Urbicide and the Subject of Politics: Notes on the Syrian Civil War

https://www.e-ir.info/2021/05/27/urbicide-and-the-subject-of-politics-notes-on-the-syrian-civil-war/

GABRIEL GARROUM, MAY 27 2021

The Syrian civil war is one of the bloodiest, most destructive conflicts of our era. At the time of writing, ten years after the start of the conflict, around half of Syria's pre-2011 population has been internally displaced or fled the country, more than 400,000 have been killed, and large urban areas of the country have been severely damaged (Global Conflict Tracker 2021). This last element, the massive levels of destruction that Syria has experienced, alongside the violent re-articulation of the country's social geography, appear like some of the most profound effects of the civil war. Notably, the destruction of cities, the alteration of local spaces, or the mobilisation of the built environment when conducting war should not be disregarded as politically irrelevant or collateral phenomena. Instead, my research is guided by a genuine interest in understanding how wartime destruction and the alteration of the built environment deeply affect the dynamics of identity and come to shape the formation of political subjects.

Contributing to an emerging field of Syrian and non-Syrian scholars dealing with the politics of space and wartime destruction and its situated, socio-political effects (Sharp 2016; al-Sabouni 2016; Azzouz 2019; Harastani and Hanna 2019; Halabi 2017), this piece is underpinned by several moves. First, I provide a conceptualisation of the politics of space, mainly focused on understanding the role that materiality plays in practices of power and resistance. Second, I propose a reading of urbicide as a conceptual framework to explore how patterns of destruction and violent spatial reorganisation come to shape political subjects. Third, this contribution makes a case for a historicisation of material destruction in Syria. I argue that only by understanding the conditions of emergence and trajectory of urban destruction in Syria as part of its experience of modernity we can adequately approach the present condition. Finally, I provide an exploration of the Syrian conflict through the lens of urbicide, detailing the different ways in which the built environment –its destruction, reorganisation and reconstruction– relates to the reconfiguration of Syria's polity.

The Politics of Space

Space, accounting for the multiple, historically dynamic social relations between subjects and objects (Susen 2013), is constitutive of the personal and the political. The various landscapes, spaces, and places in which our identities are constantly forged result from the dynamic relationship between time and the always contested socio-political particularities of a given place. Importantly, places are both material and semiotic nodes – this is, places are constituted by the piling-up of historical trajectories and stories of peoples and things, and their boundaries are constantly made and remade.

I argue that a poststructuralist, relational conceptualisation of space enables a better understanding of how practices of power and resistance emanate in and from spatial configurations and come to shape the formation of political subjects (Foucault 2009; Massey 2005; Allen 2003; Murdoch 2006). In the last decades, some strands of poststructuralism have been criticised for privileging textuality and cultural interpretation while side-lining social action and materiality (Barad 2003). However, poststructuralist scholars have challenged these criticisms in IR and other related academic fields. First, by understanding discourse as material, enabling a 'folding of the language/material dichotomy and an expansive notion of discourse as encompassing the context in which the two are fundamentally inseparable' (Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams 2015, 5). Second, by rethinking materiality as having a

significant and political role in articulating subjectivity and therefore profoundly interwoven with the field of power, ideas, identities, and sensations. Hence, the material is always completely interrelated with the discursive and the linguistic in the work of poststructuralists (St Pierre 2013), which allow us to approach political subjects as deeply embedded within spatialised materialities.

Historically and in the present, operations of state power have mobilised space and its built materiality to shape the articulation of identities for political purposes. Space becomes the target and medium of state practices of incorporation and exclusion in several ways, most notably through urban planning and the geographical distribution of bodies, and the territorial articulation of a given political economy. As Huxley (2008, 1647) puts it, spaces are inseparable from projects of government and, like subjects, are 'formed at the inter-sections of cross-cutting powers and knowledges, imaginaries and practices.'

Although social and political forces see space as a means of establishing control, domination and power, space 'escapes in part from those who would make use of it' as Henri Lefebvre (1991, 26) suggested. Thus, practices of spatial domination never fully reach their intended goals, as the 'dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals caught in the nets of "discipline"' (de Certeau 1984, xiv-xv) may challenge, repurpose and subvert geographies of domination. The fact that space also becomes central to strategies and practices of resistance shows the importance of developing an understanding of space as open and productive, and social categories as never fully stabilised and sedimented.

One can find in the work of postcolonial scholars, especially in Franz Fanon's, a thorough understanding of how space and its built materiality are related to processes of resistance and political transformation. As Jabri (2012, 72) argues, Fanon shows us a 'distinctly materialist understanding of the subject of politics' in which the reappropriation of streetscapes emerges as an act of presence and interjection, confronting oppression and giving birth to new possibilities. Thus, by understanding mundane acts of transgression as transformative mechanisms of the relationship between bodies and world order, Fanon combines 'the concept of space with the formation of the revolutionary subject' (Ouaissa 2015, 105).

Relationality, mobility, and the openness of spatial identities do not invalidate the fact that striation exists, as flows of history configure spaces in a certain way and sediment differences and boundaries. Places also have affective and semiotic intensities – senses of place – that are formative of human subjectivity. Thus, subjectivity appears as not solely the product of our cognitive actions but also a distributed phenomenon across the different bodies-politic surrounding us. Hence, writing spatial histories demands attention to 'the details and differences of history at particular times and in particular places [and to the] confusions, contradictions and conflicts' that build the daily lives of people (Philo 1992, 141-142).

The Spatial Politics of the City at War

Departing from traditional IR approaches to war that have focused on violent state interactions and macro-political processes, critical and feminist IR have highlighted the urgency to approach war as a 'social institution' (Sylvester 2013, 4) with concrete effects upon situated subjects. A critical engagement with war should seek to convey the multiple ways in which war and violent practices 'are implicated in the formation of the subject, in articulations of identity, and in the locations wherein the different renditions of war find voice' (Jabri 2007, 20).

No space is more politically charged and more relevant in the contemporary struggle for social order worldwide than the space of the city. From critical infrastructures to squares, neighbourhoods, and homes, public and private urban spaces have increasingly become securitised and conceptualised as sources of targets and threats (Campbell, Graham and Monk 2007). This is even more visible when dealing with the city at war, where both state and non-state actors conceive the city fabric as a terrain of operations and means to project and amplify their power through the exertion of violence. Cities become occupied, divided, reshaped, re-inhabited, and destroyed under war. Crucially, late modern forms of urban warfare are not only about the actors' deliberate mobilisation of the urban environment but also about its reinterpretation, manipulation, and the interruption of the political categories urban fabric sustains.

We can find in an engagement with the literature on urbicide (Coward 2006; 2009; Graham 2007; Fregonese 2009; Kipfer and Goonewardena 2007; Azoulay 2013; Weizman 2006) a remarkable point of articulation for the conceptual moves elaborated so far as well as a powerful framework to explore the Syrian case. I approach urbicide as a governmental *dispositif* (Pløger 2008) consisting of the violent spatial reorganisation of the city aiming to deny, annihilate, or homogenise place. What is at stake in episodes of urbicide is the heterogeneity and agonism that urban space enables (Coward 2009). In such a rendering, material destruction is not simply collateral damage, subordinated and dependent on violence directly perpetrated against humans, but a phenomenon of its own that should be explored concerning political subjectivity.

Particularly remarkable in instances of urbicide is the targeting of infrastructural networks, which are indispensable to sustain urban life and configure political subjectivity as a complex ecology (Coward 2009). This can be seen in urban peripheries in the Global South, often characterised by higher degrees of informality and impoverishment, where destruction and militarisation have disrupted the networks of resistance and survival strategies through subaltern street politics (Luke 2004; Bayat 1997). From this point of view, the annihilation of infrastructures renders the declared enemy as 'de-modernised by design' (Graham 2007) since the erasure of infrastructures from daily life prevents entire segments of the population from accessing the sphere of the state and see their possibilities of political agency considerably suppressed.

For Graham, urbicide is an inherent part of the complex ontology of war, which should guide our attention to the concrete perpetrators and their specific practices aimed at destroying the socio-material fabric of urban centres. However, urban destruction should not be conceptualised as a dynamic opposed to modern urbanity but rather as integral to peace and war (Virilio 2002). Overtly violent or discriminatory urban planning before armed conflict, often under the rubric of modernisation/renovation and involving mass demolitions, as well as processes of reconstruction-through-erasure after hostilities, should fall under the understanding of urbicide.

Moreover, there is a final layer of urbicide of paramount importance. Following Marshal Berman's understanding of the cultural-affective dimensions of urbicide, the destruction and alteration of cities also entail the destruction of a sense of place and ontological security, which 'may provide the affective foundations of socio-spatial identity' (Kipfer and Goonewardena 2007, 6). This 'stickiness' between the space and the subject should be understood as 'an effect of the histories of contact between bodies, objects and signs' (Ahmed 2004, 90), pointing at histories of past affective encounters embedded in the materiality of the everyday and their capacity to shape the present.

Syria: A History of Urban Destruction

In Syria, urban destruction has a history, and it is essential to understand the conditions of emergence that make wartime destruction both possible and meaningful in the first place. Urban destruction is integral to Syrians' experience of modernity. Throughout the French Mandate (1920-1946), colonial violence involved extensive spatial cartography of communities, segregative urban planning and interventions, and, most paradigmatically, aerial bombing to quell rebellion. The French bombing of Damascus in 1925, alongside a repertoire of discourses and interventions aimed at reconfiguring space and controlling Syria's architecture of communities, had a remarkable formative effect upon the postcolonial Syrian state and its political subjects.

However, the levels of violence, spatial mechanisms of control, and urban destruction employed during the civil war only make full sense in light of later developments, particularly under the rule of Hafiz al-Asad. Between 1976 and 1982, Islamic militants of the Muslim Brotherhood fiercely challenged the regime with a wave of strikes, assassinations, sabotages, and armed rebellions (Lefèvre 2013). In Aleppo and later in Hama, the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood used the configuration of urban space to advance or destroy the rebellion.

The showdown in Hama in early 1982 was particularly brutal. On the one hand, the occupation of several quarters of Hama by Brotherhood militants shows how the urban fabric – the mosque, the alleyway, the hideout– can shape and assist a powerful challenge to state authority. On the other hand, incapable of penetrating Hama's narrow streets, the regime decided to resort to helicopter fire, bulldozers, and artillery bombardments to face the rebellion. City quarters were continuously raided, and entire buildings were demolished when a suspect was identified, turning Hama's

quarters into a pile of rubble. The systematic mass killings across the city's neighbourhoods continued until the end of February 1982, claiming the lives of thousands of Syrians.

Urbicide seeks to extirpate the enemy from the social body through destruction and uprooting. The ruination of built environments and bodies organises political life through spatial acts of negativity, as those segments of the population identified as enemies are rendered dispensable. Under urbicide, like under the state of siege, violence is always metonymical, directed to the entire social body (Mbembe 2019, 82). 'Asad wanted to punish the whole of Hama', the Syrian painter Khaled al-Khani argues. 'Through us, he wanted to teach all Syrians that challenging the regime would lead to this. And it worked. It worked for 30 years' (Atassi 2012).

In February 2012, as the civil war escalated, Syrians remembered Hama on the thirtieth anniversary of its massacre. The bloodshed in Hama,which had been long subjected to silence and fear, has been recalled and explored with great intensity as if the present asked for a collective social history of the past. As Salwa Ismail (2018, 139-140) puts it, 'contenting with a violent past and finding individual and collective terms of negotiating one's relations to it has been formative of Syrians as subject-citizens under the Asad regime'.

The Civil War and the Urbicide of Syria

The predominant role of cities in the Syrian civil war is easy to see. Urban and peri-urban areas have been significant theatres of war and spaces where different actors have tried to legitimise and enforce competing socio-political orders. This has led to massive destruction of houses, public buildings, infrastructures, and cultural heritage almost throughout the entire country. More than 53% of the Syrian population living in urban centres have been affected by destruction (REACH 2019, 1), 50% of Syria's essential infrastructure was deemed inoperative by 2017, and about a third of Syria's homes were destroyed, including 36,000 buildings only in Aleppo (Overton and Dathan 2019). The urbicide of Syria has had several registers that are worth detailing.

First, both the Syrian regime and the various rebel armed groups that have configured the Syrian uprising have engaged in the strategic destruction of the built environment as a mechanism to inscribe a specific socio-political and identity regime. For instance, the desecration and often complete erasure of Christian religious buildings, shrines, and many other iconoclastic attacks proliferated as jihadist groups (paradigmatically ISIS) grew in importance. The destruction of religious buildings entails the loss of historical depth and aims to reshape political community by negating any possibility for plurality.

The regime has blatantly resorted to urbicide, in part by its superior air power, as a mechanism to uproot communities and, ultimately, render the revolutionary subject unable to perform political agency. The sieges of the Damascene Gohuta and Eastern Aleppo precisely suggest that the Syrian regime's material erasure and essential infrastructures were aimed at rendering all forms of resistance – armed, civil, secular, or Islamist – helpless and limited to sustain their very survival as human beings. Ultimately, such a severe form of an enemy-centric counterinsurgency campaign is the product of the lack of structural agreement between a regime, which is not recognised as sovereign, and the governed, who are not recognised as subjects (Azoulay 2013, 209).

As argued earlier, urbicide also entails affective, textured, and emotional layers beyond the strategic destruction performed by both the regime and rebel forces. The brutal levels of destruction have forced Syrians to bear the 'surreal transformation of a known space…the unrecognisable aspect of your city, the disorientation, as well as the painful loss' (Gómez López, 2017). In Aleppo, Lina Sergie Attar says, nothing prepares you to understand the new maps with the shifting blocks of colours and frontlines (Masahat 2018). Nothing prepares you to understand the collapse of scales of loss; how the loss of home, the loss of the city and, ultimately, the loss of memory come together and define the subject of war. The severe destruction of the city's fabric as a 'site for rooting locations of spatiotemporal memories' (Brownstein 2016) entailed the erosion of the lived experience of place and Aleppo's distinctive sense of the city. As the novelist Khaled Khalifa puts it, Aleppo became a city that no longer exists, 'but it is defending itself and its memory' (Mahmoud and Saad 2014).

Second, the urbicide of Syria also refers to the violent rearticulation of the country's social geography. Indeed, the

war has forced the division of spaces, the displacement of communities, the solidification of socio-spatial boundaries, and the formation of new territories. What is remarkable about this spatial recomposition of the urban space throughout the war, as heterogeneity is targeted and politically antagonistic enclaves are produced, is how the phenomenon of urbicide is linked to the emergence of new meanings of power, territory, and identity.

In Damascus and Aleppo, the regime was eager to invest in a discourse that activated the long-standing attachments, social behaviours, and senses of place of urban Syrians alongside a blunt depiction of the opposition as threatening rural Islamists, promoting an imaginary that linked the maintenance of social peace to the political survival of Asad. In many of the interviews I conducted throughout 2019, rural/urban, class, and sectarian narratives are often intertwined with references to the built environment. What is relevant about these testimonies is not their willingness to stress their urbanity and differentiate the city from its outskirts or peripheral neighbourhoods, but rather how these long-present socio-cultural notions and spatialisations are ultimately mobilised to justify total war upon the other.

Third, it is important to note how practices of material destruction during the war relate to both the pre-war politics of urban development and the politics of reconstruction. On the one hand, urban renewal as redevelopment-through-demolitionwas used as a weapon of war in Damascus as early as 2012 (Solvang and Neistat 2014). As an example, demolition plans approved by Decree 66/2012 did not affect areas devastated by the conflict, but quarters that witnessed big demonstrations and are strategically located around key political and economic sites in urban Damascus (Rollins 2017). On the other hand, the incipient reconstruction efforts, such as Marota City and Basilia City (Syrbanism 2019), alongside the legal framework that sustain them, do not represent a novel urban politics. In fact, the post-war reconstruction framework promoted in Syria so far is neither “post-war” nor a “framework”. In Syria, we have seen a collection of formal and informal measures, neoliberal in spirit and very asymmetric in nature, which are highly dependent on the power relations present in war-torn Syria.

Ultimately, as Hiba Bou Akar (2018, 182) brilliantly suggests concerning Beirut, we are dealing in Damascus with a spatial logic of urban territorial restructuring that seeks to turn former war-torn peripheries into frontiers through ‘locking up certain geographies in the present for fear of the future, while continuing to create calculated openings for urban growth and real estate profit’. By developing luxurious, prime-location real estate in areas with high economic potential but hitherto inhabited by lower classes, socio-economic cleavages are further inscribed upon the landscape.

Finally, urbicide is central in the regime’s envisioned new social geography of loyalty. Homogeneity, in this understanding, is not so much related to the creation of religious or ethnic enclaves but rather at the inscription of political loyalty upon space. The patterns of material destruction, the spatial mapping of trusted and untrusted communities, the forced displacement of those deemed potentially threatening, and the asymmetric and selective early reconstruction appear as some of the mechanisms that seek to govern identities and produce loyal subjects. In other words, the politics of material destruction, the politics of reconciliation in former rebel-controlled areas, the politics of return of those who have been displaced, and the politics of reconstruction should be understood as mutually interrelated.

Conclusion

This short contribution has sought to provide a framework through which Syria’s wartime spatial politics and the destruction of the urban built environment can be adequately understood, significantly as these processes shape lines of identification and political subjects. It has tried to unravel the several intertwined dynamics that urbicidal violence has taken in Syria, from the strategic destruction of the built environment to the rearticulation of the urban sphere in both peace and war to ensure political loyalty. Under urbicide, an identifiable context is erased by the amorphous cityscape, now reduced to piles of debris; continuity in place is ceased by the massive displacement, which, in turn, dislocates collective memory; historical specificity is negated.

As the morphology of Syrian cities change and their socio-spatial boundaries are remade, so are Syrians. One of the far-reaching effects of the civil war has been the rearticulation of political community: as Syrians are internally displaced and communities become tied to new spaces, refugees worldwide find themselves articulating political

agency by navigating in and through exile, opening new spheres of action and political horizons. The struggle for urban identity, preserving property rights, and reconstructing Syria's cities through accountability, justice, and local agency, will shape the years to come. Spatial justice should entail a reconstruction model that restores the relationship of inhabitants to places so that return does not become alienation.

References

Ahmed, S. (2004) *The Cultural Politics of Emotion.* Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

Al-Sabouni, M. (2016) *The Battle for Home: The Memoir of a Syrian Architect*. New York: Thames & Hudson.

Allen, J. (2003) *Lost Geographies of Power*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Atassi, B. (2012) Breaking the Silence over Hama Atrocities. *Al-Jazeera*. February 2. Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2012/2/2/breaking-the-silence-over-hama-atrocities.

Azoulay, A. (2013) When a Demolished House Becomes a Public Square. In: Stoler, A. L. (ed.)*Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination*. Durham, Duke University Press, pp. 194-224.

Azzouz, A. (2019) A Tale of a Syrian City at War. City 23.1: 107-122.

Barad, K. (2003) Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter.*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society.* 28 (3), 801-831.

Bayat, A. (1997) *Street Politics: Poor People's Movements in Iran*. New York, Columbia University Press.

Bou Akar, H. (2018) *For the War Yet to Come: Planning Beirut's Frontiers.* Redwood City, Stanford University Press.

Brownstein, D. (2016) *Finding Aleppo in a War-Torn World* [Online]. Available at: https://dabrownstein.com/2016/09/28/finding-aleppo/ [Accessed: May 21, 2021].

Campbell, D., Graham, S. & Monk, D.B. (2007) Introduction to Urbicide: The Killing of Cities? *Theory & Event* 10 (2).

Coward, M. (2006) Against Anthropocentrism: The Destruction of the Built Environment as a Distinct Form of Political Violence. *Review of International Studies.* 32 (3), 419-437.

Coward, M. (2009) *Urbicide: The Politics of Urban Destruction.* London, Routledge.

De Certeau, M. (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Berkeley, Calif, University of California Press.

Foucault, M. (2009) *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College De France, 1977 – 78.* London, Palgrave Macmillan.

Fregonese, S. (2009) The Urbicide of Beirut? Geopolitics and the Built Environment in the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1976). *Political Geography.* 28 (5), 309-318.

Global Conflict Tracker (2021) *Civil War in Syria* [Online]. Available at: https://microsites-live-backend.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-syria. [Accessed: May 21, 2021].

Gómez López, M. (2017) Picturing the Homeland Carole Alfarah in conversation with María Gómez López. *Ibraaz.* February 5. Available at: https://www.ibraaz.org/interviews/213 [Accessed: May 21, 2021].

Graham, S. (2007) Demodernizing by Design. In: Gregory, Derek & Pred, Allan (eds.) *Violent Geographies: Fear,*

Terror, and Political Violence. New York & London, Routledge, pp. 309-328.

Halabi, N. (2017) The Ancient Walls of Damascus and the Siege of Mouaddamiyya: A Historical and Spatial Analysis of Bounded Place and Cultural Identity. *Space and Culture*. 20 (4), 441-453.

Harastani, N. & Hanna, E. (2019) The Lateral Conflict of Urban Planning in Damascus. *Open House International*. 44 (2), 20-26.

Huxley, M. (2008) Space and Government: Governmentality and Geography. *Geography Compass.* 2 (5), 1635-1658.

Ismail, S. (2018) *The Rule of Violence: Subjectivity, Memory and Government in Syria.* New York,Cambridge University Press.

Jabri, V. (2010) Transformations of War: Perspectives from International Political Sociology. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies.*

Jabri, V. (2012) *The Postcolonial Subject: Claiming Politics/Governing Others in Late Modernity*. London, Routledge.

Kipfer, S. & Goonewardena, K. (2007) Colonization and the New Imperialism: On the Meaning of Urbicide Today. *Theory & Event.* (10) 2.

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The Production of Space.* Oxford, Blackwell Publishing.

Lefèvre, R. (2013) *Ashes of Hama: The Muslim Brotherhood in Syria*. New York, Oxford University Press.

Luke, T. W. (2014) Everyday Technics as Extraordinary Threats: Urban Technostructures and Non-Places in Terrorist Actions. In: Graham, Stephen (ed.) *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics*. Oxford, Blackwell, pp. 120-136.

Lundborg, T. & Vaughan-Williams, N. (2015) New Materialisms, Discourse Analysis, and International Relations: A Radical Intertextual Approach. *Review of International Studies.* 41 (1), 3-25.

Mahmoud, S. & Saad, M. (2014) Interview: Khaled Khalifa's Memory of Pain. *Al-Ahram*. February 17. Available at: ht tps://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/18/0/94411/Books/INTERVIEW-Khaled-Khalifa-Syrias-memory-of-pain-.aspx. [Accessed: May 21, 2021].

Masahat (2018) My Aleppo: When Memory Becomes Resistance-Lina Sergie Attar [Online Video]. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch? v=ufi0itMHKBo [Accessed: May 21, 2021].

Massey, D. (2005) *For Space.* London, Sage Publications.

Mbembe, A. (2019) *Necropolitics.* Durham & London, Duke University Press.

Murdoch, J. (2006) *Poststructuralist Geography: A Guide to Relational Space.* London, Sage Publications.

Ouaissa, R. (2015) Frantz Fanon: The Empowerment of the Periphery. *Middle East: Topics & Arguments.* 5, 100-106.

Overton, I. & Dathan, J. (2019)Syria in 2020: The Deadly Legacy of Explosive Violence and its Impact on Infrastructure and Health [Online]. *Action on Armed Violence (AOAV)*. December 17. Available at: https://aoav.org.u k/2019/syria-in-2020-the-deadly-legacy-of-explosive-violence-and-its-impact-on-infrastructure-and-health/.

[Accessed: May 21, 2021].

Philo, C. (1992) Foucault's Geography. *Environment and Planning. D, Society & Space.* 10 (2), 137-161.

Pløger, J. (2008) Foucault's Dispositif and the City. *Planning Theory* 7 (1), 51-70.

REACH Initiative (2019) *Syrian Cities Damage Atlas* [Online].REACH, Geneva. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/reach_thematic_assessment_syrian_cities_damage_atlas_march_2019_reduced_file_size_1.pdf. [Accessed: May 21, 2021].

Rollins, T. (2017) Decree 66: The Blueprint for al-Assad's Reconstruction of Syria? *The New Humanitarian*. April 20. Available at: https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/fr/node/259390.

Sharp, D. (2016) Urbicide and the Arrangement of Violence in Syria. In: Sharp, Deen & Panetta, Claire (eds.) *Beyond the Square: Urbanism and the Arab Uprisings.* New York, Terreform.

Solvang, O. & Neistat, A. (2014) Razed to the Ground: Syria's Unlawful Neighborhood Demolitions in 2012-2013. *Human Rights Watch*. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/01/30/razed-ground/syrias-unlawful-neighborhood-demolitions-2012-2013.

St. Pierre, E. A. (2013) The Posts Continue: Becoming. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education.* 26 (6), 646-657.

Susen, S. (2013) The Place of Space in Social and Cultural Theory. In: Elliott, A. (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Social and Cultural Theory*. London, Routledge, pp. 343-367.

Sylvester, C. (2013) *War as Experience.* London, Routledge.

Virilio, P. (2002) *Desert Screen: War at the Speed of Light.* London, Continuum.

Weizman, E. (2006) Walking Through Walls: Soldiers as Architects in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. *Radical Philosophy* 136: 8-22.

About the author:

Gabriel Garroum is an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) PhD Candidate at the Department of War Studies, King's College London. He is currently a Visiting Scholar at Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI) and teaches at ESADE Barcelona.