indigenous practice, local material, humility aesthetics, ecology friendly, low cost, dignity oriented planning does not have to be a bad idea. In the 2013 Annual Symposium on Architectural Research in Finland, I argued that we need to (re)locate architecture to its humble placement – design that is 'low cost, equitable and comprehends with the locality with a pleasing aesthetic' (Bhat 2013). Laurie Baker's work has largely been a phenomenal reflection of what I mean by a 'humble placement' in this context. Baker recognized that architecture is never permanent. He recognized the possibility of designing dignified spaces using local, indigenous practice and material open to innovations, such as strategic bricklaying methods that allow for cooling (in tropical conditions) and other tweaks in design that don't necessarily cost a lot of money but empower the consumer of that space with an experience that uplifts (Bhat 2013). Baker built thousands of homes and buildings in India including some of finest 'slum' rehabilitation projects India has ever seen. The other element of Baker's production process, the reason of which I brought his example here, is the ability to recycle and reproduce these designs as openly democratic

possibilities – processes that don't need an 'expert.' The typology of most mainstream humble low income architectural landscapes today calls for such ideological and practice centric emancipators that help communities re-designate the condition and living aesthetic of their urban realities. So perhaps a valuable line of inquiry in the habitats discipline is to think of 'via architecture' in terms of design specific emancipators that are most importantly local and sustainable. The variable of what is local and sustainable will differ from context to context but the democratic rationale, access to knowledge and ability to practice are utilities, I argue, that the government, community and partners in development cannot ignore.

So what kind of phenomena are we in favor of? I think the primary intention really is to counter hegemony in architectural production after a post destruction form crisis. While Western phases of modernism, post-modernism, etc., displayed via architecture are symbolic of economic, social and cultural experiences restricted to certain geographies and ideas, ideally, global development should not generate an obvious sanction of the 'copy-paste' reproductive process immune to thought, cultural participation and political commons acceptability, elsewhere. While one can argue that this does not take place democratically all the time, does the responsibility here also rests with the one in power? Is it with the state? The architect? The development partner? Who else? That another knowledge can be put into action and that 'another knowledge' is possible. The trouble in exploring these 'other knowledges' of spatial production in the context of a post-conflict experience is, however, based on who controls power – and how that power sanctions or articulates the spatial expressive nature of its imagination and/or its disconnect with the same. On the other hand, the trouble is based on what kind of conflict the space has just experienced. It could even be transitional. From visualizing post-genocide futures, post-displacement migrations, post-bombing stability and post-violence in all its multiplicities

could produce a very diverse basket of realities that will challenge and call for epistemological re-thinking, not just because we need to understand disasters and our responses better but also because we need to design a world beyond the conventional humanitarian parallax. To do so entertains open, humane, dignified and equity centric approaches in post-rupture thinking: what happens after the disaster? Life goes on but can architecture bring back some lost dignity?

Contemplating Kigali

Is there such a thing called an 'African Architecture?' Beyond the categorization of imaginations that situate themselves within the geography of the continent, I think the general description of an 'African Architecture' cannot offer reasonable ideas of what these categories can consist of. I am, however, willing to have a categorical view of restricted spaces, the one explored here being East African architecture, and to filter down further more; experiences within the Rwandan State and other possible humanitarian dynamisms in issues related to temporary habitats. Interestingly, this is a helpful ignorance that I think is actually required to progress ahead in epistemological thinking related to the 'African cause.' Why? Because the colonial experience by and large has been the defining force of state formation in Sub-Saharan Africa. In many cases, the project of an African Architecture has therefore found itself in one of two categories: 1) the museum, where symbols and images of the traditional household and village are placed for historical record, and 2) the state or a private actor of influence stepping on to take symbolic political empowerments via statements of architecture. Everything else is space yet to be theorized.

The Rwandan State has been praised by the international community for its achievements in reconciliation and stability and its open business environment since the 1994 genocide. Research has consistently indicated the robust and effective nature of Rwandan state capacity (Jones 2012). The

Gacaca process in Rwanda has been widely recognized as a success and holds possible lessons for international law in reference to reconciliation (Clark 2011). Rwanda has offered an unparalleled example as a possible model for post-conflict experiences, especially considering the deep and lasting trauma the genocide created. So the inquiry of an architectural question seems an ingenious one: why consider the material relevance of physical urban strategy in Rwanda when the post-genocide agenda has largely been the primary focus of political effort? The reason I think Rwanda makes a great example of architectural utility both as source and function in ideological and reconciliatory directives is because of what the leadership has structurally undertaken in its affairs with issues of land, space and habitat in its process of building new imaginations of the future. The judgment of a critique or of an appreciation is a project this paper does not primarily undertake. However, the intention of using the Rwandan example is to expand our understanding of how political futures impact material/civic/habitat design and acknowledge pathways of thinking of reconstruction connected with the nuances of ideology and the subversive interpretative lingua of 'development' after a conflict – in this case genocide. The notion also observes that the cause for the future often displaces and redacts history both by terming it in causation and by baselining the experience as a permanently avoidable circumstance. In the case of Rwanda, the vision takes on the lead for this perceived future, making it the emancipatory monarch of spatial outcomes.

To start with land, the previous phases of ethnic violence in the 1960s and 70s had displaced and exiled a large number of Rwandans, resulting in shifted land ownership. When the Rwanda Patriotic Front took Rwanda back into control, the government had to develop large scale policy action in the area of restructuring land ownership models, systems and social perspectives. Land issues have always been issues of contention and conflict within East African political

systemization. As primary baggage of colonialism, political instability, ethnic division, resource clashes, etc., land issues have always called on for status quo reversals, negotiations and ways to rethink how land can be made a meaningful tool in reconciliatory processes. The *Imidugudu* programme led by the Government of Rwanda was intended to cater to the thousands of refugees and exiled Rwandans returning back home. Catharine Newbury argues that the *Imidugudu* was an assignment in 'high modernism,' equipped to launch the state's interest in socially engineering a 'certain' kind of society as a result (Newbury 2011). The kind of 'villagization,' or cluster-centric development, that *Imidugudu* saw, however, was not unique to Rwanda in any way. Julius Nyerere's *Ujamaa* policy in Tanzania was also designed with similar processes of villagization in mind, inspired by the 'collectives' model, based out of central structures designed to effectively improve economic production (which however, did fail later on). To a certain degree, the *Imidugudu* process were also seen as land concessions taking into account a certain planned karmic reciprocity for loss that the exiled had experienced. The *Imidugudu* policy was certainly controversial in many circles, but to a great degree, supporters of the state viewed the process as a requirement in social reconfiguration in order to take initial steps of developing new imaginations of the country that the state favored. On the issue of land disputes in the Eastern province, Chris Huggins comments, 'land sharing – essentially a form of uncompensated expropriation – was implemented from 1996 on when Tutsi refugees returned to the country. The land was simply divided equally between the two households (usually the Hutu secondary occupant and the returning Tutsi original owner)' (Huggins 2011). Overall, the nature of land re-development and habitat structuring has been critiqued as a strategic project. As Des Forges's said, 'the policy and laws appear to offer more security for the prosperous and powerful, eagerly solicited for their capacity to invest, than for

the majority of Rwandans who make a bare living from their plots' (Huggins 2011). But on the other side, some have questioned the validity of specific western 'rights based' angles as inadequate in analyzing these processes within a plural nature. Early systems of ownership of *ubukonde* and *ikigingi* involving the passing of land via lineage and royal distribution, respectively, essentially involved community and power centered relations of land affiliation and distribution (RISD 2013). While scholars do acknowledge the various changes these processes undertook both during and after the colonial experience – which, to a certain extent also manipulated these relations by altering power structures and by reconfiguring agricultural practice directed at the growing of crops such as coffee – it is undisputed that land was always nevertheless a complex issue that was often at the center of conflict. Therefore, the process of dispossession that took place during these often-contentious power reconfigurations 'augmented social cleavages within Rwanda that would later contribute to mass violence' (RISD 2013). Therefore, is not the logic of social engineering within the perspective of land structuring policies actually a positive strategic necessity? At the most recent stage of a series of land reforms, the parliament passed the Organic Act of 2013, which clarifies the contemporary modality of land transfers, regulations and extra territory issues, including Special Economic Zones.

Going through processes such as enabling land regularization, land titling, etc., Rwanda also recently implemented street names and signs in 2012 (Buchana 2012). Although a seemingly minor development, I think it is quite a symbolic and rather epistemic leap reflective in certain terms, the material politic of spatial change and representation that has taken place in Rwanda in recent years. In the year 2000, the Government of Rwanda adopted 'Vision 2020' gearing to make Rwanda a middle-income country. The Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategies (EPDRS 1/2) were put in place, backing the five pillars of the

vision: 1) good governance and a capable state, 2) human resource development and a knowledge based economy, 3) a private sector-led economy, 4) infrastructure development, productive and market oriented agriculture and 5) regional and international economic integration (GoR 2000). Rwanda embarked on a design mission of configuring its ministerial agendas on achieving some of these broader objectives.

As the vocabulary of 'economic growth' found itself adopted within the ministerial frame, a series of reforms emerged. One of them, for example, was the multilayer integration of almost half a dozen ministerial agendas into one service-providing arm called the Rwanda Development Board. Within the interest of improving investment, developing businesses and realizing strategic obstacles, such as distance to port and large-scale industry, the leadership decided to take the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) agenda seriously. Having realized a leading American engineering university to set up campus in Kigali, a special economic zone for IT, liberalized the telecommunications sector, installed the country's first fiber optic broadband network etc., generated a series of consequence of a far reaching aesthetic production. With the 2010 Surbana masterplan of 132sq km of Kigali, Kagame's imagination of visualizing an 'African Singapore' went one step ahead.⁴ Any review of the new Kigali plan would appreciate the forensic nature of detail and foresight the plan indicates. The plan is an ambitious one and calls for an extensive overhaul of resources towards infrastructure and other urban elements, apparently designed for an imagined socio-economic result. The nature of the project visually and aesthetically is unquestionably neoliberal – 'capitalism with Asian values' as Zizek would perhaps call it, though of-course adapted to the Rwandan context here. The completed phase of the Gacuriro Vision 2020 Estates, seemingly zonal, modular, reproductive as spatial products, replicate a 'European' aesthetic of a typical house: replicas of each other scattered

mathematically over a hill.⁵ Other extensions nearby have been built by Chinese contractors and Chinese workers. The Kigali masterplan zonal implementation, having already begun, has led to a process of resettlement for a large population living in the center of the city to other pre-built government provided households in the peripheries.

It is indeed uncertain what the final outcome of the masterplan will be. The manager of one of Kigali's supermarkets once joked, 'We essentially are all serving the exact same number of customers, even though we have a new Nakumatt in town now. The group that shops at supermarket A on Monday, comes down to B on Wednesday and C on Saturday – there is a new supermarket in town but we don't have new customers.'⁶ This remark, although potentially biased, may not necessarily be completely off mark. While urbanization is inevitably happening, the question remains – how will the majority access the benefits or be empowered in time to be a part of this infrastructural progress? It requires a robust ecosystem of elements to generate, say an ICT economy. Rwanda still has generations to shift into the higher education paradigm, not to mention its connectivity with global innovation and economy.

Let me for a moment, take a metaphorical leeway: Immanuel the farmer comes to town. Immanuel basks in the glory of Kigali tower, he even smiles at the visual leap Kigali has made – he is, however, unable to access any of the benefits of the products and services that glare all around him. After all, like the majority of Rwandans, he lives on merely a few thousand francs every month. The two realities: on the one hand, a political vision of the future and on the other, a ground reality of the human condition, perhaps don't match. This brings us back to our primary fundamental endeavor in thinking about post-conflict architecture – what does it sing, and to whom does it sing?

While Rwanda has had to take tough decisions in the name of post-genocide national stability and has made arguably loud and courageous articulations for the future, how

real are they within an inclusive reality? Even acknowledging the systemic nature of inequality, how can two parallel developments meet in the middle when the gap between them is so wide? I would argue that the Rwandan experience stands as a bi-polar parallax in theorizing post-conflict decision making from an architectural perspective. With a large segment of Kigali's houses – temporary in nature, roofed with corrugated iron sheets, cardboard sheeting, local tiles and gravel paths to walk on – how far is the cognitive distance to a space that is built of steel, glass, concrete, marble, tarred and pebbled pathways, that is in terms with, 'Singaporean,' ideas of space? What is the political economy connection going to look like? There is a need to think of epistemology in post-conflict design that is far more connected to the socio-economic and cultural reality of a place.

Conclusion

To conclude, the intention of framing these episodes of description and analysis is to most importantly put into writing the many contrasts, conflicts and comic speculations that often counterintuitively find themselves amongst each other as subjective elements. How does one theorize this complexity? It is perhaps only in Badiou's definition of philosophy that this enactment can truly open entry. For Badiou, a 'philosophical situation is an encounter. It is an encounter between essentially foreign terms,' or arguably seemingly foreign terms (Badiou 2006). Politics and Architecture here are those seemingly foreign terms and it is in entertaining these complex yet necessary connections that meaning is often made. While this paper poses a range of critical questions, it also poses into limited validation the aspect of 'performance' that is often ignored as a category in the study of politics. The encounter in this context is therefore a meeting of politics and infrastructure that in several contemporary economic systems claim two separate sources. The claim of this piece is therefore to say that it is not

true to disclaim politics and infrastructure as separate commodities within the operation of development. The 'discursive curve' is in some ways representative of the volatility of infrastructural intents. Architecture is part of the performance of politics and in Kigali, it is being used, to describe a different kind of proclaimed imagination – one that is both a consequence of global capital and is also an effort in developing new histories.

Notes

- ¹ The term *jugaad* is a Hindi-Urdu term similar to the word 'hack' in English referring to 'fixing up' problems quickly and innovatively.
- ² The 'floating parliament' is a political philosophy joke based out of Sloterdijk's work in his texts on 'Bubbles.' The joke entails a 'pneumatic parliament' to be floated over post-conflict spaces that apparently installs 'democratic' systems.
- ³ The notion of the 'wolf' is a complex philosophical concept often extracted from Derrida's work, however most prominently visible in his posthumous collections under Seminar 1 under Volume 1 of the Beast and the Sovereign published in November 2011 by University of Chicago Press.
- ⁴ Detailed information of the Kigali masterplan is available from Surbana, the Kigali City Council and the Government of Rwanda.
- ⁵ Note that the Kigali plans can be accessed from the Kigali City Council (kigalicity.gov.rw)
- ⁶ From the personal experience of the author. Note that 'Nakumatt' is an East African chain of retail supermarkets.

Author's Note

This paper is part of a Special Collection of papers on Conflict, Transition and Development emerging from a Symposium convened by the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA), Sri Lanka, and the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) in September 2014.

References

- Badiou, A** 2006 *Polemics*. 1st ed. New York: Verso.
- Bhat, H** 2013 Decay as 'Aesthetic' and Alternative Negotiations. In: Annual Symposium of Architectural Research, Tampere, Finland on 29 August 2013.
- Buchana, P** 2012 Rwanda – New street signs ease life in Kigali. *The New Times*, 29 June.
- Clark, P** 2011 *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice without Lawyers*. 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fezer, J** and **Schmitz, M** (eds.) 2012 *Lucius Burckhardt writings: Rethinking man-made environments. Politics, landscape and design*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Government of Rwanda** 2000 *Rwanda Vision 2020*. Kigali, Rwanda: GoR.
- Huggins, C** 2011 The Presidential Land Commission: Undermining Land Law Reform. In: Straus, S and Waldorf, L (eds.) *Remaking Rwanda – State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Jones, W** 2012 Between Pyongyang and Singapore: The Rwandan State, its rulers and the military. In: Campioni, M and Noack, P (eds.) *Rwanda Fast Forward: Social, Economic, Military and Reconciliation Prospects*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Newbury, C** 2011 High Modernism at the ground level: The *Imidugudu* Policy in Rwanda. In: Straus, S and Waldorf, L (eds.) *Remaking Rwanda – State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development** 2013 *Saving Land Rights Project: A working paper on land tenure regularization in Rwanda*. Kigali, Rwanda: RISD.
- Sebald, W G** 2004 *On the natural history of destruction*. Reprint ed. New York: The Modern Library.
- Vockler, K** 2009 *Prishtina is Everywhere. Turbo Urbanism: The Aftermath of a Crisis*. Berlin: Archis.
- Weizman, E** 2007 *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*. New York: Verso.

How to cite this article: Bhat, H 2015 Architecture: Post-Conflict Infrastructure and its Discursive Curve. *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 4(1): 25, pp. 1–10, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.fr>

Published: 29 April 2015

Copyright: © 2015 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License (CC-BY 3.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>.

 *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Ubiquity Press.

OPEN ACCESS 