

DESIGN

Principles & Practices:
An International Journal

Volume 3, Number 4

The Notion of Game as Part of Urban Design
Practices

Socrates Stratis

DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
<http://www.Design-Journal.com>

First published in 2009 in Melbourne, Australia by Common Ground Publishing Pty Ltd
www.CommonGroundPublishing.com.

© 2009 (individual papers), the author(s)
© 2009 (selection and editorial matter) Common Ground

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of citations, quotations, diagrams, tables and maps.

All rights reserved. Apart from fair use for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review as permitted under the Copyright Act (Australia), no part of this work may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher. For permissions and other inquiries, please contact
<cg-support@commongroundpublishing.com>.

ISSN: 1833-1874
Publisher Site: <http://www.Design-Journal.com>

DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL is peer-reviewed, supported by rigorous processes of criterion-referenced article ranking and qualitative commentary, ensuring that only intellectual work of the greatest substance and highest significance is published.

Typeset in Common Ground Markup Language using CGCreator multichannel typesetting system
<http://www.commongroundpublishing.com/software/>

The Notion of Game as Part of Urban Design Practices

Socrates Stratis, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

Abstract: This paper investigates the notion of game as vehicle for a social dimension in urban design practices. This is examined in the education of urban design. The characteristics of the game to be investigated are its non linear processes and its coincidental outcomes, its ludic form, its communication and synergies between players. Concerning the education of urban design, the paper deals with two workshops which the author organized, (TU Graz and University of Cyprus, 2008). The students were invited to design synergy games that could encourage urbanity in urban voids. For the case of TU Graz the environment was Pyla, a mixed community (Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots), in the buffer zone between the north and south part of Cyprus. For the case of the University of Cyprus the environment was Nicosia. The form of the games designed varies from that of table games to that of participation urban games. The notion of game is used: 1. for putting the designer within a social system of project players, 2. for accepting the informal and the coincidental as equal project players, 3. for revealing hidden relations between social processes and spatial practices.

Keywords: Notion of Game, Education, Urban Design Practices, Architecture, Transitional Space

Introduction

THE TIME MAGAZINE last summer had its edition devoted to “Games, People, Play” emphasizing their social nature and preparing of course, the spirit for the Pekin Olympic Games 2008, (image 01). One can realize in fact, how the practice of games is so common amongst the human society of grown ups and not only of kids: Olympic Games, money games, role games (changing roles). The practice of games has been considered as a survival of rituals taken away from their sens and becoming something non recognizable as the rituals themselves degraded¹. In 2007, an edition was published called “Space, Time, Play” where there was an extensive documentation of relations between games, more specifically computer games, with architecture and urbanism. These relations started in the 70s and have gotten another dimension in the contemporary society through the use of cyberspace².

The aim of this paper has a double take. The first one is to present the games designed by students in two workshops and their pedagogical advantages. The second one is to link the notion of game in urban design practices through its pedagogical dimensions, to a search for new forms of engagement in the contemporary society. In this manner, the advantages of using the notion of game for educating urban design in schools of architecture through a self-reflective approach³ will be demonstrated. I will firstly describe the case studies which

¹ Conan, Michel. “Les jeux imbriqués de la conception architecturale”. In “Concevoir, inventer, créer”. Ed. Robert Prost. Paris: L’Harmattan, 1995, p. 158.

² Borries, Friedrich von, Waltz, Steffen, Bottger, Matthias. ed. “Space, Time, Play”, Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhauser, 2007.

³ Schon, Donald. “The reflective practitioner. How professionals think in action”. London: Basic Books, 1983.

are students' games from the two workshops that I have taught during 2008. The first workshop was in Technical University of Graz and the second one took place in the Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus as part of an elective theory course on the public role of the architect in contemporary society. In the second part of the paper I will attempt to link the game processes with urban and planning processes by concentrating on five points. In the third part of the paper I will demonstrate how these five points are apparent in the case studies and what sort of gain is there for the culture of urban design practices. How such approach can offer tools for a collective making of the urban project would be the summing up of the paper.

Description of Case Studies: Designing Games by Students in Urban Design Workshops

The case studies are six games designed by students. Four of them are designed through the workshop in T.U. Graz and two of them are designed by students in the Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus, (see tables 1a & 1b).

Four Games Designed in Technical University of Graz

The four games are designed through the E.U. Game workshop, (Encouraging Urbanity Game). The duration of the workshop was one week with 20 third year international students of architecture of T.U. Graz (Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, Austria and Norway). The aim of the workshop was to tackle issues about urbanity. In which ways urbanity is encouraged in public space? For the purposes of the workshop the concept of urbanity was considered to be an interrelation between four characteristics: 1.accessibility, 2.sharing, 3.transgressing edge conditions and 4.mobility⁴.

The site to study was Pyla, a community in Cyprus which is located within the buffer zone between the south and north part of the island. Pyla is one of the few villages in Cyprus where Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots live together but have no relation in the public space. In fact, the status of the buffer zone, which is controlled by the United Nations and the political situation in Cyprus, has turned any public space into a total void, (images 2, 3).

The method chosen was the design of a game, (the E.U. Game): A game with players, rules, strategic issues, a language and an outcome related to urban conditions. The EU GAME belonged to the category of synergy games with no player winning but rather of a synergy outcome. The students were divided in 4 groups of 4 to 5 persons, related to each characteristic of urbanity.

The first level of the workshop was to navigate with a compass around Graz main train station. The aim was to begin to develop a language of communication of the workshop by mapping forms of the four characteristics, (images 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). The second level of the workshop was about getting acquainted with Pyla characteristics, through texts, images, projects. The third level was about getting references of existing games with neither winner nor looser or transform them in that way. The fourth level was about designing the E.U.

⁴ The teaching method was tested in the fall semester 2007 in University of Cyprus as the first part of a main urban design studio. It in fact, succeeded in getting the students involved enthusiastically in the project by constructing their own way through the studio.

Game for Pyla. Four games were designed, one through each of the four characteristics of urbanity: “Third life”, “Caché”, “Pyla mosaic”, “Pyla play”, (see table 1a).

“Third Life”

The game “Third life” is designed by the students’ group dealing with the characteristic of “accessibility”, (Vesna Pecanac, Sonja Mijatovic, Danica Pavlovic, Ankica Zilic, Dragan Malovic). The game environment is internet with direct references to “Second life”. The players are elementary school students from Pyla, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. They could access the game anonymously either from their school or their home. The game environment is a virtual Pyla where the kids could propose projects in public spaces common for both communities, (playgrounds, new facilities with public program etc.). These projects are visible in real Pyla through large screens placed strategically in community’s public spaces. If a project attracts the attention of the grown-ups of Pyla, they could vote, with the most popular project to be implemented, (images 9, 10, 11).

The aim of the game is to encourage forms of synergy between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot children starting under the anonymat of internet, but also between the younger and older generation of Pyla inhabitants. These forms of synergy would reflect on the transformation of public space through a series of micro-projects.

“Caché ”

The game “Caché” is designed by the students’ group dealing with the characteristic of “sharing”, (Robert Mayer, Emina Catovic, Klaus Hyden, Katharina Balak, Edid Makicevic). It is a participative game with real Pyla as environment and players to be all Pyla inhabitants. The name “Caché” has references to the short memory kept for web sites when revisited. It is a sort of a treasure hunting game which is based on new coordinates imposed on the existing street system, with the players exchanging personal items. The players are asked to navigate through these new coordinates, distancing themselves from the familiar way of getting around their community. At the end of the game, the main community’s central space is transformed into an exhibition space of all personal items exchanged during the game. A map of the community is drawn on the space surface and the items are placed on the spots located at end of the game, (images 12, 13, 14, 15).

The aim of the game is actually, the exchange of private memory between the players through personal objects that change hands during the game. In this way the game encourages the construction of forms of sharing of private memory in order to reconstruct the image of the “other” (Turkish Cypriots or Greek Cypriots) and create a new collective memory for the community.

“Pyla Mosaic”

The game “Pyla mosaic” is designed by the students’s group dealing with the characteristic of “transgressing edge conditions”, (Adina Camhy, Lisa Obermayer, Markus Meirkofer, Stefan Mayer, Lubomira Doytchinova). It is a table game that uses the specific conditions of Pyla as references for the game environment but attempts to associate those conditions with similar ones all over the world. In this way the game is open to everyone to play.

The aim of the game is to activate the void (on the game board), which is present in the main community space by a series of synergies between the players. Bridging diverse environments around the void of the main space through specific tasks and missions gives the possibility to insert events and activate the public space. A miscommunication between the game's players could allow to the void, responsible for the main space inertia, to take over the whole community, (images 16, 17, 18).

“Pyla Play”

The game “Pyla play” is designed by the students' group dealing with the characteristic of “mobility”, (Eirik Gyajacobsen, Andreas Draxl, Stephan Brugger, Mathias Schmid). It is a participative game for children with real Pyla as the game environment. It has references to “Scrabble” game and more specifically to the topography created on the game board by the value variation of the grid where the letters are to be placed.

The aim of the game is both the synergy between kids beyond ethnic group, and the “contamination” of ethnic enclaves such as coffee shops, schools through the game practice. The synergy between the kids is based on the collection of the right combination of “high tech color stones”, like the letters in scrabble, which could activate the nodal points located strategically within the ethnic enclaves. The navigation between nodal points is assisted by gps technology. The community becomes a life size scrabble table board with areas getting different game value depending on the placement of the nodal points, (images 19, 20, 21).

Two Games Designed in the Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus

The two games are designed as part of an elective theory course on the public role of the architect in the contemporary society in the Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus. The duration of the workshop was a semester (fall 2008). The participating students were fourth year undergraduate students, (4) and graduate students, (2), from Cyprus and Greece. The intervention site was Nicosia, Cyprus. The first level of the workshop was to get references from their past student projects on urban design (3rd year) that dealt with similar issues⁵. The second level of the workshop was to get acquainted with Nicosia's characteristics, through texts, images and site visits, (images 22, 23). The third and fourth levels of the workshop were the same with the E.U. Game in T.U. Graz, (see table 1b).

“Pubble, Prible”

The game “pubble, prible”, a table game, has references to “Scrabble” game, in fact as the “Pyla play” game, (Anastasia Aggelidou, George Kallis, Chara Stephanou). It uses the specific conditions of Nicosia to construct the game board. The game actions are mapped by markers, blue and red, on transparencies overlayed the game board.

The aim of the game is to demonstrate how the city is an arena for creative and destructive tension between public and private actions. The publicness of the city has therefore a dynamic

⁵ Most of the students have taken the urban design studio of the previous year, concentrated on the notion of urbanity through the interrelation of the four characteristics mentioned at the beginning of the paper, (accessibility, sharing, transgressing edge conditions, mobility).

character based on the forms of tension between public and private. The game actions are guided through double sided game labels (like the letters in scrabble), but this time they enhance public oriented actions or private oriented ones depending on the team playing, (**pubble** = pub (from **pub-lic**) + ble (from **scra-ble**) or **prible** = pri (from **pri-vate**) + ble (from **scra-ble**). Each game session actions are archived in a memory booklet becoming reference for the following session, (images 24, 25, 26, 27).

“Hunting of Lost Urbanity”

The game “Hunting of lost urbanity” is a participative game with Nicosia as the game environment.

Its aim is to activate urban voids by introducing new kinds of events in spaces in the city centre, changing the use of parking lots, construction sites and urban voids. In this manner the public domain could be expanded and the city constantly remapped. The continuous remapping through the events will be documented through a web site which the players visit to get directions for the game. The game starts by inviting people through codes placed on all sorts of items in the city, from coffee cups to building walls. The players are invited to decode the game sign through assisted web technology and meet at a designated place for starting the game. The action to take place is initiated by a sort of a spinning wheel that introduces the multitude of chances of a game. The spinning wheel has a range of activities to take place and a range of time to do them. The game activities could alter the urban environment temporarily or even permanently with the game as a sort of catalyst for further out-of-the game activities to be sustained in the city, (images 28, 29, 30, 31).

Five Points for Linking the Notion of Game with Urban Design Practices

After having presented the case studies, I will refer to five points that not only show the similarities between playing and urban design practices and the city development in general, but also enable the notion of game to become a creative tool with pedagogical dimensions.

It is true that the notion of game in urban design practices dates back to the 70s with influence by the artistic manifestos of the Situationist movement that employed playful interaction seeking to reformulate social structures. The notions of “détournement” and “dérive” (drift)⁶ gave playful tools to people to rediscover their cities. There is currently an introduction of games in urban spaces which are less political, less ideological than before. They tend to seduce the users rather than shock them as they did the games in the 70s. Scenario games become vital techniques for interactive city planning, for testing a project. One of the first scenario games, the “World Game” during the 60s by Buckminster Fuller, addressed the topic of available resources of the planet in the future and introduced the issue of participating of the society rather than staying as a spectator to changes⁷. The notion of game reappears in the discussion in the context of participative urban design precisely because playing processes have indeed similarities with planning processes: there is interaction, communication, cooperation amongst the players in gaming or planning⁸. Playing games can help establish

⁶ Sadler, Simon. “*The situationist city*”, Cambridge Massachusetts, London, England: The MIT Press, 1998.

⁷ Bunschoten, Raoul. “Scenario Games”. In “*Space, Time, Play*”, p.384.

⁸ Vrachliotis, George. “Game of life: on architecture, complexity and the concept of nature as a game.” In “*Space, Time, Play*”, p.341.

and test out new relationships. Collective hazards faced in urban planning and architecture can be actually faced initially on a ludic level⁹.

Point No 1: Between Imaginary and Real

The first point is that both the contemporary urban environment and playing practices are situated somewhere between the virtual and the real. On one hand, the urban environment is becoming more and more a hybrid outcome between the virtual and the physical. The way the virtual is overlaid on the physical environment becomes a challenge for contemporary urbanists and architects¹⁰. On the other hand, the game space is situated somewhere between the real and the imaginary, in a transitional space¹¹. This gives the possibility of experimentation and exploration that the real environment sometimes does not encourage.

Contemporary cyberspace games don't only have their own transitional space as mentioned above, but also they take place both on the virtual cyberspace environment and on the physical urban one. In fact, there is an increase of former cyberspace games that use more and more the urban environment as a life size game board assisted by web technology with a direct influence on the city¹², (image 32, 33).

Point No 2: From Low Level Rules to a Higher Level of Sophistication

In order to understand a possible role of playing practices in the making of the urban environment it is important to see how the city could be considered as "*amalgams of processes, as spaces of vectorial flows that adjust to differing inputs and impulses like some self-regulating system.*"¹³ Neil Leach emphasizes the processes of thinking together and the concept of emergence which "*represents a shift in understanding from low-level rules to higher level sophistication, a kind of bottom-up development of complex adaptive systems that self regulate, in opposition to top-down overarching principles*"¹⁴. Through these references, Neil Leach emphasizes the emergent collective intelligence of groups of simple agents which lie behind bottom-up developments and have commonalities with the notion of game. One could in fact observe that there is such an emergence from playing practices based on low-level rules and achieve a higher level of sophistication.

Michel Conan emphasizes that the process of thinking together in the making of a project, in this case architectural, creates all sort of constraints by the actors themselves, a sort of

⁹ Lootsma, Bart. "Towards a game theory of architecture". In "*Space, Time, Play*", ed. Friedrich von Borries, Steffen Waltz, Matthias Bottger. Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhauser, 2007, p.405.

¹⁰ Lootsma, Bart. "Towards a game theory of architecture". In "*Space, Time, Play*", pp. 404-406.

¹¹ Winnicott, D.W. "Jeu et réalité – l'espace potentiel", Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1971, in Conan, Michel. "Les jeux imbriqués de la conception architecturale". In "Concevoir, inventer, créer". p. 163.

¹² For example the "Big Urban Game". A playful connection of the "Twin Cities" (Minneapolis and Saint Paul), a project by Nick Fortugno, Frank Lantz, Katie Salen with Janet Abrams, Mary de Laittre, Alex Terzich, 2003 in "*Space, Time, Play*". pp 390-391.

There are a lot of such examples in the same publication.

¹³ Leach, Neil. "Play Stations", in "*Space, Time, Play*". pp 328-331. He refers to: DeLanda, Manuel. "A thousand years of nonlinear history". New York: Zone books, Swerve Editions, 1997. Johnson, Steven. "Emergence: The connected lives of ants, brains, cities and software". London: Penguin, 2001.

¹⁴ Bonabeau, E. Dorigo, M. & Theraulez, G. "Swarm intelligence : from natural to artificial systems". New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 11. Referenced by Neil Leach. "Play Stations".

low-level rules. He associates this fact with playing practices where the players in the game introduce constraints by their playing involvement¹⁵.

Point No 3: Gradual Construction of the Real

This point refers mostly to the characteristic of playing practices as a vehicle of gradual construction of the real. It is a point of view of interactionists sociologists and psychologists¹⁶ who studied phases of playing from the child, teenager to the grown-up: learning to play the role that the society gives to someone. This characteristic becomes very useful in the collective making of the urban environment, plus using playing practices as pedagogical tool for urban design. The time factor introduced through this characteristic allows layers of interactions to take place during playing or planning practices.

The gradual construction of the real, allows to game players to address complex and usually conflicting issues that one can find in urban environments, without being overwhelmed. This is even more applicable when students are asked to address complex urban issues finding themselves weighed down by such complexities and conflicts.

Point No 4: Constructing Common Communication Tools

The fourth point refers to bringing people around a playing or a planning platform which requires the construction of common understanding. How people with different background, positions and priorities especially in planning processes can arrive to decide together. What is interesting is that such an effort is quite constructive within the process of planning practices or playing ones. The gradual construction of the real, as mentioned before, allows in fact to the players to build little by little collective representation means in order to understand each other, a sort of adaptive communication tools¹⁷. It also allows space for experimentation and tolerance between players and their environment, as mentioned already in the first point about the transitional space of the game.

Point No 5: The Non Linear Motion in Playing and Planning Practices

The last point emphasizes the non linear process of playing practices and its importance in planning practices. Design as game in a transitional space, between imaginary and real, disqualifies in fact, any rational model used for planning¹⁸: one of the characteristics of rational models which is cancelled is the notion of linearity. The set of constraints introduced by the players themselves, the patterns of interactivity and communication enhance non linear developments. The idea of game in terms of “motion” which implicitly exists in the game was introduced by Gadamer in the 60s who referred to the special significance of back & forth, in & out processes in playing practices¹⁹. The non linearity gives also a separate life to the game independent from the players themselves.

¹⁵ Suits, Bernard. “The Grasshopper – Games life and utopia”, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978. Referenced by Conan, Michel. “Les jeux imbriqués de la conception architecturale”. p. 158.

¹⁶ Conan, Michel. “Les jeux imbriqués de la conception architecturale”. p. 159

¹⁷ Schon, Donald. “The reflective practitioner. How professionals think in action”.

¹⁸ Conan, Michel. “Les jeux imbriqués de la conception architecturale”. p. 157.

¹⁹ Gadamer, H.G. “Wahrheit und Methode – Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik”. Tübingen: Mohr, 1960. Referenced by Vrachliotis, Georg. “Game of life” in “Space, Time, Play”, p.342.

Tracing the Five Points in the Case Studies

After having introduced the case studies of the six games designed by students during the two workshops and then having presented the five points through which playing and urban design practices could relate, I will attempt to trace those five points in the case studies themselves. The tracing process would relate on one hand on the pedagogical characteristics of such games and on the other hand on the projection of possible engagement of the players when these games will be implemented. The two table games could be considered implemented, with the students already having played a few sessions.

Between Imaginary and Real

Starting from the game “Third Life”, one can see a direct synergy between the real and imaginary environments aiming to bypass difficulties and status-quo of the real in the community of Pyla. The projects of the children on virtual Pyla are presented in real Pyla through screens and can be implemented only when most of the grown-up inhabitants of Pyla agree on it. The imaginary becomes a catalyst for changes in the real environment, (images 33, 9, 10, 11).

In the case of the game “Pyla Play”, the actual practice of the game is assisted both by the virtual internet environment and the physical space of the community. The children are guided into non familiar enclaves with the excuse of directions assisted by a virtual environment, (images 19, 20, 21).

In the case of the game “Hunting lost urbanity”, in Nicosia, the game is assisted by a virtual internet environment in order to transform temporarily or permanently the physical environment. What is special in this case study is that the imaginary, which in this case is the city mental maps²⁰ of the users, is altered by playing, (images 28, 29, 30, 31). All these operate in fact, within the logic of Bart Lootsma’s statement on the importance of synergies between the real and the virtual, mentioned in point no 1.

In the case of the game “Caché”, it is not the virtual internet environment that feeds the game space but the imaginary new coordinates superimposed to the actual space by the game itself. The transitional space of the game allows to the players to circulate in an alternative way in the very loaded symbolically street names system, (most of the streets are named after national heroes of the two communities, geographical references from the “motherlands”, / Greece and Turkey/ and other local events). The game introduced new names relating to nature (topography, sun direction, etc / image 14).

In the case of the games “Pyla Mosaic” and “Pubble, prible” the game environment is a table board which has direct references to Pyla for the former game and to Nicosia for the latter. The transfer of a real environment to a table game allows to the players to link the specificity of local events up to a larger framework of similar cases all over the world. The students who designed the game “Pyla Mosaic” explicitly stated so, (images 17, 24). In these cases, it is the transitional space of the game evoked by Michel Conan that becomes crucial, (see point no 1).

²⁰ Lynch, Kevin. “The image of the city”. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London England: The M.I.T. Press, 1960.

From Low Level Rules to a Higher Level of Sophistication

Beginning with the table games, one can see that the low level rules are bound by two kinds of constraints. The first ones are the initial regulations of the game and the second ones are the constraints created by the players themselves and influencing the game outcome (see the remarks of Michel Conan in point no 2). With the initial game regulations the constraint of no winner nor loser was introduced, encouraging synergy conditions to take place. The students who designed “Pyla Mosaic” had to run their game several times in order to be sure that the game regulations allowed synergies to take place toward accomplishing the game aim which was the activation of the “Void” of Pyla main space. Then, they realized that the constraints they created themselves while playing the game led them to different results everytime with the danger of the “Void” not only to remain in Pyla’s main space but to spread all over the community, (all over the game board). The game board, at the end of each session, presented an outcome of very complex relations created by very simple rules. That was in fact, an indirect way of grasping the complexity of real Pyla and of the contemporary urban environment in general. Plus, they realize that the urban environment, at least the one they created by playing, was directly linked to the processes they followed based on the constraints mentioned before, (images 18, 34). They built in fact an emergent collective intelligence, as Neil Leach talks about (see point no 2).

In the case of the game “Pubble, prible” the playing practice becomes closer to planning practice. That is so firstly, because there is a larger interrelation of constraints between the game sessions. Constraints of former sessions become part of the memory of the game and influence every following game session by limiting possibilities but also by giving references of how to proceed. It is like planning practices that often operate in relation to previous decisions taken by the city actors. Secondly, the students introduced the possibility of “erasing” previous game actions. As it has been described already, the game takes place on a transparent board overlaid the map of Nicosia central area. The two groups of players, “pubblers” and “priblers” draw with a blue and a red marker their actions following the instructions of their action cards. Some of them give them the possibility of erasing the oponent’s move and change the equilibrium between public and private, (images 26, 27).

Gradual Construction of the Real

Through the case studies one can see several levels of gradual construction of the real as Michel Conan refers to within the logic of the interactionists sociologists and psychologists, (see point no 3). This takes place firstly by the students who designed the games and secondly by the players of the game. In the second case one can talk about the players in a certain manner only on the implemented games which are the two table games. This research will continue when the games will be implemented in the future.

One level of gradual construction of the real is through the transfer of conditions about the real environment into virtual environment either cyberspace or game board. In the case of “Third Life” game, the children could gradually grasp the complexity of their community by playing in a virtual Pyla and getting the reactions of the grown-ups from real Pyla, (images 9, 10). In the case of “Pyla mosaic” the players get acquainted with real Pyla by operating on a game board. Playing “Pyla Mosaic” invites associations with similar conditions of conflict all over the world changing therefore the mental maps of players about real Pyla.

In the case of “Pyla Play” it is the gradual deconstruction of the real that becomes crucial when the kids are encouraged by the game to transgress existing ethnic enclaves.

A second level of gradual construction of the real is by allowing the transitional game environment to be superimposed on the real one. In this way there could be a gradual alteration of mental maps of the players about the real environment, but also a permanent change of the city by playing practices. In the case of the “Caché” game, the new game coordinates give the possibility to the players to revisit the real and reconstruct it, (image 14). In the case of the “The search of lost urbanity” game, both players and city users could get the chance to have their own mental maps of the city altered. Concerning the players, they participate by playing in the construction of new maps of the city. Concerning the city users, they experience the influences of the playing practices on urban space in a temporal or permanent way, (image 31).

Constructing Collective Means of Representation

The workshop method encouraged in both cases, TU Graz and University of Cyprus, the student groups to develop communication tools firstly common amongst them in order to design their games and secondly common amongst the players within the games themselves in order to allow the playing practices to take place successfully. They entered indeed, in an adaptive communication tools process as Donald Schon talks about, (see point no 4).

In the first case, the process of constructing adaptive communication tools amongst students was emphasized in the workshop in T.U. Graz since it was easier during an intense one week of work. Concerning the second case, the construction of common communication tools amongst players was tested through the two table games and it was projected for the rest of the non implemented games. For example, in the case of “Caché” game the exposure of personal items, thus private memory in public space attempts to deconstruct the existing collective representation of the “other” in Pyla, (image 15). In the case of “Hunting lost urbanity” game, the construction of collective representation takes place around the making of events in urban spaces, (image 29). In “Third Life” and in “Pyla Play” the game players which are kids, get the chance to gradually alter the collective representation of their community either by operating on a virtual level in the case of “Third Life”, (images 9-11), or by transgressing ethnic enclaves in the case of “Pyla Play”, (image 21).

The Non Linear Motion in Playing and Planning Practices

The non linear motion in playing regarding the case studies can be seen in three levels. Such motion in multiple levels puts indeed in question any rational model of planning as Michel Conan evokes, (see point no 5), allowing to the specific and to the informal to play a decisive role in the making of the urban project.

The first level of such non linear motion is a back & forth one between real and virtual environments. This is the case of “Third Life” with the virtual Pyla of the kids and the projection of their projects in public spaces in real Pyla. It is also the case of “Pyla Play” where the children are navigating in real Pyla with the help of internet environment. The same is true in “Hunting lost urbanity”.

The second level of such non linearity is that of a back & forth motion related to the degree of success vis a vis the game aim. For example, in “Pyla Mosaic” the players found themselves

often threatened by the spreading of the “Void” all over Pyla when they thought they were about to make it disappear from the main Pyla space. Then they had to repeat, go back and reevaluate their possibilities. The “erasing action” in “Pubble, prible” game emphasizes even more this back & forth motion towards the game aim.

The third level of non linear motion refers to an In & Out motion of the game, where the players in most of the games do have the capacity of getting out of the game while the game is still taking place (“Third Life”, “Caché” and “Hunting for lost urbanity”). Sometimes the In & Out occurs between the real and the imaginary. It is at that moment that probably the “Caché” players reconstruct their mental map about real Pyla.

Conclusion

The five points evoked through the paper linking playing and urban design practices give in fact, the possibility to enrich the culture of new forms of participation that allow the “*action in the hands of the user*” as W.J.Mitchell puts it²¹. If the words “students” and “players” are replaced with the word “users” in the six case studies, one could begin to see the construction of a framework for a collective making of the urban project.

Concentrating firstly to the teaching of urban design through games, one can see the possibility to operate in the transitional space of the game, between imaginary and real, enhances the students with a space of experimentation, and thinking in action. Such a condition can be considered indeed, a self reflective process of thinking in action as Donald Schon evokes, (point no 1). They can follow how social processes (actors’ priorities, political conditions) influence the urban environment, without being overwhelmed by complex urban conditions. The gradual construction of the real in playing practices is decisive in this case, (point no 3). The students realize that the game method is directly related to the game content and vice versa: an observation that enables all players to take mature decisions about changes on urban environment. Such an interrelation between method and content becomes possible thanks to the non linear motion in both playing and planning practices, (point no. 5). Students become also able to grasp indirectly the complexity of urban environment while they realize that the high degree of sophistication of the urban environment in which they have been immersed can be based on simple rules. They acquire in fact, a sort of an emergence of collective intelligence as Neil Leach talks about, (point no 2).

I believe that in order to let the “*action in the hands of the user*” the users themselves need to go through similar comprehension of the urban environment. The role of the architect, planner becomes mostly facilitator, catalyst for achieving a collective high level of sophistication amongst the project actors, in other words the users, as W.J.Mitchell calls them. Could users, be encouraged to construct common communication tools in order to operate on such level through playing practices?

What has been mentioned can be considered as the beginning of an investigation since there will be more of case studies to analyse through other workshops. Another level of exploration would be added when some of these games which are produced within a pedagogical framework are implemented.

²¹ Mitchell, J. William. “Action in the hands of the user”, in “*Space, Time, Play*”. pp 407-409.

References

- Bonabeau, E. Dorigo, M. & Theraulez, G. "Swarm intelligence: from natural to artificial systems". New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Borries, Friedrich von, Waltz, Steffen, Bottger, Matthias. ed."Space, Time, Play – Computer games, architecture and urbanism: the next level", Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhauser, 2007.
- Bunschoten, Raoul. "Scenario Games". In "Space, Time, Play– Computer games, architecture and urbanism: the next level", Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhauser, 2007.
- Conan, Michel. "Les jeux imbriqués de la conception architecturale". In "Concevoir, inventer, créer". Ed. Robert Prost. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995.
- DeLanda, Manuel. "A thousand years of nonlinear history". New York: Zone books, Swerve Editions, 1997.
- Gadamer, H.G. "Wahrheit und Methode – Grundzuge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik". Tubingen: Mohr, 1960.
- Jencks, Charles. "Nonlinear Architecture: New Science = New Architecture?" Architectural Design no. 129 (1997).
- Johnson, Steven. "Emergence: The connected lives of ants, brains, cities and software". London: Penguin, 2001.
- Leach, Neil. "Play Stations", in "Space, Time, Play – Computer games, architecture and urbanism: the next level", Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhauser, 2007.
- Lootsma, Bart. "Towards a game theory of architecture". In "Space, Time, Play – Computer games, architecture and urbanism: the next level", Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhauser, 2007.
- Lynch, Kevin. "The image of the city". Cambridge, Massachusetts and London England: The M.I.T. Press, 1960.
- Mitchell, J. William. "Action in the hands of the user", in "Space, Time, Play– Computer games, architecture and urbanism: the next level", Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhauser, 2007, pp 407-409.
- Sadler, Simon. "The situationist city", Cambridge Massachusetts, London, England: The MIT Press, 1998.
- Schon, Donald. "The reflective practitioner. How professionals think in action". London: Basic Books, 1983.
- Suits, Bernard. "The Grasshopper – Games life and utopia", Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978.
- Vrachliotis, George. "Game of life: on architecture, complexity and the concept of nature as a game." In "Space, Time, Play– Computer games, architecture and urbanism: the next level", Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhauser, 2007.
- Winnicott, D.W. "Jeu et réalité – l'espace potentiel", Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1971.

Table 1a: 4 Games in Workshop 3, Technical University of Graz, February 2008, Duration: one Week

GAME TITLE (No of students per group)	FORM OF URBANITY	GAME ENVIRONMENT	GAME REFERENCES	GAME PLAYERS	GAME AIM	GAME OUTCOME
1. Third life (5)	Accessibility	Internet interaction assisting site transformations	Second life	Kids under 12 in Pyla	To encourage forms of synergy between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot children and between the younger and older generation of Pyla inhabitants.	Projects in virtual Pyla to be shown on large screens in public spaces of real Pyla with the possibility to be implemented
2. "Cache" (5)	Sharing	On site participation	Web treasure game	Pyla inhabitants	To reconstruct the image of the "other" (TCs or GCs) by sharing private memories Create a new collective memory for the community.	An exhibition in the main square of personal items of Pyla inhabitants
3. "Pyla mosaic" (5)	Transgressing edge conditions	Table game	The "settlers of Catan" table game	All	To activate the void of the main square by bridging diverse environments around it.	A game board that maps all activities aiming to diminish the main square's void

4. "Play Pyla" (4)	Mobility	On site participation assisted be gps technology	"Scrabble"	Kids under 12 in Pyla	the synergy between kids beyond ethnic group, and the contamination of segregated community spaces	The circulation of mixed ethnic groups of kids in segregated community spaces
-----------------------	----------	--	------------	-----------------------	--	---

Table 1b: 2 Games as an Assignment of an Elective Theory Course on the Public Role of the Architect, Department of Architecture, Fall Semester 2008, Duration: 13 Weeks)

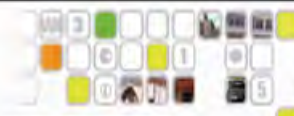
GAME TITLE (No of students)	FORM OF URBANITY	GAME ENVIRONMENT	GAME REFERENCES	GAME PLAYERS	GAME AIM	GAME OUTCOME
5."Pubble, prible" (3)	Sharing	Table game	"Scrabble"	All	To demonstrate how the city is an arena for creative and destructive tension between public and private actions.	Reconstruction of the threshold between public and private domain on the game board
6. Hunting of lost urbanity" (3)	Accessibility	On site participation assisted by internet technology	Treasure game	Nicosia inhabitants and visitors	To activate urban voids by introducing new kinds of events in monofunctional spaces in the city centre.	Events in designated spaces in the city centre as part of the game but also other events initiated by the game dynamics.



Image 03



Image 07




PYLA PLAY

BY G. J. VAN DER VEER

ANALYSE_GRAZ

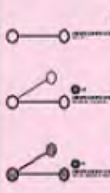
ANALYSE_GRAZ is a tool for analyzing the structure of a graph. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways.



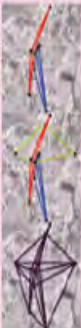
ANALYSE_GRAZ is a tool for analyzing the structure of a graph. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways.

ANALYSE_PYLA

ANALYSE_PYLA is a tool for analyzing the structure of a graph. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways.

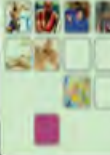


ANALYSE_PYLA is a tool for analyzing the structure of a graph. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways.



ANALYSE_GAMES

ANALYSE_GAMES is a tool for analyzing the structure of a graph. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways.



ANALYSE_GAMES is a tool for analyzing the structure of a graph. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways. It can be used to analyze the structure of a graph in a number of ways.

Image 08

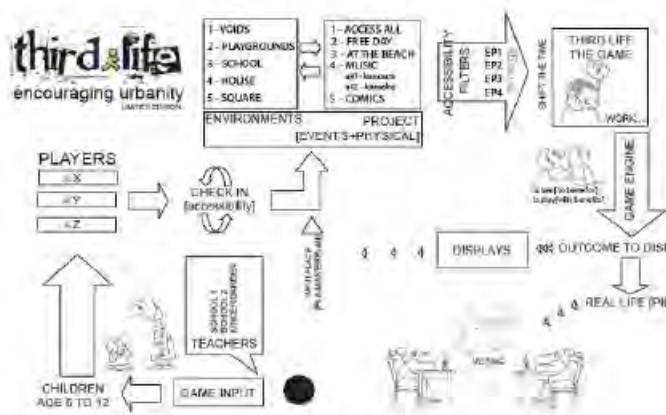


Image 09



SCENE FROM REAL LIFE BECOMES DIFFERENT MEANING IN VIRTUAL

Image 10



Image 11

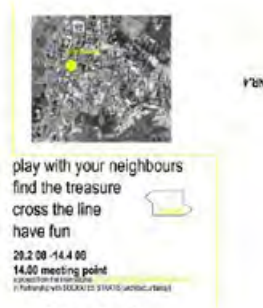


Image 12



Image 13



Image 14



Image 15

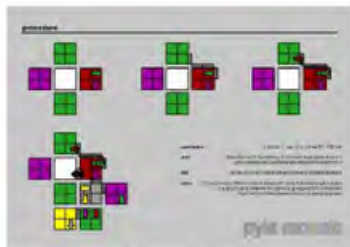


Image 16

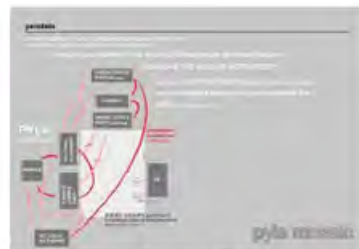


Image 17



Image 18

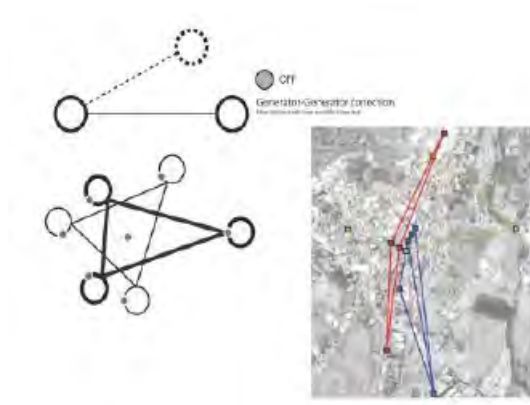


Image 19

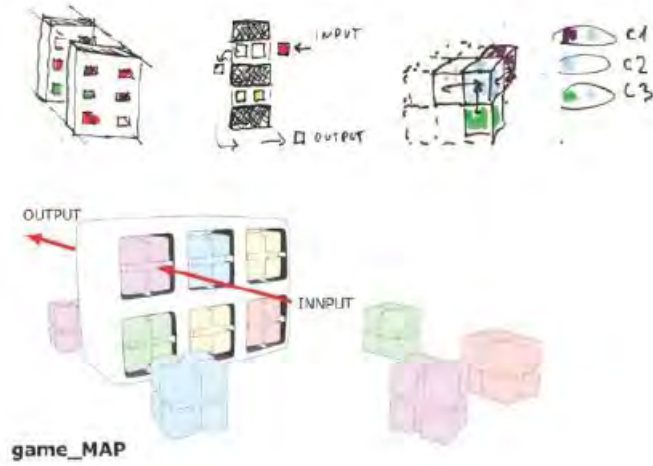


Image 20

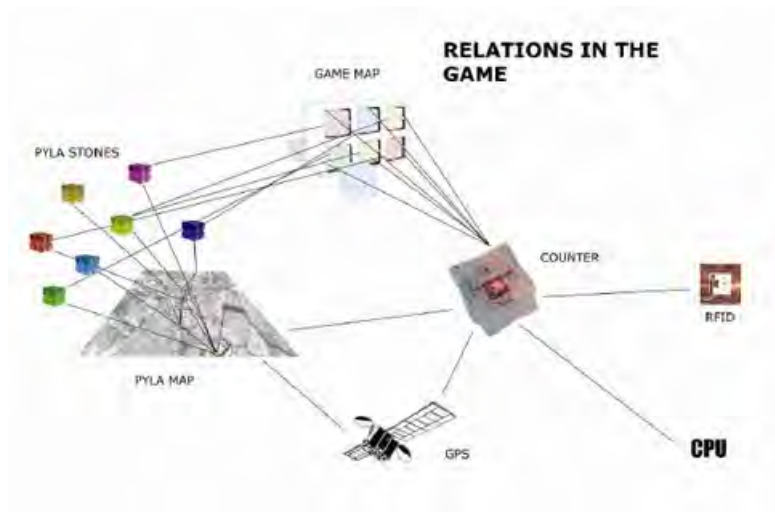


Image 21



Image 22



Image 23

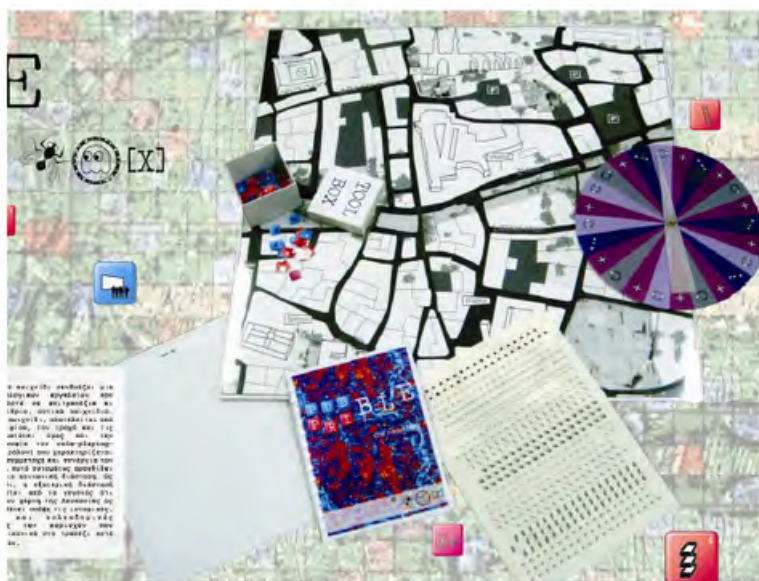


Image 24



Image 25



Image 26



Image 27



Image 28



Image 29

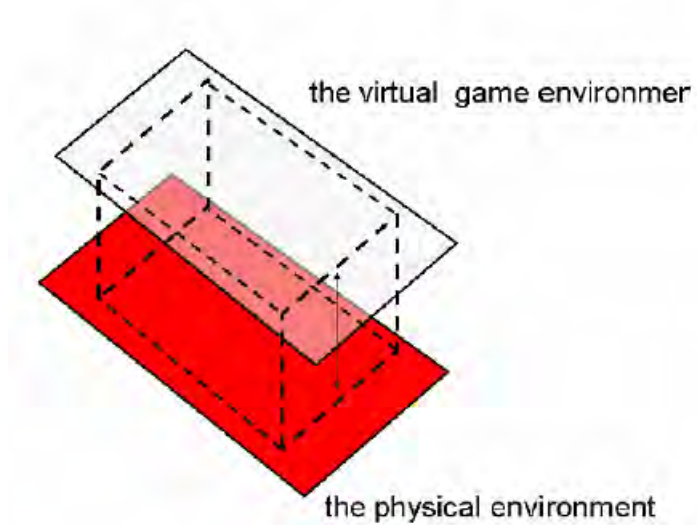


Image 32

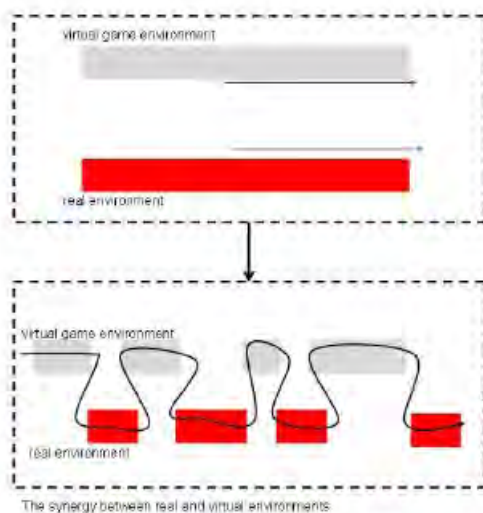


Image 33



Image 34