

Interpreting the Contemporary Metropolis: Notes on the Urban Debate and on Ignasi Solà-Morales

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1. The Legacy

1.1

The theory of architecture and urbanism face the difficult task of addressing the ever-increasing complexity of the contemporary metropolis. In this sense, the legacy of historian and architectural theorist Ignasi Solà-Morales stands out for its sharp, generous and open perspective.¹ I clearly remember how the news of Ignasi's untimely death in 2001 shook the architectural milieu. As a former student of his, I found myself remembering the impact of some of his teachings. For three nights, with the highway as a companion, I set about to organise a set of notes related to Ignasi's unique theoretical work, and remembered my contacts with the professor through his writings. His enigmatic work has the genuine capacity of creating a cartography illuminating the city in its contemporary complexity. This text consists of a series of notes related to the urban debate and to professor Ignasi's urban formulations.

1.2

From the very start, an understanding of Ignasi Solà-Morales's theoretical work could benefit from a short contextualisation regarding what had been the debate over the city. In fact, it should be acknowledged that the author worked both in an international context and in the more specific Spanish context of Barcelona, known for its contribution to and prolific debate on the 'urban project' (which involved, among other authors, Joan Busquets and Manuel

Solà-Morales).

Undoubtedly, the city constitutes a crucial phenomenon in urban culture, and in 1996 Josep Martorell put forth the question, 'whether architecture has something to provide to the cities, and what has it to provide.'² On one hand, beyond the problems of the traditional city and its centre, metropolitanisation came about with the creation of a mosaic composed of various tissues and centres. Such a phenomenon creates more complex concepts of what a city is supposed to mean - such as the 'metapolis' of Francois Ascher.³ On the other hand, at the same time the inadaptation of more obstinate and deterministic planning has been observed. Facing a lack of means and power, planning resorts mainly to operate according to 'opportunities' and to private input (partnerships and the like). As Nuno Portas,⁴ or professionals such as Joan Busquets,⁵ have pointed out, by circumventing the conventional hierarchy of plan-project, the urban process intended to come through by means of feasible actions-projects with an inductive potential, both to the city and to its sectors, in interactive connection with a global strategy of agility and commitment.

In connection with this, let's not forget to point out that for the discussion on the 'urban project' the protagonists of Spain, and of Barcelona in particular, have made a valuable contribution. The so-called protagonists of the 'urban project' have allowed the renovation of 'urban design'/'desenho urbano' to take place, overcoming the duality infra-

structure/architecture, and with an appraisal of collective public spaces in their cultural dimension. In fact, one recalls that a series of methodological alterations have emerged from the disciplinary use of non-conventional processes, namely the plan-project dialectic seen in the 1980s. For Busquets, the revamping of the urban project (i.e.: the enrichment as far as action in urban architecture is concerned) and the priority given to the urban composition during the 1970s and 1980s together were the major 'instrumental renovations and re-elaborations of the critical and analytical background' of the post-war era.⁶

According to Portas in the *Revista del Instituto de Urbanística de la Universidad de Valladolid*, planning became operative, as an interactive system of various working parts (strategy, plan and project) 'which continually tries to offer significant models to the territories of the contemporary metropolis'.⁷

Alongside this, it is also important to bear in mind the plea made by Rossi concerning the input of architecture in the urban realm/city, as well as attitudes that are close to the 'fragments theory' of IBA, or even the interventions of Solans and Bohigas under the umbrella of the urban project, which, although insufficient in terms of the structuring of the new expanded city, have offered a response to the crisis created by the rigid means of planning (in the 1960s and 1970s). Other more 'restricted' plans (for instance those of Manuel Solà-Morales and Busquets in Catalan cities), denominated as 'Third Generation' plans by Campus Venutti (i.e.: often possessing hybrid parameters and variable scales) would be applied under special conditions to consolidated cities and to axes of public spaces. To a certain extent, an answer was thus provided - parallel to the more liberal Anglo-Saxon position - to the new conditions of urban management and the requisites that the need for re-formulating the process called for in the face of the uncertainty and competition between cities.

At this point, digressing slightly, I would also like to highlight the need to consider the importance of the 'collective and public space network', due to its potential of operating to integrate occurrences and unifiers of the new reality. This particular aspect obviously claims a parallel reflection on the project's mechanisms necessary to insure the quality and image of so-called 'public space'. And out of curiosity, one notes that if, on one hand, the global image of the public spaces is conditioned by the integration of projects beyond their scale and pertaining to the largest scale of the city, then on the other hand the proposal's confirmation, even in between scales, and the lesser dimension of details also have a strategic role to play. We are talking about design/'desenho' criteria and the vocabulary range of 'primary elements of urbanisation', that, according to Aquiles Raventós, define the systems of public spaces as 'valuable cultural anchors and important levellers of the cities' urbanity'.⁸

There are several authors who venture for the hypothetical strategic capacity of the 'system of public and collective space';⁹ in face of the difficult relationship 'urbanisation/edification' (regarding this last aspect one should recall the elements of urban growth, of Manuel Solà-Morales, on the emerging expanded city).¹⁰ Most probably, we will be able to design and assure the support/foundations required for the expansion/production of urban-territory, by starting from and based in the 'networks' and their 'inter-connections', grounded on the establishment of new styles of 'public space' and the strategic focus on the 'empty spaces'. Such a deduction/approach attempts to face the current condition of the urban context. As for the latter, authors such as Busquets,¹¹ points to the qualities of such contemporary spaces when related to the reconstruction of a city. As we will see later on, Ignasi, for his part, counted on the predisposition for expectancy and the engagement of freedom and memory, alien to imitation/reproduction of a 'productive' surrounding.



Fig.1: Gonçalo Furtado, Sketch of Ignasi Solà-Morales, 1999.

Noticeably, the contemporary city is overall, in its new condition, composed by the unstable relationship of several systems and categories (socio-economical, artistic and cultural, physical and architectonic), enforced by that which Ignasi called a 'crystallization' by architecture. If the analysis of the urban phenomena has become, nowadays, a complex task, the theoretical work left to us by Ignasi Solà-Morales offers us a unique cultural understanding.

1.3

Ignasi Solà-Morales became a professor of 'Architectural Theory' and created the master program of interdisciplinary reflection 'Metropolis' in Barcelona, Spain. Already a highly respected thinker and practitioner, he also constructed iconic works as the 'Lyceum', Barcelona's Opera house, and the reconstruction of Mies van der Rohe's 'German pavilion' from the 1929 world exhibition on its original site.

Ignasi studied architecture and philosophy and conducted historical research during an extended period at the ETSAB (Cataluña's architecture school), which would later allow him to draw up one of the most remarkable and sharp theoretical cartographies of the contemporaneous condition of metropolitan architecture. His complex line of thought towards architecture was based on combining philosophical and artistic concepts, capable of elucidating aspects of architectural culture. His writings correspond, in a certain way, to a selection of 'plateaus' on which to layout provisionally interpretations of a contemporary city that is, in his own words, multiple, non-convergent or decentralised; an instable shape arising out of the crystallisation of various forces.

The outcome was a complex system united, in my view, by the permanent grand-eloquence of proposing to rise romantically above the strangeness of an age of late-capitalism, in a post-historical world. His postmodern approach did not cast aside resistant

lineages. On the contrary, he sought to (re)find the proto-modernist precedents, while at the same time democratising a-linear conscience.¹² Ignasi was the first to alert to the urgency of the need to go beyond the work that had been done in the past decade, an attitude that is now becoming common place. With a capacity to react to the forces that, nowadays, challenge architecture, he called for evolving reflections that go beyond the complacency of established positions and paradigms.¹³

2. From the Capital City to the Contemporary Metropolis

2.1

When it comes to defining architecture, Ignasi always looked beyond the simplistic idea of the 'genius loci',¹⁴ rejecting the concept of 'place/context' as the only legitimising basis for a project. Architecture requires a complex definition that goes back to the origins of the discipline, which, more than relating to the myth of the primitive hut, could be linked to the emergence of 'communication'.¹⁵

Architecture is the symbolic expression of a society and its way of living. As Zampi has argued, a building is no more than a version of an architectonic idea, 'the role of architecture lies beneath construction: it is to create visions of future spaces in which to live'.¹⁶ The profound approaches taken by Ignasi are capable of shedding light on the most significant aspects of his objects of study; and noticeably, at a certain point, his focus converged in the phenomena of metropolitan culture. From this, some interesting interpretations emerge.

Such approaches frequently go back to the beginning of the 'great city'. Focusing on the 'representations of urban experience', Ignasi linked the transformations that took place in perception and representations of urban life and the city over the past two decades to certain technical developments and, moreover, to cultural developments.¹⁷ Repre-

sentations of the 'great city', a theatre of private interests, emerged with the artist movement of realism that held the same ideals of truth and acuteness as scientific positivism and photography, a technique that would document in grand plans the modernisation of the city from the middle of the 19th century onwards. According to Ignasi, the subsequent 'great city' (or 'Grossstadt'), the rationalised city as the productive centre, would then spread like a stain of oil, still retaining a centre. But according to him the approach to envisioning the metropolis defied traditional representation largely based on the privileged focal point of perspectival views. And instead in encounters with the yet figurative nature of photography in the interwar period, the city was constructed as an association of multiple fragments, translating negativism at a time when the modernisation of the 'great city' became linked to the destructive violence of war.

2.2

The situation in the 1990s was already very different from the urban American construction that, in the early 1960s, represented the most daring process since the industrialised capitalist cities of the 19th century emerged. Ignasi also pointed to the fact that the changes in the actual megalopolis are also distinct from those that occurred to the capital city or the 'Grossstadt', which has already been referred to.¹⁸ And, in the last few decades, urban scholars identified a series of radical phenomena, including Gottmann's 'megalopolis' in the 1960s, Garreau's 'edge cities' in the 1980s, and Sassen's 'global cities' in the 1990s; as well as new urban systems arising from Los Angeles (among those analysed by Soja) to South America (as studied by Sassen). New dynamics and suppositions about territorial urban relationships based on flux and mutability were established, spawned with the onset of globalisation, the internationalisation of the economy, technological advances as well as a variety of urban phenomena. Numerous approaches try to describe such phenomena, to give an account of the complex-

ity and to overcome the conceptual crises that the city faces at the present moment (with the weakening of such traditional dichotomies of local/global, urban/rural, centrifugal and centripetal and so on). What all the new conceptual frameworks have in common, is simply a refusal of all-encompassing views and interpretative exclusivities, constituting no more than localised registrations of fragments.

The diffuse city became a new paradigm, as the division city/countryside faded away;¹⁹ a territory reorganised through the weaving of networks and systematised fluxes of global geography. According to Francesc Muñoz (a geography researcher who developed his PhD research under the guidance of Ignasi), the new economic order of globalisation, configured by means of post-fordist production and consumerist model (which rose from advances in transport, communications and due to specialised services in supporting companies).²⁰ According to Muñoz and Solà-Morales, this translates into territorial fragmentation, new models of organisation and urban morphologies. The global economy is based upon networks of small cities in a 'disorganisation' (the centre as the administrative head for the productive peripheries) that centralises certain urban nuclei to a global scale while others specialise themselves in creating a trans-national network.

According to the authors, a series of economical exchanges occur simultaneously to effect urban profound changes and globalise urban culture; this acts as an architectural critique. If the territorial model of the diffused city gives birth to new ways of a centrality at the periphery (the so-called 'edge cities'), it reconstructs itself at the same time in traditional urban clusters from where social dualities emerge, as shown by Castells.²¹ In fact, we cannot help but to point out that locations marginal to the three informational and financial centres of the 'global city' are acted upon and culturally dominated by economical forces whose expression is also spatial. The reconfigured city has, as a corol-

lary, a multiplicity of stages in which to display its dramas and inequalities: A socially dislocated city, multi-ethnic and multi-discursive, where segregation is promoted and from which spring all sorts of vigilant means of surveillance.²² It is beyond doubt that the new territorial model spatially expresses the new economical-territorial organisation in a variety of phenomena: fragmentation, the creation of new centres and the reconfiguration of the historic urban centres at the same time as many dramas and dualities arise. Complexity is precisely what creates the conceptual crises of the contemporaneous city, a feature that many approaches wish to confront. When it comes to understanding the contemporaneous metropolis, there are few scholars who present us with such a complex and interesting approach as Edward Soja (an author who was introduced to me a decade ago by Muñoz and to whom Ignasi referred).

With the purpose of understanding what has been verified in the metropolis in the last quarter century, Soja goes back to macro-urban approaches, presenting and analysing six geographies on what he denominates as 'post-metropolis'.²³ As is summarised well in a Westwood and Williams's book, Soja's first geography, on the post-ford industrial city, relates industrialisation to the process of urbanisation and explains the differences between the modern fordist cities and post-fordist post-metropolis; the second geography, on the globalisation of the world cities, enlightens the competitiveness of urban dualities; the third geography called 'Exopolis' is about growing, about the cities in suburbia and about the reconstitution of winner cities; the fourth, refers to the social pattern and its inequalities. Soja's fifth geography alerts to the urgency of a 'carceral archipelagos' and is based on the radical political vision of Mike Davis, where the city is described as a cluster of boundaries, being watched over and supervised by police forces; the sixth geography looks at the infiltration of the 'virtual city' as urban imaginary in city life, stressing the need to consider

seriously such matters as the simulacra of Baudrillard, simulation vs. reality, and it addresses aspects such as urban simulation, theme park and cyberspace.

Taken together, one could say, as stated in the previously mentioned book, that Soja's first pair of geographies (post-ford and globalisation) are, more than anything else, about processes resulting from the reorganisation of modern metropolis; the second pair deal with socio-spatial consequences, and the third pair are about social feedback relating to the effects of a post-metropolis urban restructuring. By introducing a new nomenclature such as 'post-metropolis', Soja encompasses, in a general manner, the several views that the contemporaneous city calls for: an enlarged city, globally organised in a web, so often uneven, progressively articulated in its networks.

3. The Liquidation of Architecture in the Contemporary Metropolis

3.1

As far as we can see it, the incrementation of 'velocity and flexibility' (aspects analysed in a paper for the *Magazine "V-Iudo"*,²⁴ and their expressions in architecture and the city, were the first signals of this entire context, in which dualities such as natural-urban, local-global, private-public, physical-virtual have become diluted. As already pointed out, while the dynamics of the cultural and economical condition in a mechanical era, were expressed in several architectonic typologies (from the Panorama to the Railway stations), the model of the modern metropolis will be, largely, based on the mechanics of the car.

Parallel to this, the dislocated experience of travelling has become generalised; nomadism has broadened its scope and city centres have become museums. As the artist Martha Rosler says, at present, the 'experience of mobility' already is a

characteristic of a *'civilização que requer a circulação não só de mercadorias mas de ideias, (...) e pessoas'*.²⁵ Banham refers to the particular case of human nomadism, saying that, after many antecedents, modernity announced a truly nomadic culture that is nowadays institutionalised.²⁶ The compression of space and time that occurs in our society is, for instance, parallel to the growth following World War II, of the leisure and tourism industry; supported by a highly organised system nowadays it, has become massified. A process that, according to Ignasi Solà-Morales (among others), has as its conclusion, the fact that the architectural heritage and the theme park tend to converge into one and the same thing; as we can easily draw parallels between many urban memoirs and certain 'simulations' such as Eurodisney or other sites of contemporary perception/consumption.²⁷ As Ignasi rightly pointed out, as a result architecture submits itself to a general process of museumification, integrated in a new market in which, its essence disappears.

3.2

A space defined by the cultural desire of mobility helps more than anything to understand the concept of the contemporary city. It is interesting that *Community Without Propinquity* by Melvin Webber (1960), has as its corollary the fact that human density was no longer a characteristic exclusive of urban life. The increment of mobility and the importance of mediums of communication led, in the 1970s, to a city-region defined not in means of political boundaries; but of what Ignasi would call 'fluxes', flows of merchandise, people etc.²⁸ The new concept of urbanity in the city region could now be contemplated as a culture of mobility - motorways and outer road systems, connecting nucleus, urban functions, and supporting communities and urban life, integrated the grammar of the urban fabric. As Solà-Morales described, in CIAM's Athènes Charte, 'movement' corresponded to one of four functions (in addition to housing, leisure and work); but,

even if its importance was recognised as a transportation network, it still was treated separately. In the 1950s, it was the younger and more critical side of the CIAM, who acknowledged movement as a possible design issue; this so-called figure of 'flux' or flows became a concept essential to understanding the functioning of global cities. In short, this crisis shakes the stable concepts of architecture and planning strategies from before; architecture can no longer be seen, according to Ignasi, in terms of stability, localisation and place; when the flux of information stretches human cognition-perception, the appropriation of the planet and the very meaning of mobility and place have been altered.

There is a significant call for an architecture with the goal of allowing circulation and exchange and an urban planning that encompasses temporal dimensions of chance, rooted in urban parameters simultaneously fixed and dislocated. In relation to this, one can point at, for instance, the experiments presented in Patricia Phillips's *City Speculations*.²⁹ The book presents a variety of strategies and technologies for representing cities today that have one thing in common, a departure from singular and immobile representations. These tactics express the post-modern absence of a universal individual and show the parameters of movement and time that equally question how such images affect perception and understanding of the contemporary city.³⁰ Mobility in the city itself leads to new architectural spaces and uses arising. The imperative of mobility and the understanding that a city is shaped and revealed by the density of infrastructures (motorways, petrol-stations, tools, parking lots, bus terminals, airports and control towers, subways, integrated networks of transports, high speed trains, etc) and by mega-architectural complexes (shopping centres, etc) that took their place as a peripheral phenomena of centrality, closely related to the rules of communication.³¹

Far from the conventionality of stability and

permanence, such new parameters call for an analysis of the urban phenomena occurring from several perspectives. And that is why Ignasi showed that the new space-time conception of the figure of flux 'started to take a central place in explaining modern architecture and the contemporary city'.³² Architectural space, on one hand, in a crisis of a stable-static conception (towards the new notion of time and space) tries to establish a parallel between phenomena and material fluxes (people and goods) and immaterial (services and information), seeks to redefine itself allowing new experiences and new relationships. After identifying the centrality of the concepts of stability and permanence (expressed in the concept of 'firmitas' of the Vitruvian triad) in the traditional definition of architecture, Ignasi draws up the possibility of a 'liquid architecture', expressing exchange and movement and a new way of operating according to the characteristics of the society we live in.³³ Such an architecture abolishes the primacy given to space, favouring tension instead, following on the Einsteinian notions of time and space and the fourth dimension. Such theoretical frameworks are paramount for an understanding of architectonic experience in the 20th century. In his own words, 'liquid architecture' means: 'that space and time are present simultaneously as open categories multiple and not redundant, (...) if a will for hierarchy and for imposing order'.³⁴ After a century of being fascinated by the increase of speed and by a destabilised perception, we have come to the point where we need a 'liquid architecture' to control fluxes. In his words, 'the architecture that organizes human fluxes in city transport, airports, docklands, and train stations cannot be preoccupied with its appearance, its outlooks. To become flux means (...) to establish strategies for the distribution of individuals, goods or information'.³⁵

Ignasi, in addition to calling for an understanding and thinking of an architecture based on fluxes in an open sense, proposed other concepts. In another text, he acknowledges the figure of the

'terrain vague'.³⁶ This essay has become a recurrent figure in the perception of the city (a point that addresses photography as a technical development that exposes the 'representations of urban experience', and to which has already been referred at the beginning of this article).

It is obvious that the inactive-inherent spaces that constitute a 'terrain vague' are immanent spaces, as strategies for urban intervention. As Ignasi recognises,³⁷ cities are full of residual territories, obsolete or unproductive no-man's land, responsible for fragmentation and indefiniteness; these obsolete spaces (both functionally or spatially) are expectant sites and reveal (or search for) an inclination for change. Due to their flexibility, they hold a qualitative urban potential, for instance, when they can establish (generally taken from objects of the 'urban' project) a continuity between the periphery and unconnected areas. Joan Busquets stresses the qualities of such spaces when called upon for the reconstruction of the city (what we can recognise in a series of contemporary experiences).³⁸ But this author's practical experience in urban activity (from whom we take important clues as far as materials used in urban activity and the qualification and structuring of urbanity), is different from the central idea of Ignasi's approach. What is original about Ignasi's approach to the 'terrain vague' is that he sees it as a space defined in a paradoxical condition of absence/promise and (this is to be stressed) assumes a freedom alien to the productive effectiveness of the city, remaining 'open to the re-appropriations of identity and significance of art'. They hold the possibility of constructing and appearing to us as an identifying rizome.' With great sensibility, Ignasi offers a unique theoretical contribution.³⁹ Tracing the etymological variation of the expression 'terrain vague', he finds the emptiness and imprecision but also the predisposition for expectancy and, more than anything else, the encounter of freedom and memory, alien to the imitation of the surrounding 'production'; a place of meeting and of silent artistry,

as in 'Del Nomadismo al Erotismo'.⁴⁰ (As we would put it: spaces that enable the 'a', a term that Andy Warhol uses to denominate himself in his biography 'A to Z').

Instead of urging a conventional integration of such spaces, Ignasi seemed to wish to preserve them strategically. As such the 'terrain vague' in a fast-lane world should maintain the potent symbolism of such spaces in the urban ambience, instead of 'converting in an aggressive instrument of the abstract powers and reasons'.⁴¹ In my opinion, this expresses Ignasi's personal formula for approaching architecture, and provided us a wise observation about the metropolis condition that he so perfectly knew how to interpret. An approach that can be shared by all of those open enough to enter. He recalled us that, publishing it 'was the only possibility of submitting it to the judging of anyone, of a crowd, anywhere'.⁴²

4. Farewells

4.1

At this juncture, it seems relevant refer a series of notes outlined in a conversation with Suzanne Strum, currently the Head of Studies of Metropolis.

In the 1990s, when it became clear that previous architectural theories were at a standstill and could not address in a projective and positive way any possibilities for dealing with the forces affecting the contemporary city, Ignasi presented a suggestive series of conceptual frameworks informed especially by the poststructuralist thought of Deleuze and Guattari. Traditional architectural theories and practices were unable to articulate the tremendous transformations in urban culture and form that was being felt in that decade. In terms of the metropolis, the discipline had clearly lost its dominance to other fields of expertise, in having analytical tools for describing the vertiginous transformations. Although one of his starting points came from Walter Benjamin's

writings on the 19th and 20th-century city, Ignasi kept abreast of new scholarly approaches. Writings coming from art historians like Jonathan Crary, sociologists, such as Manuel Castells, Scott Lash and John Urry, geographers such as Oriol Nello and Edward Soja, and economists like Saskia Sassen were better able to address the immaterial nature of forces effecting cities, ranging from globalisation and computer technologies to drastic changes to the world economy. Ignasi introduced these thinkers into architectural debates for the first time (in many cases), and it is significant that he initiated an interdisciplinary research-based masters program, invited artists, philosophers, anthropologists and some of the same figures mentioned above. Early on he recognised their work, but also drew on them to inform an enigmatic body of writing from within the field of architecture.

Nowadays, everyone is talking about the contemporary city, but in the mid-1990s Ignasi's work stands out, in a quite different way from that of Rem Koolhaas, who began his research masters studios at Harvard just around the same time. As one of the founders, with Peter Eisenman, of the 'Any' seminars held internationally over the decade, Ignasi presented much of his work within this globalised context. These were also years of incredible urban and architectural experimentation within the city of Barcelona itself, a prime example of the post-industrial city and its shift from production to services, from centrality to decentralising forces.

Notes

1. Ignasi Solà-Morales was an architect and professor of Theory of Architecture and History of Architecture at the ETSAB, member of the Academic Committee of Princeton University School of Architecture and member and co-producer of the series of events ANY. Among his last publications, we must point out *Diferencias: Topografía de la Arquitectura Contemporánea* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1995). The subject matter of the

- discipline 'The Cities of the City', which Ignasi taught at the Metropolis, reads like an account of his theoretical project. We are talking about a project whose main characteristic was its wide scope and the crossing, as is expressed by the utilisation of the plural 'cities', in the discipline's denomination and the diversity of thematic approaches to the city he was developing at the time (Global/Local, From City Capital to Megalopolis; Flow; Body; Les Immateriaux; Virtual; Public versus Private; Theme Park; Terrain Vague; Landscape).
2. See: Josep Martorell, 'Introducció', in: UIA [Organized by Ignasi Solà-Morales and Xavier Costa], *Present i Futurs: Arquitectura a les Ciutats* (Barcelona: COAC/CCCB, 1996).
 3. See: François Ascher, *Metapólis ou l'Avenir des Villes* (Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, 1996).
 4. See: Nuno Portas, 'La Oportunitat no Previste', *Lotus Internacional*, 69, Milão, 1999.
 5. See also: Joan Busquets, 'Nous Fenómenos Urbanos i Nou Tipus de Projecte Urbanistic', in: UIA [Organized by Ignasi Solà-Morales and Xavier Costa], *Present i Futurs: Arquitectura a les Ciutats* (Barcelona: COAC/CCCB, 1996), p.286.
 6. Ibid.
 7. See: Nuno Portas, 'Pensar la Ciudad, Vitalidad y Limites del Plan Urbanístico', in: *Ciudades 3, Revista del Instituto de Urbanística de la Universidad de Valladolid* (Valladolid: Universidade de Valladolid, 1996), p.103.
 8. See: Aquiles Raventós, *L'Espai Urbà: Criteris de Disseny* (Barcelona: Editions UPC, 1993).
 9. See: Nuno Portas e Manuel Fernandes Sá, 'Programa da Cadeira de Projecto V' [photocopy of academic brief], (Porto: FAUP, 1997-1998).
 10. See: Manuel de Solà-Morales, *Les formes de Creixement Urbà: Laboratori d' Urbanism* (Barcelona: Ediciones UPC, 1993).
 11. See: Joan Busquets, 'Nous Fenómenos Urbanos i Nou Tipus de Projecte Urbanistic', in: UIA [Organized by Ignasi Solà-Morales and Xavier Costa], *Present i Futurs: Arquitectura a les Ciutats* (Barcelona: COAC/CCCB, 1996), pp.280-287.
 12. Within the scope of this article, rather than concentrating on the vast production in the fields of modern architecture history and theory that characterised his initial investigations, we will focus on the subsequent set of writings that, generally speaking, characterise the theoretical posture he had up to the mid-1990s. It is expressed for instance in the preface of *Present i Futurs: Arquitectura a les Ciutats* for the 19th UIA Congress, 1996; (this event worked as a discussion platform organised in five different categories representative of urban phenomena that, since the last three decades have been changing, dispersed, diffused and connected urban systems. As Josep Ramoneda clarifies, the 'Mutations' and 'spaces of' indicated a new time and space relation and the 'Containers' and 'Terrain vague' identify the new spaces created. See: Josep Ramoneda, "Per a què servixen els arquitectes?", in: UIA [Organized by Ignasi Solà-Morales and Xavier Costa], *Present i Futurs: L'Arquitectura a les Ciutats*, (Barcelona: COAC/CCCB, 1996), p. 9. See also: Ignasi Solà-Morales's introductory text in the same publication.
 13. Ignasi used to say, referring to events such as ANY (one of the most demanding platforms of architectural reflection during the 1990s) and the Metropolis Program, which was directed by himself, that it was necessary to create new alternatives, for, even the approaches that arose during that decade were moving far from the time that could give them operative legitimacy.
 14. The idea of 'place' was a subject that interested urban geography, anthropology and psychology of perception-space (Bachelard, Piaget, etc), and something must have a peculiar relation with history, its built shape and for many it is a reference projecting in the form of 'context'.
 15. See: Ignasi Solà-Morales, Preface, in: Yago Conde, *Arquitectura de la Indeterminacion* (Barcelona: Actar, 2000).
 16. See: Conway Lloyd Morgan e Giuliano Zampi, *Virtual Architecture* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1995), p. 154.
 17. See: Ignasi Solà-Morales, 'Representaciones: De la Ciudad-Capital a la Metrópolis', in: *Ciudades: Del Globo al Satélite* (Barcelona: CCCB / Madrid: Electa Espanha, 1994), pp. 253-243. See also: Ignasi Solà-

- Morales, 'Representaciones de la Experiencia Urbana', ca.1994 (Undated photocopy draft in Spanish provided by Ignasi to his students at Metropolis).
18. See: Ignasi Solà-Morales, "Present i futur ...", in: UIA [organized by Ignasi Solà-Morales and Xavier Costa], *Present i Futurs: L'Arquitectura a les Ciutats*, (Barcelona: COAC/CCCB, 1996), p.10-23.
19. In Occidental Europe, the physical and functional integration of city-country that occurred with the dispersion of activities and was of inhabiting and urban life throughout the territory dissolved the traditional urban-rural separation originating territorial systems called 'diffused city'. This process, that in the last decades suffered four phases: the olive-oil stain, the sub-urbanisation, the peri-urbanisation and the rur-urbanisation, has, as a consequence, the organisation of the territory in space-temporal nets that articulate and connect it by means of trans-national fluxes. See: Oriol Nel-lo, 'Los Confins de la Ciudad sin Confins: Estructura Urbana y Límites Administrativos en la Ciudad Difusa', in: *La Ciudad Dispersa: Suburbanización e Nuevas Periferias* (Barcelona: CCCB, 1998), pp. 48-49.
20. See: Francesc Muñoz and Ignasi Sola-Morales, 'Ciudades del Mundo, Hoy. Las Formas Urbanas de la Globalización' (Undated photocopy draft in Spanish, provided by the author).
21. See: Garreau's 'edge cities' (which expressed the 'victory' of the suburbs, Laboral house and shopping malls, far from the conventional limits of the city); Castells's 'informational city', and Sassen's 'global city'.
22. See, among others, Kyong Park's 'Images of the Future: The Architecture of a New Geography', in: *Kwangju Biennale* (Korea, 1997), pp.125-143.
23. See: Edward Soja's 2000 *PostMetropolis*. See also Soja's 1996 *Thirdspace* and 1989 *Postmodern Geographies*. See also the article in: S. Westwood and J. Williams (eds.), *Imagining Cities: Scripts, Signs, Memory* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
24. See: Gonçalo Furtado, 'Transitoriedade, Mobilidade e Flexibilidade: A Condição Contemporânea da Arquitectura', in: AAVV, "V-ludo", N.5 (Lisboa, 2001), pp. 70-74.
25. See: Martha Roster, *In the Space of the Public* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Centz, 1998), p. 27
26. See: Reyner Banham, 'Neonomadismo e Nomadismo Chic', in: George Teyssot (ed.), *Il Progetto Domestico: La Casa dell'Uomo, Archetipi e Prototipi* (Milão: Electa, 1986).
27. See: Ignasi Solà-Morales, 'Patrimonio Arquitectónico o Parque Temático', *Loggia: Arquitectura & Restauración*, pp. 5-7 (1998), 30-35. See also: Ignasi Solà-Morales, 'Patrimonio Arquitectonico o Parque Tematico', ca. 1998 (Undated photocopy draft in Spanish provided by Ignasi to his students in Metropolis).
28. See: Ignasi Solà-Morales, 'Arquitectura Líquida', ca. 1998 (Undated photocopy draft in Spanish provided by the Ignasi to his students at Metropolis; translated by the author). Noticeably, the English version was published in *Anyhow*, see: Ignasi Solà-Morales, 'Liquid Architecture', in: AAVV, *Anyhow* (NY: The MIT Press, 1998), pp.36-43. I published a Portuguese translation of the paper (made with Ignasi's relatives' permission), see: Ignasi Solà-Morales, 'Arquitectura Líquida', In: Gonçalo Furtado and Rui Póvoas (eds.), *cac 2008* (Oporto: FAUP, 2008).
29. See: Patricia C. Phillips, *City Speculations* (Boston: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996).
30. Ibid.
31. Noticeably, these typologies, inserted in the networks of fluxes, express dynamic aesthetics. In this respect, one could point out the interesting projects by Odile Decq/Benoit Cornette and Schinichi Ogawa included in UIA's 1996 publication. See: UIA [Organized by Ignasi Solà-Morales and Xavier Costa], "Present i Futurs: L'Arquitectura a les Ciutats", (Barcelona: COAC/CCCB, 1996), p. 14.
32. See: Ignasi Solà-Morales, "Present i futur ...", in: UIA [organized by Ignasi Solà-Morales and Xavier Costa], *Present i Futurs: L'Arquitectura a les Ciutats*, (Barcelona: COAC/CCCB, 1996), pp.10-23
33. See footnote 28.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. See: Ignasi Solà-Morales, 'Terreno Vago', ca.1995 (Undated photocopy draft in Spanish provided by

Ignasi to his students in Metropolis; translated by the author). Noticeably, the English version was published in *Anyplace*, see 'Terrain Vague', in: AAVV, *Anyplace* (The MIT Press, 1995), pp. 118-123.

37. Ibid.

38. See: Joan Busquets, 'Nous Fenómenos Urbanos i Nou Tipus de Projecte Urbanistic', in: UIA [Organized by Ignasi Solà-Morales and Xavier Costa], "Present i Futurs, Arquitectura a les Ciutats" (Barcelona: COAC/CCCB, 1996), pp. 280-287. At one point in this text, Busquets reflects on the specificities of the project about and over the 'terrain vague' (from the re-structuring potential of the inner centre to the situations of functional obsolescence) where he stresses the presence of distinctive singular conditions (for instance space singularity, constructive, urbanistic) as well as the presence of distinctive goals as far as the potential character and internal coherence of a city are concerned.

39. See the chapter 'La Forma de l'Absència: Terrain Vague' of Ignasi's text for the UIA 1996 catalogue. See: Ignasi Solà-Morales, "Present i futur ...", in: UIA [organized by Ignasi Solà-Morales and Xavier Costa], *Present i Futurs: L'Arquitectura a les Ciutats*, (Barcelona: COAC/CCCB, 1996), pp.10-23 (Translation from the Spanish by the author). See also the article 'Terreno Vago' by Ignasi Solà-Morales, mentioned in footnote 36.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. See: Ignasi Solà-Morales, *Diferencias: Topografía de la arquitectura Contemporánea* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1998) (Translation from the Spanish by the author). As for the city, it remains, in Mumford's words (translated by the author): 'The final goal of the city is to contribute to the conscious participation of men in its cosmic and historical process. Thanks to its durable and complex structure, the city enlarges substantially the capacity of interpreting such processes and taking an active and formative part on them, in such a way that each phase of the drama being played comes to have, in the highest possible level, the illumination of consciousness, the sign of a goal, the colours of love. Such grandeur of all

life's dimensions through spiritual communion, rational communication, technological dominium and above all, dramatic representation, have been in history, the supreme function of the city. And that is the main reason for cities to remain.' See: Lewis Mumford, *A Cidade na História: Suas Origens, Transformações e Perspectivas* (Lisboa: Martins Fontes, 2001), p. 261.

Biography

Gonçalo M Furtado C Lopes has a PhD in History and Theory of Architecture (University College of London, UK) and is Professor Aux. at Oporto University. He has given lectures in Europe, USA and South American, and he is the author of several books such as *Notes on the Space of Digital Technique* (2002) and *Generator and Beyond: Encounters of Cedric Price and John Frazer* (2008).