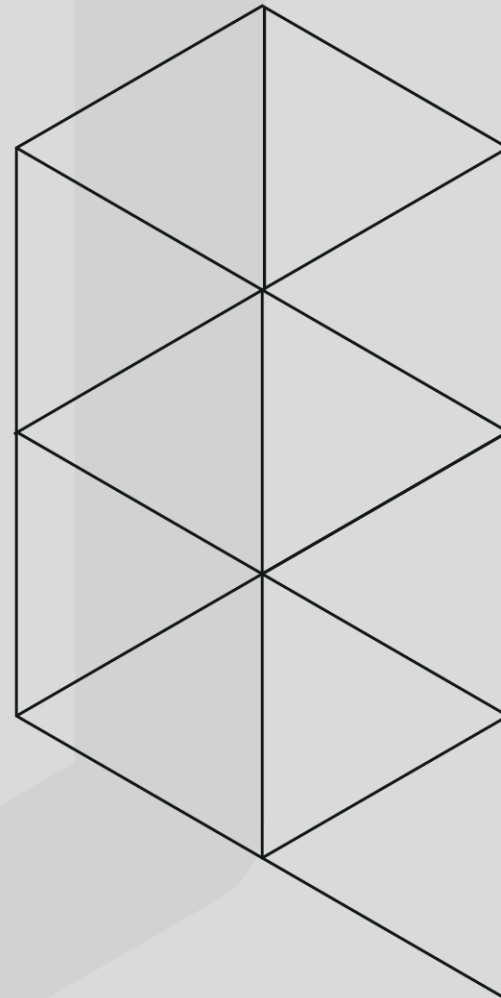# Contested Fronts Archive: Emancipatory urban practices for constructive conflict transformation

SPACEX Deliverable, Work Package 5 (D5.6, D18)

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Contested Fronts Archive

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Abstract

Decolonizing archiving practices is about emancipatory actions rather than databases. It is about conveying a multitude of actions where conflictual narratives exist. The process of democratization of societies in conflict could take place by increasing the degree of access, of the constitution and of interpretation of archives that have to do with collective memory and urban knowledge. In spaces of conflict, however, any kind of public archive, and collective memory are under the control of the dominant political powers. They use them to sustain divisive status quos. 'Contested Fronts: Commoning Practices for Conflict Transformation' challenges such control. It is the curatorial project of the Cyprus pavilion, curated by the author, for the 15th Venice Biennale of Architecture. It is an open-source archive, part of an agonistic architecture, that assembles international spatial practices, networks and pedagogical programmes. They are complementary to an activist Cypriot project, the 'Hands-on Famagusta' project. They all offer methods, inspirations and imaginaries about constructively transforming conflicts by encouraging the emergence of emancipatory commoning practices to support the commons during a potential reunification of the divided island of Cyprus. In the article, I shortly discuss the political dimensions of archive and its use by critical spatial practices. I further on, discuss issues concerning conflict and how its transformation can have constructive or destructive consequences. Additionally, I unpack the three notions constituting the 'Contested Fronts' commoning practices, those of countermapping, threshold and controversy. I examine how 'Contested Fronts' constitute an open-source archive thanks to its content, to its performativity as well as to its manifestation in the form of exhibition-on-the move.

KEYWORDS: decolonizing archiving practices, commoning practices, Famagusta, Cyprus, conflict transformation, open-source archive architecture, critical spatial practice

1. Introduction

1.1 An open-source archive for agonistic architectures

'Contested Fronts: Commoning Practices for Conflict Transformation' is the Cypriot curatorial project for the *15th Venice Biennale of Architecture*, 2016.[1] Through this article, I unpack the potentialities of 'Contested Fronts', as an open-source archive, an integral part of an agonistic architecture. Such architecture provides democratic methods and emancipatory practices of urban design to support the commons in socially and ethnically contested spaces. The process of democratization of societies in conflict could take place by increasing the degree of access, of the constitution and of interpretation of archives that have to do with collective memory and urban knowledge. The creation of emancipatory practices depends on the interrelation between potential porous urban territories with the opening up of one's psyche towards exchanges with the other, the different. In spaces of conflict, however, any kind of public archive, and collective memory are under the control of the dominant political powers. They use them to sustain divisive status quos. The 'Contested Fronts' project is about emancipatory commoning practices that resist such control by establishing new open-source archives for the urban commons. It brings forward architectural and urban design methods that advocate commoning practices to constructively transform conflicts into common urban futures. The 'Contested Fronts' project employs three such commoning practices: countermapping, creating thresholds and introducing urban controversies. Their interrelationship constitutes the emancipatory power of agonistic architecture. These commoning practices can firstly provide alternative understandings of controversial existing situations countering the dominant ones. Secondly, they can identify where to intervene and how to formulate alternative urban futures based on the commons.

I argue that such commoning practices can support the historical capacity of cities to transform conflicts in a constructive manner. They are decisive in allowing for alterity and for the powerless to be equal partners in constituting the city. Commoning practices yield urban subjectivities that can prevail over subjectivities based on ethnicity, religion and race.

1.2 The structure of the article

Before concentrating on the role of 'Contested Fronts' as an open-source archive, I shortly discuss the political dimensions of archive and its use by critical spatial practices. I further on discuss issues concerning conflict and how its transformation can have constructive or destructive consequences. Additionally, I unpack the three notions constituting the 'Contested Fronts' commoning practices, those of countermapping, threshold, and controversy. A few words about the Cyprus conflict and the 'Hands-on Famagusta'2 project will help the readers to appreciate both the complexity of the context and the challenges of a Cypriot agonistic architecture. Further on, I examine how 'Contested Fronts' constitute an open-source archive thanks to its content, to its performativity as well as to its manifestation in the form of exhibition-onthe move. We see how such an archive advocates democratic methods and emancipatory practices of urban design to support the commons during a potential reunification of the divided island of Cyprus. I do so by presenting the contribution of the 'Hands-on Famagusta' project, together with six international networks, practices and pedagogical methods into the 'Contested Fronts Archive'. The six contributors are 'Build-up', Spain; 'Archis Interventions SEE', the Netherlands; 'Institute of Threshold', Turkey; 'Passages', France; 'Mapping Architectural Controversies', the United Kingdom and 'City Reparo', Northern Ireland, United Kingdom.

2. The political dimensions of the archive

According to Jacques Derrida, the word archive comes from 'Arkhe', a Greek word that organizes two principles at once. The first one is the commencement and the second one is the commandment. The first one is sequential. It is 'the principle according to nature or history, there, where things commence'. The second one is jussive. It is 'the principle according to the law, there where men and gods command, there where authority, social order are exercised, in this place from which order is given' (Derrida 1995: 9). Derrida goes on to tell us about the Greek Arkheion, the Greek archive, that initially was 'a house, a domicile, the residence of the superior magistrates, the archons, those who commanded' (Derrida 1995: 9). Part of the power of these people was based on providing physical security to the official documents as well as having their hermeneutic right. Gathering together the archive was an additional power of the archons.

The question of politics of the archive is Derrida's permanent orientation. He argues that

> there is no political power without the control of the archive, if not memory. Derrida tells us that it is impossible to separate the principle of commencement from that of the commandment as regards the archive. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in the access of the archive, its constitution and its interpretation
>
> (Derrida 1995: 11)

Conflicts show us that 'where things commence' are in the heart of the dispute of the parties in conflict. 'Where things commence' are manipulated by the dominant political powers to formulate the laws and to exercise social order. Democratizing archives has been the priority of many initiatives taking advantage of the advancement in media and archiving technologies with the internet as the main drive. Wiki-archives and open databases are rather common.

I am mostly interested in decolonizing archiving practices that take the question of archive's politics further on. According to Pelin Tan, decolonizing archiving has to do with emancipatory actions rather than databases. It is about conveying a multitude of actions where heterogeneous narratives exist (Tan et al. 2016).

The 'Adhocracy'[3] exhibition is quite relevant since it has brought forward ad hoc methods designed and used by spatial practices as a way to emancipate from bureaucratic modes of production. They quite often adopt open source design and mainly emphasize the notion of commons in production. The 'Adhocracy' exhibition and symposium in Athens was a follow-up of the initial research/exhibition that took place in the *1st Istanbul Design Biennial* in 2012, curated by Joseph Grima and associate curators Ethel Baraona Pohl, Elian Stefa and Pelin Tan. The 'Action Archive' critical spatial practice by Meike Schalk, Sara Brolund de Carvalho and Helena falls within the logic of archive as emancipatory practice. It 'pursues participatory historical records through actions that bring together diverse actors and a public around urban cultural, historical, and political issues by employing experimental research formats such as witness seminars, Forum Theater methods, guided walks, films, re-enactments, and collective time-space mappings'.4 Rendell's open archive with critical spatial practices that operate 'at a triple crossroads: between theory and practice, between public and private, and between art and architecture',5 includes additional relevant examples as regards decolonizing archiving practices. Manuals, lexicons, guides and atlases among many others are means to enhance emancipatory commoning practices that democratize archives.

3. Conflict

3.1 Understanding the constructive transformation of conflicts

'Conflict is associated both with democratic politics and with hegemonic forms of violence'.[6] Conflict is a mode of shaping the city and its citizenship, but at the same time, it is a danger for corroding citizenship and the urban environment. Wendy Pullan and the 'Conflict in Cities' (Pullan 2013), research team, offer us valuable findings of the urban everydayness in cities ravaged by ethnonational conflicts. She points out how urban elements, spaces and social practices are instrumentalized by conflict. She invites us to examine conflict infrastructures, mobility habits, informality, education and sharing spaces to comprehend how conflicts could be resolved. She brings forward the need for urban regeneration to be sensitive to the existing conflicts (Pullan 2013).

The escalation of conflict narrows down the political space. When conflict derives from issues of sovereignty, the political space diminishes (Gaffikin and Morissey 2011: 274). Handling conflicts with constructive but also destructive consequences is a major topic in the political sciences. Björkdahl and Strömbom offer a new understanding of conflict transformation based on their research on public administration and urban studies. They claim that this new framework takes a careful look into mapping contested issues and situating local contestations (2015).

3.2 Supporting urban subjectivities to sustain conflict transformation in cities

The city gradually loses its historical capacities for conflict transformation. Such loss is due to asymmetrical wars, ethnic and social cleansing, class wars (Sassen 2017: 41). Sassen urges us to find ways to support the city maintaining its historical characteristics that transform conflict into openness instead of war. 'Cities, have long had the capacity to bring together people of different classes, ethnicities, and religions through commerce, politics and civic practices' (Sassen 2017: 41). Sassen prioritizes the production of presence instead of the protection of property in the city. The production of presence could allow for the powerless to claim the right to the

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city. Thanks to the urban practices of those without power, we see the constitution of new forms of political subjectivity (i.e. citizenship). According to Sassen, we need to produce the urban subject, to be distinct from the ethnic, religious racialized ones. The urban subject generates co-presence and exchange in the city by repositioning the aforementioned subjects, instead of erasing them.

4. Commoning practices

> Commoning practices importantly produce new relations between people. They encourage creative encounters and negotiations through which forms of sharing are organized and common life takes shape. Commoning practices, thus, do not simply produce or distribute goods but essentially create new forms of social life, forms of life-in-common.
>
> (Stavrides 2016: 2)

Commoning practices should produce urban subject, according to Stavrides and De Angelis. They both examine possibilities of production beyond capitalism. Stavrides regards commoning as a collective endeavour that provides new ways of handling power and governance by resistance to capitalism and its spatial enclosures. De Angelis gives an additional role to commoning that of the management of natural resources (De Angelis 2017). They both bring forward the need for open communities that welcome the newcomers. However, they understand that one of the dangers of autonomous communities is the creation of new spatial enclosures. For this reason, they refer to commoning practices that advocate urban porosities through creating thresholds, by offering new ways for sharing the city. The three commoning practices that constitute the 'Contested Fronts' open-source archive are then utterly relevant: countermapping, creating thresholds and introducing urban controversies.

4.1 Countermapping

Countermapping has emerged thanks to critical cartography in the field of geography and has spread in many fields including architecture, urbanism and visual arts. It is quite often supported by militant research and activism, bound by strategies of participation and deconstruction (Cuff et al. 2020: 105). J. B. Harley, D. Cosgrone, D. Wood, D. Massey among others have set the disciplinary and theoretical grounds of critical cartography (Cuff et al. 2020: 97). Critical cartography

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has four dimensions. The first one is about deconstructing the idea of the map as a truthful, objective and natural representation. Critical cartography shows how maps quite often 'serve to extend the power of a sovereign over a territory and thus have a deep linkage with imperial and colonial histories'. The focus on mapping as an activity instead of on the map as a physical object involves the agency of mapping, according to James Corner (Corner 1999 cited in Awan 2017: 33). Nishat Awan approaches the activity of mapping allegorical maps of Turkey, created thanks to mental maps drawn by Kurdish and Turkish migrants in London (Awan 2017: 33–41). The second dimension is about the map as an 'aesthetic object, as a work of visualization and art-making' (Cuff et al. 2020: 97). Critical cartography underlines the cornerstone subjectivity of map as art-making practice. The cartographic practice of Rebecca Solnit unmasks the seductiveness of the cartographic enterprise. The 'Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas' makes visible archival material, data and testimonies, and individual perspectives all ignored by the dominant mapping practices of the city (Cuff et al. 2020: 98). The third dimension relates to digital mapping. It questions the imaginary that binds the logic of what we consider as banal utilitarian digital maps such as Google Maps that are based on military infrastructures supporting the Global Positioning System (GPS), an imperial approach (Cuff et al. 2020: 100). The practice of countermapping involves a destabilization of the very infrastructure of the imperial imaginary. Working with digital spatial technologies is Laura Kurgan's practice, reclaiming and politicizing mapping practices (Cuff et al. 2020: 102). 'Kurgan turns the very technologies against themselves, offering a kind of deconstruction of their underlying assumptions and "truths"' (Cuff et al. 2020: 103). The 'Million Dollar Blocks' project is relevant. Through a 'justice mapping', she visualizes a GIS (Global Information System) map and data regarding the hidden dimension of the criminal justice system and of incarceration. She demonstrates the amount the State spends for incarceration that is related to the building blocks, with the home addresses of the incarcerated population. The fourth dimension of critical cartography involves tools of mapmaking and of data creation with direct public access. The 'Manual of Collective Mapping' by the Argentinian-based group 'Iconoclasistas' is quite relevant (Cuff et al. 2020: 104). They have created a manual based on workshops they have organized on mapping where they have encouraged collaborative and transformative practices thanks to the co-production of territorial viewpoints.[7]

4.2 Creating thresholds

The spaces of resistance and cooperation take place in spaces with porous borders, where everyday exchange among people of difference in ethnicity or religion or social status. Sennett argues that political space supports the creation of 'socially

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skilled' people, i.e. knowing to deal with the other, often across divides. Consequently, the fading of such spaces reduces the possibility of having 'socially skilled' citizens. The globalization processes in neo-liberalism shrink the political spaces at the everyday level, where resistance may start from. 'Calculative discourses' that have to do with zoning and 'smart city' planning and the like, generate all sorts of spatial segregation in the cities (Sennett 2017: 264). Thus, homogeneous gated housing estates, shopping malls, isolated business campuses and many other neo-liberal spatial products (Easterling 2014) prevail. They generate all sorts of impenetrable limits, that Sennett calls boundaries, bad edges. They control encounters, according to Stavrides, in a partitioned city (Stavrides 2016: 70;). Such boundaries threaten the 'sites for mixture, for the experience of different peoples and different functions' (Sennett 2017: 264), that Sennett calls porous borders, good edges.

Creating thresholds involves a process of countering a bad edge in the city with a porous edge. Thresholds connect and disconnect at the same time. They destroy the homogeneity and continuity envisioned by modernity and become agents for comparing differences without having them collapsed. Porous edges become thresholds according to Stavrides (2016: 56). Thresholds 'become active catalysts in processes of reappropriating the city as commons' (Stavrides 2016: 56). Urban thresholds regulate passages, thus indicating movement towards otherness (Stavrides 2016: 70).

Such acts support everyday politics for exchange among different kinds of communities living apart. Richard Sennett urges us to support such porous territories because they can confront the regressive politics of division. They can transform impenetrable limits to porous edges, encouraging, therefore, urban exchanges. Sennett goes on to interrelate the urban condition of edges with those of one's self. He argues that 'to experience porosity in the psyche, it helps to be in a porous place rather than within a rigid boundary-land; people require a territory on the ground in which to learn how to take things into the self' (Sennett 2017: 262).

4.3 Introducing urban controversies

'Controversy points to the series of uncertainties that a design project, a building, an urban plan or a construction process undergoes; it is rather a synonym of 'architecture in the making".[8]

> 'The word "controversy" refers here to every bit of science and technology which is not yet stabilized, closed or "black boxed" … we use it as a general term to describe shared uncertainty' (Venturini 2010).

Mapping controversies is developed in architecture by Bruno Latour and Albena Yaneva (Latour and Yaneva 2008). It offers a new mode of inquiry in social sciences based on Actor-Network-Theory. Albena Yaneva, in the 'Mapping controversies' project, has introduced such a mode of inquiry in architecture to demonstrate the multifarious connections and divergent priorities of the project's actors in processes of architectural design and urban development. By mapping controversies, we follow the dynamic debates about particular buildings or projects. We understand the power of the moving project that is the dynamics of the process of making, instead of the physical characteristics of the static object. Such a mode of inquiry enables us to unravel the actorial power relations, alliances, conflicts, their mediatization and their material manifestation (Yaneva 2012).

When we focus on the architecture in the making as well as on the making of any other cultural material practice, we also realize that knowing how to introduce controversies by creatively transforming disagreements and conflicts between the actors involved, open up multiple potentialities for commoning practices. They can instigate re-alliances of the actors involved as well as call for non-invited actors. They can manipulate non-linear processes of making of cultural material practices, offering opportunities to reformulate initial questions posed by architecture in the making. Commoning practices can profit from adaptive communication tools to influence the actors' priorities. In other words, introducing urban controversies turns the notion of controversy into a design mode.

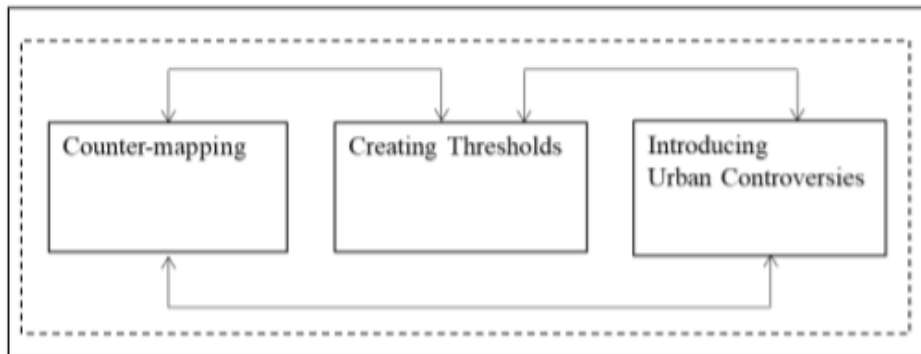# 4.4 Interrelating the three commoning practices for an agonistic architecture

Figure 1: Interrelating the three commoning practices, courtesy of the author

I argue that by interrelating the three aforementioned commoning practices, agonistic architectures are equipped with complex tools that contribute in the constructive transformation of conflicts. They can identify the presence of bad edges in the cities that shrink everyday political spaces and they can offer an alternative shared reality through countermapping. Further on, they can envision ways of transforming bad edges into urban thresholds by manipulating modalities of action thanks to new actorial alliances created by the introduction of urban controversies.

Porous territories, instigated by urban thresholds, are incubators for urban subjectivities. In addition, the design process for creating thresholds can become an incubator for urban subjectivities. More precisely, we can encourage alliances between members of communities in conflict that may have a common interest despite their belonging to different ethnic communities or social classes.

5. Famagusta, Cyprus and the 'Hands-on Famagusta' project

5.1 Famagusta, Cyprus

Famagusta is a coastal city, located on the eastern edge of Cyprus, just north of the United Nations cease fire military zone, and east of one of the United Kingdom's military bases (Figure 2).

Famagusta is a contested city grounded in ethnic conflict driven by geopolitical actors interested in the larger Eastern Mediterranean area. A consequence of British decolonisation in 1950s, the conflict started as inter-communal turmoil and resulted in war with Turkey in 1974 which caused the de facto division of the island into two ethnic parts.
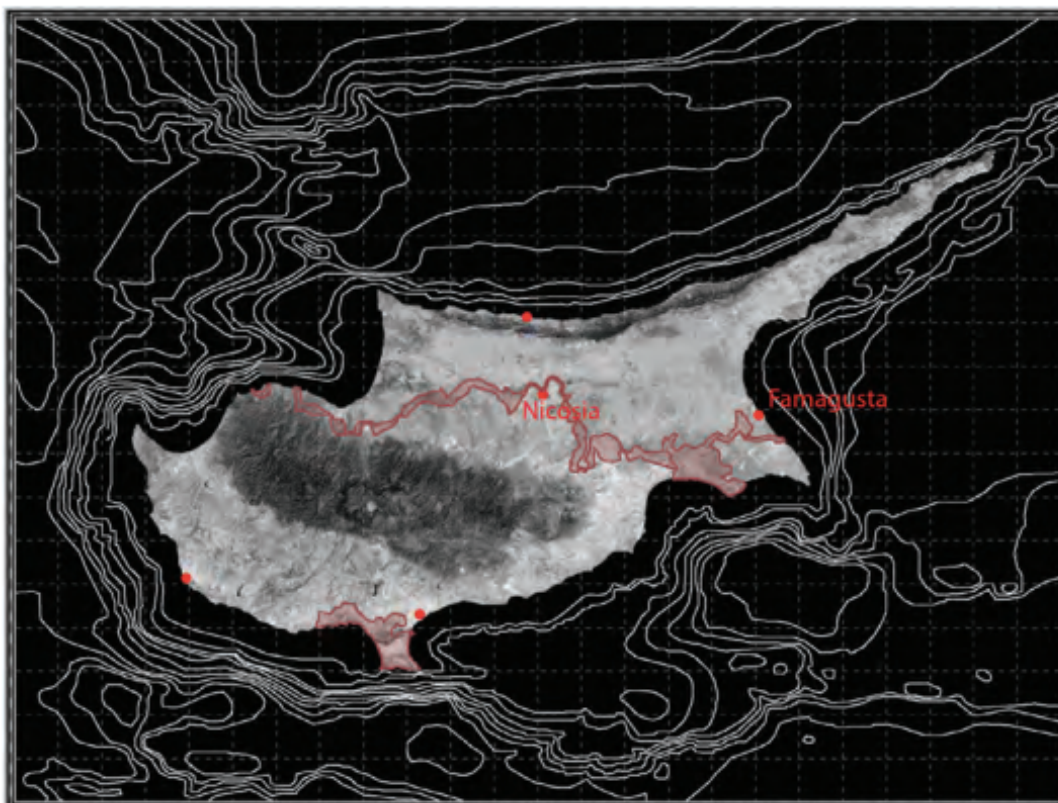
(Stratis and Akbil 2016: 157)

Figure 2: Map of Cyprus, courtesy of Hands-on Famagusta, AA&U (in Stratis 2016a, 21).

Famagusta inhabitants are Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. However, since the 1974 war with Turkey the city has been deprived of its Greek Cypriot inhabitants who were displaced to the southern part of the island during the war. This is true for all the north part of the island, occupied by Turkey. The Famagusta population was 38,960 inhabitants in 1973, of which 31,960 were Greek Cypriots and 7,000 Turkish Cypriots. The population in 2011 was 37,939 inhabitants consisting of Turkish Cypriots (some of them displaced from the south part of the island in 1974 to settle in the city) and settlers from Turkey (Figures 3–5). Famagusta consists of all kinds of enclaves with the most notorious one being the Turkish army-controlled ghost area of Famagusta. an abandoned urban area, located by a beautiful sandy shore,

which used to house around 30,000 Greek Cypriots. The French/Venetian walled city, the port area, the fenced military area along the coastline, the university enclave and the industrial zone are additional enclaves, located further north, with defined borders (Figure 6).

There are indications that, in the framework of the Cyprus Federal State, the south part of the city will be under the Greek Cypriot administration and its north part under the Turkish Cypriot one. Such scenario is part of the United Nations negotiations between the two community leaders. The negotiations unfortunately, stopped in the summer of 2017. One of the aims for the foundation of Federal Cyprus is to keep Turkey and its neocolonial plans out of the north part of the island, where it has had an overwhelming control since 1974.[9]

5.2 The 'Hands-on Famagusta' project

Figure 3: Famagusta fenced-off area – Waterfront, courtesy of Press and Information Office, Government of the Republic of Cyprus (PIO), (in Stratis 2016a: 9,10).

'Hands-on Famagusta' comes from an agonistic practice, in Cyprus, initiated by architects, planners and visual artists coming from the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, in hostility due to the ongoing conflict. It comprises support structures for public debate regarding the foundation of the urban commons of Famagusta, the day after an agreement takes place for the foundation of Federal Cyprus (Stratis 2016a: 23).

In the introduction of the *Guide to Common Urban Imaginaries in Contested Spaces* (Stratis 2016a), we see a full explication of the 'Hands-on Famagusta's' role. We can read that 'Hands-on Famagusta' will be handy for the Cypriot civil society initiatives '… to confront two major challenges in contested spaces. The first one has to do with operating in hostile environment where institutions produce narratives of division' (Stratis 2016a: 23). In other words, the political powers that sustain the status quo, control the archives that are concerned with the split collective memories of the two communities. Since 2014, the 'Hands-on Famagusta' project team has raised awareness about the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Famagustians' split mental maps and divisive collective memory that may lead to the city's partition, jeopardizing the sustainability of Federal Cyprus. The second challenge is about confronting on one hand, the neoliberal laisser-faire trends that will probably dominate the post-conflict reconstruction process. On the other hand, it is to avoid a non-transparent bureaucratic approach that may continue business as usual, missing the unique opportunity of relating reconstruction with solidarity and reconciliation, plus discouraging any democratic practices to contribute in the becoming of Famagusta within a reunified Cyprus (Stratis 2016a: 23).

The 'Hands-on Famagusta' project comprises an interactive digital interface, www.handsonfamagusta.org, roundtable workshops, and a transportable model of the city. The digital interface is an interactive web platform which hosts a smart archive that advocates the commons of a non-divided Famagusta.

Figure 4: Surveying Famagusta, courtesy of Hands-on Famagusta, I.F.
(in Akbil 2016a: 164, 165).

The web platform introduces a playful mode of knowledge exchange. The edited *Guide to Common Urban Imaginaries in Contested Spaces* provides additional information on the retheorization of this agonistic practice.

6. Contested Fronts

6.1 A network of agonistic architectures

The 'Contested Fronts' curatorial project is a stepping stone for the 'Hands-on Famagusta' project to become part of a network of agonistic architectures. Such a network may create a critical mass for agonistic practices to strike a change to the Cypriot status quo. The invitation of the six international practices, networks and pedagogical programmes to contribute to the 'Contested Fronts' archive was based on this logic. Additionally, the *Venice Biennale of Architecture* exhibition of 'Contested Fronts' was a dissemination platform, informing the public of the Biennale about the urban and political challenges regarding the future of Famagusta and Cyprus towards reunification. The 'Contested Fronts' curatorial project interrelates the three aforementioned commoning practices, those of countermapping, creating thresholds and introducing urban controversies to build

the open-source archive of practices and methods for agonistic architectures. We can see further down what the 'Hands-on Famagusta' project together with the six invited participants contribute in each of the three commoning practices.

Figure 5: Famagusta: enclaves and armatures, courtesy of Hands-on Famagusta, AA&U (in Stratis 2016a: 39).

Countermapping

The 'Hands-on Famagusta' project offers a large size printed isometric that represents Famagusta as a multi-fragmented territory instead of the dominant representation that shows the city split into two parts, that of the fenced-off part of the city and the rest (Figures 6 and 7). In addition, it offers a transportable city model that represents Famagusta as a continuous landscape devoid of all sorts of bad edges (Figure 8). A series of board games designed by the students of architecture at the University of Cyprus enrich the ad hoc technologies of all three commoning practices. They are in fact a manifestation of their playful interrelationship (Figure 9).
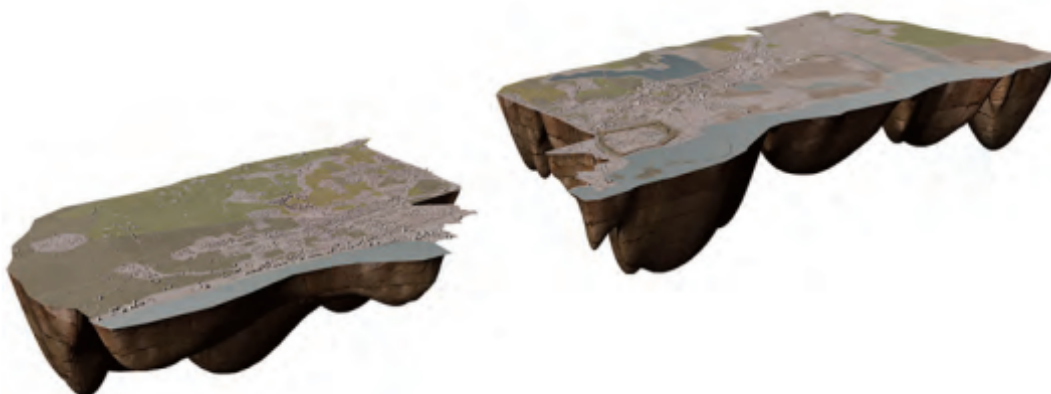
Figure 6: Famagusta: an ethnically divided mental geography, courtesy of Hands-on Famagusta, AA&U (in Stratis 2016a: 36).

Figure 7: The counter-mapped isometric drawing, courtesy of Hands-on Famagusta, AA&U (in Stratis, Akbil, Constantinou 2016: 116, 117).

Build-up i is a social enterprise active at the intersection of technology, civic engagement and peace-building. The team is based in Barcelona and has run programmes in conflict and post-conflict countries in Middle East, Asia and Africa. Build-up offers innovative technological tools to the 'Contested Fronts' archive. They help the citizens and organizations to navigate towards change and work on conflict prevention and peace-building (Figure 10).[10]

Figure 8: The model launch event, St Peter and Paul Cathedral, Famagusta, November 2015, courtesy of Hands-on Famagusta, I.F, LUCY, (in Stratis, Constantinou 2016: 135).

Archis Interventions Southeastern Europe Network is a community-based initiative, offshoot of Archis. We can see the renewing of the faith in public dialogue towards post-conflict planning. Its initial intervention took place in Pristina, Kosovo in 2005. Archis' approach is networking isolated local initiatives in Southeastern Europe. It has allowed for the exchange of experiences and knowledge among such initiatives (Figure 14).[11]

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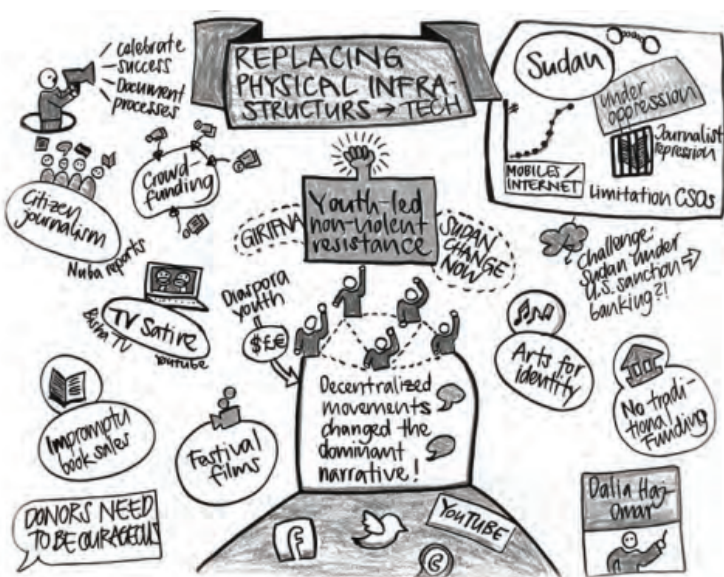Figure 9: The Encouraging Urbanity Game Series (EU 08), courtesy of LUCY, photo by Thomas Mayer.

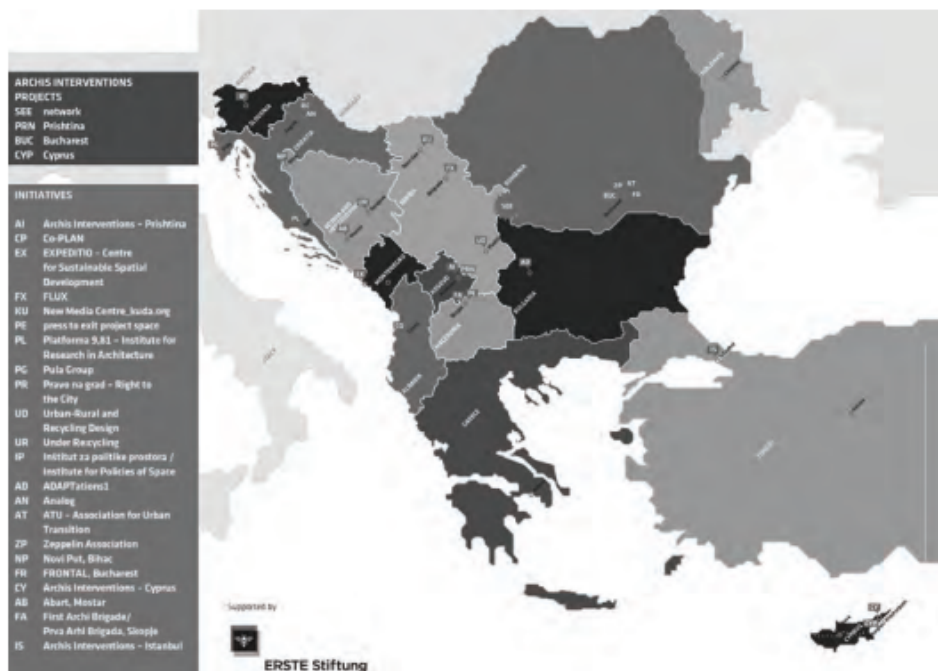Figure 10: Build Peace, drawing by DALIA-HAJ-OMAR, courtesy of Build Peace.

Figure 11: Archis SEE map, courtesy of Archis South East Europe.

Creating thresholds

The ad hoc technology of the 'Hands-on Famagusta' project that relates to Creating Thresholds commoning practices involve firstly a method of identifying bad edges of all sorts of enclaves in Famagusta. In fact, the isometric drawing that represents the multi-fragmented city, part of the countermapping part of the archive, shows such enclaves. A matrix of disenclaving strategies (Stratis 2016c: 76–94) together with an atlas of urban design projects demonstrate common shared futures. They focus on the transformation of bad edges into porous ones (Stratis 2016d: 234–54). Furthermore, four transformative themes that aim to create shared common concerns among the members of the two communities in conflict are the driving force to create shared urban imaginaries of the city's commons: creating a wide public waterfront, sharing infrastructures, turning ecological and cultural heritage into common ground, reclaiming the city of emergency during post-conflict reconstruction process (Akbil 2016: 166–95). An additional ad hoc technology coming from the 'Hands-on Famagusta' project involves graffiti stencils depicting an 'action-pigeon' which is the project's logo. The stencils are handed out to groups of volunteers. The 'Hands-on Famagusta's' ad hoc technology for creating thresholds extends into a collective practice of translation. It is about the process of translating the interactive web platform of the project from English into Turkish and into Greek.

Figure 12: Institute of Thresholds, courtesy of Pelin Tan.

Figure 13: Passages, courtesy of Passages, IVM.

Institute of Threshold: Border Infrastructure investigates scenarios of fluid border
infrastructures. We can find methods for critical mapping of the current conditions of

conflict territories in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East region. Institute of Threshold looks into emancipatory practices for autonomous archiving, according to Pelin Tan, member of the Institute of Threshold. It focuses on refugee flows and camps in the devastated area along the Turkish border with Syria (Figure 12).[12]

Passages offers to 'Contested Fronts' archive a design competition platform for instigating small mobility places, kind of thresholds. Passages is a programme founded by the French *Institute of the City on the Move*. During 2014 and 2015, a network of experts launched urban design competitions in many cities around the world, focusing on transitory infrastructural spaces. They searched for acupuncture proposals that enhance urban exchanges between isolated parts of the cities, quite often isolated by transport infrastructures (Figure 13).[13]

Figure 14: Map of Belfast, courtesy of City Reparo.

Introducing urban controversies

The 'Hands-on Famagusta's' contribution to this commoning practice aims to constructively transform conflicts based on ethnicity and religion into controversial matters regarding the role of urban reconstruction vis-à-vis the city's commons. We know that rather often, post-war urban reconstruction plans are a destructive transformation of the ongoing conflict used by the parties in conflict as a tool to demarcate their territories. The interactive web platform, www.handsonfamagusta.org is an ad hoc tool that counters such tendency, supporting a democratic approach and promoting a hand-in-hand relation between urban reconstruction and practices of solidarity and reconciliation.
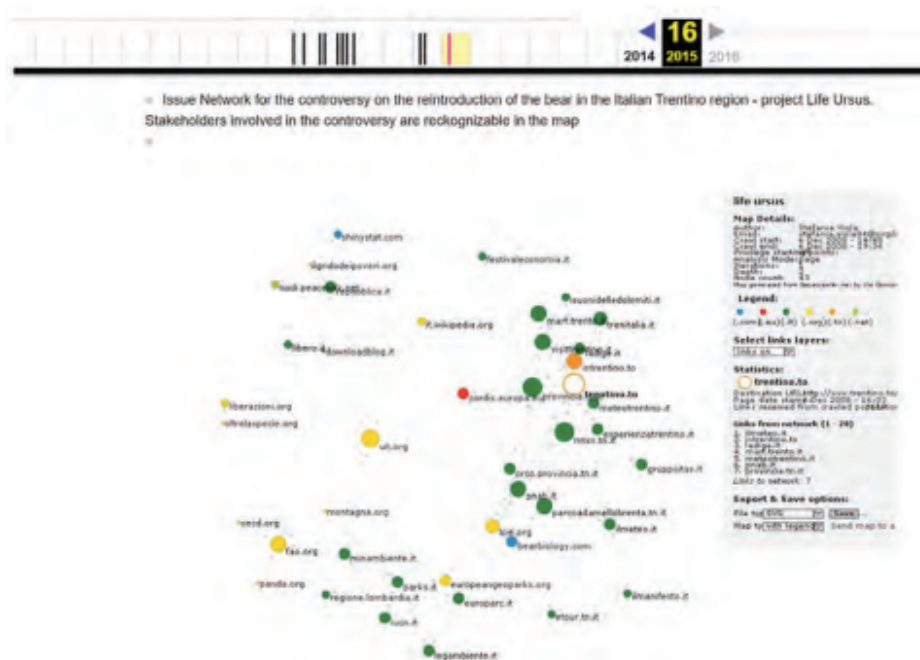
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Figure 15: Mapping Controversies, from www.mappingcontroversies.co.uk.

The web platform hosts three controversial questions per transformative theme. They appear on an interface depicting the city's enclaves as isolated hovering islands in space. Each controversial question is populated with three kinds of data. The first one is about the agendas of the urban actors at stake, both human and non-human. Each actor has three different agendas put together thanks to many off-line workshops between the project team and the urban actors. The second kind of data is about relevant urban design projects about Famagusta or other similar contexts around the world. The third kind of data involves aerial images of other cities with similar challenges. The latter offers a sense of scale to the platform's user. The 'Hands-on Famagusta' project team has evaluated the actors' agendas as well as the content of the other two data in relation to their contribution to the city's commons. The web-platform user is invited to play a game by choosing from all three data sets their preferable choices. If their choice promotes the city's commons then the web interface's hovering islands in space connect to each other resulting to one piece.

City Reparo is based in Belfast, Northern Ireland. It has offered to 'Contested Fronts' archive an urban design approach that addresses postconflict Belfast's urban challenges since the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. This contribution offers

us an insight regarding the role of urban transformation almost two decades after peace was achieved (Figure 14).[14]
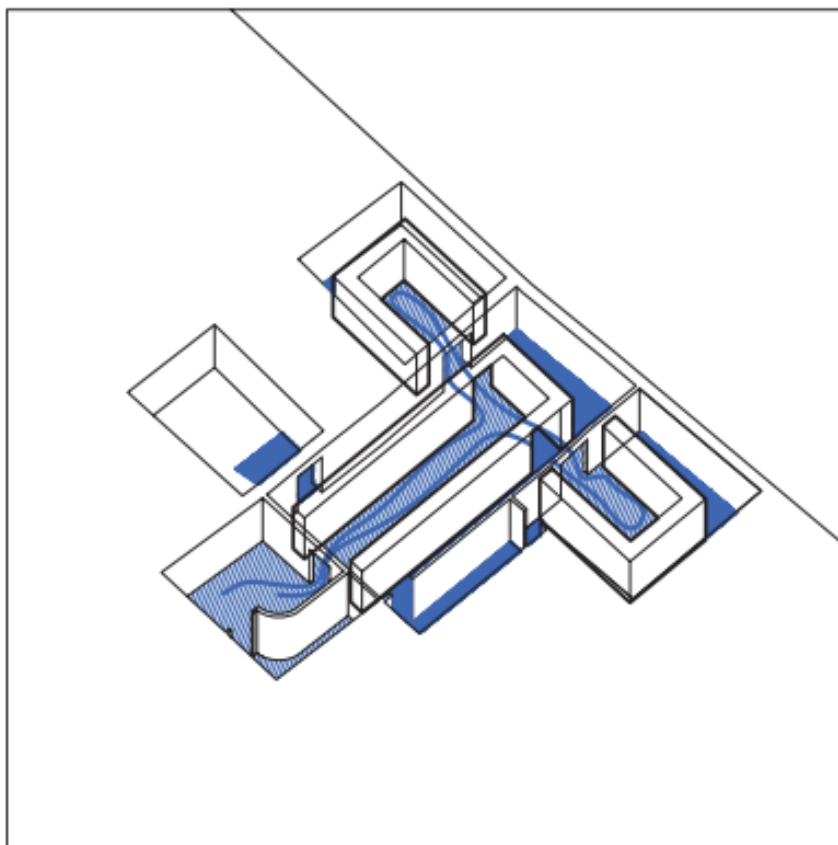

Figure 16: Spatial organization of the exhibition, Palazzo Malipiero, Venice 2016, courtesy of AA&U.

Mapping Architectural Controversies (*M.A.C.*) takes us back to our discussion on the notion of urban controversy, one of 'Contested Fronts' commoning practices. It reminds us of the importance of the moving project instead of the static object in architecture. M.A.C., organized by Albena Yaneva, is an interactive pedagogical website dedicated to students and researchers working on controversies surrounding design projects, buildings, master plans and urban and development issues. Yaneva reminds us about the importance of addressing controversies in architectural design. She tells us that the latest innovations in engineering and building together with changing demands of clients and communities cause many uncertainties during design processes. Focusing on controversies enables us to reshuffle the multifarious connections between architecture and society (Figure 15).[15]

6.2 Between exhibition and archive

As we are entering into the second floor of Palazzo Malipiero, in Venice, we are faced with a makeshift reception counter. It comprises four white translucent polycarbonate cases, placed side by side and on top of each other. They are raised 20 cm from the floor, thanks to four wooden logs, to reach a counter's height. We sense that their original use is a different one. Indeed, they are the stowage cases for 20 pieces, 55cm wide and 85 cm long, that comprise the portable model depicting the city of Famagusta. When they are deployed on five foldable aluminium stands, they cover an area of 5.5 m and 1.70 m wide (Stratis and Constantinou 2016: 132–47). They are all stowed on the metal shelves in the first room of the exhibition space devoted to 'countermapping commoning practices', just after the reception counter.
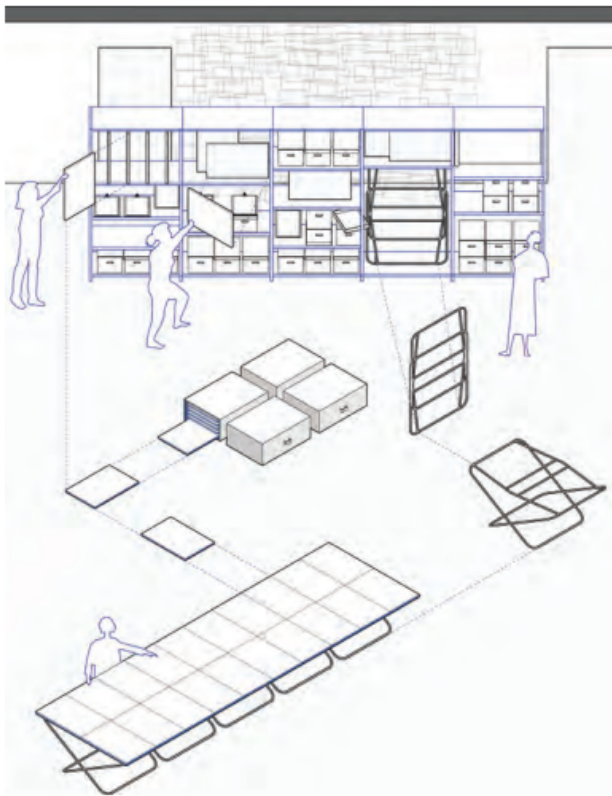

Figure 17: Assembling the mobile city model, courtesy of AA&U

This example gives us a good sense of the Contested Fronts' approach. It is at the same time an archive and an exhibition. The exhibition is an active agent in disseminating knowledge. We all know how important exhibitions are for

disseminating architectural knowledge. We are in Venice Biennale of Architecture, after all. However, the dissemination of knowledge has to do more with the moving project rather than with the static object of architecture. The makeshift reception counter reminds us that the exhibition is temporal. It can be relocated in its entirety or part by part in other spaces. The curatorial team has developed a series of drawings to guide such relocation of the exhibition. The drawings demonstrate how the spaces devoted to the archive for commoning practices can be re-adjusted (Figures 16 and 17). The aim is to enrich the archive each time is relocated. The DAZ centre of Architecture in Berlin was such a potential place, where unfortunately the relocation has not taken place, due to lack of financial support (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Collage of a view regarding an adjusted form of the exhibited archive, courtesy of AA&U.

Figure 19: View from the exhibition space, Palazzo Malipiero, Venice, 2016, courtesy of DSL studio.

The exhibition space comprises three rooms, each devoted to one of the three aforementioned commoning practices. Entering in each one of them, we have a

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sense of compression and then of decompression (Figures 19–21). The archive's industrial metal shelves are carefully placed a meter away from the rooms' walls. On the shelves, we can see half unfolded axonometric drawings, coming out from cardboard tubes. We can see the twenty parts of the model and printed informative material on brown draft paper. We can see A3-size blue cover books, A2-size sheets of drawings and video screens that present the aforementioned international participants. On the shelves, we can also find stamps, graffiti stencils, gameboards, A1 cardboard folders to keep in order the pedagogical work by the University of Cyprus students. Small and large box files are piled up, stowing additional material of the archive. They are all tools, most of them architectural tools.

We call them ad hoc technology because they are adapted by the participating members of the projects to serve an additional purpose from their original one. Just like the stowage model cases becoming the exhibition's reception counter. They are instrumentalized by the participating members to profit from their active agencies, hence to support the emergence of temporal communities, of instant territories of coexistence (Stratis 2016: 7). The ad hoc technology has assisted a tactful organization of physical spaces and events that have overcome segregated everyday social practices. Their performativity has supported the production and sharing of situated knowledge. They have enhanced the creation of porous territories from where I argue that the urban subject emerges. If we extend Richard Sennett's point of view, we can say that the ad hoc technology helps the psyche of the community members to overcome their fear and insecurity, to become empowered and open to the other.

The exhibition walls and the space that separates the shelves from the walls are devoted to the documentation of the ad hoc technology's performativity In this case, we profit mostly from the richness of the 'Hands-on Famagusta's' ad hoc technology. On the walls, we see floor-to-ceiling drawings, comprising of dozens of A3 sheet size parts (Figure 22). They are meticulously pinned on the walls. They can be taken down, stowed in the available boxes and moved to the next location of the exhibited archive. They depict instant territories of coexistence produced by commoning practices: instant territories thanks to round table discussions in Nicosia's buffer zone, in Famagusta and in Limassol. Thanks to the use of graffiti stencils as well as of urban games designed by students of the University of Cyprus, we witness the creation of instant territories-in-common in the streets of Nicosia and Famagusta. Photographs of such instant territories are suspended in the meter-wide in-between space, hung from a system of metal prosthetic arms fixed on the shelves.

Figure 20: Creating Thresholds commoning practices. Exhibition section, courtesy of Studio DSL.

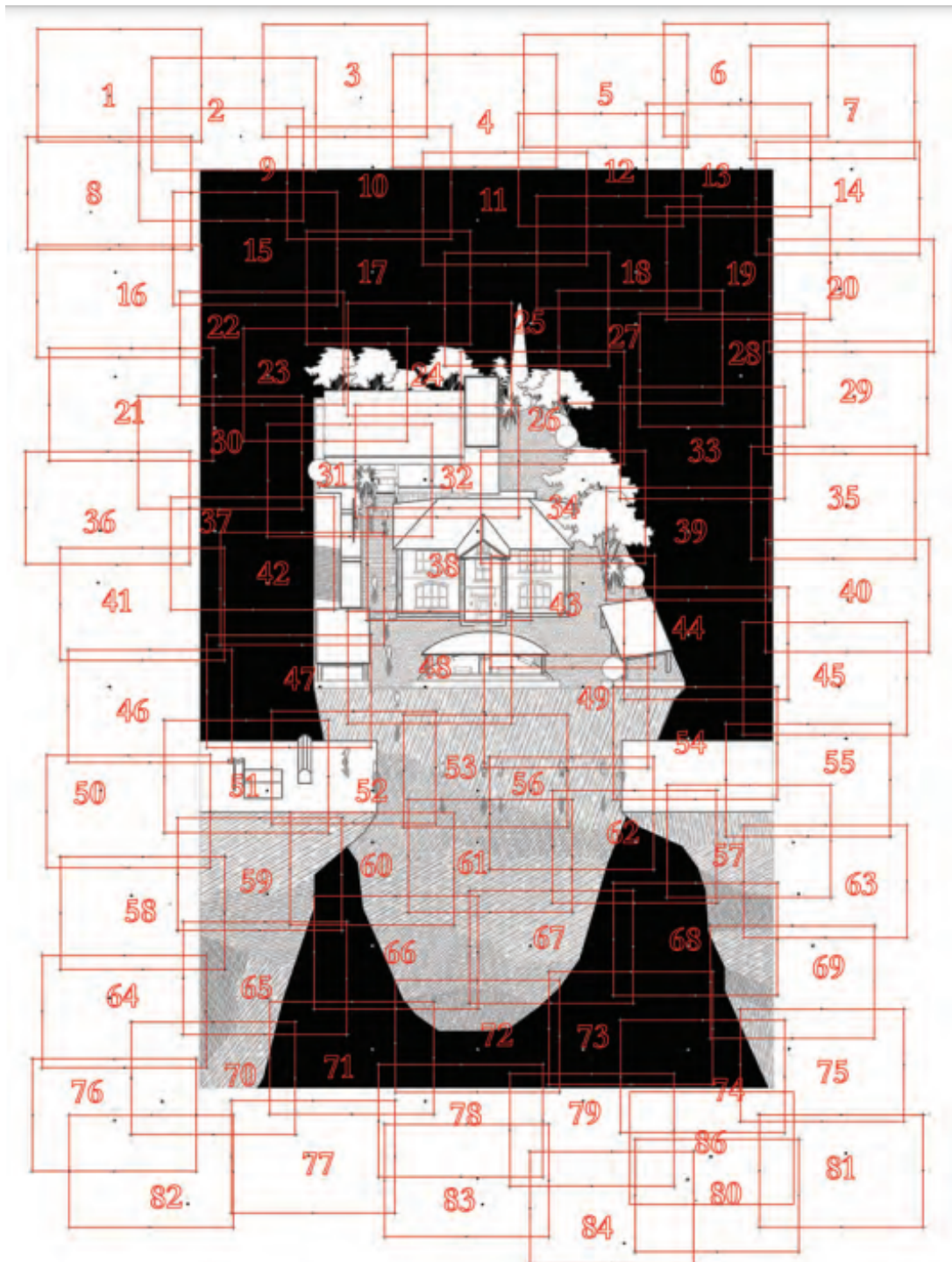Figure 21: Introducing Urban Controversies. Exhibition section, courtesy of Studio DSL.

Figure 22: The drawing of the Goethe Institute enclave, United Nations buffer zone, Nicosia, assembled with 86 A3-size sheets, courtesy of Hands-on Famagusta, AA&U (in Akbil 2016b: 203).

Figure 23: The city model encourages accidental encounters and meetings around it, Nicosia, courtesy of LUCY.

6.3 Exhibiting the archive's acts

The archive is being enriched by the documentation of the ongoing performativity of its parts, well after 2016. These parts support the archive's acts and contribute to its openness.

The city model is one example. The four cases with the twenty model pieces were placed in a central pedestrian street in Nicosia, in cultural centres in Famagusta and Limassol. The city model's next destination is the public spaces and shopping malls in Kyrenia, Nicosia and Limassol in Cyprus. The aim is to catch the attention of the passers-by and to discuss with them about the urban future of Federal Cyprus. By placing the model in public spaces, we create presence. The city model encourages accidental encounters and meetings around it between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, between Famagustians, between Cypriots and foreigners (Stratis and Constantinou 2016: 132–47) (Figure 23).

Another example is the axonometric drawing depicting the extremely fragmented Famagustian territory. During the summer of 2019, Munevver Ozgur Ozersay and I, both members of the 'Hands-on Famagusta' project team, have initiated a series of countermapping acts, with the help of two other members of the team, Emre Akbil

and Esra Can Akbil. We have invited ourselves to various offices of politicians and technical bodies on both parts of the island. We aimed to create awareness for the urgent need in putting together a joint committee for discussing the common urban future of Famagusta. We managed to have ten meetings. In each meeting, we were accompanied by two cardboard tubes in which we keep the two sheets of the axonometric drawing of Famagusta's enclaves. These drawings were exhibited in the 'Countermapping' room of the Palazzo Malipiero exhibition in Venice. Unfolding the oversize drawing of 1.20 m wide and more than 2.5 m long has been part of the archive's act. Due to its size, we excused ourselves to shift the meeting spaces into non-common areas, such as foyers, or larger meeting tables. For the duration of the meetings, the power relations between hosts and guests were perturbated. We found ourselves standing around the axonometric drawing and discussing. We therefore could, perform around the drawing freely, creating an alternative presence. The exposure of the hosts to the axonometric drawing was mind-blowing. They could link, pull out and compare discourses of the prevailing politics of the Cypriots through the spatial and image qualities eloquently expressed by the axonometric drawing and our performance of it (Figure 24).

A third example is the 'Found-in-translation' act. The 'Hands-on Famagusta' project team initiated a collective process to translate the English text of the www.handsonfamagusta.org web platform into Turkish and Greek. Suffice to say that because of the conflict, there are hardly any official initiatives that practice translation between Greek and Turkish, even though Turkish is one of the official languages of the Republic of Cyprus, together with Greek. In 2015, we formed a group of volunteers and met in a cultural centre in the old city of Famagusta to discuss the draft version of the translation. Their role was to comment on the translation by focusing on a few controversial words highlighted in the texts by the project team and by the two professional translators. Some words in English, when translated into Turkish or Greek, were burdened by the cultural memory and histories of the two ethnic groups. The collective process of translation consisted of two groups of volunteers, Greek speaking and Turkish speaking ones. They discussed the controversial words and shared among them relevant conflictual stories and histories (Figure 25). The project team decided to keep the conflictual meaning burdening the translated words. They allowed for multiple narratives to coexist side by side in the trilingual web platform. The 'Found-in-translation' act touches upon both the commencement and commandment of the archive. It has transformed a banal translation practice into an instant territory in common, a porous territory for the Cypriots' psyche. The three booklets, containing the final translated text in the three languages, were exhibited in Palazzo Malipiero, in the room devoted to 'Creating Thresholds'.

Figure 24: The counter-mapped isometric drawing in action, United Nations Headquarters, UN buffer zone at Nicosia airport, 2019, courtesy of AA&U, IF.

7. Conclusion

The notion of archive involves the principles of commencement and commandment. According to Derrida, there are no political powers without the control of the archive if not memory. The political powers manipulate 'where things commence' (Derrida 1995: 9) to formulate laws and to exercise social order. Democratizing archives has been a major aim of emancipatory practices that resist the control of such political powers.

By focusing on the 'Contested Fronts' curatorial project, I have unpacked emancipatory commoning practices that use architecture's agencies to counter urban knowledge archives and collective memory. Archives and collective memory are controlled by the dominant political powers that sustain the status-quo in conflict areas. We have seen how emancipatory commoning practices can produce their archives by participating in their access, constitution and interpretation, an act of decolonizing archives. This kind of archives offers means for architecture to support the constructive transformation of conflicts. It encourages us to revisit architecture in

the making, as a moving project, rather than as a static object. By adopting the moving project approach, the commoning practices may gain their emancipation. They tactfully insert seeds of solidarity and collective networking within the system of physical, temporal and actorial elements of the moving project. They manipulate architectural tools to design ad-hoc technologies and perform them. We have seen that commoning practices such as countermapping, creating thresholds and introducing urban controversies as well as their interrelationship, empower agonistic architectures. Agonistic architectures can hence, claim a role in creating porous territories and support the emergence of the urban subject.

'Contested Fronts Open-Source Archive' has been an effort to create alliances of networks of critical spatial practices to confront the challenges of shrinking everyday political spaces, starting from Cyprus. I have demonstrated how the three aforementioned commoning practices as well as their interrelationship have become the driving force of ad hoc acts of resistance in conflict areas where contestation prevails. They are the means for identifying bad edges in the city that shrink everyday political spaces. They are the way to create shared urban imaginaries for people living in areas across divides, such as the Cypriot one and especially at Famagusta.

The article makes apparent an additional crucial point as regards the practices participating in the 'Contested Fronts' archive, especially that of 'Hands-on Famagusta'. They have developed a systematic re-theorization of their praxis. We have understood how they create channels for disseminating and for sharing urban and architectural knowledge. These channels encourage the participants to enrich, to readjust, to re-interpret the knowledge at stake, to produce, in other words situated knowledge. We have also found out how these practices translate their theoretical investigations into practice. Having said that, we can witness the emergence of a new paradigm as regards the dynamic relations between theory and praxis in architecture and urban design.

Yet, we live in an era where porous territories are increasingly diminishing, risking to be extinct. They are taken over by sealed boundaries and closed edges both in our physical space as well as in our psyche. The refugee and immigrant flows, due to wars and climate change on one hand and the COVID-19 sanitary crisis on the other, have caused the sealing-off any kind of borders. They have raised walls between people, between communities between ethnic groups. Turkey and the right-wing Turkish Cypriot leadership have recently unilaterally opened-up the fenced-off part of Famagusta, ignoring any decision taken by the United Nations since 1974 to return the city to its legitimate owners. An act that diminishes the possibility for a reunified island with a non-divided Famagusta. An act that shrinks even more the everyday political spaces on the island.

Figure 38. The 'Found-in Translation' project, Famagusta 2015, courtesy of Hands-on Famagusta

How could we experience porosity in one's psyche when porous territories are disappearing before our eyes? What can an archive such as that of 'Contested Fronts' do in such unprecedented times? That is precisely, why the 'Contested Fronts' open-source archive approach has become utterly topical. First of all, it points out to the urgent need to establish new dynamic relations between theory and praxis in architecture and urban design. Secondly, it shows us how to operate in hopeless conditions where there is abundance of sealed boundaries and closed edges both in physical spaces and one's psyche. Cyprus is an utterly relevant example. How to put seeds for porous territories that can be instant or temporal, hoping to have a lasting influence.

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Notes
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Web platform development by LightBlack, Web platform Graphic Design by AA&U, Web platform Videos by AA&U, and Logo Design by Olof Jondelius and Robin Lee.

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16. The Imaginary Famagusta team together with LUCY and AA&U manage the 'Hands-on Famagusta's' ad hoc technology.

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