

# Mediating public and private: three models of ‘public space’

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This paper is mindful of the increasingly complex mediations of public and private, and explores theoretical constructs gleaned from architectural thought and political theory, to derive ideas that are pertinent to our present context. It considers three models of public space, namely: physical space (via architecture), de-institutionalised space (via Hannah Arendt) and finally de-territorialised-de-institutionalised space (via Claude Lefort, Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau). Each model builds upon the previous in terms of complexity, nuance, and indeed relevance.

**Key words:** public space, mediation, public and private.

**Izibonelo Ezintathu zokwakha Indawo Yomphakathi: Zihlanganisa Ubuzwe kanye nokuzimela**  
Leli liphepha lidingida udaba oluqukethe izindlela eziningi lapho uhulumeni kanye nabantu nje bashintja indawo yomphakathi lapho siphila khona ngekusebenzisa imicabango ephuma ezifundweni ngezakhiwo nangezembusazwe. Leliphepha lisebenzisa imicondo ephuma kubantu abanjengo Hannah Arendt okhuluma ngekuphathwa kwendawo, libuye lisebenzise imibono kaClaude Lefort, noChantal Mouffe and kanye noErnesto Laclau abakhuluma ngemifakela ephuma ngaphandle ekuphatheni kwesindawo, nganti futsi leliphetha libuye lisebenzise nemicondo ejwayekile esentjiziswa esifundweni zokwakha. Yonkhe into ecukethwe lapha ihlanganise imicondo ehluahlukene ewungeke uyihlukanise kalula kepha idingekile.

**Amagama amcoka:** indawo yomphakathi, umfakela, umphakathi nabantu nje

The near seamless exchange between public and private realms would appear to be an increasingly pervasive phenomenon of our time. On an institutional level we witness the growth of public/private partnerships, and the interdependence of state, market and civil society. Closer to home, in the post-apartheid city, we see new forms of informal urban appropriation (figure 1) – where open space is re-configured as part of an emerging public realm, while former ‘public’ institutions are left to decay in abandon. This circumstance is cited here as the contextual background against which the theoretical considerations of this paper unfold. Mindful of the increasingly complex mediations of public and private realms, the paper explores theoretical constructs gleaned from architectural thought and political theory, to derive ideas that are pertinent to the present context.

I wish to consider three models of public space: namely: *physical/architectural space*, *de-institutionalised space* (via Hannah Arendt) and finally *de-territorialised-de-institutionalised space* (via Claude Lefort, Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau). Each builds upon the previous in terms of complexity, to arrive at more useful categories.

## Physical / architectural space

The first is what I shall call a physical/architectural model, and I use this term for want of a better description. I say physical, because this model focuses upon the physical artefact, i.e. the material/spatial objectivity of buildings and open spaces. And, I use the term architectural, because I wish to suggest that this conception, more or less, corresponds to the idea of public space that most architects, and architectural scholars take for granted.

The environment is all around us. The environment is everywhere, and hence we might say that environmental space is continuous. Lets say I begin my journey in a public square, slip into a side street and move towards my house. I open the door, circulate through the living room and into the confines of my bedroom. From the perspective of bodily motion, space seems to flow, as if it were an uninterrupted entity, from the most public part of the city to the most private aspect of my house. The public realm outside appears to flow beneath the

crack below the front door, and into the private sanctum of the house. And yet, despite this fact, public / private categorisations are one of the primary ways through which we ordinarily understand the built environment. Indeed, buildings give effect to this categorisation, through the delimitation of space, through the creation of internal and external domains. Architecture establishes the boundaries and thresholds that distinguish public and private realms. From a physical/architectural point of view, it seems natural to assume that public space coincides with an architectural delimitation of space.



**Figure 1**  
**Hawkers on the streets of downtown Johannesburg (Bremner 2004: 16).**

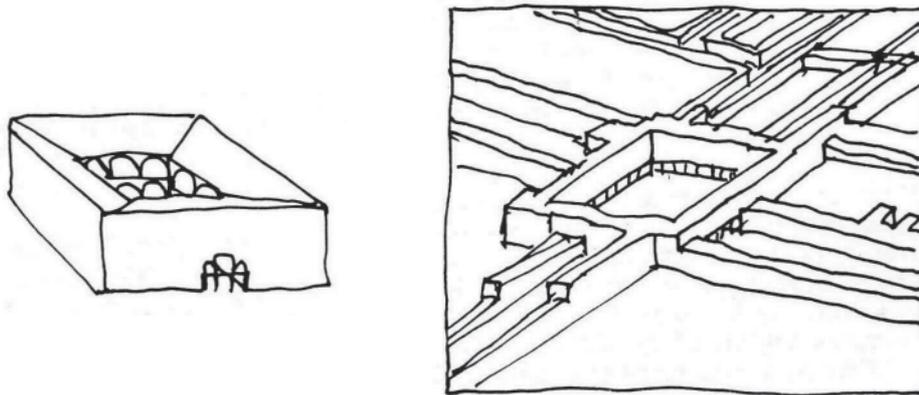
Not surprisingly, categorisations of public and private space are a commonplace to theories of architecture. In *The Concept of Dwelling* Norberg-Schultz (1985) for instance, speaks of four modes of dwelling: settlement, urban space (i.e. the public realm), institutional spaces and the house. Concerning urbanity and the house he maintains:

From ancient times *urban space* has been the stage where human meeting takes place [...] We may call this mode *collective dwelling* [...] The stage where private dwelling takes place, is the *house* [...] where man gathers and expresses those memories which make up his personal world. (Norberg-Schultz 1985: 13)

And for Rob Krier, the public and private realm are distinct, yet thoroughly interrelated. In fact he models his conception of urban space on the spatial compartmentalisation of internal/architectural space, and hence he maintains that, “[t]he two basic elements [of urban space] are the street and the square. In the category of ‘interior space’ we would be talking about the corridor and the room” (Krier 1979: 16) (figure 2). And later he adds, “[t]he activities of a town take place in public and private spheres.” (Krier 1979: 17).

We may observe that in these citations, public/private distinctions are linked to architectural relations of outside to inside, and of city to home. Public architectures are also commonly classed in accordance with their symbolic importance – which implies a gradient of public to private. In most cases, for example, Sir Banister Fletcher, in *A History of Architecture* (1987), arranges historical buildings in accordance with their public/symbolic significance. Hence he commonly moves from monuments and religious buildings, onto public institutions, to public recreational spaces (such as theatres), onto private houses, and lastly functional structures such as bridges and aqueduct – and by inference we arrive at a hierarchical relation of public/

symbolic importance. This arrangement is probably not intended but rather flows from what is perceived to be the narrative of architectural significance, hence when he discusses 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> C. European architecture, he begins with innovations in domestic buildings, especially apartment blocks, and in this case, religious and public buildings are discussed later in the chapter. Nevertheless, one has the general feeling that a hierarchy of public significance is an ‘obvious’, ‘taken-for-granted’ feature with respect to his classification of historic buildings. Similar observations may also be made of Nikolaus Pevsner’s *A History of Building Types* (1976). In his introduction he states that “[t]he arrangement of types is to be from the most monumental to the least monumental, from the most ideal to the most utilitarian, from national monuments to factories” (Pevsner 1976: 10).



**Figure 2**  
House and city, sketches by Rob Krier (Krier 1979: 17).

In citing these examples, I have shown that some hierarchy of symbolic significance is commonly assumed with respect to the city, and these hierarchies of public significance feature in the ‘taken-for-granted’ categorisations that we commonly make. In this, I have hoped to provide evidence for what I have termed a physical/architectural conception of public space, and wish to argue that the important feature of this conception is the co-presence that is assumed to exist between the physical character of space, and its socio-political significance. And arguably an extreme consequence of this notion comes to fullness in the wake of 19<sup>th</sup> C historicism – because the linking of architectural form and space, on the one hand, with social and political significance, on the other, is theorised by the historicizing turn – where we must surely note how architecture wishes to become the guardian of public life. Significantly, the Modernist creed of a new form for a new society, in fact mutated into the notion that a new form can give birth to the desired society – because the assumed co-incidence of architectural forms/spaces with their associated societal norms suggests that architecture has the capacity to reform society. Questions of the public realm, the social and political transmogrify into questions of architectural order, and urban form. For instance, in *Towards a New Architecture* Le Corbusier asks the deluded question “Architecture or Revolution” (Le Corbusier 1931: 289) – as if there were an active choice in the matter; as if modern architecture had the power to transform society; and as if that transformation could count as something other than a revolution.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever we do or do not think of Le Corbusier’s injunction, my main point here is to show that the assumed coincidence of architectural space with public political space, lies at the heart of this confusion, and it is precisely the coincidence of these terms, *physical space*, and *political space*, that should be examined today.

### **De-institutionalising public space**

At this point I wish to lay aside architectural theory, and look to political philosophy for ways of adding richness and complexity to our binary of public/private space. I wish to begin by de-

institutionalising a conception of public space through a consideration of the visionary work of Hannah Arendt.

I have chosen to discuss Arendt's work, because next to Karl Marx, she is surely one of the most profound political thinkers of the modern world. Architects will be interested to learn that in her best known work *The Human Condition* (1998) Arendt makes a clean distinction between public and private spheres, and she does so with reference to architectural types, namely the *polis* (or city) and the *oikos* (or house). So we are on familiar territory here, and nearly everything we have identified with respect to architectural theory is implied.<sup>2</sup> The leading question now is to ask what Arendt *does* with her category of the *polis*. It is fruitful to ask how the *polis* features in her conception of the public realm?

One time lover of Martin Heidegger, Arendt had a life-long interest in phenomenology. At an early point, however, she realised the need to break from Heidegger – on both an emotional and an intellectual level – to develop her own mode of thought, which has provided us with a unique kind of political-phenomenology. It is helpful to know, in this respect, that Arendt derives all her political categories from phenomenological questions, which pertain to the human experience of, being-in-time, and of being-in-the-world. Her thought is distinct from that of Heidegger, however, and a key difference concerns the condition of human plurality. A consideration of the plurality of public life was one of Arendt's principal concerns. In *The Human Condition* she writes, “[p]lurality is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is human, in such a way that nobody is the same as anyone else who ever lived; lives, or will live” (Arendt 1998: 8).

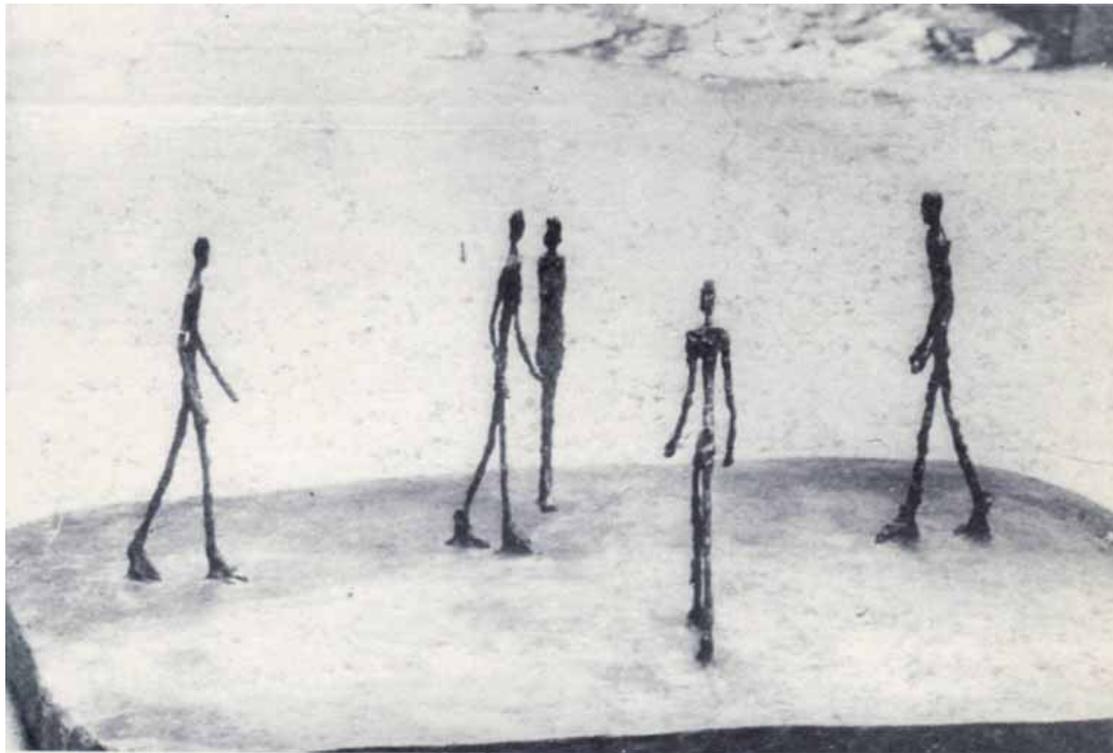
Where Heidegger spoke of *Dasien*, a ‘there-being’ which is thrown into the world (Heidegger 1962), Arendt speaks of the ‘space of appearances’, the plurality of man/woman, and the requirement of intersubjective confirmation, for a sense of what is real (Arendt 1998). Let's pause to unpack this word *intersubjective*. This idea acknowledges the fact that every human being that ever lived, lives, and is yet to live, has a unique perspective on things. Intersubjectivity is a relational term. It concerns the relations that exist between our various perspectives and the entanglements that occur between subjectivities. For Arendt, the public realm is a discursive or communicative space – and not a physical space as such – where we gain understanding as to the plurality of the others, and where we learn to formulate our own perspectives in response (figure 3). As Arendt explains:

... the passions of the heart, the thoughts of the mind, the delights of the senses – lead an uncertain, shadowy kind of existence unless and until they are transformed, de-privatized and de-individualized, as it were, into a shape to fit them for public appearance. (Arendt 1998: 50)

The sense of self requires intersubjective confirmation from another – the self requires the other. Intersubjectivity is communicative. Indeed, we might say that Intersubjectivity mediates between designators of the public and private.<sup>3</sup>

Parekh asserts that public space, as Arendt conceives it, presupposes at least three things (Parekh 1981: 92-96), namely: the condition of human plurality; speech or communication<sup>4</sup>; and an attention to public objects, public affairs, concerns or issues. For Arendt, these three ingredients converge within, what she terms the ‘space of appearance’ (Arendt 1998) which is the space of intersubjective relation, the discursive spaces of the public realm. “[P]ublic space or space of appearance is the intangible ‘in-between’ or ‘interspace’ that exists between men formally assembled to talk about objects of common interest” (Parekh 1981: 92). These spaces are performative in nature, and so cannot be stored up, concretised or institutionalised, hence:

[...] representative institutions, free elections, free speech, free press, and so on are only the preconditions of politics and cannot by themselves create or sustain a political community [...] politics refers not to the state *per se*, but to a particular manner of constituting it and conducting its affairs (Parekh 1981: 140).



**Figure 3**  
**The ‘space of appearance’, sculpture by Giacometti (1950), titled “Project for a Square”**  
**(Norberg-Schultz 1985: 15).**

From this we begin to understand the role of the *polis*, the city as backdrop, or stage-set for the spaces of human appearance. The public buildings, institutions, and public spaces of the city are actually the precondition for the possibility of public life. However, Physical spaces and buildings cannot and do not guarantee the life of the polity. Physical spaces are required for public life. A city can aid, or it can hinder the political life, but it cannot constitute it. Nor can architecture adequately freeze, or concretise a sufficient expression of the public good, for the common good, like the public itself is never singular, and is always open to contestation.

If Arendt’s central intuition is correct, and I believe it is largely so, then we are forced to make some form of distinction between architectural/physical space (which is material in nature), and political, public space (which is plural, intersubjective, and discursively constituted).<sup>5</sup>

From this we may note the problems of holistic assumption, so common to historicist study, where it is believed that works of art, or the design of buildings and urban spaces can provide a definitive concretisation of common values. For now the question immediately emerges as to ‘whose’ values these edifices, or spaces are supposed to represent. The backdrop cannot tell us about the substance of the argument, i.e. the plurality of differing positions. With Arendt, we are lead to acknowledge that it is primarily the dispersed substance of the discussion that defines the public (or for that matter ‘the people’) and not its assumed concretisation in the form of institutions and monuments. Well of course we may identify social hegemonies – forms of dominance – and show how these gain expression in spatial and architectural terms, but the dominant is never the full story as counter-hegemonies and forms of otherness are always at play. Dominant hierarchies of the public and private are just that, and cannot provide a stable ‘given’ with respect to the socio-political significance of urban space: which is also to say that we should guard against studying public spaces through an overly hierarchical (a rigid gradient of public to private) or institutionalised lens.

## De-territorialising public space

I hope to have shown that Arendt's work may be used to de-institutionalise a notion of public space, which is not to say that institutions are not important for public life – naturally, institutions and physical infrastructures, such as architecture and urbanity, are crucial – but rather, to point to the nature and limits of the political, and from this to obtain a clearer view as to the nature and limits of what architectural space can, and cannot contribute, what can and cannot be expressed, and I believe these considerations free our imagination to see the wider, indeed the ever present possibilities of the political as it is constituted in space.

Importantly, Arendt's model privileges face-to-face relations. Her conception of 'the space of appearances' is physically located and embodied. It occurs when I stand before you and look into your eyes, and it is necessary therefore to move beyond the territorial implications of her thought. I used Arendt to de-institutionalise a conception of public space and I now wish to de-territorialise this conception as well. The work of French political philosopher, Claude Lefort, is significant in this regard. Arendt's influence upon Lefort is widely noted (Flynn 2005: xiv) (Hanson 1993: 11) (Macey in, Lefort 1988: 6)<sup>6</sup>, and the motion from one to the other entails a shift from the Aristotelian like logic of Arendt – with her clear-cut distinctions – onto the post-foundational character of Lefort's thought, and I shall argue that this motion leads to a 'de-territorialisation' of our conception of public space.

Lefort provides an original reading of the democratic tradition, one that emphasises a vacuum of institutional power, and the fluid uncertainty of political representation (Lefort 1986, 1988). In France, the transition from monarchy to the establishment of the modern state is marked by the French revolution, and importantly the amputation of the kings head. For Lefort the cutting off of the kings' head is no mere act of revenge, but rather symbolises a change in the nature and distribution of power, hence:

Lefort argues that the political revolutions that ushered in modernity did so by the killing of the king, both his body of nature and his body of grace [... yet ...] while the 'figure of the king' is effaced, the *place* which he occupied still remains; it remains as an 'empty place' (Flynn 2005: xxiv).

The empty place – which is the space of the representation of power, within modernity – left by the removal of the king means, no less, that “democratic society is instituted as a society without a body, as a society which undermines the representation of an organic totality” (Lefort 1988: 18). Hence, “[t]he legitimacy of power is based on the people; but the image of popular sovereignty is linked to the image of an empty space, impossible to occupy. Such that those who exercise public authority can never claim to appropriate it” (Lefort 1986: 279). In other words the democratic revolution inaugurates a form of power that can no longer be embodied in a singular persona, a central figure, or symbol of authority. Power is de-personalised and de-territorialized, a polity emerges where debate and difference ensure that leaders be re-elected, and where operative power is dispersed amongst the various and many members of the state. Power is, in the final instance, indeterminate, fluid and dispersed. In the words of Lefort,

[...] democracy is instituted and sustained by the *dissolution of the markers of certainty*. It inaugurates a history in which people experience a fundamental indeterminacy as to the basis of power, law and knowledge, and as a basis of the relations between self and other, at every level of social life ... (Lefort 1988: 19).

In their celebrated book, 'Hegemony and Socialist Strategy', Laclau and Mouffe summarise Lefort's thesis as follows:

[...] power becomes an empty space: the reference to a transcendent guarantor disappears, and with it the representation of the substantial unity of society. As a consequence a split occurs between the instances of power, knowledge, and the law, and their foundations are no longer assured. The possibility is thus opened up of an unending process of questioning [...] in sum [there can be] no representation

of a centre of society: unity is no longer able to erase social division. Democracy inaugurates the experience of a society which cannot be apprehended or controlled. (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 186)

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe provided further significance to what might be termed Lefort's 'de-centred' thesis, by linking Derrida's 'deferred signifier' to the dis-embodied, 'empty space' of power, as gleaned from Lefort (Laclau & Mouffe 2001) – a point to which we shall return. From these terms Laclau and Mouffe formulate their idea of 'Radical Democracy', a notion of democracy that is based upon the failure of representation.



**Figure 4**  
**'Empty space' and the failure of representation, painting by Lucio Fontanna (1960), titled "Spatial Concept 'Waiting'" (Collins 1983: 21).**

To explain this idea of the democratic as the failure of representation we may consider that if the problems of public governance could be reduced to technical concerns, and if those who are in power could have the means to know political space in its entirety, indeed, if those in positions of power could secure a totalising and transparent representation of the social, then surely, there would be no need for debate or opinion, there would be no need for politics – and I use the term 'politics' here as Arendt imagines it. The same holds for the architectural profession – indeed all professional forms of practise and knowledge – namely if architects and urban planners could achieve a transparent representation and operative 'remedy' for the city, then there would be

no need for public debate or opinion. As corollary to this assertion, Laclau and Mouffe wish to say that politics as science, politics as totality is totalitarian. Democratic discussion is required, however, because political representation invariably fails. At stake in this observation is Laclau and Mouffe's move to link Derrida's 'deferred signifier' (the un-decidable in language) to Lefort's 'empty space' and thereby to argue that the failure of representation *is* the crucial structure (or if you prefer, de-structure) that underlies the socio-democratic project. The failure to reach closure *is* the democratic principle that keeps debate alive (figure 4).<sup>7</sup> Indeed, from this Laclau and Mouffe maintain that the possibility of a unified discourse of the left has been erased:

[...] there is no radical and plural democracy without renouncing discourses of the universal and its implicit assumption of a privileged point of access to 'the truth,' which can be reached only by a limited number of subjects. (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 191-192)

Which is another way of saying that a party does not merely represent the people, for a party, in truth, will represent its particular perspectival view, a view which will fall short of the discontinuous space that is the social field.

In linking the 'deferred signifier' to the 'empty space' Laclau and Mouffe posit language – its social use and associated practises, i.e. discourse – as the operative domain of the social, and of the political as well. Importantly it is the un-decidability within language – and by inference human communication – that sustains the open-ended character, the questioning nature of democratic dialogue and imagination. These considerations take us beyond the bounded territoriality of Arendt's 'spaces of appearance', for public space now concerns circuits and networks of communication (i.e. discourses, the use of language), both institutional and non-institutional, networks that are dispersed and lacking in definitive boundaries. Any centralised claim to authority, such as the autonomy of the profession of architecture, notions of the public good, and indeed any attempt to represent the public, or the people will likely fail to gain an adequate picture of the protean and fractured substance of society. Discussion and dialogue is required because representation of the totality is un-available. Hence returning to Laclau and Mouffe's primary thesis (adopted from Derrida and Lefort) democracy is premised upon the failure of representation – which is to say, following Nietzsche, that the body politic is *nomadic*. The *polis*, as Arendt would use the term, is no longer tied to a foundational ground or an embodied encounter with the other – be that physical or metaphysical – and what I have termed a de-territorialised conception of public space flows, precisely, from the absence of this ground.

Public space is not limited to actions that are grounded in public/urban spaces, but rather public space circulates through wide ranging networks of discourse, be they various forms of public media (newsprint, internet, radio, TV, etc.), parliamentary debate, protest outside the town hall, or criticism of George Bush whilst with a friend in the local shopping mall, over a cup of tea.

## **Concluding remarks**

These considerations have a profound effect upon the way we envisage architecture's social role, and by way of conclusion, I wish to spell out what this implies – suggestions that are hugely pertinent to our situation, in South Africa today.

Democracy envisaged as a fragile and open question, a question with which we should all be concerned, models a picture of the public that has some striking similarities to the open ended, and what might be called the 'conversational nature' of creative processes in art and design. To be sure, rigid designators of public versus private – be they urban or otherwise – are

becoming increasingly irrelevant. Instead, public/private overlaps need to be negotiated in the context of each unique circumstance, and these relations also provide clues as to what might be expressed in aesthetic terms.

Architecture has always been positioned at the confluence of personal imagination, public participation and reception, and we would do well to consider the dispersed complexity that increasingly occurs at this interface – indeed I have endeavoured to argue that public-political space *is* (or at least necessarily includes) this discursive interface. The architect has a leading hand in deciding what aspects of the programme, what personal details of the client and end users, what aspects of the project will receive a public expression through design. I am hardly suggesting anything new. Public/private narratives have always been negotiated in the process of doing design. My point is to theorise the significance of this fact, and to emphasise the fluidity of this public/private interface, in the hopes that we may render it a positive resource for imagination in design, and historical study.

In contemporary South Africa, so called public participation – be that a participation in the design process or discussion after the building event – should not be viewed as an inconvenient, or politically correct addition, but rather as a living conversation, one which may contribute to the imaginative content of design. I believe we increasingly require forms of interactive openness, and we need to re-imagine design as a process which establishes wide ranging interactions with various players, be they fellow professions, clients, users, or members of the general public.

Revisiting the question of a hierarchy of public urban significance – a question that was introduced in the opening section of this paper – the point gleaned from this study is not to dismiss the importance of public urbanity (i.e. public spaces and buildings), but rather to guard against rigid boundaries and static designators. Public urbanity may well be focused and condensed at certain locales in the city (i.e. through the architecture of public spaces and buildings), but the public character of these locales is, implicitly, tied to differing forms of use, to different subjectivities and identities, to events, to the circuits of opinion, to publicity and media. Indeed, urban spaces do not merely exist, but rather, they are produced and reproduced through multiple, overlapping and at times diverging social discourses.

The de-institutionalisation and de-territorialisation of public space may, at first glance, appear to de-politicise architecture, but in fact this is not the case, for rather with these considerations we have re-spatialised the very nature of politics.

## Notes

1. At the close of his book, Le Corbusier (1931) famously supports the transformative potential of revolutionary architecture (i.e. modernism) against social revolution – which arguably, constitutes a false opposition. “Industry has created new tools [...] capable of adding to human welfare and of lightening human toil. If these new conditions are set against the past, you have a revolution.” (Le Corbusier 1931: 283-4)  
“Architecture finds itself confronted with new laws [...] all the [architectural] values have been revised; there has been a revolution in the conception of what Architecture is.” (Le Corbusier 1931: 287-8)  
“It is a question of building which is at the root of the social unrest of to-day; architecture or revolution.” (Le Corbusier 1931: 269)  
“Society is filled with a violent desire for something it may obtain or may not [...] Architecture or Revolution. Revolution can be avoided.” (Le Corbusier 1931: 288-9)
2. Arendt’s thought is replete with clear-cut binaries, and as many contemporary commentators have observed, the static quality of these distinction are highly problematic. In particular, we have good reason to question any rigid distinction between public and private realms, as contemporary feminists have rightly shown.
3. I am mindful here of democratic theorists Seyla Benhabib (2002) and Iris Marion Young (2002) – both attentive to Arendt’s work – who, in their

own and admittedly different way, emphasise the necessarily in-between character (public/private) of socio-political discourses, or narratives.

4. Hence reading Arendt from within the linguistic turn in philosophy, we might interpret Arendt to mean that politics is discursively constituted.
5. This distinction will ‘ultimately’ fail, because architecture is a product of discourses that are internal to architecture itself – or at least partially so – and these discourses have a political dimension of their own. But this is a separate observation that does not diminish the usefulness of the distinction that I have proposed here.
6. For example Hanson writes, “theorists of totalitarianism such as Claude Lefort [...] follow in Arendt’s footsteps” (Hanson, 1993: 11).
7. This thesis – that democracy is premised upon the failure of representation – does not mean that politics is impossible; that political parties or social movement cannot and should not work to represent group interests, the public, or the people. Indeed, to the contrary, the *necessary*

attempts of political representation – for after all, politics works on representation – are, for Laclau and Mouffe either hegemonic or counter-hegemonic in character. In this, political action does not merely represent a set of social interests, but rather has a hand in forming the nature of the interests it aims to represent. The hegemonic practices that fashion social interests can crucially, however, be more or less open/fluid, more or less static/closed. A certain tension emerges here, in that Laclau and Mouffe’s position, on the one hand, highlights the need for openness and inclusion (inclusion, but not necessarily assimilation), whilst on the other, their analysis showcases the advantage of the imperfection of politics. The complexity of the matter – on the one hand the persistence of representation, whilst on the other the failure of representation – is un-grounded, and accordingly Laclau and Mouffe posit “the field of the political as the space for a game which is never ‘zero-sum’, because the rules and the players are never fully explicit” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 193).

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