

ALI MADANIPOUR

LECTURE

ARCHITECTURE LECTURE SERIES
2018, UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SPACE



THURSDAY 17 MAY, 2018
17.45 - 19.30

MARKOU DRAKOU 12, NICOSIA
CHATEAU STATUS



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Can public spaces be a response to social fragmentation, segregation and exclusion? How far can these urban nodes contribute to social and spatial justice? In the context of centrifugal forces that split societies apart, the idea of public space is advocated as a catalyst for bringing the fragmented pieces together. This presentation will analyse the political, economic and cultural aspects of the conditions of social fragmentation and the potentials and limitations of public spaces for confronting them. It will critically discuss the multivalent roles that they play in the processes of urban change.

The conditions and processes of social fragmentation, segregation and exclusion are generally considered as social pathologies that require a remedy; as signs of social inequality and injustice that need redressing. In response, various reforms are devised to reduce social inequality, halt social disintegration, deliver social justice, and promote social inclusion and cohesion. One of these responses is the development of public spaces, as spaces of sociability, interaction and exchange, which could link the fragments together and generate counterweights to centrifugal and fragmentary social forces. This presentation will examine whether and how far the public space can play this role, primarily in European cities, but in the context of global processes.

The public space, as a primary ingredient of urban life, which facilitates co-presence, is thought to have the potential for bringing together the broken, segregated and excluded pieces. It is thought to counter the forces of social fragmentation and segregation, and therefore contribute to the possibility of social inclusion and justice. The literature on the public space has big claims and hopes about such potentials to heal the social fractures. So the critical question is whether these claims can be believed, and whether such optimism can be maintained. Can the public space, which in fact is a mirror of the urban society, be a counterweight to social segregation and exclusion?

To answer the question, the presentation will investigate the possible linkages between social segregation and public space in the context of urban change, arguing that the challenges of, and responses to, social fragmentation should be understood in the context of social and historical changes, at the intersection of politics, economics and culture. It will examine the shapes that fragmentation, segregation and exclusion take, their implications for urban life, the possible contributions of public space towards addressing these social maladies. This will be accompanied by a critical evaluation of such contributions as to whether they halt or exacerbate social fragmentation and segregation in new ways.

ALI MADANIPOUR



Ali Madanipour is Professor of Urban Design at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University, and has been affiliated with the AESOP thematic group on Public Space and Urban Cultures from its inception. He is currently involved in an EC-funded research project on the relationship between localism and spatial justice (Relocal.eu). His recent books include *Cities in Time: Temporary Urbanism and the Future of the City* (2017, Bloomsbury) and *Handbook of Planning Theory* (Routledge, 2018).

