

Cet ouvrage se propose de redéfinir le rôle joué par le projet – projet de villes et de territoires – dans la construction sociale de l'espoir. Les disciplines de la transformation de l'espace ont toujours contribué à l'élaboration de visions du monde et de systèmes de valeurs partagés. Leur participation à la construction de l'espoir est pourtant remise en question aujourd'hui, principalement en raison de leur difficulté à s'inscrire dans une narration collective convaincante à propos du futur.

Les contributions rassemblées dans le présent ouvrage visent à identifier les conditions théoriques et pratiques nécessaires à la constitution d'un urbanisme de l'espoir: saisir les configurations socio-économiques du territoire en dehors des théories dominantes; appréhender le territoire comme palimpseste, en considérant sa profondeur historique et ses potentialités évolutives; privilégier l'approche descriptive et qualitative pour aborder, sous l'angle des enjeux climatiques et énergétiques, des problématiques aussi cruciales que la régénération des sols, les structures paysagères, le bâti ou les formes de la production industrielle et agricole. Une posture paradoxale doit être assumée: réanimer le lien indissoluble que la modernité a établi entre projet et espoir, tout en en renversant les fondements.

Textes de Christian Arnspurger, Jean Attali, Dominique Bourg, Gioacchino Garofoli, Géry Leloutre, Panos Mantziaras, Sébastien Marot, Brent Patterson, Alikí-Myrto Perysinakí, Matthew Skjonsberg, Séréna Vanbutsele, Eric Verrechia, Antoine Vialle et Paola Viganò.

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PANOS MANTZIARAS
PAOLA VIGANÒ

URBANISME DE L'ESPOIR

MétisPresses

Sous la direction de

PANOS MANTZIARAS / PAOLA VIGANÒ

PROJETER DES HORIZONS D'ATTENTE

URBANISME DE L'ESPOIR

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URBANISME DE L'ESPOIR. LE 21^e SIÈCLE EN MOUVEMENT

Introduction

Nos capacités de prévision sont extrêmement limitées; comme le sont aussi, dans une société pluraliste, nos capacités individuelles et collectives à coordonner les actions des divers sujets qui contribuent à la construction, la transformation et la modification de la ville. La personne qui fait des scénarios est une personne désenchantée, sans certitudes et, pour cette raison, elle ne propose que des lignes possibles de raisonnement. (SECCHI 1996)

Comme pour regretter un Âge d'Or consistant à entrevoir, parmi les signes du présent et l'interprétation de l'histoire, un horizon façonnable par des actions coordonnées, Bernardo Secchi observe le rôle limité de l'urbaniste dans le théâtre des transformations urbaines. Quand il écrit ces lignes, le monde traverse une décennie exceptionnelle, la dernière du 20^e siècle et du 2^e millénaire à la fois. Nous avons tendance à oublier aujourd'hui à quel point celle-ci fut colorée par de nombreux millénarismes, qui sans retenue, prévoyaient la fin du monde. Fin du monde il n'y a pas eu, et pour certains même cette décennie fut *The Best Decade Ever*: avec la juste dose de technologie couplée avec l'ouverture de l'ex-bloc soviétique, la fin de l'apartheid, la prospérité de par le monde, l'extension des libertés individuelles et la démocratisation du bon café par... Starbucks (ANDERSEN 2015)!

Un dur aveu cependant, celui de la difficulté d'anticiper le futur par le projet, autrement dit de gouverner, dans une société pluraliste. Il résonne comme un écho des proclamations de Francis Fukuyama sur la fin de *l'Histoire et des idéologies*¹. Suite à la chute du mur de Berlin, les années 1990 étaient en passe de devenir, selon lui, la première décennie de la domination absolue du capitalisme démocratique et des marchés, ainsi que le début d'une spirale ascendante de prospérité pour le plus grand nombre. Bien sûr, en date du 11 septembre 2001 cette thèse fut

A CIVIC HOPE. FROM LAUSANNE TO LOS ANGELES

Christian Arnspenger, Matthew Skjonsberg¹

Archaeology as a method for unearthing hope

The aim of this essay is to show how hope for an apparently hopeless metropolis can emerge from an *archaeology of past hopefulnesses*. New hope routinely takes root in the midst of dire circumstances – not through a top-down decree (although wise governance often helps), but through the careful and loving unearthing, by citizens and civically-minded participants and observers, of *things once hoped for and not carried out*. Unrealized hopes of past communities haunt the future by being present in archives, memories and testimonies – by existing as *joyfully ghostly visions* of possible futures that were nearly realized, or ended up only partially realized.

In ancient Greek mythology, “hope” is often personified by the goddess Elpis; the substantive *elpis* in classical Greek literature stands for hope or expectation. English use of the term “hope” dates back to the 1200s, meaning “confidence in the future”, and “wishful desire” – addressing both the thing hoped for and the basis for that hope – a confidence generally founded upon religious beliefs. The basis of hope in contemporary secular societies is less straightforward and frequently paradoxical: science is a popular basis for “confidence in the future”, but it has also yielded climate change and the traumatic prospect of nuclear apocalypse. So it seems we ultimately place our hope in education and governance – and this, in fact, is the scope of the historic discipline of *civics*, and of the interdisciplinary tradition of *civic design*. Our essay is a proposal for the tracing and charting of older horizons of *civic* hope that were – or might still be – derived from existing conditions and



1. LAUS'ANGELES,
LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND,
2016 (@ALEJANDRO PAL).

shared civic ambitions, validating and further enabling contemporary civic actions.

The apparently hopeless context in which we intend to perform this exercise in hopeful memory is the Los Angeles region. It is a place we both have grown to love, for professional but chiefly for personal, familial reasons. We both live and work in Lausanne and we both have a deep attachment to Los Angeles. In the suburb of Malley, near both our universities, there was – until recently – a shoddy, hangar-like building on whose roof the wonderfully revealing, giant graffiti's inscription *LAUS'ANGELES* is boldly featured, suggestively anticipating our transatlantic, transcontinental exploration. As if to underline one of the points we wish to make in this essay, the building – which exuded authenticity – was recently demolished to make way for gentrifying rail corridor redevelopment (ill. 1). Our question is: What civic and formal commonalities might exist between a quiet Swiss city on the shores of the Lac Léman and what, by all accounts, seems to be a metropolitan nightmare stretching out inside a desert basin between mountain ranges along the coast of the Pacific Ocean? And what meaningful differences might exist between them that could yet prove to be of reciprocal interest?

From Lausanne to Los Angeles

The Université de Lausanne (UNIL), financed by the Canton of Vaud, has been developing its capacities in the direction of sustainability: since about 2010 its Rectorate has channelled significant human and financial resources into the strengthening of its Institute of Geography and Sustainability (*Institut de géographie et durabilité*, IGD), of which one of us is currently the Director. The École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), funded by the Swiss Confederation, is one of the nation's two technical universities – the second one being in Zurich – and has become one of the world's top schools in engineering. The other of us is currently a doctoral researcher there at the EPFL's *Laboratoire d'urbanisme* (Lab-U), founded by Paola Viganò with Elena Cogato Lanza within its Faculty of Natural and Built Environment (ENAC). Our academic homes in Lausanne – IGD and Lab-U – have at least one thing in common: a deliberate emphasis on *prospective, utopian vision*. Envisioning new worlds on the basis of existing ones is what we are in the business of, with a dimension of “actionable utopia”, meaning the aim of delineating horizons of expectation that can be effectively acted upon.

Lausanne is located within the same geographical region as Geneva – the cities are neighbours on Lake Geneva's French-speaking “west coast”. As the capitals of neighbouring Cantons, they also act as polar boundaries (southwest and northeast) of an expanding metropolitan footprint along the northwest lakeshore, known in French as Lac Léman – yielding the so-called “Lemanic arc”, or *arc lémanique*. This *métropole lémanique*, as it is increasingly being referred to (LERESCHE, JOYE and BASSAND 1995), is one example of the dynamic urban form famously known as the *città diffusa*, or “diffuse city” (INDOVINA 1990; GROSJEAN 2010) – one formal variation on a broader formal theme subsequently characterized by Bernardo Secchi and Paola Viganò as the “Horizontal Metropolis”, or HM (VIGANÒ 2013; VIGANÒ, SECCHI and FABIAN 2016). The utopian aspects of the “Horizontal Metropolis” have recently been addressed in the essays “The Metrics of Utopia” and “The Genius of Utopia” (SKJONSBORG 2016, 2017), the potential for community in HM is addressed in “Do It Yourself: From Individual



2. LAUSANNE/
LOS ANGELES
[GOOGLE EARTH].

Sovereignty to Civic Design" (SKJONSBERG 2017) while the exemplarity of Switzerland's horizontally *metropolizing* process as a negotiated compromise between densification and sprawl was highlighted by our joint IGD – Lab-U teams in "Rethinking urban form: Switzerland as a 'Horizontal Metropolis'"². Swiss urban form has relied significantly on two structural properties: *isotropic provision* – that is, the tendency for life-sustaining landscapes and infrastructures to be available equally in all directions, from any given point in space – as qualified by and predicated upon the valley corridors of a mountainous geomorphology; and *high existential*

quality – meaning that the social and ecological "services" to which these life-sustaining landscapes and infrastructures give access offer, by and large, a high quality of life (ill. 2).

By comparison, Los Angeles provides extremely uneven existential quality to its citizens – most of whom need to rely on cars, many of whom cannot easily access quality medical, postal, educational, commercial, or natural services even with a car, and a significant number of whom are too poor to even own a car, making them *de facto* disenfranchised. In other words, different places in the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area are (a) either "heterotropic", offering extremely uneven access to life-sustaining landscapes and infrastructures in different directions, or (b) if occasionally isotropic, then offering homogeneously low-quality isotropy or, as we would put it, "dystropic" – a hallmark of, paradoxically, both affluent and poor sprawling urban and suburban communities: the affluent because they need to cover huge distances in many directions to earn and spend their money; the poor because they have neither money to spend nor access to anything of even medium quality in their own neighbourhood. For all practical as well as theoretical purposes, L.A. could be called a mix of "heterotropic" and "dystropic" horizontalities.

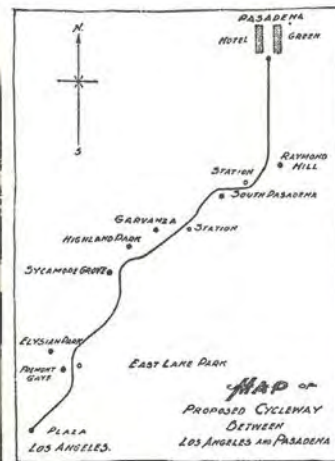
When we started out on this joint work, one of the key aspects of any "urbanism of hope" was, in our view, the possibility for urban behemoths such as the L.A. Metropolitan Area to both inspire and to draw inspiration from the HM hypothesis. Just as L.A. has informed HM in some ways and has provided a cautionary example in other respects, Swiss "urban planning" has made certain accomplishments over the past century that might prove of interest to civically-minded citizens, even of that impossible city. It is not that Swiss city "planners" always got everything right – far from it. But the artful, culturally ingrained, landscape-conditioned Helvetic city-form has, by and large, successfully charted a middle course between the twin nightmares of endless sprawl and extreme densification.

One initial impulse was for us to offer a neat, dichotomous picture: Switzerland's isotropic Horizontal Metropolis comes to the rescue of L.A.'s dystropic horizontal nightmare. (Insert here some *Alphorn* music

with a drone film of the meshwork of rural and urban between, say, Lausanne and Neuchâtel...) But the reality is, in fact, rather more complicated. Even as HM presents itself as a resource and inspiration for other metropolises to start recycling their infrastructures and treating them as renewable resources instead of seeing them as intractable obstacles standing in the way of sustainability, Switzerland's HM "genes" reveal a clear polarization between *densification* and *conservation*, between singling out a subset of the territory for hyper-densification while fallows and "empty spaces" are conserved as repositories for "wild" landscapes (DIENER, HERZOG, MEILLI, DE MEURON and SCHMID 2005). In the aforementioned *Urban Planning* article from March 2017 by Viganò, Arnsperger and other Lab-U members, the HM hypothesis emerged not only as descriptive of what had existed up until today, but also as normative or prescriptive of what the future could offer.

Past traces of another L.A., and how they were covered up

The two us – that is, Arnsperger and Skjonsberg – met several times between September 2017 and January 2018 to discuss the implications of an important and fascinating finding by Matthew of the displaced practice of *civic design* and of the *park systems* championed by civic designers. Throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century history – even of the seemingly hopeless, sprawling non-entity that is now the L.A. Metropolitan Area – there ran a consistently vital thread of civic design (see e.g. ADSHEAD 1910; STEPHENSON 1985; see also HEATHCOTT 2013; SKJONBERG 2017) fuelled by utopian images and the construction of bicycle highways, park thoroughfares, and the general aspiration of local citizens to live in their communities in healthy and sustainable ways – using low-tech and bioregional ways of doing and thinking – in contrast to the technocratic, anarchic but real-estate – and automobile-driven gigantism that gripped the nation – and Los Angeles in particular – starting in the 1920s. Grassroots initiatives for carless, alternative living, extending over more than two decades, have sprung up in the 1980s, such as the Los Angeles Ecovillage (see e.g. ARNSPERGER 2016 or SANFORD 2017) – one



of whose main objectives is to foster car-free, bicycle-based lifestyles in the middle of the metropolis (see HART 2016 for an exploration of the L.A. Ecovillage's "bike kitchen"). In parallel, citizen-rooted steps are currently being taken towards resurrecting the L.A.-Pasadena "California Cycleway" of the 1890s (see e.g. ZEVITS 2013; KOEPEL 2015; BROVERMAN 2016)(ill. 3 and 4).

As Skjonsberg had discovered during his doctoral research, Los Angeles, like many other cities on both sides of the Atlantic, has had – and still has – a long-standing, more or less "underground" tradition of "green urbanism". This was represented in a paradigmatic way by the famous Olmsted regional plan of the late 1920s (HISE and DEVERELL 2000) – a prime example of "civic design" in the form of a Regional Park System commissioned by the L.A. Chamber of Commerce from the Olmsted Brothers in 1928, submitted in 1930 (OLMSTED BROTHERS and BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES 1930)(ill. 5 and 6, see next page).

This plan, championing ecological coherence and active mobility, was put aside under the pressure of economic interests intent on developing the city along the lines of maximum real-estate values and automobile accessibility – exemplary of civic design's more explicitly commercial

3-4. CALIFORNIA CYCLEWAY, A SEEN FROM THE HOTEL GREEN IN PASADENA, 1900 (TO THE LEFT) (© PASADENA MUSEUM OF HISTORY); CALIFORNIA CYCLEWAY, PROPOSED 9 MILE ROUTE, 1898 (TO THE RIGHT) (© LOS ANGELES HERALD).



5. PARKS PLAYGROUNDS AND BEACHES FOR THE LOS ANGELES REGION, OLMSTED BROTHERS AND BARTHOLOMEW ASSOCIATES (1930), PLATE 42, CAPTIONED: "GENERAL PLAN FOR LARGE RESERVATIONS IN MOUNTAINS, CANYONS, DESERTS AND ISLANDS, IN EXTENSION OF THE PLAN FOR PARKS AND PARKWAYS..." [© LIBRARY OF CONGRESS].



disciplinary successor, "urban design". For the past twenty years, this same green urbanism tradition – rooted in bottom-up civic activism and supported by top-down civic institutions – has been revitalized as a number of Los Angeles community organizations have begun using remarkably effective long-term, bottom-up/top-down methods to establish civic services for those least served, finally implementing – in piecemeal fashion – the tremendous Olmsted plan that had been sidelined immediately upon its delivery. Among an array of related current initiatives, both the "Olmsted Vision" plan of The City Project and the Amigos de los Rios "Emerald Necklace Park Network" plan are finding new ways to implement that earlier Olmsted-inspired park system – in such a way as to effectively provide contemporary civic services to the city's underserved communities (see e.g. GOODYEAR 2014 or ROBINSON 2016).

6. PARKS PLAYGROUNDS AND BEACHES FOR THE LOS ANGELES REGION, OLMSTED BROTHERS AND BARTHOLOMEW ASSOCIATES (1930), PLATE 46, CAPTIONED: "GENERAL PLAN FOR A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF PARKS AND PARKWAYS FOR THE LOS ANGELES REGION" [© LIBRARY OF CONGRESS].



7. THE CITY PROJECT, WEBSITE (TO THE LEFT) AND PLAN (TO THE RIGHT) (@ COURTESY OF THE CITY PROJECT).

8. AMIGOS DE LOS RIOS, PLAN AND COMMUNITY (@ COURTESY OF AMIGOS DE LOS RIOS).



One of the reasons the Olmsted plan had little chance of becoming a reality when it was initially proposed is that the suburban-house-cum-automobile idyll that served key economic interests so well in the late 1920s – and that led, in parallel, to the swift dismantling of L.A.’s city rail system, at the time one of the best in the world (FISHMAN 1996; ELKIND 2014: 4-10) – supported by a new vision of “wilderness” that had started to emerge in the conservation movement during the period from 1890-1920 (see e.g. TAYLOR 2016)(ill. 7 and 8). As the industrialization and urbanization of the American West advanced at a rapid pace, the arch-American ideal of communities “living at one with nature” yielded (even in the discourse of such earnest and rugged naturalists as John Muir) to a much more dualizing image – that of the “protection” of nature from human encroachment, and of the setting-apart of remote “wilderness” areas from areas where human activities could freely occupy land and use



resources without constraint. This idea of “polarized horizontality” as formal resolution of civic and commercial values seems to have played a key role in assuaging people’s qualms about industrialized urbanization – having received assurances that despite the urban obliteration of their own regional ecology, those remote *hinterland* regions

would be conserved in service to urbanization (SKJONSBORG 2014). In the first half on the 20th century Los Angeles was marketed to Eastern US citizens as a paradise of urban industriousness surrounded by virgin nature – mountains, forests and ocean (see e.g. Part 1 of CARLE 2016: 11-68). Undoubtedly, rampant urban sprawl in Southern California was made more imperceptible and emotionally innocuous by a discourse of “conservation” that would theoretically set apart fallows and “empty lands” as a counterweight to explosive metropolitan growth. But while the federal government assisted with remote conservation efforts, coupled with regional waste disposal strategies, vested industrial interests also enjoyed advantages conferred by federal legislation – structurally compromising legislated conservation efforts already difficult to implement and to enforce. As the US’s environmental history in the 19th and early 20th century seems to show, the National Park Service itself might well have unconsciously served as a cultural alibi for otherwise unchecked devolution of America’s corporate economy into a land-grabbing, extractive, growth-obsessed *economism*. In his landmark study of the link between suburban sprawl and the rise of American environmentalism, Adam Rome (2001) aptly coins the expression “suburban-industrial complex” to describe the mass production of housing as well as of the associated automobile infrastructures. As other analysts of Southern California’s resource predicament such as David Carle (2016) have shown, this power structure extended deeply into the countryside as well, generating vast agricultural land speculation in parallel with suburban real-estate booms – which, given the relative scarcity and high use value of agricultural land, ought to have been subject to regional conservation as well. Remote conservationism appears to have developed largely on the backdrop of – some would say as a last-ditch bulwark against – rapid suburbanization that needed to be marketed as the manufacturing of a bucolic idyll in the midst of natural plenty. As Carle has persuasively argued, Los Angeles marketed itself for a long time as a water-drenched orange-grove paradise miraculously surrounded by “virgin” mountains and deserts (see also SACKMAN 2005).

If there was any “urbanism of hope” at work back then, it was an impossibly oxymoronic one: *We can endlessly grow our cities and our economies while leaving just enough Nature untouched so that growth-thirsty humans can be forever in harmony with a constantly regenerating biosphere.* But soil, water and air are linked systems – respecting few boundaries – and both cities and wildernesses have finally also been toxified by this permissiveness towards industry. Environmental contamination has further accelerated the rural exodus of those whose only remaining hope is urban – so they are being told – often not realizing that urban areas, too, are already increasingly toxic.

Did the Olmsted plan of the late 1920s address such an ontological dualization between “economic Man” and “untouched Nature”? In part, it did. By creating a network of parks and green corridors connecting them the plan ensured much-needed ecological coherence in the region, allowing inhabitants to breathe better while they went about their lives. It brought Nature *physically closer* to Angelenos than could any National Park that was more geographically remote. The term “park system” was coined by Olmsted around 1860, and was widely used by civic designers on both sides of the Atlantic for over a century. As in most of these *park systems*, Los Angeles’s plan was regional in scope: it was designed as a “nature network”, a continuous armature of parks and ecological corridors to be superimposed upon, and combined with – but generally deferred to and accommodated by – the “culture network” of existing (pre-automobile) infrastructural grid of highways and metro lines, both of which had a tendency to create localized living arrangements with living quarters, schools, shops and workshops all concentrated on close-knit areas so that daily life unfolds with and within the “green”, not alongside it. To us, this image of a mutually-reinforcing “dual network” is the key to understanding what L.A. could become: the Olmsted plan *had the power and potential to act as a radical catalyst unleashing a dynamics of healthy, life-enhancing, site-specific horizontality.*

True enough, the plan of the late 1920s generally deferred to the emerging highways and established metro lines and was accommodated by them. Only a few years earlier Olmsted and Bartholomew had also co-authored

a large-scale automobile traffic plan for L.A. (see OLMSTED, BARTHOLOMEW and CHENEY 1924). Despite these efforts, the Olmsted plans were not able to stem the tide of industrialized urbanization brought about by real-estate- and petroleum-fuelled interests – interests well-represented on the very committee that had commissioned the Olmsted plan, and that had therefore promptly buried it (HISE and DEVERELL 2000). Yet, had public discretion been better informed (as it arguably often is nowadays) and had the power imbalances been less massive, the Olmsted park systems plan would have had the potential of catalysing dynamic civic transformations radically different from what since came to be. Indeed, had the Olmsted plan been implemented after 1928, and had the other infrastructural grids evolved alongside it, the city’s earlier emphasis on widespread biking and on city-train transportation would very likely have been intensified and deepened, probably embodying an early version of the radical critique of the false autonomy granted to city dwellers by petroleum, much later spelled out by Ivan Illich, summarized in a statement about a genuinely utopian ideal:

Participatory democracy demands low energy technology, and free people must travel the road to productive social relations at the speed of a bicycle. (ILLICH 1973: 12)

Los Angeles might well have evolved into something akin to a federation of “ecocities” in the sense of Todd and Todd (1994), Register (2006) or Downton (2009).

In actual fact, the 1890-1920 period was the heyday of US petroleum production and the monopolistic forces of “fossil capital” (MALM 2016) were so overwhelmingly powerful that rapid automobile expansion and the second real-estate boom it made possible (after the earlier boom created by transcontinental railroads in the 1860s, which itself followed, and to some degree paralleled, an initial boom facilitated by transcontinental canals: see e.g. CRONON 1991, WHITE 2011) abruptly tipped the scales against anything resembling the visionary Olmsted plan. (For detailed histories of California’s urban growth and its social as well as cultural underpinnings, see SIMPSON 2004 as well as Part 1 of CARLE 2016.)

Short-term economic interests ensured that Angelenos would have only a few tiny parks in their city – indeed, any contemporary map of L.A. confirms how incredibly few there are by now, and how small and far apart they are – and in practical terms Angelenos mostly have to be content with long car trips “into nature”, creeping more or less sluggishly along enormous, clogged freeways beyond the San Fernando Valley to the northwest or out east beyond San Bernardino, where the great National Parks (Mojave, Joshua Tree) beckon with their still uncluttered vistas of “unadulterated” nature.

Please note very carefully that this is nothing but *a continuation of the pathological view of heterotropic or even dystropic access to “resources” and “need-fulfillment places”* that has made Los Angeles into a distended, utterly unbalanced urban dystopia. Establishing a landscape of faraway “virgin nature” places – National Parks, National Monuments, State and National Forests, etc. – is certainly not something we want to disparage; it is clearly a valuable focus for conservation in and of itself. However, it is emphatically *not* a model of isotropic provision (as these “virgin nature” places are, by definition, unevenly placed in the overall California landscape and require long drives to be accessed by some) or of high existential quality (as nearby urban landscapes are depleted of natural features and beauty, and the built environment itself is either unevenly cared for or protected, or destroyed).

Unearthing a new civic hope

In keeping with our earlier terminology, as distinct from a “civic horizontality” that would ensure access to nature while servicing both rural and urban populations at a regional scale, we could call this “urban centrality”. It is analogous to – though much more destructive than – the view of the multi-zone subdivision which (as we saw earlier) seems to be emerging nowadays within the Swiss urban-planning milieus. The risk lies in the view that increased density and urban land occupation can somehow be “purchased” by simply leaving other remote parts of the territory empty and “wild” – not acknowledging that even these conservation areas and

rural regions are merely regarded as “*hinterlands*” whose value ultimately is derived from those “resources” that can be extracted to serve further industrial urbanization. In Southern California, the direction taken has not been densification so much as it has been opportunistic land speculation, resulting in wider and wider urban sprawl. There is a feature common to these two analogous perspectives: while city parks, national parks, and “wilderness reserves” are presumed to have some kind of effective ecological performance, behaving like “ecological corridors” (a revealing word given that it signals cordoned-off, protected natural landscapes “where not to build”), in actual fact they generally do not, being fragmentary and lacking the necessary formal continuity that supports natural cycles – a continuity that was effectively illustrated, once again, by Olmsted’s regional plan.

The danger of superficially co-opting any kind of Olmstedian plan into such a petroleum-, car- driven view of metropolitan life is that it would, indeed, become one more cog in the wheel of further industrial urbanization, and would uphold L.A.’s hetero- and dystropic imbalances. This is surely not what the Olmsteds (see MARTIN 2011) or some of their equally prestigious contemporaries such as Patrick Geddes (see WELTER 2002; SKJONSBERG 2016, 2017) originally had in mind, since they were coming from a rather different worldview – one that, while not opposed to modernism in all its facets and not even adverse to the automobile in itself (it was only just emerging in their day), clearly championed multiple transportation modes and, most specifically, a deeply organic interpenetration of the natural and the built, of the slow and the fast, of the local neighbourhood, the far-reaching metropolis, and the regional rural community (see e.g. HOBBS 2014). They identified themselves as civic designers. Theirs was a civic vision; they maintained a civic hope.

Ultimately, to rescue the Olmsted plan from a superficial interpretation as sprawl-vindicating picture-framing – and from becoming a mere ornament to “provide a few nice parks” for an otherwise unchanged, unrestrained and overreaching mega-metropolis – we need to *adopt a view of horizontality that coheres much more with what the Swiss tradition of isotropy has been conveying and enacting for centuries*. The issue is not merely, and not even

mainly, to provide “a bit of nature” wherever there is still some room left, nor is it to create some room further out of the neighbourhood or the city where a largely symbolic, sacrificial “swath of green” can be provisionally conserved. The issue, rather, is how to structuralize extensive swaths of connected natural ecosystems within the city. The issue is how to affirm the effective relevance of horizontality by enshrining the basic principles of isotropic provision and of high existential quality – of genuinely inhabiting spaces that are natural and built, inclusively rural and urban, while adding to and reaffirming the integrity of existing conservation areas. And our sense is that this is precisely what *the contemporary resurgence of civil-society movements in Los Angeles, aiming at reappropriating space and time at multiple scales so as to reach back to the Olmsted plan in a radical manner*, is attempting to do.

This leads us to postulate a specific dialectical schema: the regional park system as a radical community catalyst. The Olmsted plan acts as an imaginal and imaginary trigger for multiple, utopia-inspired citizens' actions, and these in turn concur to gradually shaping a reality of enhanced ecological and social coherence. The schema is dialectical because, obviously, the “end result” is bound to differ from the initial plan – in today's L.A. the original Olmsted plan will, of necessity, need to be tweaked and adapted to physical and ideational realities the plan was not dealing with at the time. And nevertheless, contemporary grassroots actions are inspired and driven forward by the catalyst of the original plan. Civic hope, as we have said, is rooted in the desire to finally actualize what once almost became reality.

The Horizontal Metropolis between isotropy and polarization

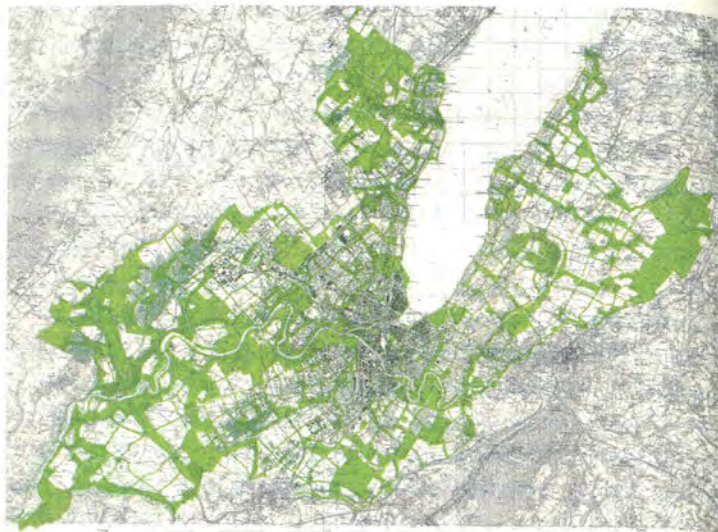
As we continue discussing these findings and ideas, and combine them with the ongoing research within Lab-U on the history and future of the Horizontal Metropolis, a rather different intellectual landscape gradually emerges for us. The polarization is not so much between a hopeless L.A. and a hope-offering Switzerland – the debate, rather, is between two poles which on both sides of the Atlantic stand in a relationship

of *complementary opposition*: (1) the pole of *isotropic regional horizontality*, which Los Angeles lost in its early 20th-century past but is rediscovering today through a renewed interest in civic design, which Switzerland has cultivated until its recent past, but which is now in danger of letting slip away due to recent centralizing urban ideologies; and (2) the pole of *dystropic urban centrality*, which both Los Angeles and the Swiss Horizontal Metropolis seem currently to be evolving towards – in a devolution from a richer past in the case of Switzerland and in a misguided attempt to hang on to an indigent past in the case of Los Angeles.

The gist of this essay is that we should attempt to steer clear of the second pole at all costs and steer firmly towards the first, seeking inspiration in the civic design tradition, in the rich past of the Horizontal Metropolis, and in a variety of other related ideas – bottom-up ones such as “civic ecology” (KRASNY and TIDBALL 2015) and “permaculture design” (HEMENWAY 2015; BROCK 2017) as well as more top-down ones such as “ecocities” (REGISTER 2006; DOWNTON 2009) and “regional design” (LEWIS 1996) – in order to elicit and cultivate a regional landscape of rural urban form that is both decentralized and coherent, both isotropic and providing high existential quality.

In closing, one final connection between the *arc lémanique* and Los Angeles is worth noting. The city of Geneva, it turns out, also undertook to provide a regional park system just a few years after Olmsted's Los Angeles plan. The Geneva plan was first elegantly drawn in 1936, and once again more emphatically rendered in 1948. Thus, in recognizing the practical intergenerational relevance of park systems for Los Angeles – emphasizing ecological performance and civic services as catalysts for a dynamic path towards isotropic regional horizontality – we are led to also rediscover, and to regard with renewed interest, these unfulfilled civic ambitions for Geneva's Olmsted-inspired park system: *once hoped for and not carried out* – at least not yet.

In the introduction we spoke of “joyfully ghostly visions”. Indeed this is what ghosts do: they live in the present as remnants of an unfinished past, with an agenda for the immediate future. Los Angeles is “haunted”,



9. ALBERT BODMER'S "GREEN GRID" FOR GENEVA (1936) ON A MAP OF THE CITY IN 1992 (@ CRR DE L'IAUG [CENTRE DE RECHERCHE SUR LA RÉNOVATION URBAINE, INSTITUT D'ARCHITECTURE DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE]).

in a very positive sense, by the very real vestiges of its unfulfilled urban past – a past so alive, enticing and joyful that it is mobilizing some of its citizens towards a hopeful future (ill. 9 and 10).

With discoveries such as these now surfacing – as they are beginning to do through Matthew's doctoral research, among others (see SKJONSBERG 2018) – the "regional park system as radical community catalyst" schema is emerging as a transatlantic, transcontinental source of heightened civic hope for the future of rural urban form both in Los Angeles and in Switzerland: through savvy governance, grassroots engagement, and a civic reappropriation of re-excavated, past hopefulneses, the clear advantages of *isotropic balanced horizontality* can be garnered, harnessed, and solidified into a locally differentiated but conceptually robust pattern of urban form – the Horizontal Metropolis. Switzerland's regional traditions offer time-tested resources for site-responsive *isotropic planning* and community-responsive *civic design*, as well as recent warnings as to how strong the temptation towards *urban centrality* can be; Los Angeles' gradual rediscovery of the Olmsted plan and the California Cycleway through



10. GENEVA PARK SYSTEMS – BEFORE (TOP) AND AFTER (1948) (BOTTOM), CAPTIONED: ZONE ET LIAISONS DE VERDURE, GENÈVE AGGLOMÉRATION ACTUELLE... FUTURE (@ DÉPARTEMENT DES TRAVAUX PUBLICS, GENÈVE).

current initiatives in civic design illustrates a grassroots modality through which the dynamics of *civic horizontality* can be made healthy and life-enhancing – fulfilling the intergenerational ambition of an interdisciplinary tradition.

¹ The authors are grateful to Christian's partner Agnieszka Soltysik, herself a Los Angeles native, for her comments and suggestions on an earlier draft, and in particular for clarifying (as an expert of the "gothic") how ghosts connect the past and the future through a presence in the present.

² See VIGANÒ, ARNSPERGER, BARCELLONI CORTE, COGATO LANZA and CAVALIERI 2017.

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RE-ENCHANTING ARCHITECTURE. L'IMPACT DE LA RÉGLEMENTATION LIÉE AU BÂTIMENT ET AU TERRITOIRE SUR LE PROCESSUS DU PROJET EN ARCHITECTURE

Aliki-Myrto Perysinaki

Il y a 31 ans, en 1987, un article du journal *Newsweek*, parlait d'une montée spectaculaire de la renommée et de la fortune de Donald Trump, qui se montrait dès cette époque, confiant dans sa capacité de candidater à la présidence des États-Unis. En cette même année, la notion de développement durable avait été définie dans le rapport Brundtland de manière à répondre aux besoins du présent, sans compromettre la capacité des générations futures à répondre à leurs propres besoins (!) La vision du développement durable, telle qu'elle a été établie dans ce rapport, comprenait trois dimensions: la croissance économique, l'inclusion sociale et l'équilibre environnemental. Ces dimensions se sont vues accorder une place de modèle et ont été, par la suite, consolidées comme le paradigme du développement durable (Sommet de la Terre à Rio de Janeiro). Suite à de nombreuses initiatives, la culture a été incluse dans ce modèle selon l'argument qu'elle façonne ce que nous entendons par 'développement' et détermine les actions des peuples dans le monde (ill. 1).

1. LA VISION DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE COMPRENAIT INITIALEMENT TROIS DIMENSIONS (CROISSANCE ÉCONOMIQUE, INCLUSION SOCIALE ET ÉQUILIBRE ENVIRONNEMENTAL) AUXQUELLES LA CULTURE A ÉTÉ INCLUSE, ORIENTANT AINSI VERS UNE APPROCHE HEURISTIQUE, ET SOUDANT LES PILIERS ENTRE EUX.

