



Editorial Note

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Urban areas have long served as battlegrounds of social conflict, and urbanization and globalization have only intensified their role as focal points of struggle. As the stakes of physical, military, and economic planning have risen, so has the temptation to use coercive tactics to manage urban conflicts. Government responses to terrorism, trafficking, piracy, and other forms of lawlessness reflect this attraction to the use of violence.

Recently, worsening local economic inequality has spurred rising discontent, and governments in almost every part of the world have sought to acquire security through force. States have tightened the physical control of their borders, while implementing increased immigration enforcement within those borders. They have blurred the lines between military and police forces. They have even invaded and occupied territories seen as hostile to their national identity or to corporate economic interests.

Militaristic transformations are not always so obvious. Though often forgotten or overlooked, the specter of force wielded in the control of space is a major part of the foundation of the global political economy. Militarism has important indirect effects on society as well. For example, regional governments compete fiercely for the privilege of leveraging military production as local development. The impulse to secure territory also features prominently in physical and social architectures, legal systems, police technology and tactics, security, and residential patterns.

Yet the state does not monopolize the use of force in the control of space. For instance, powerful corporations and criminal organizations both may rely on force to advance their purposes. Nor is the control of space uncontested. People are engaging in mass protests, violent and nonviolent, in the Middle East, in the Maghreb, in Southern Europe, in the United States, and elsewhere—not just to critique government policies, but also to resist and challenge the control of space and resources. These social movements may point towards a more widespread progressive militaristic urbanism.

As we started to work on this issue of *Critical Planning*, the Occupy movement began to gain momentum in cities across the world. From New York and Los Angeles to Oakland, Washington, D.C., and London, individuals from all walks of life began setting up camp in parks and outside city halls, holding nightly meetings to democratically set agendas and plans for the future. Support for the movement grew as suburban branches popped up in planned communities such as Irvine, and university-based Occupy groups staged demonstrations over the rising cost of tuition. However, as these groups stood together under the banner

of “the 99%,” they faced increasing pressure to end their demonstrations and occupations of public space from local city governments and police departments.

Our cover photo for this volume depicts a moment of dual resistance in Oakland, where militarized struggle made national headlines. In the photo, armed police officers take aim at Occupy members, while members resist the armed control over space.

Conflicts over space often uncover layers of hidden complexity. In Vancouver, for example, the city’s preparation for the Olympics revealed power struggles between the Vancouver City Council and the police over inclusiveness in the city’s public space policies. In another piece, the author discusses how the art world can reflect and inform spatialized struggles, through a comparative analysis of German film and Japanese anime.

Interpretations of militaristic urbanism and the implications for planning vary with geographic location and time period. From Latin America we read about urban upgrading and its potential use as a militaristic tool against armed groups coexisting in areas where upgrading occurs. Additionally, an opinion piece compares fortified cities in Brazil and Palestine, noting the injustices for marginalized populations. Contributions from Europe offer an historical perspective and recent applications of militaristic urbanism in France and Great Britain.

The control over space also has direct human consequences. In a poignant photo essay from Erella Grassiani, photos taken by Israeli soldiers and activists portray spatial control on a different scale -- control

over people’s homes. Although some of the images are disturbing, to remove any of them would mean censoring the sometimes devastating and fatal effect of militaristic urbanism.

But recent responses to militaristic urbanism also reflect the hope among those who are resisting. We are especially proud to include in this volume interviews with UCLA-based scholars who played a significant role in facilitating social media communication during recent uprisings in Egypt, and who continue to document the use of social media in revolutions and protests across the globe. We are also excited to include in this issue speech text from a DREAM Act demonstration, giving voice to immigration-related militaristic urbanism concerns.

As we look to the future at *Critical Planning*, we are thankful for this continuing space to explore pressing and often controversial urban issues. The recent turn toward academic social media activity inspired us to start our very own facebook page this year. Within a few short days we quickly accrued more than 100 fans, many of whom had no previous knowledge of our journal. We are hopeful that our growing readership results in continued discussion about planning issues, in academia, practice, and beyond.

None of this would be possible without the dedicated students on our Editorial Board, who tirelessly devoted their energy and countless hours of thoughtful discussion to producing this edition. Additionally, our publication process would not be possible without the dozens of students who review and copy edit submissions, and our Layout Editor, Francis Reilly. Finally, we thank the UCLA department of

Urban Planning, the Luskin School of Public Affairs, and the Graduate Student Association Publications office for their support and guidance.

We hope this edition of *Critical Planning* will shed light on this important issue, inspire critical discussion, and inform progressive action. Please enjoy, and let us know what you think!

Your Editors,

Ian Elder & Nina Flores

Lead Photograph

Street art in Medellin, Colombia. Photograph by Nina Flores.