

What is particular about the role of buildings in conflicts waged under the conditions of post-modernity?

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Introduction

A city is an attempt at a kind of collective immortality – we may die, but the forms and structures of our city live on.¹

Marshall Berman

It is the challenge of this piece to put forward a unique link between Post-modernity and some aspects of the Western Way of War (WWW), arguing that, not only do these stir up the convulsions over the ownership of memory, but they also influence the “styles” of threats to buildings in the battlefields of the 21st century. We believe this question is of interest to those studying the interrelation of conflict and globalization (here defined in terms of post-modernity) because urban space and buildings represent innate and strategic vases of memory that are key subjects of the battles over the ownership of memory. Memory is a prime commodity in contemporary conflict and as such, by contributing to a better comprehension of some particular contemporary threats to it, is significant.

The dissertation is divided into three sections. Our first section will put forward the theoretical toolbox used to understand the role of buildings in contexts of conflict and put forward our argument, an argument which is based on Locke’s Letter concerning toleration². In the same way Locke called upon tolerance as the criteria of the true church we argue that his positive notion of tolerance will be the criteria for benign policy-making towards narrative-buildings. We aim to contribute to that by trying to break down the contemporary framework of urban destruction, revealing a milieu where this positive notion of tolerance towards the “urbe” is particularly threatened at two levels. These two levels are presented and explored in section 2 (by the discussion over the new conditions of post-modernity and its effects on battlefield urban places) and section 3 (with three case studies and a collection of some relevant elements of the WWW and the Revolution in Military Affairs’ (RMA) particular threats to urbanity).

Exposing and breaking down these two sets of interdependent threats constitutes our argument that overarches the whole text but is more explicitly put forward at the end of section 1 and ultimately revisited in the conclusion.

Section 1

Buildings – intersecting symbolism and materiality

All that is air hardens into solidity.³

Robert Bevan

Defining the city and the urban space is not straightforward. It is a particularly loose and constantly re-defined concept in social sciences and economics. Notions such as Sassen’s “World Cities”⁴ or Fainstein’s “Divided Cities”⁵ provide a framework for the concept that is essentially socio-economic and analyses the macro-place of the city as part of an international economic puzzle. We will instead follow the style of Calvino’s “Invisible cities”⁶, understanding the place of

¹ Berman, M. (1996) “Falling Towers: City Life after Urbicide” in Crow, D. (ed.) *Geography and Identity: Living and Exploring Geopolitics of Identity* Vol.2 (Washington: Maisonneuve Press), p.175

² Locke, J. (1689) *Letter concerning toleration*, 15 April 2006 (<http://www.constitution.org/jl/tolerati.htm>)

³ Bevan, R. (2006) *The destruction of memory* (London: Reaktion Books), p.134

⁴ Sassen, S. (1991) *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (New York: Princeton)

⁵ Fainstein, S. et al (1992) *Divided Cities* (Cambridge: Blackwell),p.238

⁶ Calvino, I. (1978) *Invisible Cities* (Washington: Harvest Books)

the city as a privileged one for symbolic intersections of physical and intangible infrastructures. Alice Hills⁷ speaks of a consensus that the world is urbanising, her statistics (taken from studies by UN and RAND) describe a world in 2015 whose population will be 7.2 billion, an increase of 1.1 billion from 2000, nearly all concentrated in the space of cities. For purposes of our study, these observations are well complemented by Graham's statement that "warfare like everything else is being urbanised"⁸. The city, even long before the 1648 advent of the nation-state based Westphalian model, has always been a privileged place for conflicts to have their climaxes as crowded, well-guarded, fortified and hard to penetrate areas. The city as bastion of defence then changed to the city as bastion of resources (both industrial and human), it changed from a defensive node to an economic and political node witnessing a crescendo of vulnerability in the face of an evolving technology of war that renders its fortifications increasingly obsolete and "open to attack"⁹. The history of architecture has always been one of both creation and destruction, of erecting and bringing down, of retaining and rethinking, of struggles for conservation and for renewal, of objects for clashes and for encounters. In sum, it has always been a history of duality, contradictions and paradoxes. Buildings of all types always set up new borders, new outsides and insides, new extensions for the spheres of the public and private and for the areas of influence of different groups and individuals. Hence their political character, buildings more than just providing a material space and environment to exist in, represent property, in fact they frequently exist at the intersections, interlinks and overlaps of the different property of individuals, families and communities.

In this piece we understand property not just in its legal form but in a broader sense, as a targeted feeling of ownership and belonging with different levels of intensity – it can be economical, political, cultural and social, and it can affect both material and symbolic entities alike. Belongings and ownerships have for a long time clashed and faced each other in the form of different conflicts. The history of different individuals and groups is the history of their property. It is the history of their belongings, of the (material and intangible) positioning of each group and individual's "self" in relation to the "other(s)". This property and "bordering" is what has been for centuries weaving distinct narratives, each with its own particular conception of human nature, of how life and social relations are supposed to be played out. Without being tightly sealed, each narrative exercises its own symbols in language, music, good manners, literature and also architecture. Our theoretical framework and toolbox relies on the concept of emotional property for cementing our argument. We understand emotional property as the ownership of memory. Property has been usually associated in contemporary law, economics, anthropology and sociology texts with the subject's relations towards tangible (terrain, buildings, cars, etc.) and intangible (copyright, patent, license, trademarks, etc.) matters to which one can attribute a numerical value. We understand the concept in a more dynamic and less static way. We see property and the striving towards property as an attachment and/or a longing for an attachment, as an engine for symmetrical and asymmetrical allegiances, which often lead up to situations of both destruction and creation, not only in physical "numerical" ways, but also in intangible and emotional manners. It was John Locke (balancing in his pieces both a broad and a narrow notion of property) who first tried to tackle the problems of intangible emotional property and its extremisms, which assumed the form of intolerance. His Letter Concerning Toleration¹⁰, calling for greater freedom regarding religiosity's private and emotional attachments, represented an interesting innovative notion of tolerance, a positive notion entailing not just passive acceptance and effortless disregard but "attention to" and heed for the "other". Emotional property therefore, embodies a reading in which just by belonging to something (a material culture), you also tend to have a perception that you own it, that the degree of "freedom to commit yourself to a

⁷ Hills, A. (2004) *Future War in Cities* (London: Frank Class), p.16

⁸ Stephen, G. (eds.) "Introduction" *Cities, War and Terrorism* (Oxford: Blackwell) (London: Frank Class), p.4

⁹ Shaw, M. (2004) "New Wars of the City: Relationships of 'Urbicide' and 'Genocide'" in Stephen, G. eds., *Cities, War and Terrorism* (Oxford: Blackwell), p.142

¹⁰ Locke, J. (1689) *Letter concerning toleration*, 15 April 2006 (<http://www.constitution.org/jl/tolerati.htm>)

community, to find your welfare in its welfare”¹¹ is embellished and sealed within this urban space. In the same way that Locke speaks of property, as something man “hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property”¹², one can establish a parallel with the case when someone or some group mixes its emotions and distinctive narrative with particular material objects such as is the case with buildings. Our conceptualization puts a stronger emphasis on the possible empirical impact of its existence since it entails a specific agenda at play and a normative feeling of ownership of what ought to be the “self” and what ought to be the “other”.

Narrative-buildings represent the application of this emotional property to urban places. They are manmade material places consciously and/or unintentionally put together by individuals and groups that publicly ritualize a common story in ways that please, reward and instigate a path that is being trailed. Narrative-buildings are constituted by their material existence or physical space of the building together with the story behind and beyond it. In some way every building is a narrative-building but some retain particularly strong narratives that can be put to strategic use (also in their destruction) by warring factions (both in positive and negative terms i.e. conscious and inadvertent morale boosters and conscious and inadvertent attacks on morale).

Ultimately, the notion of tolerance of emotional properties we introduce is to be seen both as a right and a duty. It is borne out of a brute awareness of an initial distinction between spirit and material things and then from a posterior observation and recognition of the synergetic symbolic processes that transformed them into narrative-buildings. This textual deconstruction and reconstruction will allow for a better understanding of what buildings represent in the context of war. Tolerance is a condition for peace and common good, Locke uses it as a feeling, a disposition of an individual or group to accept the interactions of different cultures, behaviours, ethnicities or groups. It is an ethic and humanitarian value. The autonomy of emotional property cannot be destroyed by just any exterior force but it can be altered and transformed. Robert Bevan¹³ makes a similar call when he pledges for an inter-architectural “communion”, looking at narrative-buildings as social and individual expressions of natural rights. People and groups have always felt the necessity of attaching stories to buildings and have narrative-buildings as references.

These concepts follow through in the next two sections. Emotional property is important in the argument since it allows us to establish a link between the role of buildings and the particular conditions of post-modernity and how this property is played out in contemporary violent conflict. Interdependently, the two trends of the WWI and Post-modernity presented below aggravate the impact of extremist emotional property whilst spurring the warring factions to constantly try and control the perceptions over those same means of property. One of the major means of emotional property, if not the most important, is urbanism in general and buildings in particular.

¹¹ Berman, M. (1996) “Falling Towers: City Life after Urbicide” in Crow, D. (ed.) *Geography and Identity: Living and Exploring Geopolitics of Identity* Vol.2 (Washington: Maitsonneuve Press), p.191

¹² Locke, J. (1690) *Two treatises of Government*, 15 April 2006 (<http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtr05.txt>), Section 27

¹³ Bevan, R. (2006) *The destruction of memory* (London: Reaktion Books), chapters 6 and 7

Section 2

Urban emotional property – New salencies under the conditions of post-modernity

Let the man be a reprobate who sells a slave, injures a fruit-bearing tree, and makes lime from chiselled marble¹⁴

Prophet Muhammad

In this section we theoretically display the sprawling of identity politics in the form of attacks on material culture by ethnic and grievance wars as well as the war on terrorism. Post-modernity has brought about a new set of characteristics (conditions of post-modernity, war on terrorism, new wars and identity politics) challenging peaceful attempts towards improving the “conditions of the possibility of heterogeneity”¹⁵ and challenging the tolerance embodied in the preservation of narrative-buildings within ethnic and identity based conflicts. Contemporary conflict occurs in occasions when tolerance has little room, or has been relegated to second plan by greed and grievances, which in turn are underpinned by problems of incompatible over-possessive emotional property. In ethnic and genocidal wars, emotional property is totalizing in the eyes of one or more of the factions. Situations of fake tolerance can also occur, these are occasions when a return to the strict, narrow concept of passive tolerance is rhetorically used as an instrument of propaganda or of justification for war. The warring factions may claim that they attempt to tolerate the “other” but that these attempts are left mute. Violent “Jihads” and the “war on terrorism” besides being backed up by intellectual flavours from the Project for New American Century¹⁶, Wahhabism, Bin Laden’s ideology (terrorism, Islamism and anti-westernism) and even Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations¹⁷ have also been brought to bear under the very specific conditions of post-modernity which have made the struggles over emotional property more salient. Modern warfare is about striking several different neuralgic points, kidnapping and taking hostage civilian nationals from the invading force for example, can be a depressingly effective means by which to torture the emotional property of the enemy. This piece however will focus on the neuralgic points of urban emotional property and their place in the way of war. Financial centres, embassies, tourist resorts, mosques, bridges, churches, transportation, etc. are not only targeted strategically because of their high population density propensity but also due to their propensity for intense symbolism.

Harvey¹⁸ in his piece looking at the terms of social relations in our era puts forward the three points he finds most relevant: compression of time and space; regime of flexible accumulation and volatility of ideas. The advent of modern liberal capitalism, under economical and cultural globalization, had a side to it that reacted to a new “bombardment of stimuli”: the reactions arrived in the form of presses towards “discovering and manufacturing (...) eternal truths” laying within “contemplative memory”¹⁹. Fundamentalisms attacking urban materiality are a primary example, in the same way that Harvey finds space becoming even more relevant in a flexible accumulation regime of fluid economic agents, one can also argue that symbolic urban space becomes even more relevant in a regime of volatility of values and ideologies where the leviathans of the Cold War are long gone, and are now “unleashing restrained hatreds”²⁰. What is sometimes seen as the neo-medievalism of International Relations brings back the dimension of the clan, the family, the city and the street as significant. Micro-worlds and micro-stories are longed for in a world where more and more macro-stories appear as too

¹⁴ Bevan, R. (2006) *The destruction of memory* (London: Reaktion Books), p.19

¹⁵ Coward, M. (2004) “Urbicide in Bosnia” in Stephen, G. eds., *Cities, War and Terrorism* (Oxford: Blackwell), p.169

¹⁶ Wolfowitz P. et al (1997) Statement of Principles [1 May 2006] <http://www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm>

¹⁷ Huntington, S. (1997) *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of World Order* (London: Simon and Schuster)

¹⁸ Harvey, D. (1989) *The condition of post-modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell), p.286

¹⁹ *ibid*, p.292

²⁰ Stephen, G. (eds.) “Introduction” *Cities, War and Terrorism* (Oxford: Blackwell) (London: Frank Class), p.6

confusing and threatening, as Berman argues “in a universe that seems to mean nothing, the bond between citizens and their city means something”²¹. No other place is more replete of rooted tradition and micro-loyalties than the place of the city. The bricks of a mosque or an orthodox church embody the lives and deaths of centuries, witnessing many intersections of a place and numerous metamorphoses of groups and individuals. Sensitivities increase with time and space compression and while that happens “place identity (...) becomes an important issue, because everyone occupies a space of individuation”²². Unfortunately, these movements (voluntary or not) to control memory together with the conditions of post-modernity (which increasingly turns the process of war into a collection of instantaneities) have repeatedly obtained exclusionist results and intolerance, strengthening localisms and nationalisms that rely on the “security that place always offers in the midst of all the shifting that flexible accumulation implies”²³

Locke’s notions of property can be put in a different context and work as a link between post-modernity and its proneness to deficiencies of tolerance, resulting in conflicts critically affecting (by strategy and disregard) the material culture reflected in buildings. The destruction of urban narrative-buildings often derives under postmodernity from the malign complicity between intolerance (fundamentalism, fear, grievance and greed) and the emotional property retained within these buildings. Alice Hills portrays this antagonising complicity between post-modernity and the reaction to it – primitivism – (which in turn is also an element of post-modernity), arguing that primitive forms of resentment creating fear and force are often in display within cities. Primitivism will be opposing post-modern forms of diplomacy and conflict-prevention “challenging liberal norms”²⁴. The battle between the two, as we will see next, will have as a privileged arena the urban space.

Section 3

Memory - a sophisticated victim

“I found joy with every house that came down because I knew that they didn’t mind dying but they cared about their homes. If you knocked down their house you buried 40 or 50 people for generations...”²⁵

Colonel Bukhis

Looking at the international environment, one acknowledges that besides the existence of sophisticated organized crime networks and the increased ruthlessness of drug cartels and gangs, the post-Cold war context has provided greater “accessibility of heavy weapons”²⁶. Not just are these more accessible but there is also a new range of weapons that are not 21st century precision gadgets but actually tools of extensive and high urban destruction potential – such as the D9 bulldozer, the daisy cutter and some thermobaric weapons²⁷. In addition, Rutherford also sees the RMA as often introducing a sort of “joystick war” where western soldiers are put through an aesthetic experience in a “surreal world of computerized killing” demanding “no courage or moral doubt, only sharp reflexes and quick thinking”²⁸. The new strategic model of urban warfare

²¹ Berman, M. (1996) “Falling Towers: City Life after Urbicide” in Crow, D. (ed.) *Geography and Identity: Living and Exploring Geopolitics of Identity* Vol.2 (Washington: Maisonneuve Press), p.178

²² Harvey, D. (1989) *The condition of post-modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell), p.302

²³ *ibid*, p.306

²⁴ Hills, A. (2004) *Future War in Cities* (London: Frank Class), p.15

²⁵ quoted in Graham, S. (2004) *Constructing Urbicide by Bulldozer in the Occupied Territories* (London: Frank Class), p.209

²⁶ Stephen, G. (eds.) “Introduction” *Cities, War and Terrorism* (Oxford: Blackwell) (London: Frank Class), p.6

²⁷ Hills, A. (2004) *Future War in Cities* (London: Frank Class), p.233

²⁸ Rutherford, J. (September 2005) “At war” in *Cultural Studies*, Vol.19, No.5

has changed the interplay of emotional property and the urban component as contemporary conflict has paradoxically decreased the emotional attachment of some groups towards the destroyed buildings, whilst the attachment and impact of destruction on others remains high. Despite the RMA and WWW sometimes turning urban and human destruction into a virtual experience of “sexy” precision weaponry, Hills still acknowledges that it also remains true that “accuracy matters less in non-conventional war or terrorism”²⁹. The two activities are urban by nature, these perhaps unpremeditated and indirect factors increasing the risks to the urban fabric underpinned by a wider military and political biased set of trends that challenge the urban tissue in renovated and unprecedented ways. In the case of the new specificity of urban warfare and the WWW, emotional property of buildings is shaped by new strategic interests and aims. Martin Shaw³⁰ describes the central feature of the WWW as the process of Risk Transfer Militarism whereby governments transfer death risks from urban dwellers in the west to urbanites as well as peasants in peripheral regions. This strategic transfer also entails a control of the emotional property at play and requires success in distancing the western urban dwellers from feeling that they too responsibly “own” the destruction of those peripheral regions. In his article “the New wars of the city” he puts forward the argument that Urbicide must be seen as “one of the forms of genocide”³¹; urbicide, just like genocide, is one of a different number of forms to destroy/attack emotional property – and a very effective one indeed. If war in the West is “in conditions of surveillance all about risks”³², part of a successful management of risks for politicians will entail an administration of “anaesthetics” to the possible emotional property links between the population whose token of legitimacy towards the aggression depends on and the urban narrative that is being attacked and reformulated. The reliance on air power has been on the rise and moves for “looking to others from as far as possible”³³ have today a central role in the WWW. The “enemy must be killed: efficiently, quickly and discretely”³⁴, in this affirmation it is helpful for our argument to look a little bit further into the need to be discrete - this discretion is two-faced. One should ask for who must the killing and destruction be discrete and what are the ways in which that is achieved. There is a tension that soldiers in modern warfare must balance between destroying the resistance and morale of the enemy and being discrete. This is a problem of visibility which is more and more a vital arena for modern warfare. The most effective armies will be the ones who are better able to put visibility to their own use, it is not just a case of being successful in propaganda or deciding how things are seen, it is about setting the agenda and deciding what is seen, what are the cameras, maps, eyes, minds and emotions focused on and how is that visibility digested. Alice Hills supports this point when she claims that cities are frequently “visible expressions of governments and states and therefore must sometimes be captured even when they are no more than rubble”³⁵ (i.e. Sarajevo and Dubrovnik). The RMA and the more visible efficiency of a risk-averse Western Way of War have had a paradoxical product embodied in Risk-Transfer Militarism.

In the Post-Cold war world the examples supporting our argument are numerous and we are left with the tough task of selecting 2 or 3 to illustrate our point. The most obvious and most frequently referred to as a primary case of urbicide must be the Bosnian conflict where Bosnian Muslim narrative-buildings such as the national library, the oriental institute, Mostar bridge and several mosques were singled out and systematically cleansed. Also, terrorist attacks such as the 9/11 attacks and the 11th of March and 7th of July bombings were violent not just because of the casualties, but also because of the places in which and how they happened. The targets were means of communication and transport by which people commute and

²⁹ Hills, A. (2004) *Future War in Cities* (London: Frank Class), p.160

³⁰ Shaw, M. (2005) *The new Western Way of War* (Cambridge: Polity)

³¹ Shaw, M. (2004) “New Wars of the City: Relationships of ‘Urbicide’ and ‘Genocide’” in Stephen, G. eds., *Cities, War and Terrorism* (Oxford: Blackwell), p.141

³² Shaw, M. (2005) *The new Western Way of War* (Cambridge: Polity), p.71

³³ *ibid*, p.81

³⁴ *ibid*, p.82

³⁵ Hills, A. (2004) *Future War in Cities* (London: Frank Class), p.14

interchange. The sites represented an economic activity but also a cultural one – a predisposition towards movement and tolerance. The examples are countless but we decide however to test our argument with an empirical analysis of three cases: Kosovo, Fallujah and the West Bank.

The transfer of risk from the high-tech commando, secret services' agents and the F-16 pilot to the local civilian or ally foot soldier exacerbates the local dimension of the identity conflict that is taking place. Those increasingly assuming the risk of war are native, local, city dwellers and city passengers with a background within the battle environment, partaking in an inevitable secessionist action - war. A good example of this occurrence happened during the Kosovo intervention. NATO bombings spurred a rush and anxiety towards ethnic cleansing that concentrated and aggravated (at least in the short term) the threats to Albanian Muslims and their material narrative. Because NATO's Enduring Force operation was restricted to air bombings and did not have any kind of ground troops involved, not only were the bombings sometimes ineffective against mobile ground troops and tanks but also the Civilian Albanian Muslims and Serbs kept assuming the short-term growing risks of war. Civilians were subject to an accelerated wave of ethnic cleansing by the Yugoslavian army and violence by the KLA (Kosovo's Liberation Army), while the Humanitarian troops were living in the limbo of selling to electorates a "humanitarian war" whose main argument for its "purchase" was because it was clean and risk-free. According to an American Congressional Research Service Report, after the invasion, "the Yugoslav forces moved rapidly to expel most of Kosovo's ethnic Albanians from their homes, many of which were looted and burned, the total number of refugees and displaced persons at over 1.5 million, over 90% of Kosovo's ethnic Albanian population". The report says that Yugoslav forces "killed about 10,000 ethnic Albanians, and abused, tortured and raped others"³⁶. The diplomatic build-up of the WWI and the visions of a risk-free intervention, increased on this occasion the rapidity and efficiency of the ethnic cleansing and with it the rapidity and efficiency of the material and architectural cleansing. In the context of humanitarian intervention and some ventures of the war on Terror, the pace of battle is accelerated by the use of RMA. Actors shade away from bodily intervention on the field, meaning that, the physical and material consequences of this new accelerated pace of combat are more and more concentrated on local factions and their material narratives than on the intervening outsiders.

Another case-study of an ongoing event supporting our argument is the Israeli-Arab conflict in the West Gaza Bank. Stephen Graham in his piece on the political and material consequences and repercussions of the use of the D9 urbicidal bulldozers graphically and academically portraits extremely well the extent to which precision meets medievalism in the new technicalities of war. This precise medievalism by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) uses carefully targeted bulldozing as "a weapon of collective and individual punishment (...) and as a means of shaping the geopolitical configuration of the territory"³⁷. Over 11,000 Palestinian houses have been demolished since 1967 with 4000 of these occurring between 2000 and 2003³⁸. D9's are used to increase visibility and improve vigilance over problematic neighbourhoods such as Jenin, creating checkpoint and desert sections in strategic areas and retaliating (frequently imprecisely and disproportionately) against the families and the communities of extremist suspects. After what was denominated as the Jenin battle in 2002, when local Palestinians clashed against an IDF bulldozing task force, 140 multi-family housing blocks were destroyed and 4000³⁹ (out of a resident 14,000) were made homeless. In Graham's description⁴⁰ this acceleration is clearly in debt to a set of new and improved urbicidal techniques targeting the strong link between Arab communities and their well known strong cultural attachment to their home. One can spot two targets that the IDF strategically pinpoint: firstly a "forced

³⁶Woehrel, S. (et all) (2001) *Kosovo and US Policy*, [30 April 2006] <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/crs/RL31053.pdf> p.6

³⁷ Graham, S. (2004) *Constructing Urbicide by Bulldozer in the Occupied Territories* (London: Frank Class), p.197" in Stephen, G. eds., *Cities, War and Terrorism* (Oxford: Blackwell) (London: Frank Class), p.197

³⁸ ibidem

³⁹ ibid. p.208

⁴⁰ ibid, p.199 and 200

demodernization” that goes hand in hand with the cleansing of “any cultural or bureaucratic symbol of the proto-Palestinian state”; and secondly attacks on the narrative buildings and the emotional property of the old historical Palestinian neighbourhoods allowed by a rhetoric and language-based⁴¹ political framing of that property as illegal, illegitimate and threatening, an emotional property and a story (the one of the Palestinian people), that should be substituted by the Israeli narrative. This constitutes a clear case of a lack of tolerance over the stories of the material existence behind the homes and the crowded alleys of Palestinian settlements which are strategically erased and made more liable and visible through checkpoints and “stadiums”⁴² that also clear room for future replacement by a clean-cut modernized Israeli settlement and an accomplished Israeli guiding narrative.

Curiously, American Military Operations on Urban Terrain (MOUT) specialists closely accompanied the Jenin siege and learned its intricacies in order to be more effective in the Iraqi campaign. In terms of siege and urban capitulation, the American capture of Baghdad was swift and successful, especially in terms of symbolic handling. The Americans were able to carefully shape the visible urban environment to their favour such as on the famous day of the bringing down of Saddam’s statue, an event that was “carefully choreographed”⁴³ in order to try and rewrite, in one emancipating act, an undesired regime. Capturing that specific narrative-abundant statue in such a way represented a crucial visual authentication of a victorious “decapitation of the regime”. The momentary “stylish” success in Baghdad however was not followed through in operations in some Saddam’s bastions such as Fallujah and Mosul” and as Alice Hills goes on to argue, “sophisticated technology may have allowed that Baghdad was taken quickly, but they could not manage the subsequent disorder”⁴⁴. In the cases of Fallujah and Mosul, the urban space and its narratives were not being followed as closely by the media, allowing for more blurred figures of civilian deaths and of material destruction. This is a situation of blurriness to a specific community in the west since, as is observed by Edmund Ghareeb, for locals on the ground “when mosques in the city broadcast prayers (...) under fire, it looks like the U.S. is attacking Islam. These are emotionally charged situations, (...) the challenge facing U.S. officials (...) is that messages are being broadcast from one side to the other not just through the media but by the unspoken messages conveyed by symbols and by pictures.”⁴⁵ The siege of Fallujah was indeed different, as a symbolic and political bastion, American forces had a more ruthless stance towards it, the use of white phosphorous⁴⁶ was widely criticized and relief workers were not allowed in the city until much later. Problematic neighbourhoods were extensively turned into rubble with “70% estimated to be bombed to the ground”. The later insurgency worsened with what Scilla Elworthy saw as an insensitive takeover by the US military of a primary school in Fallujah, turning it into its headquarters. The non-negotiations and the bad handling of a protest rally (leaving many protesters killed) triggered the insurgency into full force, leaving lessons to be learned such as holding considerable cultural and language understanding in order to “bring local civil leaders ‘onside’ ”⁴⁷. The symbolic attack on a very rich and dense feeling of emotional property by locals towards the “city of Mosques” where “almost every mosque, school or public building had been destroyed or damaged and the great majority of the 300,000 inhabitants forced to become refugees”⁴⁸ meant that this soft-tolerance approach towards narrative-places ended up setting up a micro-cosmos of what is most politically problematic about the war

⁴¹ *ibid*, p. 203

⁴² These stadiums are an expression alluding to the huge open fields left out after the actions of the bulldozers, read the statement of Colonel Bukhis quoted in Graham, S. (2004) *Constructing Urbicide by Bulldozer in the Occupied Territories* (London: Frank Class), p.209

⁴³ Bevan, R. (2006) *The destruction of memory* (London: Reaktion Books), p.91

⁴⁴ Hills, A. (2004) *Future War in Cities* (London: Frank Class), p.64

⁴⁵ Ghareeb, E. (2004) Testimony Before the Subcommittee on International Operations and Terrorism Committee on Foreign Relations [27 April 2006] <http://globalsecurity.insightful.com/search/jsp/docQuery.jsp?docId=89470&sid=-1&txt=different+falluja>

⁴⁶ Buncombe, A. & Hughes, S. (2005) *The fog of war: white phosphorus, Fallujah and some burning questions* [1 May 2006] <http://news.independent.co.uk/world/americas/article327094.ece>

⁴⁷ Scilla Elworth (2005) *Learning from Fallujah’s agony* [27 April 2006] http://www.opendemocracy.net/conflict-iraq/fallujah_2999.jsp

⁴⁸ Rogers, P. (2005) *Iraq in the mirror of Fallujah* [27 April 2006] <http://www.opendemocracy.net/themes/article.jsp?id=2&articleId=2691>

– the sudden “fundamentalization” and grievance of locally rooted groups (civil leaders). In the end Fallujah shows evidence of growing problems of precipitated “seek and destroy” operations of sometimes inept MOUT strategic options and techniques that struggle to distinguish between civilians and combatants, and also shows how, as time progresses, both those actors tend to assume a less clear-cut role.

Urbanism is one of the primary elements vulnerable to degenerate wars, not only because it has been “made the focus of the ‘New wars’ of the 90s”⁴⁹ by its demilitarisation and increased vulnerability, but also because degenerate wars entail an asymmetric proportion of casualties in the civilian population⁵⁰, a population which is more and more concentrated in the space of the city, dwelling within urban buildings. The so called “urban area”⁵¹ is a central concept in modern military strategy, the operations occurring within this environment are specific and so are the requirements and outcomes of the operation. An increasingly concentrated population contributes to a situation where the manmade urban place is strongly mixed with the population’s emotions and collective narrative, usually much more than in cases of jungles, deserts, prairies and mountains. Also, in the context of sprawled, fluid networks upon which some violent attacks now rely (such as 9/11), “cities provide more cover and better command-and-control opportunities than do caves in central Asia”⁵², the borderless scope of these networks bring additional strategic problems and render old armies obsolete. The soldier’s view and interpretation of the battlefield has changed and is now conditioned and controlled by a different number of mediators (such as the media, political spin, the machines and the accessories of the RMA) – these represent attempts by those waging war to control the mechanisms of emotional property for their own benefit, at home and on the battlefield. A minor level of emotional property towards enemy’s buildings on your side of the barricade means less tolerance towards enemies’ material culture (i.e. buildings) and a greater room for flexible and more expansive urban destruction on behalf of your forces. This is true both at the level of supporting electorate and population and at the level of the soldiers. A good soldier will be emotionally detached from the enemy and will hold a link of aversion towards him. At the same time, striking on the symbolical nodes, with which your enemy establishes strong levels of emotional property, will provide you with the paradox of decreasing morale among the enemy troops but also of diminishing the levels of tolerance those enemy troops hold for your own. Urban space and buildings perform a variety of functions in the modern warfare part of the means of war: they signal, tell, moralize, demoralise, organise and provide an environment. As we saw in the case of The Gaza Strip clashes, rhetoric and media agenda-setting are part of the attempts to control the means over the perceptions of emotional-property; these attempts at controlling and sometimes totalizing emotional property now revamped by the RMA and re-structured by the WWW and risk adverse militarism, have, as we have seen, exacerbated the local and urban dimensions of identity conflicts. These changes at the level of strategic revisions, producing and reproducing the RMA and risk-transfer militarism of the WWW, embody in the end a new need for controlling, taming and domesticating the city, a necessity threatening the urban space and now holding innovative tools and means at the technological, strategic and political levels.

Conclusion

This piece makes, in the end, a call for a return of Locke’s conceptualization of tolerance to be applied in the urban component. A call for “attention” and care for places and buildings whose existence (and celebrated destructions and reconstructions) constitute primary vases of memory, fulfilling the task of remembering humanity of its achievements,

⁴⁹ Shaw, M. (2004) “New Wars of the City: Relationships of ‘Urbicide’ and ‘Genocide’” in Stephen, G. eds., *Cities, War and Terrorism* (Oxford: Blackwell), p.142

⁵⁰ Shaw, M. (2003) *War and Genocide* (Cambridge: Polity), p.5

⁵¹ a topographical complex in which manmade construction or high population density are the main dominant features as in Hills, A. (2004) *Future War in Cities* (London: Frank Class), p.6

⁵² Hills, A. (2004) *Future War in Cities* (London: Frank Class), p.21

mistakes and reinventions. The war of the future will remain civilian-based and as we saw in our examples there has been a clear “implosion of global and national politics into the urban world”⁵³. Interdependently, the two groups of self-reinforcing tendencies (WWII and Post-modernity) aggravate the impact of extremist attacks and convulsion surrounding emotional property, of which, urbanism is a primary transmission node, if not the most important one. The physical and material places affected by war are crucial since the latter constitute the emotional space, filling the narratives of battles with colours, smells, objects, sounds and reality where life and death is at play. The sensorial representation of a façade offers an opportunity for identity and emotional property since it tells of a background and of a previous path of a given group or individuals. The new urban model of warfare has changed the ways of war, the maps of the battleground, the locus of attention, the targets and even the probabilities and the criteria to win battles and wars. In the same way that for Locke tolerance was the criteria of the true church, we argue that that same tolerance will be the criteria for benign policy-making towards narrative-buildings. Locke expressed his incomprehension towards religious violence in the name of salvation. Violence over narrative-buildings too is frequently useless and not very effective in imposing a new narrative. Attempts to do so often result in no more than an artificial simulation. The destruction and reconstruction of buildings does not, in turn, ensure the change of truth, opinion and/or emotional property, in fact targeting an emotionally charged object or place may serve instead to strengthen and exacerbate its presence and influence. We can note from our examples that a bombed Mosque or tower still exists in the imagination of those that once “owned” it “as attempts at a kind of collective immortality”⁵⁴. Groups and individuals often strongly react to this new invisibility, ritualizing it in violent forms (both political and material). Accepting an architectural “dogma” does not necessarily collide with the identity and citizenship of groups and individuals, although this in turn does not mean that architecture is not political and cannot be aggressive⁵⁵. In this piece, by using the concepts of emotional property and narrative-buildings, we tried to represent and demonstrate how buildings, in the context of conflicts (waged under the conditions of post-modernity) are innate, intermediate screens onto which stories are projected and from which, the studies of conflict cannot afford to abstain.

⁵³ Appadurai in Stephen, G. (eds.) “Introduction” *Cities, War and Terrorism* (Oxford: Blackwell) (London: Frank Cass), p.7

⁵⁴ Berman, M. (1996) “Falling Towers: City Life after Urbicide” in Crow, D. (ed.) *Geography and Identity: Living and Exploring Geopolitics of Identity* Vol.2 (Washington: Maitsonneuve Press), p.175

⁵⁵ For an extensive exploration of the intricacies and techniques of aggressive architecture see the provocative piece Segal, R. et. Al (eds.) (2003) *A civilian occupation: the Politics of Israeli Architecture* (London: Babel Publishers)

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