An Immanent Criticism of Urban Design in Montevideo

MORALES Washington
Universidad de la República, Uruguay
wamm1756@gmail.com
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The debate about the so called “excluding design” has been a focus for applied philosophy for several years. The structure of this debate is constituted by deontological and consequentialist’s applied ethics and as well as agonistic democratic approaches. This paper asks for the applicability of these points of view to the particular socio-political reality of Montevideo. Examining this reality closer, I hold that we cannot comprehend the recent aestheticization of the excluding design there through these contemporary philosophical frameworks. As an alternative philosophical procedure, I analyze the aestheticization of excluding design in Montevideo from Rahel Jaeggli’s immanent criticism. I hold that this process of aestheticization implies an ideological regressive “form of life”. And I also argue that the Uruguayan democracy is affected by this ideological regression. Nevertheless, because this aestheticization is not an exclusive Uruguayan phenomenon, this paper intends to open one direction in applied philosophy of urban design.

Keywords: Immanent Criticism, Urban Design, Democracy, Aestheticization

Problems and Theses

Anybody who visits Montevideo and looks carefully at its urban landscapes will certainly find it has a highly heterogeneous architectural aspect. In particular, houses have a variety of fences, ranging from one with mere aesthetic purposes to notoriously practical uses. Italian style houses are still part of the urban landscapes, with fences clearly made to satisfy an aesthetic function (see Figure 1). The Italian-style fences work, or almost worked, as aestheticized balcony. A second type of fences, which are now part of both the Italian style houses and the newer one, are those that cover whole windows and external doors. Hence, they obviously have a defensive function. If we pay attention, we can also find a third type of fences, those which are not covering windows and doors (see Figure 2). Moreover, there are other objects in the Montevidean urban landscape, such as flowerpots, garden gnomes, sculptures, and fountains (see Figure 3). It seems obvious that if we see ornaments in the houses’ façade, we tend to naturally think that they are merely ornamental, i.e., aesthetically oriented. However, recently, it can see in the city flowerpots and tubes recently and curiously posited in the same place of those unusual situated fences (see Figure 4). Are those new locations contingent? It does not seem trivial that these objects are sometimes located in similar spaces as the third type of fences, what I will call “unfamiliar fences”. In fact, the answer is very clear: they are alternative forms of defensive urban design. The flowerpots and tubes do cover neither doors nor windows, and they are not put in their traditional places (see Figure 5). This change of new practical uses for external house objects is a phenomenon that Montevideo only recently experiences, and that has been “excluding design”. Fences, flowerpots, and other objects are aimed not only to defend indoor spaces of Montevidean houses, but a lot of them are also strategically positioned to persuade people from resting (setting, sleeping) in outside locations (see Figure 6).

Although this phenomenon has different names, those are determined by two main case interpretations. Excluding design has been recognized around the world by a lot of institutions, such as academy and press. It is
not, therefore, a specific Montevidean social phenomenon. These main interpretations are organized in two sets of interlocutors: those who believe that using excluding design supposes, attending its diverse consequences, a morally wrong decision and those who believe that, by virtue of diverse practical principles, to using excluding design is the better political decision of a community. The use of spikes in London urban area, example that will be analyzed later, has had broad media coverage, big public response from the political authorities and of course a big response within London citizens. To many journalists and academics, those spikes are located by virtue of morally and politically wrong decisions. However, Karl de Fine Licht (2017) has questioned the legitimacy of the axiological negative perspective concerning excluding objects.

Nevertheless, considering the particular Uruguayan case, I hold that the discussions about the legitimacy of excluding design have missed the point. The counter-arguments very smartly developed by the de Fine Licht against his interlocutors engages us to accept a specific form of applied philosophy. In accordance with his paper, the excluding design can be evaluated through deontological and consequentialist categories, i.e., by which have been called “internal” and “external criticism” (Jaeggi, 2018). In my opinion, however, it is necessary to change the framework to interpret this world wide phenomenon. In response to the perspective of agonistic on design and democracy (Di Salvo, 2010), I state that we can normatively explain the use of excluding design around the world. I argue that we can both comprehend and also criticize the excluding design in Montevideo, i.e., we can gain a comprehension of the ideological conditions of Montevidean forms of life materialized in urban design objects as, in turn, we can gain also a critical and transformative perspective of this phenomenon. My thesis consists in determining if the conditions which produce solutions to a socio-political problem by aestheticization of defensive objects are the same that produce such a socio-political problem. The corollary of this thesis is that this problem, recognized by the middle class and the Government as socio-political problem related to poverty (and in particular, to homeless people), cannot be solved by the middle class. Moreover, I point out that the city’s embellishment process supposes an inner contradictory practice in order to solve such a problem recognized as socio-political one. We assist to a regressive state of social affairs, because the aestheticization of excluding urban design contributes to further invisibilize the problematic process of social polarization that the city has lived for many decades.
Therefore, I will defend here an immanent criticism of such a process of regressive forms of life. I will introduce the main problems which Rahel Jaeggi deals with in *Critique of Forms of Life* as well as her main theses in the same book in order to reorganize the debate on public urban design and democracy. The general aim, then, is to rethink the challenges of designers, given that their products are not isolated from political practices and discourses which produce not formal, but living instances of democracy.  

![Figure 2: Example of unusual fences in Montevideo](image)

**Antecedents: Common Perspectives**

The identification of excluding design as such has become more common in the past decades. Particularly, in United Kingdom and United States, journalists have referred to the issues around the appearance of excluding design objects and procedures. In understanding the excluding design in *latu senso*, Robert Moses’ architectural design has been used as example not only by the press (Powell, 6 May 2007), but also by academy (Caro, 1975, Schindler, 2015), due to their notably discriminatory approach. For instance, for some predominantly affluent, white New York neighbourhoods, he designed a parkway that was lower than the average of that time. This meant that buses, which were used mainly by poor black people, could not go underneath them. British press has also called attention to the use of spikes in United Kingdom’s urban areas (Blundy, 13 Jun. 2014; Omidi, 12 Jun. 2014) as well as the curious case of using a certain pink light in Nottingham in order to exclude teenagers from some public sites (Omidi, 12 Jun. 2014). Finally, to mention one last example, for a time German train stations used atonal music to expulse people with ‘anti-social’ behaviour (Marshall, 22 Aug. 2018).

The use of architecture, light, industrial design, and music as tools to persuasion to push people from one urban area to another has been interpreted as a process of political, ethical, and juridical ordering. As Schindler (2015) pointed out, the objects of design, in *latu senso*, require an interpretation from a juridical and philosophical point of view, insofar as the laws and social practical rules are not the sole media to order social behaviours. Design is one of the wide set of social resources that rule human practices. Although there are
particular studies of the excluding design which focus on specific urban areas (Fainstein, 2009; Dawson, 2009; Newman, 1996; Petty, 2017), in fact there are not many researches in applied philosophy that have analyzed this specific phenomenon.

Recently, Karl de Fine Licht (2017) published what is probably the latest applied philosophy research on this phenomenon, where the author aims to evaluate arguments that find political and ethical faults of the excluding design. His starting point is a review by Giovanni de Grandis (2013) of Susan Fainstein’s *The Just City*. de Grandis mentions Fainstein’s previous work on urban planning and justice (Fainstein, 2009), showing that it establishes the whole discussion in relation to the disputes on the application of John Rawls theory of justice into urban planning. According to de Grandis, “Fainstein claims that justice should be the first concern in urban policy-making.” (de Grandis, 2013, p. 37). In this text, de Fine Licht puts the emphasis on the discrepancies of de Grandis about Fainstein’s theses, particularly in relation to the open field of research which, according to de Grandis, needed more academic attention. With this paper, de Fine Licht aims to evaluate a specific domain of urban policy-making, i.e., to philosophically evaluate the uses of the called “excluding urban design”.

Throughout his article, de Fine Licht introduces arguments against the excluding design to then provide his counter-arguments. While academics, politicians, and journalists have stated that the excluding design has negative consequences for the whole society and especially for the well-being of marginalized people, de Fine Licht tries to refute these statements from different angles. First, according to de Fine Licht, (A) we do not know if, or at least it has not been proved that, there are a set of negative consequences from excluding architecture. Second, (B) de Fine Licht argues that even though some social groups are excluded by urban design, those are not necessarily the most marginalized groups of society. Third, (C) the author declares that “…defensive architecture may actually benefit those against whom it is designed.” (de Fine Licht, 2017, 32). Fourth, (D) de Fine Licht holds that sometimes flowerpots, benches, fences, spikes, etc., are bought to satisfy an aesthetical desire, not to morally exclude. It is not ever a question of morals, but aesthetics. Fifth, (E) de Fine Licht states that the duty preventing us from avoiding marginalized people do not impel us to meet them systematically.1 A sixth de Fine Licht’s counter-argument (F) says that excluding design promotes the use of shelters, and, assuming that the shelters give to homeless better conditions of life than the streets, then the excluding design supposes the materialization of a ethical right decisions. Finally, (G) de Fine Licht analyzes the argument that asserts that excluding design is ethically wrong, because everybody has a right to use public places. Nevertheless, he objects that every one of us has the right to use the public spaces, but only if the users do not damage the private property of others.

The Problems of the Common Perspectives

In this section, I want to discuss de Fine Licht’s counter-arguments, aiming to evaluate the fruitfulness of his whole framework. Although, I do not deny the philosophical richness of deontological and consequentialist’s approaches in applied philosophy, by virtue of the particular Uruguayan social situation, I believe that it is necessary to revisit key philosophical notions about excluding design. As I said in the Introduction, the problematization of the debate’s framework can be incidental to rethink the role of design in democratic societies and also the role of the designer in her socio-political context.

I will now analyze de Fine Licht’s (A), (B), (C), and (F). Starting with (B), it is necessary to say that any problem of exclusion should be considered a real big problem for a community. If we ask which social groups are the most excluded in Montevideo, the answer is not “the skateboarders”. Skateboarding is not practiced extensively in Montevideo and the different local governments have created specific spots to practice it. Moreover, there is not a record of relevant social tensions concerning such a practice. Nevertheless, in Montevideo homeless people are strongly ruled by not only private agents, but also by the local and the State Governments.2 Against the de Fine Licht’s counter-argument then, in Uruguay, the groups that are the most socially excluded are also the most economically marginalized.

1 However, as we will see later, these last two counter-arguments set out by de Fine Licht are the keys to the better understand of Uruguayan case, because they suppose ideological perspectives which oriented the aestheticization of excluding design in Montevideo.

2 In Montevideo, as Fiorella Ciapessoni points out, “…the problem of homelessness has become very publicly visible” (Ciapessoni, 2016, p. 113).
I will mention two sources of discrimination towards homeless people in Montevideo. Firstly, the Uruguayan Government has developed a strategy to solve the problem of public safety by promoting. It aims to fight against the insecurity by social integration (Ministerio del Interior [Ministry of Interior], 2012). The expected integration is achieved through the transformation of public infrastructure. For example, one of the most important governmental actions which include, among different spaces, the mentioned skate parks. In contrast, a lot of State buildings have clear excluding design elements, such as fences as those I mentioned above in the introduction of this paper, i.e., they do not cover windows and doors; they cover State public sites where homeless rest. Moreover, the new design of the Montevidean public garbage containers prevent of homeless people from sleep inside them or go through the bins and collect valuables, as these containers turn impossible to take out anything from within them. This governmental strategy is grounded in the law (Poder Legislativo [Legislative Power], 2013), which forbids everybody to rest in public spaces. The second source of discrimination has a double aspect. On one hand, to my knowledge there is just one article concerning the excluding design and homelessness (Ferreira, 30 Sep. 2016), i.e., the first aspect is the public absence or omission of the problem. On the other hand, some press journalists have written articles clearly discriminating a heterogeneous and marginalized population in Montevideo (Melgar, 7 Apr. 2016).

Both the Uruguayan self-comprehension and the governmental aim concerning the integration of Uruguayan people seem to clearly contradict the actual circumstances of everyday life. The question is if these contradictions are just mere contingencies or if they are related to a big structural problem. We Uruguayans tend, on one hand, to believe that we are very tolerant to different people (Achúgar, 2002) and, on the other hand, we seek an integration of all of us by designing objects and writing laws which produce the opposite expected effect. No one of these sources of ordering the social behaviour of marginalized people seems to emerge ex nihilo. The number of homeless people has increased considerably in the last decade. According to the last governmental census, there are around 1650 people living in the street in Montevideo (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social [Ministry of Social Development], 2016), which represented a 52,6 % notorious increase from 2011. The situation is critical. It seems that we are attending a whole social transformation of the city by virtue of the polarization of people. And, as I said, the Uruguayan press and the academy do not problematize the objects designed to exclude marginalized people and to an extent, they do not regard which are the ideological conditions behind the aestheticized design in urban spaces.

Let us now examine the counter-arguments (A) and (F). If we think that promoting shelters can benefit homeless people, we can also think that to promote excluding design has positive consequences. de Fine Licht's counter-argument (F) can be an answer to the counter-argument (A), because if excluding design foments the shelters and the shelters can benefit marginalized people, then it is possible that the excluding design actually helps them.

Nevertheless, that statement is easily debunked if we take into account the Uruguayan situation. In Montevideo, as in many other cities, homeless shelters aim to contribute to the re-integration their users into a ‘normal’ life. However, they face big issues. Psychiatrist Esteban Acosta stated in an interview done by journalist Betania Núñez that many homeless people in Montevideo suffer ‘hospitalism’ or ‘shelterism’, and the psychological, social, and psychiatric literature on the topic supports the diagnosis (Núñez, 30 Sep. 2016). According to Arapoglou, Gounis, and Siatitsa (2015), the ‘shelterisation’ is:

[…] a type of institutionalisation specific to homelessness refers to the effects of prolonged dependency on institutional regimes that tend to colonize a homeless person’s everyday routines in ways that render long(er)-term life paths and objectives impossible even to contemplate. Contrary to what may appear obvious meaning of the term, we view shelterisation as a structural condition […], there is ample documentation of the ways in which these settings, as well as the wider array of emergency services for homeless persons, capture the time and exhaust the energy of those that have to stay there. (Arapoglou, Gounis, & Siatitsa, 2015, p. 140).

It is unacceptable to think that shelters, at least in Montevideo, have only benefits to homeless people. de Fine Licht’s consequentialist and deontologist approaches do not help us to decide the legitimacy or arbitrariness of excluding design in Montevideo, because the excluded population are mainly, it seems, a marginalized one and because the benefits of exclusion are not clear. The consequentialist’s ethic theories, on the one hand, hold “… that normative properties depend only on consequences” (Sinnott-Armstrong, 2015). As we examined, the consequences of excluding design in Montevideo can not be the foundations to accept such a design. However, to deny these foundations, ipso facto, do not allow us to affirm the opposite thesis. Moreover, the deontological approach, on the other hand, does not allow us to understand, by its proper definition
(Alexander & Moore, 2016), the socio-political conditions of excluding design in Montevideo. This approach constitutes an example of “external criticism” (Jaeggi, 2018), because the choices are judged by normative principles which are not intrinsic of the forms of life in question. In other words, it does not matter what the context is, the norm used to judge choices is ever employed.

Hence, we need to satisfy two theoretical conditions to examine the excluding design in Montevideo. 1) The empirical information of the social situation in Montevideo seems relevant to analyze the excluding design, because we are facing big socio-political tensions. Therefore, the evaluation of excluding design needs an “internal” approach, i.e., to comprehend the proper characteristics of Uruguayan forms of life. 2) Nevertheless, such an evaluation requires transcending the empirical conditions which merely describe the phenomenon in order to achieve, in turn, a normative evaluation of such a particular phenomenon. Then, the internal criticism does not allow for itself to satisfy this second condition, because an internal criticism of forms of life, according to Rahel Jaeggi (2018), inhibits the possibility to transcending the status quo. i.e., it does not question the initial conditions of one community’s problematic practices.

Nevertheless, the contemporary theoretic landscape offers an alternative to consequentialists and deontologist’s ethic approaches and also to the agonistic democratic approaches. DiSalvo, for instance, holds a perspective on design and democracy from the Ernsto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s theses (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). However, as Rahel Jaeggi points out (2018), we need not only to recognize the different conflicts and tensions of democratic forms of life, but also the possibilities to rationally thematize and discuss the achieved solutions which some forms of life employ to solve their socio-political problems. The idea of normativity cannot be strictly founded on the agonistic perspective of Chantal Mouffe (2016). Hence, it is difficult to satisfy the two theoretic conditions from her theoretical point of view3. For these reasons, I propose an immanent criticism to understand and evaluate the excluding design in Montevideo. I look for the comprehension of the contradiction between the discourses and the practices – we can remember, for example, the contradiction between, the self-comprehension of Uruguayan people and their practices, as well as the government’s contradictions between its aims and its laws and practices. But I also look for to demonstrate that these contradictions are not contingent ones, but that they are structural ones.

Figure 3: Example of traditional ornamental fountain

3 “In fact, it seems to me that contingency is incompatible with any particular normative claim that might follow from it.” (Cross, 2017, p. 189). Ben Cross, by virtue of his own reasons, would be accept the critical theses of Rahel Jaeggi against the possibility of a normativity in a agonistic democratic’s framework.
Aestheticization design as a Regressive Form of Life

I argue that Rahel Jaeggi’s thesis is the best alternative to the discourses on deliberative democracy, i.e., to those conceptions which engage us with the principle of ethical abstinence (NOTA AL PIE) and I consider it to be the best alternative to agonistic democratic approaches, because Jaeggi recognizes the inherent conflictive processes of any form of life, and also she also recognizes the normative inherent character of them. The immanent criticism can make the social structures visible. Moreover, the visualization of the contradictoriness of some social practices would open the social black box processes to alternative solutions. In this way, the naturalized solutions inherited by a form of life leave behind their fate character. In other words, to visualize the inherited character of socially interpreted processes of problem-solving (social practices or forms of life) contributes to determining a factum as a historically interpreted problem-solving process. As I think, the whole framework of an immanent criticism allows us to evaluate the entire ideological conditions of a democratic system. Such a framework makes possible to determine the social tensions, identifying, in turn, their deep social axiomatic. All of that also gives the conditions to problematize the forms of normativity and rationality involved in social practices. In this theoretical context, the designers confront the challenge of reflecting on their role in a global form of life where, and by, they produce design objects. Clearly, that reflection can be the starting point to problematize the nature of the design objects as the materialization of forms of life. Therefore, I think that the hard problem of designers facing our democratic political organizations is precisely to ask themselves about the global process of social transformations where they live.

Following the example of immanent criticism analyzed by Jaeggi (2018), we can evaluate the excluding design in Montevideo. As Jaeggi points out, Hegel recognizes a structural relationship between the independence of modern individuals and the dependent character of their interests to social institutions – essentially, the market. The procedure of immanent criticism supposes, therefore, three pre-conditions and three active procedures as such. Firstly, the immanent criticism recognizes the necessary relationship between some social norms and practices, and then its primary task is to identify the no contingent character of such relationship. Secondly, the immanent criticism recognizes that one practice is necessarily constituted by a set of norms, and then its second task is to determine such a constitutive character. Finally, the immanent criticism finds the inner contradictoriness character of a practice by virtue of its constitution by a set of norms. And then, such contradictoriness character is not contingent, but structural. Therefore, the immanent criticism claims to demonstrate the structural character of the practice’s contradiction by virtue of a norm. By this procedure, the evaluative moment of immanent criticism emerges from the research on the interpretations that one community makes of itself and the practices and products developed and associated to these interpretations. The process of transformation of a practice, then, is a process of the transformation of the interpretations of problems and solutions which a community has to deal with. The role of the Thomas Kuhn’s thesis on scientific progress is not minor in Jaeggi’s thesis. According to Kuhn, a successful theory depends precisely on the interpretations of one problem made by a scientific community. If one community holds the high capacity of a theory to solve its own big problem, then such a theory becomes the best candidate to guide the further subordinate problems and then to pilot successfully the future scientific researches. One theory is successfully only if it is capable to formulate a problem that is, according to its community, solvable without turning less economic or more obscure their original formulations (Kuhn, 1996). Hence, in analogous way, one form of life is successful if their solutions to its big problem do not imply some sort of regression, i.e., if they obscure or invisibilize more and more the social axiomatic structures which produce such a problem.

As I mentioned above, Montevideo not only has different fences, but also has ornamental objects situated in usual places. If we think about the differences not from a synchronic point of view, but by attending the increase of homelessness in Montevideo it is possible to hold one diachronic thesis. The fences have historically changed their function, because they reflect the transformations on the relationships among the Uruguayans. In the first place, we can recognize a first moment in the Montevidean 20th century when the fences were becoming aesthetic objects oriented by aesthetic functions (to use a balcony). Then, the defensive fences emerged, due to the socially interpreted problem of insecurity. By virtue of such a problem, the fences started to cover the whole doors and windows of Montevidean houses and buildings. More recently and in a third stage, we witnessed the emergence of fences that do not cover any door or any window. These fences clearly have a defensive function, but such a function does not seek to protect the indoor of houses. These fences do not fight, therefore, against the insecurity itself. It seems that these fences are designed and positioned to push homeless people out. As we can see in the Figure 2, these fences cover outdoor places used by the homeless to shelter themselves from wind, sun, and rain. Therefore, the problem is not only the insecurity, but the disagreement or distaste, because it is also a question of aesthetics of poverty, concerning
other forms of life. But, finally, we have a fourth big social transformation. In middle-class neighbourhoods the flowerpots and tubes are putting in the same places that could serve as potential shelters. But why are these decorative objects chosen to the detriment of the fences? It is just a mere variation of the practical decisions involved in using the newer fences? It is possible to find the primary answers to these questions in a lucid paper by James Petty (2016).

Treating the famous case of London spikes (Petty, 2016), if we examine not only the press reactions to these spikes in London, but also the point of view of the residents and The Mayor of London, we can conclude that one of the main focuses on such an issue is an aesthetic one. Quoting a Leonie Sandercock’s paper (Sandercock, 1997, p. 30), Petty argues that the spikes controversy visibilizes the imaginary shared by some London citizens, i.e., the ideal image of a clean, sanitise, attractive, and safe London. This ideal image of London involves a tight implementation of the order, in particular, of urban control. However, this procedure visually shapes the urban landscape, sometimes contradicting the ideal image of the city. The spikes issue formulates, in latu senso, a contradiction between the ideal images of London and the seeking of the city’s security. This case also sheds light on the protests against the installation of spikes, because they would affect as the homeless do such ideal images of the city. If we reflect on that, we can state that the process of aestheticization of the cities implies the update of the social answer to the spikes issue. If the materialization of social control is aestheticized, then we can shape a city where social tensions seem to be inexistent. Nevertheless, this process of aestheticization is a worldwide tendency. Choon-Piew Pow (2017) shows that the governmental urban city planning in China is increasingly oriented by aesthetic virtues, in particular, the idea of updating the harmonious experience of cities. In a previous work on the Shanghai’s process of aestheticization, Pow holds that:

*By being thoroughly aestheticized, class relations are depoliticized and reduced to questions of lifestyle, consumption patterns, taste, and visual pleasure. Ultimately, the paper contends that in gated communities such as Vanke Garden City, the celebration of landscape beauty and appearance masks the interrelatedness of issues of aesthetic and class identity on the one hand and broader problems of urban inequality and segregation on the other. The seemingly innocent pleasure in the aesthetic appreciation of landscapes and the desire to protect the beauty and aesthetic qualities of landscape can act as a subtle yet highly effective mechanism of social exclusion and the reaffirmation of elite class identities. (Pow, 2009, p.387).*

![Figure 4: Example of fences and flowerpots covering possible shelters](image)
If an immanent criticism implies the determination of a structural no-contingent relationship between practices and norms, we find the relationship between the aestheticization and “urban inequality” around the world. It seems, then, that the Uruguayan process is not an isolated phenomenon of aestheticization of political ordering of urban spaces. In the imaginary of peaceful city produced by the Uruguayans, Argentineans, and Brazilians we can find Punta del Este as an exclusive beach town in Uruguay, hosting thousands of tourists from Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil. It is the most aestheticized city in Uruguay and the reasons for that is precisely associated with the idea of relaxing life which, in turn, supposes letting behind the urban landscapes of very conflicted places as Montevideo (Uruguay), Buenos Aires (Argentina), and Porto Alegre (Brazil). In fact, there is evidence of the increase in fences in public spaces in Buenos Aires, and specifically by virtue of the recent political and social conflicts in Argentina (Chronopoulos, 2014). Such an idea of a relaxing life is not clearly possible under conditions of homelessness which are not only the homelessness itself, but also the visual and material signs of such homeless people. The aestheticization of Montevideo has its model in Uruguayan beach towns as Punta del Este.

Nevertheless, what is the nature of the structural relationship? I think that it is necessary to determine more precisely the perspectives of Petty and Pow from the Jaeggi’s immanent criticism. The ideal of harmonious city materialized in aestheticized objects implies the conditions which produce the problems to the aestheticized solutions come from. The fourth phase of the middle class form of life supposes the pacification – control – by virtue of aestheticization of the urban landscape. If we attend to de Fine Licht’s counter-arguments (D) and (G), we can hold that, on the one hand, the politics are usually excluded from the aesthetics and, on the other hand, it seems that what the Montevidean middle class wants to do is to avoid any sign of poverty from its visual urban landscapes. If we put together both counter-arguments, we can hold that the aestheticization implies the exclusion of politics from the horizon of Montevideo’s visual aspect. If we argue with Jaeggi that
the democratic system not only supposes the integration, but also the disagreements of different forms of life, the aestheticization has its ideal image in the dissolution of the socio-political conditions of democracy. Let us consider the moments involved in such a process. Firstly, the aestheticization of Montevideo seems to imply ideals of full safety, purity, health, and harmony of the city. Secondly, these ideas imply the dissolution of other divergent forms of life, especially the marginalized ones. Thirdly, the diverse forms of life are constitutive of politics and, in particular, of democracy according to Jaeggi’s perspective. Fourth, for Montevidean middle-class, aestheticized design is the counter face of democracy. Fifth, the middle class seeks to solve the disagreements with others by using aestheticized design. Sixth, the aestheticized design, therefore, supposes both the claim to solve the disagreements and the dissolution of other divergent forms of life. In other words, the aestheticization supposes the solution of a problem and also the violence that it pretends to solve.

If we consider once again these moments not from a synchronic point of view, but from a diachronic one, the aestheticization turns itself a late moment of the invisibilization of the disagreements of different forms of life. The fences do not cover themselves as defensive objects, i.e., they do not hide the disagreements. Therefore, they are urban signs of different forms of life in conflict, although these conflicts were understood as the obvious material exclusion of homeless. However, the aestheticization goes deeper in the divergence, as there are no any public sign of conflict. Because it does not produce an explicit sign of conflict, it presents the apparent image of the solution of its original problem. In this way, the aestheticization of excluding design strengthens the problem and, then, produces an ideological image of society – an inverted image of society. Hence, it is not a successful moment of the problem-solving process, because it does not visibilize the different phases of the conflict and the different interpretations of these phases. Therefore, we can say that the aestheticization of urban Montevidean design has a regressive nature.
Conclusions

If we do a close examination of the Uruguayan social reality, the deontological and consequentialist’s ethic approaches to excluding design do not allow us to comprehend the relationships between democracy and design in the country. There is evidence that does not support de Fine Licht’s counter-arguments against excluding design. The whole debate on deontological and consequentialist norms is under discussion, because the most excluded people in Uruguay are marginal and because such people are pressed by the Scylla and Charybdis of, on the one hand, being expelled from streets by civil, private, and governmental dispositives of control and, on the other hand, the harsh living conditions of shelters. Nevertheless, it is possible to give another framework to examine and also evaluate the legitimacy of excluding design in Montevideo. The immanent analysis proposed by Rahel Jaeggi can satisfy the double nature of a descriptive and normative philosophical framework. Proceeding to analyze the Uruguayan aestheticization of urban design, it is possible to recognize this political role of such a design. It cooperates to increase the process of social polarization, since it covers the social coercion into an aesthetic turn. This aesthetic turn contradicts, for its part, the deliberative, agonistic, and immanent perspectives on democracy, because, firstly, it invisibilizes the social conflicts, then, secondly, it does not allow a public discussion about it and, thirdly, because it does not visibilize the historicity of its ideological structure. Therefore, such aestheticization inhibits the political development of democracy in Uruguay.

Although this paper deals with the different phases of Uruguayan social changes, the aestheticization of urban areas is not an exclusive phenomenon of Uruguay. This paper aimed to methodologically contribute to analyze the particular characteristics of the problem-solving tendencies embedded in the world wide aestheticization. Therefore, no matter the designer’s particular social circumstances are, the most political challenging problems of design are, firstly, the self-consciousness of the forms of life materialized in projects and design pieces and, secondly, to question the political legitimacy of these projects and pieces. The critique of forms of life, therefore, is also one of the designer’s tasks. The awareness of the ideological framework of design’s practices is a condition to question the world wide process of the depoliticization of democracy triggered by aestheticization.

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