



This is a repository copy of *An urban partisan: Carl Schmitt's and Jacob Taubes' guide for urban revolution*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:  
<http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/93024/>

Version: Accepted Version

---

**Article:**

Nawratek, K.J. (2014) An urban partisan: Carl Schmitt's and Jacob Taubes' guide for urban revolution. *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism*, 38 (1). pp. 3-10. ISSN 2029-7955

<https://doi.org/10.3846/20297955.2014.893623>

---

**Reuse**

Unless indicated otherwise, fulltext items are protected by copyright with all rights reserved. The copyright exception in section 29 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 allows the making of a single copy solely for the purpose of non-commercial research or private study within the limits of fair dealing. The publisher or other rights-holder may allow further reproduction and re-use of this version - refer to the White Rose Research Online record for this item. Where records identify the publisher as the copyright holder, users can verify any specific terms of use on the publisher's website.

**Takedown**

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing [eprints@whiterose.ac.uk](mailto:eprints@whiterose.ac.uk) including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



[eprints@whiterose.ac.uk](mailto:eprints@whiterose.ac.uk)  
<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/>

## AN URBAN PARTISAN: CARL SCHMITT'S AND JACOB TAUBES' GUIDE FOR URBAN REVOLUTION

Krzysztof Nawratek

School of Architecture, Design and Environment, Faculty of Arts, Roland Levinsky Building, Plymouth University, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA, UK

E-mail: krzysztof.nawratek@plymouth.ac.uk

Received; accepted

**Abstract.** The contemporary neoliberal city exists within the context of the immateriality of the contemporary economy, the dominance of financial speculation over commodity exchange and the transition of the city from the political subject to a mere resource used by global corporations and institutions (Hirst 2005; Harvey 2012; Marazzi 2010). There is an obvious conflict between the city as a material entity, and the immaterial forces of global capitalism. In this context, Carl Schmitt and Jacob Taubes provide useful tools with which to create a theoretical framework to re-establish discussion of the city as a political and economic subject. I will begin by referring to Schmitt's considerations of territory and the conflict between the telluric logic, the sea logic and the air logic as presented in his work 'The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum' (Schmitt 2003). I will continue by discussing Jacob Taubes, who in his *Occidental Eschatology* (Taubes 2009) provided the tools with which to reject the Heideggerean, reactionary understanding of place, and invented a new type of place – the 'Taubesian place', a place where a revolution could be started. As a theoretical context for these considerations, I have referenced the Partisan figure presented by Schmitt (2004), through Taubes considerations of space and history.

**Keywords:** Carl Schmitt, Jacob Taubes, place, autonomy, urban revolution, partisan, special economic zone.

**Reference** to this paper should be made as follows; Nawratek, K. 2014. An urban partisan: Carl Schmitt's and Jacob Taubes' guide for urban revolution, *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism* 38(1):

### Revolution beyond nature

The intellectual relationship between Carl Schmitt, a Nazi lawyer and Jacob Taubes, a Jewish philosopher<sup>1</sup>, is extremely interesting, especially from a human perspective – it is hard to imagine two people in a more adversarial (using the Schmitt's criteria<sup>2</sup>) position. However, their mutual fascination was possible because they both tried to root their thinking within the concept of transcendence.

Before I start a discussion focusing on the (mostly European) neoliberal city I must first acknowledge the context of this discussion: the immateriality of the contemporary neo-liberal economy, the dominance of financial speculation over commodity exchange, the loss of subjectivity of the city (and thus the ability to manage itself) and the transition from the political subject to a mere resource used by global corporations and institutions (Hirst 2005, Harvey 2012; Marazzi 2010).

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information see: *To Carl Schmitt: Letters and Reflections*, Columbia University Press, by Mike Grimshaw.

<sup>2</sup> Schmitt's thinking is founded on friend-foe distinction. Jacob Taubes accepted this perspective and perceived himself as an enemy of Carl Schmitt.

In this context, Carl Schmitt and Jacob Taubes may seem like unexpected or inappropriate guides for a discussion based on the city. However, I begin with Schmitt's considerations of territory and the conflict between the telluric logic, the sea logic and the air logic as presented in his work *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum* (Schmitt 2003). I will follow with a discussion of Jacob Taubes, who in his *Occidental Eschatology* (Taubes 2009) provided its readers with a basis from which it was possible to reject the Heideggerean, reactionary understanding of place, by putting forward the concept of the nomad (this being an early portrayal of the nomad in conflict with the later ideas of Deleuze and Guattari from 1986). As a theoretical reading for these considerations, I would propose the Partisan figure presented by Schmitt (2007), through Taubes's considerations of space, history (which is still not finished) and Logos.

In his book *Occidental Eschatology*, Jacob Taubes (2009) analyses the relationship between Jewish theology – especially the messianic thought – and revolution. From the point of view of this paper there are two important aspects of this text, the first, is an attempt to define freedom (because without it no revolution or change is possible) and the second is the relationship between existence in time (in history) and existence in space. To begin I will discuss Taubes (2009) definition of freedom, he asks: “*How does finite freedom, which is an element of time, relate to absolute freedom, an element of eternity?*” Taubes shows three possible relationships within these three systems: atheistic-materialist, pantheist-immanent and theistic-transcendental. He argues that true freedom and therefore real revolution, is possible only as a break in the continuity of nature and the world, suggesting therefore that only atheistic-materialism and mainly theistic-transcendentalism allows true revolution to happen. Pantheist-immanentism represents any belief in the continuity of nature<sup>3</sup>, any naturalistic ethics. Contemporary capitalism presented as fulfilment of 'natural rules of human behaviours' is an obvious example of the un-revolutionary (conservative/reactionary), pantheist-immanentism system. From this point of view, a distinction between 'finite freedom' – the freedom of choice and market against 'absolute freedom' – the freedom of creation and revolution is of essential importance.

A question one could ask is – is this breaking in the continuity of Nature possible as a spatial phenomenon? I would argue, and I am not alone here (Harvey 2000; Leyshon Lee and Williams 2003; Gibson-Graham 2006) that spatial anomaly is the only possibility, but that it is rooted in something that goes beyond space (and beyond nature). There are several perspectives that address this anomaly; I will describe three of them. The first, refers to the intuitive understanding of space without a clearly defined purpose, a left-over space, an in-between space like the belt of grass by the roadside, remnants of an unfinished investment, abandoned amusement parks, and bankrupt malls for example. It also refers to the potentiality of these spaces. The second, refers to Emil Cioran's (1970) understanding of the 'void' as a no-being, interrupting the continuity of existence. For Cioran the 'void' has a rather more functional than ontological significance – it is more important what the void does (it interferes, interrupts and blocks) rather than what it actually is. Thirdly I would refer to the idea of the 'void' within the meaning of Alain Badiou (2005, 2011), as the Real beyond Representation.

Therefore the phenomenon I have identified is an excess, not an absence, an excess/surplus without a language to describe it – or to be able to include it into any existing narrative. I will call this space 'hole in the whole' (Nawratek 2012) and define it as (a partially) virtual space waiting for its actualisation. This 'hole' is a very real space, however it cannot be described as the hole until a new language is able to include it into the new urban narrative. It is important to stress that we are not passively waiting for this event, which we will be able to 'entrust' (as Badiou suggests), it is not even a 'space of hope' (Harvey 2000) but rather with the challenge of 'creative freedom' (or Taubes' "absolute freedom") – is to create a new language. Excess/surplus of the 'hole in the whole' is therefore the task of finding a new narrative and a new application.

---

<sup>3</sup> It is important to understand Taubes' definition of Nature, as a kind of 'prison', as an obstacle to freedom: “*The essence of history is freedom. (...) Freedom alone lifts mankind out of the cycle of nature into the realm of history. (...) Nature, and mankind embedded in nature have no history.*” (Taubes 2009: 5).

The other fundamental issue considered by Taubes, is the relationship between existence in time (in history) and existence in space. Taubes sees nature in the context of myth, of eternally returning to the same (Eliade 1971). There is a fundamental difference between settlers who are rooted in place and the nomadic Jewish people who are uprooted from place, but rooted in the word (Logos) and within history. Here, it is important to understand that Jewish thinking reaches beyond nature, it is thinking funded on absolute freedom and is therefore capable of instigating revolution. This passage seems to anticipate Heidegger's (2008) narrative from "Building Dwelling Thinking" (published in 1951), however Taubes' book was published in 1947, which of course, only strengthens the allegation that there is a deep connection between Heidegger's thought and anti-Semitism.

#### 'Taubesian place'

Taubes describes a clear opposition between space and time, within this context one should ask if it is possible to use Taubes' thinking as a tool with which to investigate the possibility of spatial autonomy. The answer might be positive, because his thinking is not, by definition, anti-spatial but rather allows the re-definition of our understanding of place to move beyond a reactionary (Heideggerian) position. One could ask, while looking for an alternative to neoliberal capitalism – if one could fall into the trap of xenophobia and authoritarian anti-universalist thinking? It is a very important question and one which mustn't be ignored. The use of Taubes' ideas could allow us to define a place not just as a point of arrival, but also as departure, not as a point from which to settle down but rather as an anomaly, allowing us to 'jump' into a chosen moment in time (history). The 'Taubesian place' could then be defined as a gateway in time, to a point of historical fulfilment.

Today, especially in the propaganda of its biggest supporters, capitalism (particularly in its neo-liberal mutation) is presented as 'natural'. Jacob Taubes and the whole Jewish Messianic tradition helped us to rebel against this natural order. However, going beyond nature and beyond continuity has a darker side. The rejection of universalism can lead to the establishment of a 'place of exception', so well described by Giorgio Agamben (1998) who uses the concentration camp as an obvious illustration of this logic. This is the very reason why the re-definition of 'place' is so important. The 'Taubesian place' is immune to the perversion of place into a 'place of exception', on the contrary – the 'Taubesian place' is a place of absolute inclusivity.

The idea of place as a something that could be clearly defined is essential to the establishment of a material, physical subject. Without the act of separation (at least partly and temporarily) the city (or a part of the city – the urban anomaly) cannot exist. Therefore, the very gesture of separation (which is a necessity but causes a risk and the danger of fatal exclusion, as proved by Giorgio Agamben) must be examined.

It is appropriate now to refer to Carl Schmitt's concept of 'Nomos' (2003) which was used by him against the logic of the global 'offshore' (mainly Anglo-Saxon) capitalism. Schmitt's political thinking is based on a fundamental distinction between friend and foe. For Schmitt the definition of a subject (self) is only possible by first defining an enemy. Schmitt also states that this clear distinction is only possible fully on the land, not at sea. Schmitt's thinking links the problem of subjectivity and territory (spatial autonomy), and has become more popular in recent years, being reclaimed by his natural enemy – the political left. His ideas have also influenced thinking about the city and architecture, as can be observed in Aureli's *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (2011), which strongly defends architecture and building against the city, which is seen as a kind of homogenous field. Aureli's argument is similar to that of Aldo Rossi (1967) whose defence of architecture is similar to that of Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till (2011) who present the image of a building (as a secure territory) a node of wider network.

#### Partisanship and a different meaning of autonomy

The most interesting concept in the analysis of the contemporary, neoliberal-in-crisis city seems to be Partisan. Partisan is an extremely interesting and important concept because of his/her ambivalent

character. It exists as a point of exchange, somewhere between a civilian and a soldier it is ‘the living hole-in-the-whole’. Partisan is telluric (but Schmitt suggests that Partisan is a kind of ‘earth corsair’, that operates like a submarine – underground) and is defensive but she/he is also a highly politicized figure a hybrid somewhere between a civilian and a regular soldier. His/her existence fully depends on a civil society living on a territory that he/she is trying to reclaim from enemy hands.

The relationship between partisan and ideology is also interesting – even within the context of the communist partisans of Vietcong or Mao Tse Tung, these global ideologies are simply adjusted into a local context. This relationship with ideology makes Partisan similar to a messianic nomad: “*Mission is the only form of conquest for a nation without land*” (Taubes 2009: 25). A global (or at least non-local) character of the enemy is important here. Partisan is weaker, smaller and is always more local than the occupants. “*For a theory of the partisan in the sense intended here, however, a few criteria must be kept in sight so that the theme does not dissolve into abstract generality. Such criteria are irregularity, increased mobility of the active combat, and a heightened intensity of political commitment. I want to insist on a fourth criterion of the genuine partisan, one that Jover Zamora has called his tellurian character. It is significant for the essentially defensive situation of the partisan – despite his tactical mobility – whose nature changes when he identifies with the absolute aggressiveness of a world-revolutionary or technologizing ideology.*” (Schmitt 2004).

Let us come back for a moment to the fundamental question – can we think of a pluralistic (and thus not only capitalist) socio-economic model for contemporary (Western) cities? This is a fundamental question about the potential of the existence of the city as a subject. Economic sovereignty (as well as social, cultural, political and so forth) is being challenged at the level of nation-states, which – at least in theory, is at the level of basic human need – and could be self-sufficient. Needs and their fulfilment could be balanced within one country (especially a country covering big territory like Russia, Brazil, India, USA or China), however several historical attempts to develop an autarkic economy are known to have failed. Therefore, if self-sufficiency of the state is possible, but not really effective, any attempt to develop a self-sufficient city is clearly absurd. However, ignoring spatial (territorial) aspects of politics clearly leads to the dominance of the popular narrative of immaterial (information technology, knowledge, culture, finance) aspects of the global economy. This narrative is at least partly proving to be true, yet in the context of the financial crisis which started in 2008, it is not offering us a convincing or desirable path forward. The very fact that countries with vast territories (such as China, India, Russia, Brazil or USA<sup>4</sup>) are in the first ten contemporary global economies suggests, that spatial and material aspects of politics are probably more important than we have acknowledged during the last thirty years. This hypothesis – of the importance of territory – could lead us to further investigate the idea of spatial autonomy within our cities.

But how could this spatial autonomy be defined? Udo Staber (2001) in his paper *The Structure of Networks in Industrial Districts* presents an interesting argument against autarky: “*Under certain conditions, the fragmentation of economic activities into specialized units creates benefits that are external to the individual firm and internal to the economic system, in which the firm participate*”. In his paper, using examples of the Ruhr and the Jura he shows how excessive autarchy leads to destruction. However, his argument is important primarily because it forces a precise definition of those internal activities and the always present surplus. In discussing autonomy one of the most important issues is a precise definition of the interface, the boundary / institution separating and connecting the outside and the inside. Therefore every process, every activity cannot be considered as a whole, but analysed / broken down into what is directed inside and what is a surplus. Using Staber’s arguments one could formulate a new meaning of autonomy. From this perspective, autonomy will then not be separated from the hegemonic whole as a separate realm with specific internal regulations, but on the contrary – it will be a realm in which the hegemonic order is fully revealed. I will therefore not be discussing autonomy any further as such, but will continue by looking at what autonomy can produce, an overlooked side effect, a ‘free radical’. If autonomy is then an element preserving the status quo, it is this ‘free radical’ that has revolutionary potential.

---

<sup>4</sup> The argument of relationship between territoriality and economic development is inspired by ideas presented by Roberto Mangabeira Unger (2009).



In the context of architecture, the process of designing and constructing a building is where at any stage the ‘free radical’ can occur. To look at this idea more closely let's use the design and build of a private family house as an example. From the very beginning, when an architect is commissioned to design a house, he has the opportunity to go beyond the client's (usually) conservative ideas about family living, through the process of negotiating initial ideas with planning officials, the choice of materials and methods of construction. In each of these stages lies the possibility of both revolt and innovation. This revolt – as rightly pointed out by Awan, Schneider and Till (2011) – can have both a communal and network dimension and can go beyond the ego and fantasy of the architect allowing other actors to strengthen their position (women and children in the patriarchal family, local producers of building materials or artisans etc.)

To consistently adopt Staber's hypothesis is to use the term ‘autonomy’ differently, not as a being or place, but as an instrument for creating an alternative structure. The autonomous process should consider not only what is beyond the current system, but also (and perhaps most importantly) what concerns our own relationship with the system.

Let's pause for a moment, however, and come back to the traditional sense of autonomy.

The basic question is – whether and under what conditions is autonomy possible? The nation-state, the city, a squat or a private apartment are all examples of specific spaces that should theoretically support the formation and growth of autonomous subjectivity. But what conditions should be fulfilled to allow for this to happen? The ‘Taubesian place’ has to be understood as a specific time-space anomaly. It is a place aiming to be an experimental space of ultimate inclusivity, put into a horizon of the ‘end times’. The ‘end times’ is a time of fulfilment, a time of absolute love (in the sense of Hardt's and Negri's political love defined in ‘The Commonwealth’). The architectural shell is not what creates the ‘Taubesian place’ but without this material and spacial artefact, constructing and defending this place is not possible. The Taubesian place is a territory of love – for example a squat or an apartment gives a chance to be both separated and connected in the same time, and a squat is potentially even more of a ‘Taubesian place’ than an apartment. The construction of a house / apartment is the outcome of an external, capitalist economic and social relationship. It doesn't mean that there is no gap between external and internal structures, but (especially in a context of ‘mortgage economy’) that this gap is limited and fragile.

A much more interesting notion is that of the squat (or ‘autonomous social space’). The squat is a space which is taken out of the capitalist system – but it is taken out because it is by its very nature external, it literally exists outside the capitalist structure. Capitalism couldn't find a way to use it, therefore it could only be utilized by non-capitalist forces. This idea puts forward an interesting question – could a ‘Taubesian place’ be built? The answer is, yes, it could, but it must be created by forces that exist beyond or outside (at least partly) the capitalist logic. A simple example of this could be a church, which is built to fulfil different, non-capitalist – religious – purposes (Cloke, Beaumont 2012, Cloke 2013; Beaumont 2011). As Carl Schmitt writes about a Partisan: “...*the partisan is always dependent in some way, as an irregular fighter, on a regular power*” (2004: 54) This is why the use of a figure of a partisan for an analysis of a potential of urban revolution is so crucial. Schmitt, despite his willingness to separate them is absolutely aware of the dialectic relationship between enemies – the two (or more) sides define themselves in relation to each other. Partisan is dependent therefore on being outside / beyond the system and he/she must in this dependence be protected and supported by a regular power. The squat could exist because of certain gaps and exceptions in the legal system, therefore this legal system – an integral part of a capitalist structure of power – is itself protecting and supporting its enemy. There are two interesting examples of Polish squats that perfectly illustrate this argument – the first one is Od:Zysk in Poznan. This squat has regular visits from the building inspector of Poznan city council, who provides his professional knowledge and support. A second example is a Cicha 4 in the city of Lublin, an area described as the ‘Autonomy Cultural Center’. Cicha 4 is not a ‘regular’ squat – it exists because the legal status of the land where the building is located is unclear. Therefore the owner of the building can't really use it and he has decided to allow it to be used, for free, by some ‘alternative’ social organizations. This case is extremely interesting, because even if these groups are informal and ‘anti-system’, there is a person amongst them who was responsible

## THIS IS A DRAFT – PLEASE QUOTE FROM THE PUBLISHED VERSION

**Journal of Architecture and Urbanism** Volume 38, Issue 1, 2014 DOI:10.3846/20297955.2014.893623

for signing a contract with the owner! This person is then – by definition – a part of the system. In summary if Carlos Taibo (2013) is right, when describing the roots of the Occupy! Movement as ‘not integrated into the system’: “*When I speak of alternative social movements I am thinking of those who have wrought these changes in cities: of the self-managed and occupied social centres, of the feminism, environmentalism and pacifism that have not been integrated into the system...*” and further “*In general terms, and in the light of their declared commitment to grassroots democracy and self-management, we can safely describe these people as libertarians*” then it is clear why the Occupy! movement was/is unable to be a part of any real political change – because there was a lack of a ‘Taubesian place’, a place where an irregular (partisan) activity is protected and supported by a regular power.

[Spatial] limitation of capitalism

Let us examine some of the most well-known ideas about the limits and limitations of capitalism / the free market. It is important to notice here that there is a common blurring of the difference between the totalising epistemological aspect of the free market and capitalism as an economical system. They are very often, effectively and deceptively treated as one.

Let us start with Rosa Luxemburg’s (1951) famous thesis which states that: “*Capital cannot accumulate without the aid of non-capitalist organisations, nor, on the other hand, can it tolerate their continued existence side by side with itself. Only the continuous and progressive disintegration of non-capitalist organisations makes accumulation of capital possible*”. Edward Glaeser’s and Jose Scheinkman’s (2001) idea of non-market social interactions, without which the market cannot function, is similar, however less radical. There is also an interesting concept of ‘cite’, an autonomous community, immune to the influences of the market, formulated by Georges Sorel (Laskowski 2011). Finally, it is worth mentioning Hardt’s and Negri’s (2009) attempt to redefine ‘the commons’, not as a space outside capitalism, but rather as a path/gate leading beyond it (however without defining what really lies outside it). Michael Foucault’s ‘heterotopia’ (1967) could also be added to this list, but it is however a little too obvious, and not necessary appropriate here, because heterotopia isn’t located outside capitalism. Perhaps Hakim Bey (2003) and his Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ), could be mentioned but it is even less related to the idea of spatial autonomy. In the case of Rosa Luxemburg, Edward Glaeser and Georges Sorel, the relationship is quite obvious – these concepts of spheres beyond capitalism (or the free market) can easily be imagined as distinct territories.

It would be easy to draw a map based on these ideas, locating capitalist and non-capitalist areas. For Hardt and Negri however it is more complicated, a map would not be not enough, we would need a three-dimensional representation. For them ‘The Commons’ is formed between / beside / under and over capitalism, maybe it even constitutes a separate dimension. However the authors do not address the problem of ‘what is the common’ as they focus primarily on the creation of a definition of how this is created and not what it is. Moreover – when they do start defining ‘the common’ it appears a kind of magma, a homogenous entity without any distinction or structure. This lack of structure renders this concept useless for a purpose of this paper.

The problem with Hakim Bey's idea lie not so much with the fact that Temporary Autonomy Zones are not spatial, but because they are temporary. TAZ’s are only at first glimpse similar to ideas found in Jacob Taubes thinking – in fact TAZ’s have no real purpose, they are just random, temporary glitches in the system. Again, in terms of the argument present in this paper is not what I am looking for.

The spatiality of alternatives (or ‘supplements’) to free market / capitalism is of fundamental importance. The more the subject (local autonomy) is material, spatial and concrete, the greater the chance of separation / distinguish from – the increasingly more intangible – capitalism.

#### Top-down revolution

The contemporary nation-state is founded on ‘fantasy’<sup>5</sup> – the language and the culture. Contemporary capitalism is based on very similar intangible foundations. The city is much more tangible still – it is neither language nor culture but the technical infrastructure and institutions are founding the city’s very existence. Therefore, the city could be – at least in theory – an area for the formation of a spatial autonomous subject capable of non-capitalist experiments.

Therefore, paradoxically, it seems that the nation-state can and should be the guarantor and protector of local autonomy, the very autonomy which was born to challenge it. It may seem an impossible challenge, yet it is exactly the way China introduced its free market reforms – by creating Special Economic Zones (SEZ). I am using this example not because it illustrates how nation state (stronger power structure) could create a territory organised under anti-hegemonic rules. Obviously SEZ were/are acting in favour of global capitalism, so I am not supporting SEZ as an example of the anomaly I am looking for in this paper. However, SEZ is a perfect illustration of a mechanism of experimentation, which could be a model from which to learn. It is also important to stress that exactly the same mechanism is used in contemporary in China to create territory organised beyond the logic of neoliberalism (Harvey 2012: 64–65).

The creation of SEZ was decided in 1978 and the first four SEZ were created a year later. As described by James Kung (1985), the reasons for creating SEZ were both economic and political. Kung emphasizes that it is wrong to understand this decision as an attempt to restore capitalism in China. It was an experiment with unpredictable end.

From my point of view, two issues are important – first, in official documents and speeches it was strongly emphasised, that SEZ were an experiment, and secondly, it is important to be aware of the environment in which SEZ were created. In the early 1980s, in terms of income China continued to be classified as a poor country but in terms of others indicators such as illiteracy, infant mortality and life expectancy, it was amongst the more affluent countries. China thus began experimenting with capitalism not in a situation of a dramatic crisis, but rather at the time when the most dramatic effects of the cultural revolution were overcome and during a period of relative stability. It should be noted that until the mid-80s over 70% of SEZ trade was with internal markets.

There are some important features of the SEZ experiment – first, its objectives have never been clearly explained and its ambiguity is almost a constitutive element of it. This uncertainty and ambiguity allowed the treatment of SEZs as experimental where the outcome is unknown and unpredictable. There is also the fact that the rules for functioning of SEZ were imposed with some delay. Chenggang Xu (2011) argues that China’s success lies in hidden ‘regionally decentralized authoritarianism’. Interestingly, different regions of China use ‘manually controlled’ policy of protectionism – for example, prohibiting the purchase of taxis produced outside the region. China therefore rejects the networked model, rejects non-scale capitalism allowing it to benefit from the tension between different localities.

Special Economic Zones in China can be regarded as a very important lesson (but not a model!) on how the ‘Taubesian place’ could, in theory, be created – it is a separate autonomous realm, with strong relationships to the outside. The Partisan perspective in this case is very useful because it shows the relationship between what is regular (government) and irregular (SEZ). This is obviously a special case because it is very rare for the authority to consciously design and support a mechanism, which may lead to radical change, but the success of SEZ proves that this strategy is both possible and effective.

#### Conclusions

Carl Schmitt and Jacob Taubes may seem like unexpected guides on the way to the urban anti- neoliberal change, however, as I have argued, their ideas can be useful in the provision of a framework from which to

---

<sup>5</sup> I refer here (indirectly) to ideas presented by Benedict Anderson in the book *Imagined Communities*, Verso: London-New York, 2006.



discuss and construct a starting point for urban revolution. In left-wing revolutionary narratives, there are two questions that determine the possibility of the start of the (urban) revolution – on the one hand a revolutionary subject is needed, and on the other, a pivotal event is required that will itself usher in the revolution. Carl Schmitt and Jacob Taubes identify authority as the prerequisite for revolution – as it always operates ‘top-down’, from large to small scale. However, on the other hand, allowing the construction of a ‘Taubesian place’ as a separate zone for experimenting with universal aspirations. From a Taubesian place the revolution could spread globally – this time from a small scale upwards. The concept of Partisan shows how the ‘irregular’ comes in contact with the ‘regular’ and this point of contact in the city must be placed somewhere. Partisan is a concept connecting Taubes’ narrative of a nomad rooted in Logos and Schmitt’s territorial imagination – partisan is a ‘living Taubesian place’. Urban revolution must have a starting point, a fulcrum. Capturing the essence and meaning of this may, in my opinion, open a new way of practicing progressive urban policy.

## References

- Agamben, G. 1998. *Homo sacer: sovereign power and bare life*. Translated by Daniel Heller, Palo Alto. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Awan, N.; Schneider, T.; Till, J. 2011. *Spatial agency: other ways of doing architecture*. London: Routledge.
- Badiou, A. 2005. *Being and event*. Translated by Oliver Feltham. New York: Continuum.
- Badiou, A. 2011. *Infinity and Set Theory: How To Begin With The Void* [online], [cited 10 November 2013]. Available from Internet: <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/alain-badiou/articles/infinity-and-set-theory/>
- Beaumont, J. 2011. *Postsecular cities: space, theory and practice*. New York: Continuum.
- Bey, H. 2003. *TAZ: the temporary autonomous zone, ontological anarchy, poetic terrorism*. Los Angeles: Autonomedia.
- Chenggang Xu. 2011. The fundamental institutions of China’s reforms and development, *Journal of Economic Literature*, 49(4): 1076–1151. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1257/jel.49.4.1076>
- Cioran, E. 1970. Encounter with the Void, *The Hudson Review* 23(1): 37–48. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3849597>
- Cloke, P.; Beaumont, J. 2012. *Faith-based organisations and exclusion in European cities*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Cloke, P. 2013. *Working faith*. Milton Keynes: aternoster Press.
- Eliade, M. 1971. *The myth of the eternal return: or, cosmos and history*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Foucault, M. 1967. *Of Other Spaces. Heterotopias* [online], [cited 10 November 2013]. Available from Internet: **HYPERLINK** "<http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>"<http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>
- Glaeser, E.; Scheinkman, J. 2001. Non-market interactions, *Harvard Institute of Economic Research Paper No. 1914*. **HYPERLINK** "<http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.263374>"<http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.263374>
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. 2006. *The end of capitalism (as we knew it) a feminist critique of political economy*. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.
- Hardt, M.; Negri, A. 2009. *Commonwealth*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Harvey, D. 2012. *Rebel cities. From the right to the city to the urban revolution*. London-New York: Verso, 64–65.
- Harvey, D. 2000. *Spaces of hope*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Heidegger, M. 2008. Building, dwelling thinking, in N. Leach (Ed.). *Rethinking architecture. A reader in cultural theory*. London: Routledge, 100–109.
- Hirst, P. 2005. *Space and Power. Politics, War and Architecture*, Cambridge: Polity Press
- Kung, J. 1985. The origins and performance of China’s special economic zone, *Asian Journal of Public Administration* 7(1): 198–215.
- Laskowski, P. 2011. *Maszyny Wojenne. Georges Sorel i strategię radykalnej filozofii politycznej*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca.

- Leyshon, A. Lee, R. Williams, C. 2003. *Alternative Economic Spaces*, London: Sage
- Luxemburg, R. 1951. *The accumulation of capital*. London: Routledge. 416 p.
- Marazzi, Ch. 2010. *The violence of financial capitalism*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).
- Nawratek, K. 2012. *Holes in the whole. Introduction to the urban revolutions*. Washington: Zero Books.
- Rossi, A. 1967. *Introduction to Étienne-Louis Boullée, Architettura, saggio sull'arte*. Translated by Aldo Rossi. Padua: Marsilio, 4–14.
- Boullée, L. 1953. Architecture, essay on art., in H. Rosenau (Ed.). *Boullée's treatise on architecture* quoted by P. V. Aureli 2011. *The possibility of an absolute architecture*. MIT Press: London.
- Schmitt, C. 2003. *The nomos of the earth in the international law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*. New York: Telos Press Publishing.
- Schmitt, C. 2004. *The theory of the partisan: a commentary/remark on the concept of the political*. Michigan State University Press.
- Staber, U. 2001. The structure of networks in industrial districts, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 25(3): 537–552. HYPERLINK "<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.00328>" \n  
\_blank<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.00328>
- Taibo, C. 2013. *It is Necessary to Create Autonomous Spaces* [online], [cited 10 November 2013]. Available from Internet: HYPERLINK "<http://autonomies.org/en/2013/06/it-is-necessary-to-create-autonomous-spaces-carlos-taibo/>"<http://autonomies.org/en/2013/06/it-is-necessary-to-create-autonomous-spaces-carlos-taibo/>
- Taubes, J. 2009. *Occidental eschatology*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Taubes, J. 2013. *To Carl Schmitt: letters and reflections*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Unger, R. M. 2009. *The left alternative*. London-New York: Verso.

## **KRZYSZTOF NAWRATEK**

*School of Architecture, Design and Environment, Faculty of Arts, Roland Levinsky Building, Plymouth University, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA, UK. E-mail:* HYPERLINK "<mailto:krzysztof.nawratek@plymouth.ac.uk>"*krzysztof.nawratek@plymouth.ac.uk*

Dr Krzysztof Nawratek is a lecturer in Architecture, M.Arch. and M.A. in Architecture programme leader at the School of Architecture, Design and Environment, Plymouth University, United Kingdom. Educated as an architect and urban planner, he has worked in Poland, Latvia (e.g. for Riga City Council) and Ireland (Principal Urban Designer at Colin Buchanan, Dublin). Nawratek worked as a visiting professor at the Geography Department at the University of Latvia and as a researcher at National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis, Maynooth, Ireland. Member of Board of Experts European Prize for Urban Public Space 2012 and member of selection panel for the Polish contribution to the 13th International Architecture Biennial in Venice in 2012 and to the 14<sup>th</sup> in 2014. Krzysztof is an urban theorist, author of *City as a Political Idea* (Plymouth, University of Plymouth Press, 2011) and *Holes in the Whole. Introduction to the Urban Revolutions* (Winchester, Zero Books, 2012) and several papers and chapters in edited books.