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Università Iuav
di Venezia



Benno Albrecht, Jacopo Galli

**RECONSTRUCT – SENSITIVE EMPLOYMENT CREATION
THROUGH BOTTOM-UP CELLULAR STRATEGY**

URBICIDE TASK FORCE

URBICIDE MOSUL TRIGGERS FOR RECONSTRUCTION

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URBICIDE MOSUL

TRIGGERS FOR RECONSTRUCTION

Urbicide Task Force, Università Iuav di Venezia

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Decentralisation, a first proposal

Jacopo Galli

How and in what form the concepts, the models of government and the construction of new institutions reflect on the territory and on its transformation is one of the central points in the definition of reconstruction strategies and processes. The ecological and social balance through the careful management of collective assets and the maximisation of social capital, strictly concerns not only the government and the management of the territory but directly the settlement models, technologies, ways of managing urban agglomerations alternative to the unique model of the global megalopolis. The emergence of alternative delocalisation scenarios finds in pre-existence and resistance of historical agglomerations a solid base on which to build with innovative features. This is the identification of a territorial identity¹ through the reading of training processes in the long term, identifying invariants, permanences, sediments and possibilities for innovation.

1 – Magnaghi Alberto, "Una metodologia analitica per la progettazione identitaria del territorio", in Magnaghi Alberto (edited by), "Rappresentare i luoghi, metodi e tecniche", Alinea, Firenze, 2001.

– On the previous page: Resource-driven Density, F. Bresin, G. Dal Bianco.

2 – Gleick Peter, “Water Drought, Climate Change, and Conflict in Syria. Weather, Climate, and Society”, vol. 6, n. 3, July, 2014.

3 – Tøset Hans Petter, Gleditsch Nils Petter, Hegre Håvard, “Shared rivers and interstate conflict”, in *Political Geography*, vol. 19:8, pp. 971–996, 2000.
 Wolf Aaron, “Shared waters: Conflict and cooperation” in *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, vol. 32, pp. 241–269, 2007.

4 – Knapp Michael, Ayboga Ercan, Flach Anja, “Laboratorio Rojava. Confederalismo democratico, ecologia radicale e liberazione delle donne nella terra della rivoluzione”, Redstar Press, Roma, 2016.

5 – Gopal Anand, “Syria’s Last Bastion of Freedom”, *The New Yorker*, December 10th 2018.

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 Archeological Traces,
 S. Bolzan, C. Delaini, G. Simonetto.

The subject of decentralised reconstruction must, however, necessarily find a form of administrative management that allows spontaneous community assemblies to become the engine of the processes of transformation of the city and territory. The community self-government is today struggling to recognise itself in today’s territorial divisions, particularly in countries like Syria or Iraq where the centralisation of the state is very strong and where decisions on territorial policies of the entire state are taken directly by the central government. In the same way, the management of collective assets is particularly complex in rigid administrative organisations due to the non-perfect adherence between the territory of production and consumption of resources and the statutory or regional administrative limits. Some scholars² have put forward the hypothesis that the management of a fundamental collective good like water is the main cause of the Syrian conflict, a largely exogenous cause since water is not managed within the country’s borders but from neighbouring Turkey whose hydroelectric projects have reduced water flow to Syria by 40%. Regardless of the importance of the single cause within the complex geopolitical framework that led to the war in Syria, it is clear that the joint and transnational management of a vital good is complex in a framework of conflicting relationships between neighbours that can turn it into a real weapon³.

On an urban scale and in territorial management, the Syrian conflict has generated a series of spontaneous and informal administrative experiences: the Kurdish cantons of Rojava in the north of the country have a federal type of government⁴ that overlaps without replacing the central one, while in the small village of Saraqib in Idlib province free elections were held in the middle of the conflict⁵. In general, all the forces





in the field have had to experiment with alternative management systems to state centralisation and to understand how the resources, often scarce, present in specific places could be exploited. In many cases these were overlapping and hybrid jurisdictions as in the case of the suburb of Barzeh where the delivery of weapons by the opposition allowed the return of basic services (water, electricity) without the complete return of the regime⁶ or in the village of al-Sanamayn where the truce between opposition and rebels occurred through a negotiation called *taswiyat al-wad* (problem solving) and through a process of reconciliation and public discussion⁷. The sum of the experiences of informal and fragmented management of the territory, and of the processes of reconciliation, can perhaps constitute a patrimony for the processes of bottom-up reconstruction but the administrative rethinking towards decentralisation must pass from an alternative hypothesis that allows to divide the decision-making processes among more actors involved avoiding the rigid territorial division that creates enormous diseconomies and disharmonies on many government issues. The fragmentation of the authorities generated by the war can constitute a push towards a less centralised post-war structure and, if well organised, an engine of reconstruction processes⁸.

Swiss economist Bruno Frey proposed an innovative federal system called FOCJ, *Functional Overlapping Competing Jurisdiction*⁹ which can be a valuable tool for reconstruction processes. It is an administrative model in which political organisations are linked to a single objective they want to reach (transport, water management, waste disposal, etc.), they do not belong to a clearly defined territory, they are superimposable, and above all they are competitive in trying

6 – Hamlo K., “Syria’s reconciliation deals near collapse: possible breakdown of truces would place Damascus under serious threat of opposition offensive”, *The Arab Weekly*, July 31st 2015.

7 – Al-Tamimi Ajmenn, “Reconciliation’ in Syria: The Case of Al-Sanamayn”, *SyriaCom*, April 27th 2017.

8 – Hinnebusch Raymond, Imady Omar, “Syria’s reconciliation agreements”, St. Andrews University, St. Andrews, 2017.

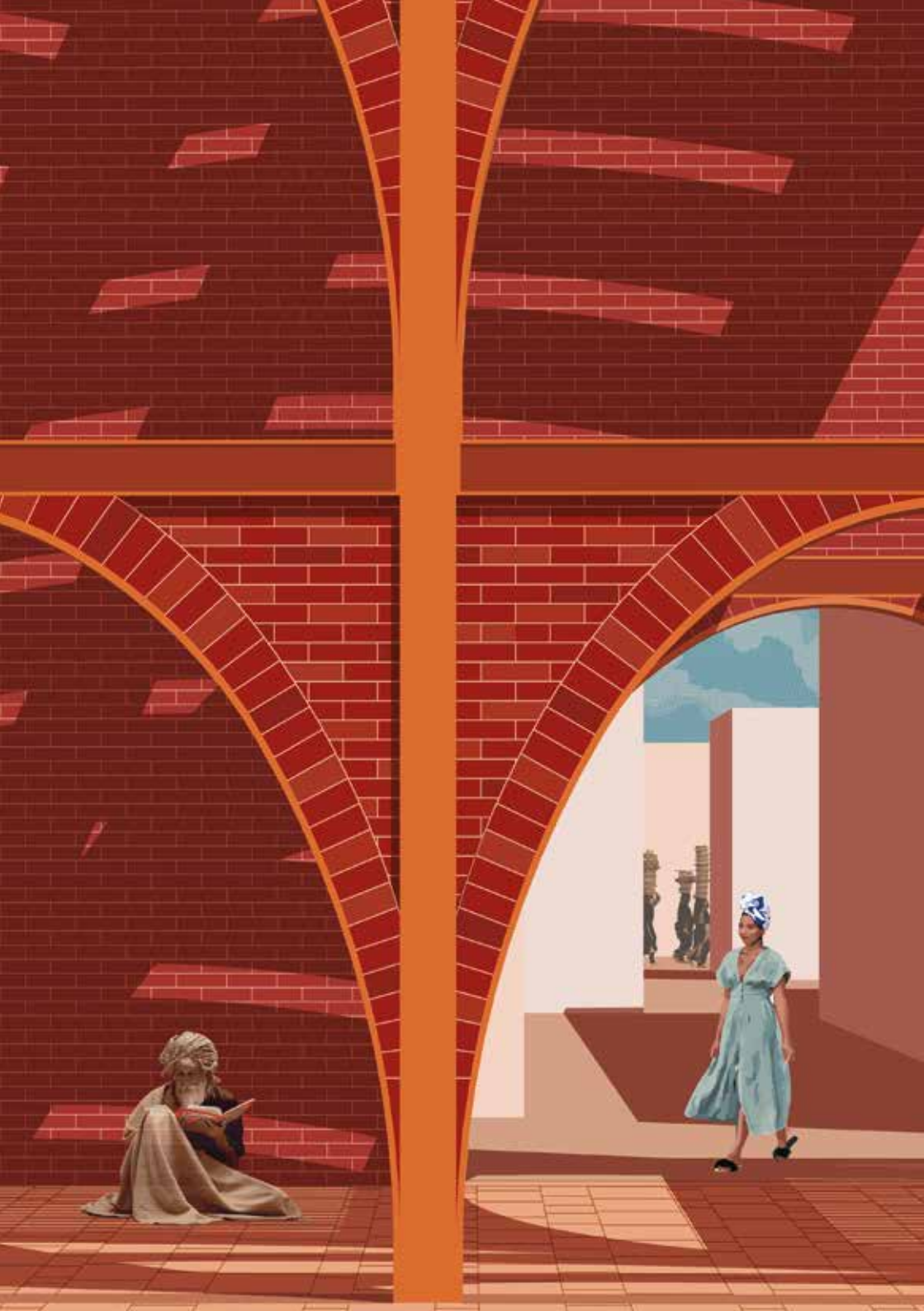
9 – Frey Bruno, Eichenberger Reiner, “The New Democratic Federalism of Europe. Functional, Overlapping and Competing Jurisdiction”, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 1999.

– On the previous page: Neighbourhood Permeability, A. Dini, N. Genovese, M. Turcato.

to be chosen by individual citizens or entire communities. The application of the FOCJ system to reconstruction has a considerable number of advantages based on assumptions: the division into competitive jurisdictions (which can take place on an ethnic or religious basis) within villages and urban districts is not in itself a problem if equal possibilities of access to natural and economic financial resources are guaranteed and if third spaces are provided for meeting and dialogue between the different communities. Once these aspects have been considered, reconstruction through the FOCJ system allows popular assemblies in the area to give shape to the needs expressed by communities, allowing wise use of collective assets and necessary innovations in urban forms and administrative processes. The main advantages of a reconstruction system made through competitive jurisdiction are: a greater attention to the will of the communities, a general decrease in expenses due to economies of scale and a faster process of application and adaptation of innovative ideas.

The FOCJ of the reconstruction can foresee the constitution of a popular assembly that decides assisted by experts on construction methods, materials to be used, ownership structures, location of the production plants and organisation of the networks for urbanisation. These decisions can be different between neighbouring FOCJs allowing individual citizens or groups to join the jurisdictions that best represent them. Once the reconstruction process has started, the limited size of each administrative unit allows to quickly verify the quality of the choices, immediately modifying decisions based on the simultaneous observation of the surrounding units. The application of this model of decentralisation therefore makes it possible to reconnect the management of the territory to the wishes

– On the next page:
Public Hierarchy, D.
Fabrello, S. Righi, A.
Russo.



10 – Bookchin Murray, "Per una società ecologica. Tesi sul municipalismo libertario e la rivoluzione sociale", Elèuthera, Milano, 2016.

and hopes of the community that inhabits it and in the long term the urban and territorial form consequent to the administrative process can be an alternative to urban concentration. The rural jurisdictions can allow an alternation between small high-density population centres and cultivated areas with low-density settlement methods, while the application in urban contexts leads to imagine a cellular city in which only the management of interstitial spaces between cells is delegated to a centralised government.

Reconstruction thus becomes the field of application and observation of new administrative modes and urban morphology, trying to heal the reasons for open conflict and at the same time to propose alternative settlement models to the urban dictatorship. "Decentralisation in a human-scale community is therefore not the romantic dream of a solitary lover of nature [...] but is an indispensable goal for an ecologically stable society. We must choose between an environment in rapid degradation (or already completely degraded) that will end up compromising the integrity and complexity of the life forms of the planet, and a society capable of living in balance with nature". Decentralisation as a necessity that cannot be postponed and as a form of mediation and pacification of the conflict, "so that a city never becomes so great that an alarm cry raised by the walls cannot be heard"¹⁰.

– On the next pages:
Informal Structure, M. De Bernardini, E. Franceschetti, M. Savignano; Urban Syntax, M. Santoni, G. Soini, G. Trivellin.



Decentralisation, a first proposal

