

# Save Karadere

Resisting Relentless Urbanization of a Wild Beach on the  
Bulgarian Black Sea Coast



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**Save Karadere: Resisting Relentless Urbanization of a Wild Beach on the Bulgarian Black**

**Sea Coast**

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## Summary

### Background

During the communist rule in Bulgaria, the country witnessed a boom of strictly planned resorts that were based on a synthesis between the communist ideology and capitalist market model. Ever since the collapse of the communist regime, relentless urban development has been ravaging Bulgaria's coast. In this context, forthcoming mass tourism development currently threatens the nature and culture of Karadere, one of the few wild beaches on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. The offshore corporation Madara Europe and the Bulgarian company Maxi I proposed the construction of a high-end holiday complex (designed by Norman Foster) and a luxury campsite respectively. The forthcoming urbanization of Karadere unleashed a wave of social disapproval throughout Bulgaria. A coalition of citizens' initiative "Let's save Karadere" and NGOs mobilized in a progressive network of solidarity in attempts to preserve the wild beach.

### Objectives

The urbanization of Karadere does not only have an environmental impact because the beach and its hinterland fall within EU's Natura 2000 eco network, but also economic and socio-political. To address all aspects of the problem, this research is based on the notion of *spatial justice*, Edward Soja's comprehensive idea about the interplay between the ordering of social relations and spaces in respect to issues of resource (re)distribution and political decision-making. The aim of this research was to focus on multiple spatial dimensions of societal processes, urban developments on Bulgaria's coast, and challenges of spatial justice in order to engage critically with the struggle to save the wild beach. To enrich academic and public debates, spatial metaphors, such as the *spatial fix* (geographical expansion of resort development) and the *spatiality* of contentious politics (how the social production of space matters to progressive grassroots mobilization ) were intertwined with the anthropological notion of *liminality* (intermediate stage in transition). The main research question was:

How do socio-spatial processes, such as the *social construction of space* and *spatial fix*, produce spatial (in)justice as elucidated in the urbanization of a wild beach on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and how can social movements resist the mass tourism development projects through spatial justice strategies and tactics?

### Methodology

Building on the state-of-the-art critical spatial theory, this research employed qualitative strategy with a case study design. Eleven in-depth expert interviews and conversations with visitors of Karadere and Byala, government documents, media reports, online venues and a fieldwork in Bulgaria with observations, notes and photographs were used as comprehensive data sources.

### Results

Following systematic data analysis, theoretical and practical implications were discussed. Several findings, but not exclusively, can be listed:

- Although being termed “eco” projects, both Madara Europe’s and Maxi I’s large-scale construction works would impose threats to the wild life and habitats falling in Natura 2000.
- Although the local municipality would receive taxes, the all-inclusive high-end resorts in Karadere would impose pressure to the local business of the town of Byala.
- Although the investors boast to provide jobs, employment for the locals was not guaranteed or if provided, it would be temporary.
- Although the Detailed Development Plan of Byala was reported unlawfully implemented (without environmental evaluation), it is still regulates plots in Karadere.
- Interviewees envisioned an alternative future for Karadere, namely no large-scale constructions, a less crowded and clean beach, development of local and sustainable small-scale business, a management plan of the area as a protected zone, and civil concession.
- Through liminal experiences in Karadere, dwellers successfully manipulated the physical and symbolic environment of the beach to imagine alternatives and challenge derogatory attitudes, to form allies and to contest time and history.
- Spatial fix was embedded in socialist escapes (communists’ utopian resort dream), consolidation of land (investment funds and private landowners), power relations, offshore companies, architect’ s prestige, priority class certificate, and the amendments of the Municipality of Byala’s Master Plan, Russian-speakers holiday home buyers

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

Spatial justice struggles on Karadere beach are part of wider socio-political, economic and environmental processes in Bulgaria, a state arguably stuck in liminality. Several recommendations encompass the following:

1. Transparency and civic engagement
2. Regulatory urban planning and management of Natura 2000
3. Spatial justice as a political objective

*Key words:* Karadere, urbanization, Bulgarian Black Sea coast, spatial justice, spatial fix, Thirdspace, liminality

## Резюме

### Обща информация

По времето на социалистическото управление на България, страната се славеше с бурното развитие на стриктно планирани курорти, базиращи се на синтез между комунистическата идеология и капиталистически пазарен модел. След краха на комунистическият режим, безмилостно стоителство започна да опустошава българското Черноморие. В този контекст, предстоящото развитие на масов туризъм заплашва природата и културата на Карадере, една от малкото местности с див плаж и природа по българското Черноморие. Офшорната компания „Мадара Юрп“ и българската „Макси I“ възнамеряват да строят комплекси за богати туристи като първата иска да осъществи „Черноморски Градини“ (проектиран от Норман Фостър), а втората „луксозен къмпинг“. Предстоящата урбанизация на Карадере отприщи вълна от гражданско недоволство в цяла България. Коалиция от гражданска инициатива „Да спасим Карадере“ и НПО-та се мобилизираха в прогресивна солидарна мрежа в опит да запазят дивия плаж.

### Цели

Урбанизацията на Карадере няма да има само екологично въздействие, защото плажа и прилежащата към него територия попада в европейската еко мрежа Натура 2000, но също така ще има икономическо и социалнополитическо влияние. За да се обхванат различните аспекти на проблема, това изследване се основава на понятието за *пространствена справедливост* (анг.: *spatial justice*), термин на хуманитарният географ Едуард Соджа обхващащ цялостно взаимовръзката между разпределението на социалните отношения и пространството спрямо въпросите на (пре)разпределение на ресурси и взимането на политически решения. Целта на това проучване е да се съсредоточи върху множество пространствени измерения на обществените процеси, градоустройството по крайбрежието на България и предизвикателствата за пространствена справедливост, за да се ангажира критично с борбата за опазване на дивия плаж. За да се обогатят академичните и обществени дебати, пространствени метафори, като *пространствена корекция* (анг.: *spatial fix*, географското разширяване на курортите за масов туризъм) и *пространствено на спорните политики* (анг.: *contentious politics*, как социалното производство на пространство е от значение за прогресивната мобилизация на граждани), са преплетени с антропологичното понятие *лиминалност* (междинен етап в прехода). Основният въпрос в това изследване е:

Как социално-пространствените процеси, като *социално производство на пространство* и *пространствена корекция*, произвеждат пространствена (не)справедливост, както е изяснено в урбанизацията на див плаж на българското Черноморие, и как може социални движения да се противопоставят на проектите за развитие на масов туризъм чрез стратегии и тактики за пространствена справедливост?

### Методология

Това качествено проучване с казус Карадере е основано на критичната пространствена теория. Данните са събрани от единадест задълбочени интервюта с експерти и разговори с кърмпингари, правителствени документи, репортажи, онлайн форуми и полева работа в България с наблюдения, бележки и снимки.

## **Резултати**

Теоретични и практически приложения са обсъдени след систематичен анализ на данните. Някои констатации, но не изключително, могат да бъдат изброени:

- Въпреки, че проектите на Мадара Юрп и Макси I са определени като „еко“, те биха оказали заплаха за животинските видове и техните обитания, попадащи под закрилата на Натура 2000.
- Въпреки, че месната община ще се облагодетелства от данъци, курортите от висок клас с пълен пакет включен в цената биха оказали натиск върху местния бизнес в гр. Бяла.
- Въпреки, че инвеститорите могат да се похвалят с осигоряването на работа, заетост не е гарантирана за местните или ако е би била временна.
- Въпреки, че ПУП-ПР на ЗО „Бяла-север“ бе установен като нелегален, тъй като е бил приет без задължителна еко оценка, той все още регулира земите в месността Карадере.
- Интервюраните изразиха някой алтернативни виждания за Карадере, т.е. без мащабни стоителни конструкции, малко населен и чист плаж, устойчиво развитие на местния малък и среден бизнес, план за управление на месността като защитена територия или гражданска концесия.
- Чрез лиминантно преживяване на Карадере, обитателите му успяват да манипулират материалната и символичната среда на плажа, за да си представят алтернативи, противопоставят на пренебрежителни нагласи, да образуват съюзи и да оспорят времето и историята.
- Пространствената корекция е вградена в социалистичеки бягства (утопичната курортна мечта на комунистите), окрупняването на земя (инвестиционни фондове и частни собственици на земя), властови отношения, офшорни компании, престиж на архитекта, сертификат за приоритетен клас, промените в Общия Устройствения План на гр. Бяла, руско говорящи купувачи на курортни имоти.

## **Обобщения и препоръки**

Пространствените борби за справедливост на Карадере са част от по-широки социалнополитически, икономически и еко процеси в България, страна може би заседнала в лимианалност. Някои препоръки обхващат следното:

1. Прозрачност и гражданско участие
2. Регулирано градоустройство и планове за управление на Натура 2000
3. Пространствена справедливост като политическа цел



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## Abbreviations

BAS	Bulgarian Academy of Science
BCP	Bulgarian Communist Party
BDA	Biological Diversity Act
BGN	Lev (Bulgarian Monetary Unit)
BSNN	Black Sea NGO Network
BTA	Bulgarian Telegraph Agency
BRU	Bus Riders Union
BSP	Bulgarian Socialist Party
BVI	British Virgin Islands
CDP	Common Development Plan
CM	The Council of Ministers
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
DDP	Detailed Development Plan
DNKS	Directorate for National Construction Control
EEA	European Environment Agency
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Act
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro (European Monetary Unit)
FSC	Financial Supervision Commission
GERB	Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria
GBP	British Pound Sterling
IBA	Invest Bulgaria Agency
IPA	Investment Promotion Act
MEE	Ministry of Economy and Energy
MOEW	Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Water
MRF	Movement for Rights and Freedom
PES	Party of European Socialists
PTA	Protected Territories Act
RIEW	Regional Inspection of Environment and Water
SAC	Bulgarian Supreme Administrative Court
SAPO	Supreme Administrative Prosecution Office
SPA	Spatial Planning Act
UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles
UIC	Unified Identification Code



**Figure 1** Anthem of Karadere written and composed by Hristo Lalev to honor the struggle to save one of the few wild beaches on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast

Стани, стани о младо и пламенно сърце,  
 Че Карадере да браним от мръсните ръце;  
 Там девица тъй прекрасна, чудна песен пей,  
 Девицата да браним от мръсните ръце.

(Original lyrics in Bulgarian)

Rise up, rise up oh young and ardent heart,  
 From the dirty hands Karadere to safeguard;  
 There a virgin sings such a splendid, lovely song,  
 From the dirty hands the virgin to protect lifelong.

(Translated by Miroslav Damyanov)



## 1 Forthcoming urbanization of the last wild beach on Bulgaria's coast

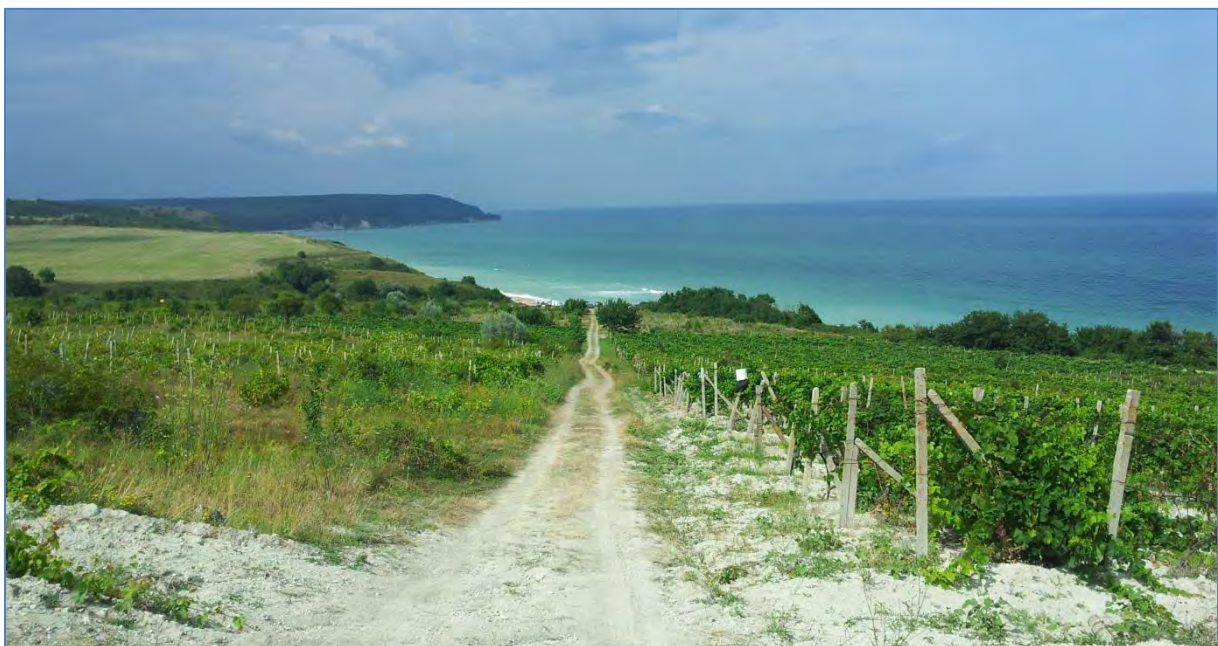
It is a summer morning in July. I lay awake in my tent unaware what time it exactly is. Time does not matter really. Birds are singing and trees are rustling in the wind. I pull down the zipper of my tent's doorway and go slowly out. Down the stairs dug into the hill, I am on the beach where people are up for a daily nude bathe in the sea. Water is clean and refreshing. I sit down on the soft sand to mesmerize the picturesque scene and breathe in fresh air. The sun shines above the water. I feel the gentle warmth of the sun on my skin. In the background kids are running behind a dog, a young lady is sitting on the sand and combing her long hair, a man is kayaking in the sea, the Kentish plovers are playfully running along the shoreline and the seagulls are dipping in the water for their next meal. Ahead of me to the left- and right- hand side cliffs cut directly into the sea. A mixed forest stands proudly behind me up the hill. No city noises – only human talks, the chirping of the birds, and the swash and backwash of the waves. Tranquility! Marvelous! This is Karadere.



**Figure 2** The young lady of Karadere beach © Miroslav Damyanov

Karadere is one of the last remaining unspoiled by mass tourism development areas with a wild beach on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. The name derives from the Turkish *kara*

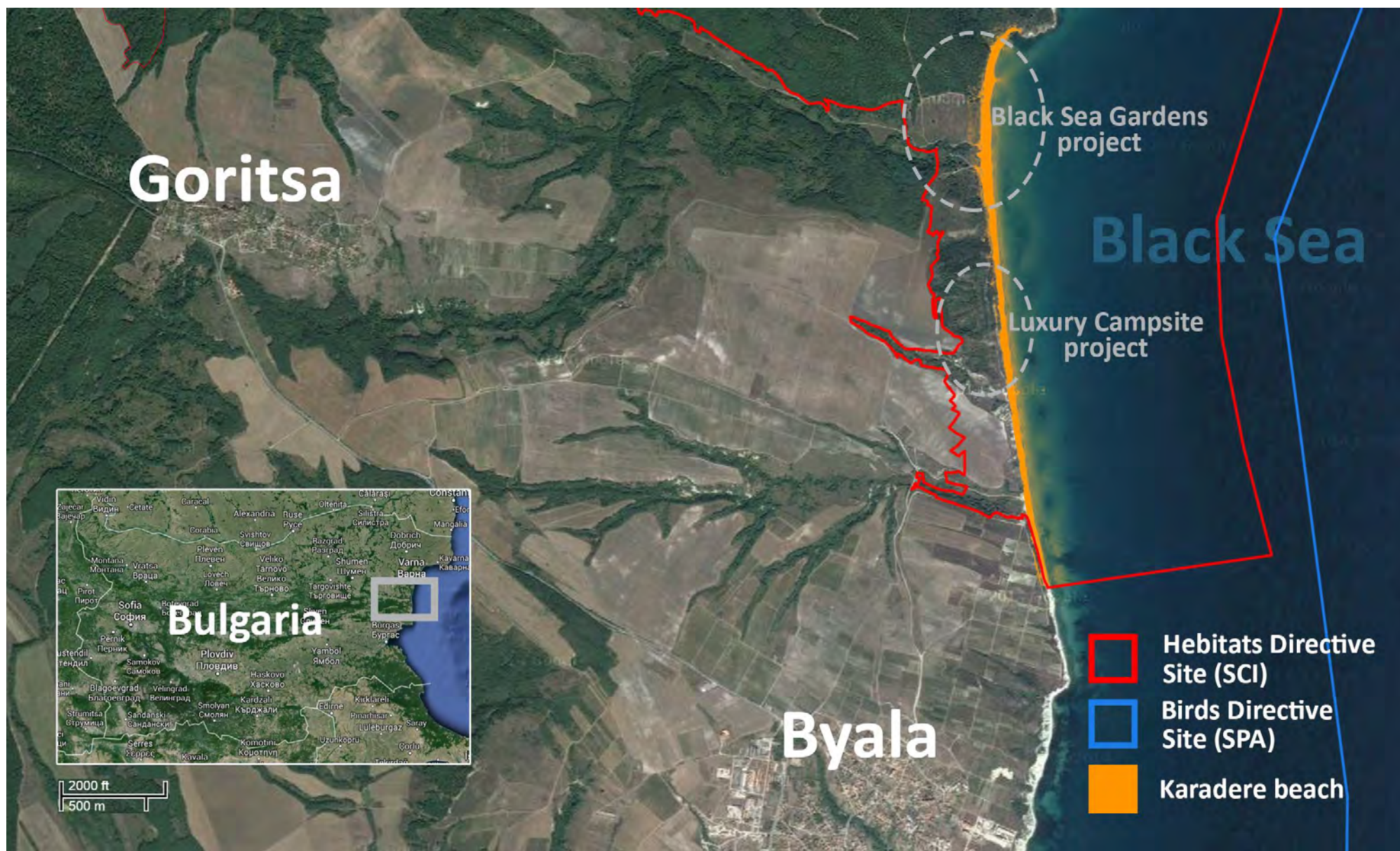
meaning black and *dere* meaning gully. Situated to the northern slopes of the Balkan Mountains, Karadere is about 5 km away from the town of Byala and the village of Goritsa, district of Varna. The beach spans 5 km in length and a mixed oak forest, vineyards and agricultural lands surround it. The estuaries of two small rivers—the Karadere river and the Byala river—are situated on Karadere beach. Although Karadere is relatively close to the town and village, it is difficult to reach because there is no infrastructure. Bumpy dirt roads and tracks lead to the beach where there is no cell phone service, electricity, tap water, sewage or any other urban facilities. Despite the lack of main utilities and facilities, Karadere has unique natural offerings—the fine sand, the clean sea water, the fresh air, the sunny weather, the spring water, the mud baths and even the opportunity to spot a dolphin in the bay (observation, July 22, 2014). Moreover, Karadere is a habitat for many and even endangered animal and bird species. It falls within the EU's eco network Natura 2000 in the protected site Kamchiyska Mountain, for the conservation of wild bird species and the protected site Shkorpilovtsi Beach, for the conservation of natural habitats, wild flora and fauna (EEA, 2015a, 2015d).



**Figure 3** Dirt roads through vineyards and cultivated fields lead to the gully of Karadere © Miroslav Damyanov

Not only does Karadere have unique nature, but also a unique culture. The pristine beach provides an opportunity for free camping. The free camping consists predominantly of tents, which are pitched on the sand or in the forest above shore. There are also caravans, but they are confined to the northern-most part due to the difficulty to transport them to the southern side of the beach. A diverse group of people camp on and visit Karadere. Families with children, extreme water sportsmen, nature lovers, artists, people with different occupation and any adventurers from different parts of Bulgaria and abroad prefer Karadere to the numerous overcrowded mass tourism resorts along Bulgaria's coastline





**Figure 4** Location of Karadere, investment projects and Natura 2000 sites. Source: Google, EEA, BSNN

not only because the pristine beach is more affordable, but also because one can better recover from the daily urban hassles. Additionally, the wild beach is suited for topless and nude sunbathing. Despite the constraints, visitors manage to create their own comfort with materials brought from home or those found in the forest or on the shore. Barrels of water heated in the sun, satellite dishes, PCV-free solar showers, water taps in big bottles, camp stoves on gas or wood were some of the belongings people brought to the beach (observation, July 22, 2014).

Despite its remoteness, the lack of utilities and infrastructure that have preserved the pristine beach from urbanization and overpopulation for a very long time, mass tourism development currently threatens Karadere. Two developers—the offshore company Madara Europe and the Sofia-based Maksi I—plan to build large-scale tourist resorts. Construction was scheduled to begin in 2014.

The first developer, Madara Europe, plans to construct a luxury holiday village called Black Sea Gardens Eco Resort. They intend to invest over BGN 100 M in three luxury hotels and public service areas. Moreover, this project is argued to create 500 jobs in the municipality of Byala whose unemployment rate is currently above the national average (Council of Ministers, 2014). In practice, Madara Europe renewed its initial intention to build a holiday complex in the area of Karadere beach. Under its initial version from 2007, the project was estimated EUR 1 B. Moreover, it gained popularity because it was designed by the top architectural firm Foster + Partners in cooperation with architect Georgi Stanishev, brother of former Prime Minister and former leader of Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) Sergey Stanishev. The project has now been reworked and spans a gross floor area of 247 353 m<sup>2</sup>, where three types of hotels, public service buildings and leisure infrastructure will be built (Madara Europe, 2014a).

The second developer, Maksi I, plans to construct a legal and luxury campsite, which would restrict the current free camping with tents and caravans, on a gross floor area of 162 500 m<sup>2</sup>. The developer bought the land in Karadere from the bankrupted Black Sea Property Fund for BGN 1.66 M. This means that a square meter of land costs barely BGN 10. Besides places for tents, campers and caravans, the investor plans to build family bungalows, villas, public service buildings, restaurants, shops, bars, playgrounds, toilets, a park, a spa center and streets. The campsite is expected to accommodate up to 1860 people and 670 vehicles (Krusteva, 2014). In practice, a mass scale construction work lurks behind the name of a camping.

Although both holiday complexes are termed “eco” projects, the intense construction of public service buildings, hotels, bars, playgrounds, and various infrastructures, will eventually harm the extremely rich and varied flora and fauna. Not only will the wild life be impaired, but also the traditional economic sectors and jobs. The mass tourist development projects would apply pressure on the local population and administration with the main goal to benefit the political and business elite in Bulgaria. The realization of the projects would result in deprivation of affordable and efficient recreation for a numerous and diverse group of people. Overall, the mass tourism development projects turn to be very controversial.

Therefore, the privatization of a scarce nature resource, namely Karadere, provoked social discontent in Bulgaria. A diverse social movement organized public demonstrations, on-site interventions, discussions, court appeals and petitions to resist the forthcoming urbanization of Karadere.

The forthcoming urbanization of Karadere and progressive grassroots mobilization in Bulgaria fuelled my longstanding academic interest in the production of space and contentious politics within human geography. Thus, I devoted this research project to the case of Karadere. Karadere is very well embedded in the environmental, economic, and socio-political dynamics in Bulgaria. It speaks to a risk of irreversible nature loss, a pattern of relentless urbanization on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, the need of capital to seek geographical expansion and justice struggles. The overreaching topic of my thesis is spatial justice, Edward W. Soja's (2010b) comprehensive notion on how the (re)organization of space is dialectically related to the fair and equitable distribution of valuable resources and the opportunities to use them.

## 1.1 Outline

The structure of the report is as follows:

**Chapter 1** introduces the conflicting urbanization of the last-remaining wild beach Karadere in northeast Bulgaria. This chapter presents the background and the issues of the research as well as why it creates valuable and useful knowledge. In a consecutive order, the objectives, research questions, scientific and societal relevance are outlined.

**Chapter 2** elaborates on the state-of-the-art critical spatial theory. The problems of Karadere require spatial thinking. Therefore, various spatial concepts and metaphors are reviewed in a consecutive order: the social production of space, the spatial fix, the spatial justice, and spatiality of grassroots mobilization, and the anthropological concept of liminality. The aim of this chapter is to devise an effective analytical tool.

**Chapter 3** outlines the methodology. This research employs a qualitative research strategy with a case study design. Alongside, the data collection and the operationalization of the concepts are clarified.

**Chapter 4** sets Karadere's urbanization in the context of major spatial restructuring processes on Bulgaria's coast. In a consecutive order, the discussion includes urban coastal development before and after the fall of the socialist regime followed by the most striking example of resort development in Bulgaria – Sunny Beach.

**Chapter 5** introduces the immediate context of Karadere. Firstly, the demographics, history and economy of the town of Byala are presented. Secondly, the developers and their investment plans are scrutinized. Next, the amendments of Byala's Master Plan are traced. In the end, some preliminary findings and discussions are drawn.

**Chapter 6** applies the anthropological notion of liminality to understand how alternative spaces of representations are formed. This chapter presents three major properties of liminality—imaginaries, spontaneous encounters, and timelessness—as a critique to the logic of the spatial fix.



**Chapter 7** represents first-hand critiques of the urbanization project in Karadere. The interest in the right to the city in respect to the beach is revived. The citizen's initiative "Let's save Karadere", its features, arguments, and strategies are thoroughly discussed.

**Chapter 8** provides space for interpretation and discussion of the major findings to answer the research questions.

**Chapter 9** draws the conclusions and provides several recommendations for the involved stakeholders.

## 1.2 Objectives

The aim of this project is to focus on multiple spatial dimensions of societal processes, urban developments on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, and challenges of *spatial justice* in order to engage critically with the struggle to save the wild beach Karadere. Therefore, I will reflect on the wealth of literature about the *spatial fix*, social production of space, and spatiality of social movements to evaluate the responses towards and discourses of the urbanization of Karadere. Last but not least, I am curious about the struggle for space, the defense for place, the fight for justice, and possibilities for a dialogue in Bulgaria.

## 1.3 Research questions

The main research question encompasses dimensions of socio-spatial relations, new geographies of capital accumulation, and social-scientific account of contentious politics in Bulgaria.

How do socio-spatial processes, such as the *social construction of space* and *spatial fix*, produce spatial (in)justice as elucidated in the urbanization of a wild beach on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and how can social movements resist the mass tourism development projects through spatial justice strategies and tactics?

In order to provide a thorough answer to the main research question, several topics will be addressed in the following sub-questions.

- 1) How can various spatial dimensions of societal relations reveal the production of new geographies of accumulation and injustice on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast?
- 2) Who are the collective agents trying to save Karadere beach and what are their strategies and tactics?
- 3) How does space (i.e., spatiality) play a role in constituting environmental and social movement mobilization reflecting *spatial justice* on Karadere?



## 1.4 Scientific relevance

This research seeks engagement with debates and critical theories about geographies of capital accumulation and contentious politics. It emphasizes the importance of space and the process of its production (aka, *spatial turn*) by building on the extensive work of neo-Marxist scholars (e.g., Lefebvre, Harvey, Soja) to reflect on capitalism's paradoxes and discuss grassroots mobilization. To understand why and how the production of mass tourism resorts seek new markets at the Bulgarian seaside and specifically on Karadere beach, Harvey's *spatial fix* (capitalism's insatiable drive to resolve its crisis tendencies through geographical expansion and (re)organization) is used as an analytical tool. Moreover, this research re-introduces the notion of *spatial justice*, namely how the (re)organization of space is influenced and influences the fair ordering of human relations, as a valuable angle to investigate the physical and social infrastructures embedded in the forthcoming urbanization of Karadere (Soja, 2010b; Williams, 2013). Because the spatial fix and spatial justice are rooted in socialist and post-socialist milieu in Bulgaria, this empirical enquiry attempts to provide a different twist to mainly Anglophone spatial theories and debates in human geography. Last but not least, the inclusion of the anthropological notion of *liminality* (intermediate stage in transition) is a novel approach to complement the discussions on social production of spaces and spatial justice struggles.

## 1.5 Societal relevance

The urbanization of the wild beach Karadere is a socially relevant issue because it has economic, socio-political and environmental impacts. Firstly, it involves rhetoric on securing capital in the Black Sea region in Bulgaria, impairing local businesses, and alleviating the high unemployment rate in the Municipality of Byala. Secondly, the urbanization of Karadere and specifically the engagement of members of the economic and political elite with dubious development projects spark the general distrust in governance, state institutions, and business. Thirdly, the urbanization of the beach opens debates about detrimental effects on the natural habitats, wild flora and fauna in the area of Karadere under EU's eco network Natura 2000. Throughout this research, I would try to debunk public discourses on the aforementioned impacts. Likewise, I would engage with the work of governance institutions and communities to evaluate possible strategies and tactics aiming to preserve Karadere. Overall, the finding of this study would provide relevant knowledge and recommendations to policy makers on local, national and EU level as well as to practitioners in the field of urban planning, governance, environment and social work.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 The production of space

The case of Karadere requires spatial thinking. This approach allows to understand the statement that space, and Karadere specifically, is socially produced. Socially produced spaces differ from environmentally produced spaces on the account that people make them, but they can also unmake them. Henri Lefebvre—a French philosopher, sociologist and a great thinker of the twentieth century—was a pioneer in developing the notion of the social production of space. Lefebvre shifted the theoretical focus from Marx's examination of the modes of production *in* space to an analysis of the modes of production *of* space. He considered that space acquired a reality on its own within the modes of production and society different from, and yet alike, the one creating and created by commodities, money and capital around the globe. The recognition of space as socially produced rather than as pre-given indicates that social relations are both producing and shaped by the space they occupy. Lefebvre viewed space as a multifaceted social construction based on values and the social production of meanings that influence spatial practices and perceptions (Shields, 2001). This idea was a central argument in his book *The Production of Space* where he focused on multiple aspects of space in an attempted to create awareness that socially produced spaces are controlled by the state and capitalism.

The theory we need, which fails to come together because the necessary critical moment does not occur, and which therefore falls back into the state of mere bits and pieces of knowledge, might well be called, by analogy, a 'unitary theory': the aim is to discover or construct a theoretical unity between 'fields' which are apprehended separately, just as molecular, electromagnetic and gravitational forces are in physics. The fields we are concerned with are, first, the *physical* – nature, the Cosmos; secondary, the *mental*, including logical and formal abstractions; and, thirdly, the *social*. In other words, we are concerned with logico-epistemological space, the space of social practice, the space occupied by sensory phenomena, including products of imagination such as projects and projections, symbols and utopias. [...] The search for a unitary theory in no way rules out conflicts within knowledge itself, and controversy and polemics are inevitable. (Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 11-13)

Lefebvre's spatial theory, which incorporates a critical self-reflection, is based on three principles or modes of production—*spatial practice*, *representations of space*, and *representational space*—consecutively referred to as fields in the above quote (Lefebvre, 1991).

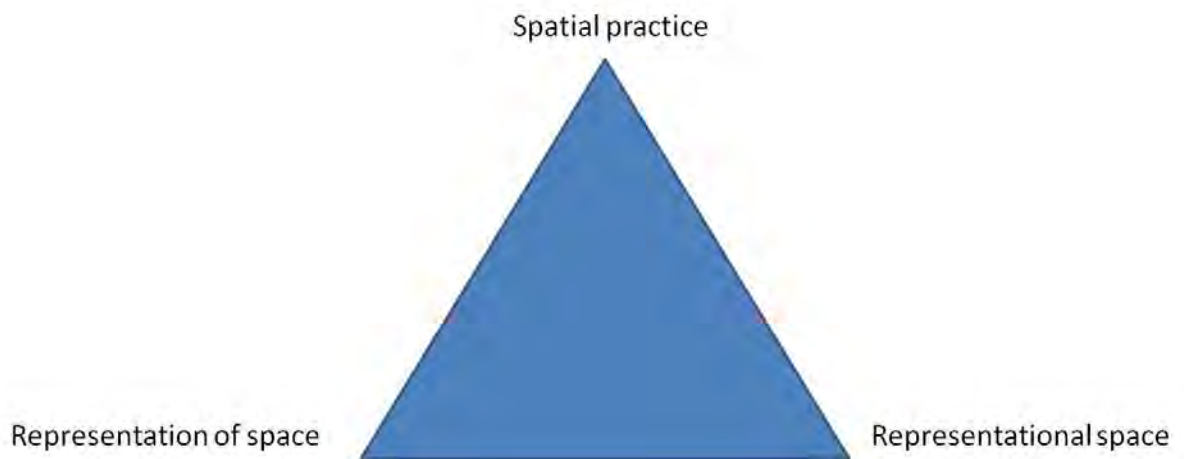
*Spatial practice*, or perceived space (*espace perçu*), refers to the material space that is produced and reproduced in everyday life. In another words, this is the physical space around—the roads, parks, houses, offices buildings or classrooms for example—which creates material conditions for social relations—what people do there. As a process of production and reproduction of material forms of social relations, spatial practice is both

“the medium and the outcome of human activity, behavior, and experience” (Soja, 1996, p. 66). “[T]he spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38). It is thought to be directly perceived through the senses, to be easily measured and described. Spatial practice epitomizes “a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, ‘private’ life and leisure)” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38). Finally, the spatial practice of a society “ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion” and “implies a guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance*” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33).

*Representations of space*, or conceived space (*espace conçu*), refer to the ideal space that is developed cognitively through dominant discourses. These are the conceptualized space of architects, planners, social engineers or other urban professionals whose scientific work identifies “what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38). Representations take on physical forms—maps, plans, models, designs and so forth—that communicate abstract ideas of experiences in space reduced to quantified movements. Representations of space involve imposed systems of signs, codes and discourses about the order in space. These complex systems embody relationships of power, control and production. Therefore, Lefebvre (1991) remarked: “This is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production)” (pp. 38-9). Through a systematic study on how plans evolve over time, the development of predominant ideologies about space can be exposed. Although there are various connections between *the spatial practice* and *the representations of space*, there are some subtle differences. The former points toward the physical, built space while the latter involves the way in which it is represented in conversations and thoughts about space. Moreover, *the representations of space* reinforce daily human activity, behavior and experience instead of being influenced by them.

*Representational space*, or lived space (*espace vécu*), refers to the space of everyday life that is experienced over time through complex symbolization and idealization of its inhabitants and users; space as real and imagined simultaneously (Lefebvre, 1991). Neither is the *representational space* strictly material and produced like *the spatial practice* (materialist), nor is it strictly textual or verbal like *the representations of space* (idealist). It is a combination of both – real and imagined at the same time. Lefebvre emphasized that *the representational space* “overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects” (p. 39). The *representational space* engages the present embodied experiences of individuals with their local environment, as practiced in their daily activities. Additionally, it covers complex symbolism, mystery and secrets. This is the directly lived space of inhabitants, users and dwellers. Lefebvre (1991) characterized it as “directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’, but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers (...)” (p. 39). He also noted that artists, philosophers and even “ethnologists, anthropologists and psychoanalysis” or other “students of such representational spaces” used this space (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 41). Furthermore, the associated symbols and images comprise rich semiotics. Slogans, signs,

outcries, murals and art forms are part of the symbolic manifestation of space. According to Lefebvre (1991), the symbolic works are the only products of *the representational space*. Finally, to engage correctly with the *representational space*, one has to abandon the binary and conventional way of thinking. The reason is that the *representational space* is contradictory, mysterious, inclusive and extraordinary. The lived space can only be understood from within.



**Figure 5** Lefebvre's spatial triad

These three modes of production are dialectically related implying a continuous and dynamic tension between “what *exists in space*” (perceived space), the “*discourse on space*” (mental space) and the “*knowledge of space*” (lived space) (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 7). None of them is intrinsically privileged over the others to avoid poor understanding. However, Lefebvre (1991) implicitly stressed on the importance of lived social space. The introducing of the third aspect of space and giving it a strategic privilege are needed to break down dichotomies and surpass reductionism (a system is merely the sum of its parts). This argument is crucial for further developments in critical spatial theory. Political geographer and urban planner Edward W. Soja (1996) elaborated on the importance of lived social space and complemented Lefebvre's writings and ideas from *The Production of Space* to convey what he called Thirdspace.

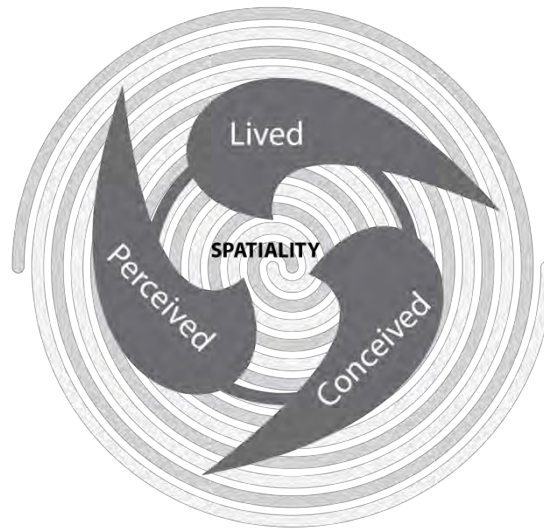
Thirdspace: the space where all places are, capable of being seen from every angle, each standing clear; but also a secret and conjectured object, filled with illusions and allusions, a space that is common to all of us yet never able to be completely seen and understood, an unimaginable universe,” or as Lefebvre would put it, “the most general of products.” (Soja, 1996, p. 56)

Thirdspace shows an analogy with the Aleph, which is according to the story of the Argentine writer and poet Jorge Luis Borges, a point in space from where everything in the universe is seen simultaneously. Like Borge's Aleph, Lefebvre's masterpiece on the

production of space is a recollection of various kinds of spaces. Soja (1996) used the analogy with the Aleph to envision Thirdspace and complement Lefebvre's work to apprehend the bewildering confusion about further developments in spatial knowledge.

Soja (1996) introduced the notion and critical strategy of *thirling-as-Othering*, which was also embedded in *The Production of Space*, as the basis for Thirdspace. He described *thirling-as-Othering* as "the first and most important step in transforming the categorical and closed logic of either/or to the dialectically open logic of both/and also [...]" (Soja, 1996, p. 60). The critical *thirling-as-Othering* is more than "the dialectical synthesis *a la* Hegel or Marx", which according to Soja (1996), is too predictive by merely adding binary antecedents in consecutive thesis/ antithesis/ synthesis (pp. 60-1). Rather *thirling-as-Othering* is meant to open alternatives by distorting presumably totalizing products. In other words, the third is not solely another term between the opposites, but rather it distorts, deconstructs and reconstructs them. Therefore, the third term and Thirdspace is not meant to stop at three, but rather to continuously expand the spatial knowledge.

Thirdspace "retains the multiple meanings Lefebvre persistently ascribed to social space. It is both a space that is distinguishable from other spaces (physical and mental, First and Second) and a transcending composite of all spaces (Thirdspace as Aleph)" (Soja, 1996, p. 62). To emphasize, it is a radically inclusive concept that moves beyond dualism. Soja has an implied preference for Thirdspace that does not derive from an ontological privilege, but from a strategic political choice. This political choice gives a specific attention to Lefebvre's lived spaces of representation as spaces for social struggle. Lived spaces of representation are "the terrain for generation of "counterspaces," spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning" (Soja, 1996, p. 68). Therefore, Thirdspace, built on Lefebvre's *representational space*, is the space for lived grassroots experiences and the space for struggle, liberation, emancipation with "radical openness and teeming imagery" (Soja, 1996, p. 68). Not only did Soja's (1996) postmodern conception of Thirdspace draws on Lefebvre's work, but also on Michel Foucault's *heterotopia*, bell hooks' *margins*, Gloria Anzaldua's *boderlands*, Homi Bhabha's *third space*, Gayatri Spivak's *subaltern* and Edward Said's *imaginative geography*. Soja's (1996) Thirdspace breaks the Firstspace-Secondspace dualism to allow "other ways of making practical sense of the spatiality of social life" (Soja, 1996, p. 74). This dynamic process of reconfiguration is illustrated in the trialectics of spatiality model (see Figure 6). This model is fluid and open. In a risk of oversimplifying it, Thirdspace is the strategic force that breaks and establishes relations between all categories informing spatial knowledge. Every term contains the others, but only Thirdspace is strategically privileged.



**Figure 6** The trialectics of spatiality (Soja, 1996, p. 74)

The works of Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1996) are theoretically sound. Both advocated comprehensively an ontological shift in spatial theory and research from space to process of its production. This idea does not only influence debates in human geography, but also in various other disciplines, such as economics, sociology, and urban planning to name a few. Although *The Production of Space* and *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* point towards the important epistemological discovery that capitalism survives through production of space, they failed to explain why and how it happens. This shortcoming has been evaluated and elaborated in the theory of a spatial fix.

## 2.2 The spatial fix

The theory of a spatial fix, or more accurately, a spatio-temporal fix has been developed by David Harvey (1975, 1981, 1989, 1992, 2001a, 2001b, 2003) to interpret the geographical dynamics of capital expansion. Harvey's main argument is the tendency within global capitalism to produce crises of overaccumulation. Such crises are typically registered as surplus capital (in commodity, money, or productive capacity forms) and surplus labor (rising unemployment), "without there apparently being any means to bring them together profitably to accomplish socially useful tasks" (Harvey, 2003, p. 83).

Such surpluses may be absorbed by (a) temporal displacement through investment in long-term capital projects or social expenditures (such as education and research) that defer the re-entry of current excess capital values into circulation well into the future, (b) spatial displacements through opening up new markets, new production capacities and new resource, social and labour possibilities elsewhere, or (c) some combination of (a) and (b). The combination of (a) and (b) is particularly important when we focus on fixed capital of an independent kind embedded in the built environment. (Harvey, 2003, p. 64)



Spatial fix, therefore, refers to various forms of spatial reorganization and geographical expansion that serve to solve the crisis tendencies of capitalism. On the one hand, to resolve the crises of overaccumulation, capital should be fixed in place, meaning that it is secured in space and cannot be moved or modified. However, this resolution is only temporal rather than permanent because the general crisis tendencies might reoccur (Harvey, 2001a). On the other hand, capital flows move perpetually from place to place in search for new markets. As a result, new spaces and geographical concentrations are created. Consequently, the spatial fix does not resolve the problems of capitalism, but rather “moves them around geographically” (RSA, 2010).

This leads to one of the central contradictions of capital: that it has to build a fixed space (or “landscape”) necessary for its own functioning at a certain point in its history only to have to destroy that space (and devalue much of the capital invested therein) at a later point in order to make way for a new “spatial fix” (openings for fresh accumulation in new spaces and territories) at a later point in its history. (Harvey, 2001a, p. 25)

The above quote alludes to two important considerations: *creative destruction* and a tension between *fixity* and *mobility* of capital. Harvey used the term spatial fix and its complicated meanings to deliberately unravel the contradictions of capital accumulation. When Harvey spoke about the devaluation and even destructions of invested capital usually following a continuous innovation, he referred to Joseph Schumpeter’s notion (2010/ 1942) *creative destruction*. Creative destruction involves devaluation of fixed assets and laying off labor in one concentric center while opening new concentric centers in new sites of productive operation. Through continuous process of creative destruction, capitalism does not resolve its problems but rather moves them from one corner of the globe to another:

The effect of continuous innovation [...] is to devalue, if not destroy, past investments and labour skills. *Creative destruction* is embedded within the circulation of capital itself. Innovation exacerbates instability, insecurity, and in the end, becomes the prime force pushing capitalism into periodic paroxysms of crisis. [...] The struggle to maintain profitability sends capitalists racing off to explore all kinds of other possibilities. New product lines are opened up, and that means the creation of new wants and needs. Capitalists are forced to redouble their efforts to create new needs in others [...]. The result is to exacerbate insecurity and instability, as masses of capital and workers shift from one line of production to another, leaving whole sectors devastated [...]. The drive to relocate to more advantageous places (the geographical movement of both capital and labour) periodically revolutionizes the international and territorial division of labour, adding a vital geographical dimension to the insecurity. The resultant transformation in the experience of space and place is matched by revolutions in the time dimension, as capitalists strive to reduce the

turnover time of their capital to "the twinkling of an eye". (Harvey, 1992, pp. 105-106)

Furthermore, the attempt to resolve the crisis tendencies within capitalism through internal transformation reflects the tension between *fixity* (to pin down and secure it to a place) and *mobility* of capital in time and space (Harvey, 2001a, p. 27). This tension is apparent within fixed capital itself (e.g., immovable transportation, communication and supply infrastructures) and circulating capital (raw materials, semi-finished goods, finished products versus liquid money capital), and the relation between the two (e.g. commercial centers and global flows of people, commodities and capital) (Jessop, 2008). Harvey remarked that capitalism has to fix space in order to overcome space:

I note, for example, that capitalism has to fix space (in immoveable structures of transport and communication nets, as well as in built environments of factories, roads, houses, water supplies, and other physical infrastructures) in order to overcome space (achieve a liberty of movement through low transport and communication costs). (Harvey, 2001a, p. 25)

In order to analyze the tension between *fixity* and *mobility* of capital, Harvey (2003) compares and contrasts two logics of power. He borrowed Giovanni Arrighi's concepts of territorial and capitalist logics of power. The first one is the logic of the state and it refers to the attempt to maintain capital within a place or space. The second one is the logic of the capitalists (e.g., private investors, multinational companies) and it refers to the need of capitalism to find new places to make profit (Harvey, 2003). Furthermore, the interests of the key actors within both logics of power differ. Politicians and governors, that represent territorially-bound states on multiple scales, would try to attract and maintain profitable business and industry in their country or region vis-à-vis other country or region. When the steel industry and shipbuilding are collapsing, for example, politicians would focus on any possibilities to maintain the health and well-being of their locality through convention business or convention centers, or museums and tourism. According to the capitalist logic of power, capitalist, that hold money capital, would seek strategic place where to put in their money in order to accumulate more profit. Capitalists seek individual advantages (they are restricted by law though) and consider no one other than their immediate social circle. Whereas politicians seek collective advantages and they are responsible to one way or another to citizens, often to a selected elite group, kinship structure, class or other social group (Harvey, 2003). Overall, politicians operate in a territorialized space while capitalist operate in continuous time and space (Harvey, 2003).

Harvey (2003) explored how territorial logic of power, fixed in space, would respond to the open spatial dynamics of the capitalist logic of power. The territorial logic of power would attempt to bind capital in a territory, but it would be very difficult to tame "the molecular forces of capital accumulation in space and time" that operate in an open and spatially dynamic field of accumulation, unless there are any strict regulations of course

(Harvey, 2003, p. 26). The relation between the two logics is thus not unidirectional or functional to begin with. Their relationship is problematic and contradictory. The two logics are dialectically intertwined and therefore it is inappropriate to give privilege to either fully geo-political or fully geo-economic argumentations. The territorial logic of power entails geo-political strategies to seize control over territories with inevitable economic effects (e.g., access to resources, promoting of free trade, protectionism during crisis)(Jessop, 2008). Examples of such strategies, which sometimes might involve military means, are the defense and expansion of territorial borders of neighborhoods, regions, or countries. The capitalist logic of power entails geo-economics of capital flows, occurring spatial monopolies and production of new economic scales with inevitable political effects (e.g., regional node of economic power as a base for an economic elite) (Jessop, 2008).

Following the clarification of the theory of a spatial fix, a concrete example is needed to illustrate the spatial reorganization and geographical expansion that serve to resolve the capitalism's crisis tendencies. *Urbanization* is a subtle example of a spatial fix where the contradictions of capital are at work. Urbanization is one way to absorb the surpluses of capital and labor. Infrastructures of urbanizations (e.g., highways, airports, houses, hotels, amenities etc.) are important as foci of investments to absorb the aforementioned surpluses and required fixed capital of immobile kind to facilitate spatial movement and temporal dynamics of ongoing capital accumulation. For example, urbanization in the United States played a crucial role in absorbing the surpluses of capital and labor after 1945. Highway systems were needed to facilitate suburbanization. Hereby both contradictions of fixity and mobility were at play – suburbs need cars and vice versa. However, urbanization is a limit in itself as it tends to freeze productive forces into a fixed spatial form. Note that capital cannot tolerate a limit to profitability. Consequently, ever more frantic forms of time space-compression (e.g., increased speed of turnover, innovation of ever faster transport and communications' infrastructure) would ensure forced technological innovation (Harvey, 2001a).

Building on the limitation of classical political economy, Harvey developed his theory:

[A] general theory of space-relations and geographical development under a capitalism that can, among other things, explain the significance and evolution of state functions (local, regional, national, and supranational), uneven geographical development, interregional inequalities, imperialism, the progress and forms of urbanisation and the like. Only in this way can we understand how territorial configurations and class alliances are shaped and reshaped, how territories lose or gain in economic, political, and military power, the external limits on internal state autonomy (including the transition to socialism), or how state power, once constituted, can itself become a barrier to the unencumbered accumulation of capital, or a strategic centre from which class struggle or interimperialist struggles can be waged. (Harvey, 2001b, pp. 326-327)

The focus of his theory, as affirmed from the above quote, is to expose inequalities, processes leading to injustice and the struggle of communities inherit in global capital accumulation. In his critique of capital accumulation, Harvey thus discussed *accumulation by dispossession* (Harvey, 2003). This notion entails that people in general have been deprived of their rights or assets. There are rights which have been a common property. For example, access to clean drinking water or using a place for recreational purposes. One way, in which these rights can be taken away from people, is privatization. Additionally, land may sometimes be taken away from communities in order some urban projects to be realized. Part of communities in a place might be convinced to sell their land, so that private projects could be realized. There might be instances whereby the state tries to repress any kinds of protests by communities. In summary, there are people accumulating profit at other people's expenses (i.e., commodification and privatization of land).

Overall, Harvey's interest in the spatial fix is not only rooted in land use patterns and multiscalar spatial dynamics, but it is also informed by a long-standing scholarship in urbanism, capitalist geographies as well as sustained engagement with Marx's theory and method. Like Lefebvre and Soja, Harvey advocated an ontological shift in spatial theory, namely the end of privileging of time over space in analysis and interpretation of urban phenomena. Moreover, his theory of the spatial fix is informed and informs developments in critical spatial thinking. In *Rebel Cities*, for example, Harvey (2012) linked urban development with struggles over the access to resources and the quality and organization of daily life. Harvey pointed towards (in)justice that is reflected in urban development. The idea that (in)justice has a geography is thoroughly developed by Edward Soja who proposed the theory of *spatial justice*.

## 2.3 Spatial justice

Human geographer Edward W. Soja developed the theory of *spatial justice* to analyze justice struggles, which have diverse overlapping and mutually reinforcing aspects—social, economic, environmental, racial and so on. In his influential book *Seeking Spatial Justice*, which has comprehensive theoretical and practical origins, Soja (2010b) did not merely propose the notion of *spatial justice* as an alternative form to other aspects of justice struggles, but rather he offered an inclusive framework to explain the various aspects of justice struggles from a critical spatial perspective. By putting into the foreground the critical spatial perspective, Soja (2010b) interpreted the social production of space and geographies of (in)justice.

To emphasize the consequential spatiality of social justice and its connections to related notions of democracy and human rights, I pay particular attention to the explicit use of the term *spatial justice* [...] Highlighting the socio-spatial dialectic, I also adopt from the start the view that the spatiality of (in)justice [...] affects society and social life just as much as social processes shape the spatiality or specific geography of (in)justice. (Soja, 2010b, p. 5)

As suggested in the above quote, geography, or spatiality, of justice (both used interchangeably by the author) is an integral part of justice itself, a crucial part how justice and injustice are socially produced, maintained and developed over time. Furthermore, Soja (2010b) spoke about consequential geographies of justice, which were not only an outcome of political and social processes, but also a dynamic force influencing these processes. Therefore, the human geographer emphasized the use of socio-spatial dialectic throughout his book. Not only did Soja (2010b) argue vividly in his book that justice had a geography, but also that the fair and equitable allocation of resources, services, and access (i.e., water, land, health, education, housing, transport, living wage, welfare etc.) was a basic human right related to specific time and space. Soja's (2010b) notion of *spatial justice* entails how the (re)organization of space is dialectically related to the fair and equitable distribution of valuable resources and the opportunities to use them. Moreover, *spatial justice* involves a greater control over how space is perceived, imagined and lived. *Spatial justice* is both the goal and the tool for (re)organizing space and human relations. Therefore, *spatial justice* reflects also forms of participatory democracy whereby dwellers are active agents in changing their immediate environment.

It [spatial justice] seeks to promote more progressive and participatory form of democratic politics and social activism, and to provide new ideas about how to mobilize and maintain cohesive coalitions and regional confederations of grassroots and justice-oriented social movements. (Soja, 2010b, p. 6)

At the beginning of his book, Soja (2010b) posed two important questions. Why spatial justice? Why now? The human geographer attempted to answer the first question by discussing the limitations of justice theories and the second one by tracing the genealogy of critical spatial theory.

Spatial justice is a critical response of Soja's (2010b) discontented with theorizing justice in general. Edward Soja reflected on John Rawls' (1971) *A Theory of Justice* and Iris Marion Young's (1990) *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Unlike Fainstein (2010), Soja (2010b) criticized "Rawls's fundamentally aspatial and ahistorical notion of justice", which engaged merely with static forms of social inequality and their immediate unfair outcomes rather than the underling structural processes generating them (p. 76). Soja (2010b) argued that Rawls's (1971) notion of *distributive justice* was poorly spatial and historical because it focused on "an idealized liberal democratic notion of a fair distribution" and an "immediate moment and conditions for individuals" (p. 77). Soja (2010b) acknowledged Young's (1990) work on the account it enriched justice studies with a shift "from outcomes to process and from assuring equality and fairness to respecting difference and pluralistic solidarity" (p. 78). Distributional fairness was substituted with a multifaceted notion of oppression. The notion of oppression, and hence of injustice, was discussed in five interrelated forms: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. Although Young (1990) realized that the right to be different was important for coalition building, Soja (2010b) argued that she overlooked the role of space until she contributed the justice debate with



the notions of *regional democracy* in her later writings. Soja (2010b) advocated the need for a more forceful form of spatial explanation of (in)justice. The human geographer believed that combining spatial and justice could open new possibilities for social and political action as well as for empirical research.

To give an answer to the second question, Soja (2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d) elaborated on the development of spatial theory. He reported that thinking about space changed considerably over the past decades from the cartographic notion of a static space that can be descriptively mapped to a more active force that shapes and is shaped by human relations. Additionally, the way of interpreting the relations between the social, the historical, and the spatial aspects of human life changed. The author noted three principles that revolve around the change in critical spatial thinking:

- a) The ontological spatiality of being (we are all spatial as well as social and temporal beings) (see Figure 7)
- b) The social production of spatiality (space is socially produced and can therefore be socially changed) (see Figure 6)
- c) [T]he socio-spatial dialectic (the spatial shapes the social as much as the social shapes the spatial)

(Soja, 2010d)



**Figure 7** The trialectics of being (Soja, 1996, p. 71)

This new approach of thinking about space occurs in conjunction with what is termed *spatial turn*—the growing attention to the concept of space in a wide array of academic disciplines since the 1970s. Soja (2010b) emphasized that this impetus of new spatial consciousness transcended academia to reach “a wider public and political realm” (p. 14).

This so-called *spatial turn* is the primary reason for the attention that is now being given to the concept of *spatial justice* and to the broader spatialization of our basic

ideas of democracy and human rights, as in the revival of Lefebvre's notion of *the right to the city* [emphasis added]. (Soja, 2010d)

Soja (2010b) argued that the new understanding of space in its broader sense should be contextualized “[f]rom local and urban contexts to the regional, national, and global scales” to reach “public debates on such key issues as human rights, social inclusion-exclusion, citizenship, democracy, poverty, racism, economic growth, and environmental policy” (p. 15). Moreover, with the notion of *spatial justice*, Soja (2010b) revived Lefebvre's passionate idea and philosophy about *the right to the city*—a critique developed in the context of post-war urbanism and omnipresent consumerism in France in the late 1960s. Henri Lefebvre (1996) believed that urbanization could be turned into something liberating by granting all its inhabitants the right to appropriation, difference, access and centrality (more tangible and attainable than universal human rights).

Theorizing *spatial justice* was brought by evaluating the scholarship of various urban critics because the new spatial consciousness did not simply occurred over night. Henri Lefebvre's (1996) and David Harvey's (2008) work on the right to the city were a milestone of Soja's critical spatial theory. Lefebvre and Harvey's view about justice moved beyond Rawls' liberal egalitarian formulation. The concepts of the *right to the city* and *spatial justice* became intertwined very much that it is now difficult to take them apart. It is often forgotten fact that Lefebvre's idea about justice is not limited to the city *per se*. Lefebvre (1991) discussed that spatial processes moved beyond the borders of the city and could also affect the countryside. Consider that the bureaucratic society and its extension through urban planning and public policy do not merely affect those living in the city, but also those in the countryside and rural areas (Soja, 2010b). In line with this thinking, Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (2010b, 2013) perceived the world as continuously urbanizing. The importance of urbanization was introduced by the well-known urbanist Jane Jacobs (1969) in her classic *The Economy of Cities* as the primary transformative, provocative and insightful cause for societal development and technological innovation in the past twelve thousand years. The *spatial turn* revived Jacobs' urban spatial assertiveness which was recognized in Soja's (2003, 2010b) discussion on *synekism* (a notion denoting the stimulus of urban and regional agglomeration). However, urbanization was not only viewed as an innocent and prudent transformation. Harvey (2001a) reported that urbanization was an expression of capital's drive to colonize new geographies in attempt to solve its inner crisis tendencies. He used the example of urbanization to illustrate the work the *spatial fix*—opening of new markets of capital accumulation—and expose the paradoxes of capitalism. In various publications, Harvey and Soja acknowledged that the reorganization and restructuring processes, which the *spatial fix* involves, were inherently unjust. Remaining highly vigilant to the capitalist reductionism trap, however, Soja (2010b) recognized that the *spatial fix*, of course not exclusively, could be examined as one possible mechanism of generating geographies of injustice.

Furthermore, Michel Foucault's trialectics of space, knowledge and power, which is very well rooted in Soja's work, could complement the understanding of how geographies of

(in)justices emerge. Some key conclusion could be drawn from Foucault's work: (i) space is crucial in understanding social power relations; (ii) space is crucial to exercise power; (iii) power creates particular space. The above conclusions are based on Foucault's engagement with "medicine, clinical psychology, institutional design, urban planning, and the (spatial) order of things" (Soja, 1996, p. 147). However, "Foucault never developed his conceptualization of space in great self-conscious detail" like Lefebvre did (Soja, 1996, p. 147). Nevertheless, Foucault's scholarship facilitated the idea that socially constructed spaces were embedded in power relations (Soja, 1996, 2010b). This notion is reflected in Lefebvre's (1991) argument that a hegemonic class used the social production of space as a tool to reproduce its dominance. Importantly, Foucault argued that power was not merely something which institutions possessed and used oppressively against individuals. He tried to analyze how power operated in everyday interactions between individuals, institutions, and the state. According to him, power was more a strategy than a possession:

I am not referring to Power with a capital P, dominating and imposing its rationality upon the totality of the social body. In fact, there are power relations. They are multiple; they have different forms, they can be in play in family relations, or within an institution, or an administration. (Foucault, 1988, p. 38)

He also acknowledged that "as soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy" (Foucault 1988, p. 123). Commonly the reading of Foucault's work is dominated by an emphasis on the subject as helpless and passive victim and therefore the actual resistance to it is overlooked. Power is seen as a more unstable element, which can be always contested, so power relations should be continually renewed and reaffirmed. However, Foucault emphasis on the individual subject failed him to bridge theory and practice and to explore collective agents (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja 1996).

In *Seeking Spatial Justice*, Soja (2010b) aimed to bridge the gaps between theory and practice. Soja's strategic rational "seeking" attempted to open new horizons for theoretical and political practical innovation. Soja (2010b) explored the spaces of hope, to put it in Harvey's (2000) term, to not only surpass utopian thinking, but also to epitomize the possibilities for imagining, creating, and actively producing more just geographies. Alongside this line of thought, Soja (2010b) discussed stunning examples of new spatial consciousness in Los Angeles and the United States. He presented the Bus Riders Union (BRU)'s court case victory against LA transportation authority that was obliged to reorient the bus-based transit around inner-city working poor commuters instead of investing in costly fixed-rail development serving predominantly white and affluent commuters of the suburbs and the outer rings of the metropolis. The fixed-rail investment project could have increased the cleavage between class, race, gender and age since the bus transit population comprised predominantly of poor people of color, especially women and children, who needed a more flexible, reliable, efficient and safe bus network given their multiple and multi-locational job

households and school placement respectively (Soja, 2010b, 2010d). In addition to racial discrimination claims, the grassroots coalition of diverse bus riders included the notion of spatial and locational discrimination that helped them win the court case (Soja, 2010d). As a result, the BRU demonstrated that a more just socio-spatial reality of LA could be envisioned and achieved. Other examples of the power of coalition building were illustrated with the successful defeat of planned Wal-Mart superstore in the city of Inglewood and the unsuccessful attempt to preserve a community garden in South Central Los Angeles. Active community-university engagement was the driver of the aforementioned campaigns. Soja (2010b) argued that UCLA's Urban Planning Program fostered not only theoretical innovation, but also practical developments and strategies for spatial justice in LA. Last but not least, the formation of Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) (<http://www.laane.org/>) and the Right to the City Alliance (<http://righttothecity.org/>) showcased justice struggles and community empowerment from the local scale and beyond (Soja, 2010b).

To conclude, Edward Soja did not merely attempt to provide a geographical description of social or any other forms of justice. Foregrounding space was an innovative theoretical and practical strategy to bridge gaps between and within academic and political agendas. Soja explored justice struggles from a critical spatial perspective and advocated a more forceful use of spatial explanation of (in)justice. He elaborated extensively on how the intertwining of social and spatial processes produced oppressive and enabling geographies. Although the concept of *spatial justice* is theoretically sound, it might be very abstract for practical use. Therefore, in the process of translating theory into spatial praxis, a debate arises over the preference for more tangible synonymous or complementary notions, such as *the right to the city* (Lefebvre, 1996), *environmental justice* (Soja, 2010a), *territorial justice* (Harvey, 1973) or *the just city* (Fainstein, 2010; Soja, 2010c). Overall, Soja's scholarship promoted progressive forms of participatory democracy and civic initiatives possible through theoretical innovation, grassroots mobilization and coalition building.

## 2.4 Spatiality of resistance movement

Alongside Soja's discussion about the importance of space and progressive grassroots mobilization, Nicholls, Miller and Beaumont (2013) admitted that there was an increased interest in spatiality of the protest and social movements. Martin and Miller (2003 as cited by Porta, Fabbri, & Pizza, 2013) also noted the importance of space.

Like time, space is not merely a variable or container of activism: it constitutes and structures relations and networks (including the process that produce gender, race, and class identities); situates social and cultural life including repertoires of contention; is integral to the attribution of threats and opportunities; is implicit in many types of category formation; is central to scale-jumping strategies that aim to alter discrepancies in power among political contestants. (Martin and Miller, 2003, as cited by Porta, Fabbri, & Pizza, 2013, p. 28)

Space is part of the social dynamics of any protest and social movement that is influenced by and also shapes. However, the analysis of space in contentious politics has long been insufficient (Nicholls, Miller, & Beaumont, 2013). To overcome this shortcoming in academic debate, Nicholls, Miller and Beaumont (2013) analyzed how space plays a constitutive role in social movement mobilization. Therefore, the theoretical task at hand would be to demonstrate how space plays a role in constituting socio-political movement mobilization in Bulgaria.

Grassroots mobilization includes common people driven by community's politics. The term implies that ordinary people, contrasting the leadership or elite of a political party or union, come together to solve a societal challenge. The individuals in this group share the same commitment to changes. Grassroots mobilization is an elusive concept because it describes a wide array of bottom-up civic initiatives that are fragmented in many different ways. Although some might be more progressive than others, they all share one common feature – the attempt to mobilize individuals to act and improve the well-being of a community (Mayer, 2006).

Leitner, Sheppard and Sziarto (2008) argued that people were positioned simultaneously in multiple spaces. The different spaces will be of greater or lesser importance at different times and in different places, so that they will be associated with the mobilization, capacities, and resources found in socio-political movements.

Firstly, social movements are structured by space in which they develop. Auyero (2006 as cited by Porta, Fabbri, & Pizza, 2013) stated that “[s]pace is sometimes the site, other times the object and usually both the site and the object of contentious politics” (p. 28). Activists take some advantages of or confront with disadvantages of particular constraints. Secondly, social movements are also space producers; they manipulate it, use it and create new ones. Socio-political movements grow in *terrains of resistance*. Routledge (1996 as cited by Porta, Fabbri, & Pizza, 2013) defined them as “sites for contestations and the multiplicity of relations between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic powers and discourses, between forces and relations of dominations, subjection, exploitation and resistance” (pp. 28-9). Protest itself can also create a sense of place because it is an emotionally intense and cognitively charged event that plays with the symbolic language of a place. Consequently, new meanings and values might be assigned to a particular place through the interaction of various actors, such as protesters, counter protesters and the police (Porta, Fabbri, & Pizza, 2013).

Occupation of public (urban) space has become a popular form of protest. Its unique features are its horizontal and leaderless structure. Not only does it employ traditional tactics, but also new tools of technology and alternative forms of organizing and informing to express concerns (Lubin, 2012). New socio-political movements are now able to merge physical and virtual spaces into “networks of alternative communication” (Fahmi, 2009, p. 89). Furthermore, activists' mobility, horizontal and leaderless organizational model as well



as the access to communications have shifted their campaigns and resources to virtual venues.

By literally and symbolically claiming (urban) spaces as sites for resistance, occupiers might transform these spaces into sites for liberty and participatory democracy. People gather to learn, discuss and confront issues of public concern. They try to demonstrate the possibility of a more inclusive and just world in which the civil society takes an active role (Lubin, 2012).

## 2.5 The beach as a liminal space

One of the multiple spatialities of the grassroots movement is the beach. The beach might literary and symbolically be the site for resistance and cultural performance. The spatial fix is constantly challenged from there. Its logic of conquering new territories to establish new markets confronts a culturally rich space. The spatial fix needs to cross some form of imagined threshold to be fully complete. There are contrasting discourses of representation, which can be explored through the anthropological concept of *liminality*—an intermediate stage in transition. The beach as a liminal space is socially and culturally identified, constructed and contested. Therefore, it is important to explore the perceived, conceived and lived landscape of the beach as a *liminal space* and the unique role of the beach as a site for resistance and cultural performance.

The etymology of the term *liminal* derives from the Latin word *limen* meaning a threshold; that is, an imagined doorway between different spaces and stages of life one needs to cross. The concept originates from Arnold van Gennep's pivotal work *The Rites of Passage* published in 1909. In his study of small-scales societies, Van Gennep (1909/ 1960) developed the notion of *liminality* to theorize the transition from adolescence to adulthood through a ritual that consisted of three-fold sequential structure: separation, transition (or the liminal period) and incorporation. In the first stage, the initiate (the one undergoing the ritual) was stripped of all former social status and identity. After that, the initiate had to cross a transitional stage. Within the final rite of passage, the individual was reintegrated into society and empowered with a new social status and identity. Building on Van Gennep's work (1909/ 1960), Victor Turner (1969) elaborated on the importance of the transition period. He stressed that the individuals or entities within the liminal period were "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony" (Turner, 1969, p. 95). During the liminal stage, social differences were dissolved and a social structure of *communitas* was formed. *Communitas* are the core of a community and they refer to a shared or even egalitarian experience by a group of people. According to Turner (1969) *communitas* can be "*existential* or *spontaneous*" (a shared feeling of togetherness), "*normative*" (a stable social structure due to the need of social control), and "*ideological*" (applied to utopian social models) (p. 132).

The anthropological concept of *liminality*, which can be applied to study the intermediate stages in transition of individuals, groups and large-scale societies, has both temporal and spatial dimensions (Thomassen, 2009) (see Table 1, p. 28). For example,

*liminality* is marked by specific dates in the calendar and associated with a specific place. Consider the experience of going on a holiday. A person takes days-off in the summer to travel to a specific beach. In this case, *liminality* (Turner 1974; Gennep 1909/ 1960) embodies the personal experience of willingly leaving one's daily routine at home to temporally go to a new place to relax, recreate and regenerate (Brooker & Joppe, 2014). The interval "betwixt and between" leaving home and going to the beach is the imagined threshold a person crosses. "For some the simple act of stepping into the sand may be accompanied by a feeling of upliftment, a frisson of awareness, and a holistic sensation in which action and consciousness are merged at the moment of crossing into what we call a liminal space" (Preston-Whyte, 2008, p. 349). Therefore, a *liminal space* is literally and figuratively in-between boundary zone one crosses.

Preston-Whyte (2008) discussed the beach as a *liminal space* from recognized limiting "Western viewpoints" (pp. 349-51). The author defined it in terms of perceived material space and lived cultural space:

The beach is a place of strong magic. As a material space it is a boundary zone where the hint of celestial forces is whispered by ebb and flow of tides, a space that is neither land nor sea, a zone of uncertainty that resonates with the sound of ever-changing seas, a setting that is, by turn, calm, tranquil, and soothing or agitated, unruly, and frightening. As a cultural spaces it is a borderland that allows both difference and hybridity while facing the tactile tug of land or sea to reveal for many, but not all, spaces of heightened sensibilities that are temporary, personal, and elusive – in short, liminal spaces. (Peston-Whyte, 2008, p. 349)

*Liminal beach space* encompasses leisure activities in the physical environment as well as the symbolic values culturally and socially assigned to both the activities and environment. It is a socially constructed space if Lefebvre and Soja's work are taken into account. *Liminal beach space* as a social construct is the outcome and medium of processes and practices that define its use. The incorporation of social, cultural and environmental components of the beach create a space that is commonly used for bathing, surfing, fishing, spirituality and so on. However, transgressive practices and behaviors, such as free camping and nudism can also be present. These activities may embody freedom and escape from social, cultural, political and economic constraints. Not only will people seek to escape the daily grind of social life at home, but also build up a coalition against oppressive forces. "Visitors may seek, but not necessarily find, on these beaches a space where the stress of normal working lives is temporary suspended, cultures merge, egalitarianism flourishes, and bonds of friendship are forged" (Preston-Whyte, 2008, p. 350).

It is also worth noting that *liminal beach spaces* are elusive, intangible, and obscure. "They lie in a limbo-like space often beyond normal and social constraints" (Preston-Whyte, 2008, p. 350). They are a sort of social limbo between certainty and uncertainty, confinement and freedom, danger and safety, difference and hybridity (Preston-Whyte, 2008).

*Liminal beach spaces* can be comprehended with an epistemological and ontological approach that also includes inhibitors of liminal experiences (Preston-Whyte, 2008). There are several factors, such as overdevelopment, overpopulation, noise and pollution that are assumed to lead to disappointment and frustration in an attempt to find liminality. Moreover, the possibility of social and criminal violence impairs the viability of the beach as a place for solitude and relaxation. Additionally, the personnel employed to take care of the lifeguard, cleanness and security of the beach are assumed to not perceive the enjoyment of the beach as the other visitors do (Preston-Whyte, 2008). *Liminal beach spaces* are common social places of enjoyment:

The beach is the only place of enjoyment that the human species has discovered in nature. Thanks to its sensory organs, from the sense of smell and from sexuality to sight (without any special emphasis being placed on the visual sphere), the body tends to behave as a *differential field*. It behaves, in other words, as a total body, breaking out of the temporal and spatial shell developed in response to labour, to the division of labour, to the localizing of work and the specialization of places (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 384).

The sensations of the beach inspire social, spiritual, sexual, sports, and nudist beach spaces, all of which have liminal potential. Generally, three properties of liminality can be identified: imagination, spontaneity and timelessness. Firstly, the beach is “a place of festivity, the space of the dream” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 353). This corresponds to the differing associations every single user has about the beach. This also relates to “spiritual rebirth, transformation, and recuperation” (Preston-Whyte, 2008, p. 350). The liminal experience of the beach is heightened by both individual and collective imagining associated with concrete representations. Secondly, the beach is argued to be a site for spontaneous encounters and hospitable interactions. Through communal activities, such as bathing, doing sports, cooking, eating, people may develop longstanding relationships and sacred bonds (Coldicutt, 2013). This resonates with building a coalition and forwarding the emphasis from the self to the community. Thirdly, liminal beach spaces reorient the senses of time and space. The regular activities and behaviors embedded in the natural and social elements of the beach create “a timeless space suspended between land and sea” (Preston-Whyte, 2008, p. 352). This is associated with tranquility and solitude one seeks on the beach.

The beach is characterized as a liminal space. Thus, it intrinsically defies permanence. Following the definition of *liminality*, the beach is difficult to be pinned down because it involves blurred territorial boundaries and multiplicity of identities—ideas which confront dualism. Not by coincidence, *liminal beach spaces* are compared to borderlands—regions of contact, hybridity, confluence, and divergence. Furthermore, the opposition between permanence and temporality associated with liminality is closely related to the opposition between *fixity* and *mobility* associated with the *spatial fix*. Therefore, *liminal beach spaces* might also provide a critical lens to unravel the challenges the spatial fix faces in its attempt to pin down capital in urban infrastructure on the beach.

The current research will attempt to bridge different knowledge gaps in research about *liminal beach spaces*, spatial development and contentious politics. Although the importance of liminality has been widely recognized in studying beach communities (Coldicutt, 2013) or innovations in tourism (Brooker & Joppe, 2014), knowledge is mostly informed by Anglo-Saxon research. This research will emphasize on the spatial relationship the concept of liminality implies, rather merely focusing on the traditional temporal meanings usually associated with it. Additionally, liminality will not only be viewed in terms of marginality, openness and surprise, but as a sphere of outspoken and silent agencies and strategies of resistance. Through liminal experiences on the beach, people may obtain tacit knowledge, which would shape innovation and creativity in resistant movement. Although liminal spaces are full of uncertainties, Turner (1969) considered the possibility that the inhabitants of liminal spaces can be empowered if only they can properly manipulate their environment. If the threshold people successfully manipulate their environment, liminal beach spaces may become spaces for radical openness to put it directly in Soja's (1996) words. Therefore, liminal beach space can be a zone of the Thirdspace from where all other socially constructed spaces and (in)justice can be scrutinized.

## 2.6 Multifaceted theoretical approach

Based on the previously discussed developments of spatial theory, it can be concluded that space and spatiality are social and cultural productions. However, how space and spatiality can be approached remains a matter of discussion in human geography. Debates engage with the multiplicitious and heterogeneous nature of space and its production.

[I]t is precisely the multiplicitious and heterogeneous nature of space and spatiality – as abstract and concrete, produced and producing, imagined and materialized, structured and lived, relational, relative and absolute – which lends the concept a powerful functionality that appeals to many geographers and thinkers in the social sciences and humanities (Merriman, Jones, Olsson, Sheppard, Thrift, Tuan, 2012, p. 4)

One possible approach to grasp the multidimensional and polymorphic aspects of sociospatial relations is the TPSN framework. Following Soja's reassertion of the importance of space and its production, Jessop, Brenner and Jones (2008) proposed territories (T), places (P), scales (S), and networks (N) as the multiple dimensions, not exclusively though, of sociospatial relations (see Table 2, p. 29). Their heuristic perspective attempted to surpass the unproductive debates over the emphasis on a single ontology - flat versus scale ontology for example. The authors acknowledged that there was a flow of concepts and turns replacing one another without providing any common ground in sociospatial theory. The authors highlighted the following:

“[S]ociospatial theory is most powerful when it (a) refers to historically specific geographies of social relations; and (b) explores contextual and historical variation in

the structural coupling, strategic coordination, and forms of interconnection among different dimensions of the latter. (Jessop, Brenner, Jones, 2008, p. 392)

The research team argued that territory, place, scale and network were the most salient dimensions and important entry points to theorize political-economic restructuring (Jessop et al., 2008). In order to surpass the limits of one-dimensionalism, the researchers delineated how the aspects of sociospatial relations interact (see Table 3, p. 29). Following Harvey's discussions about the spatial (re)organization and dynamics of capital accumulation, the authors argued that the importance of the aforementioned dimensions as structuring principles for sociospatial relations varied with the manifestation of *spatial fix* in time and space (Jessop et al., 2008). Following Leitner and colleagues' (2008) discussion about the spatiality of resistance movements, Jessop and colleagues (2008) proposed that the multiple dimensions of sociospatial relations and their varying importance in time and space can be used to decipher the sites, strategies and objectives of individuals, collective agents and institutions involved in contentious politics. Overall, Jessop and colleagues (2008) outlined a research agenda that encompassed the paradoxes of capital accumulation, uneven spatial development, power relations, collective agents' struggles and tactics in response to the consequential geographies (i.e., *spatial justice*).

However, TPSN framework might pose a limit to itself as it is a list of selected master concepts that were supposed to matter the most. Eric Sheppard (as cited in Merriman et al., 2012) claimed that spatialities were always open and every time researchers tried to create bounders between different spatial concepts one's ability to comprehend the social world was impaired. Therefore, *liminality* – personifying the multiplicitious and heterogeneous lived, imagined, material and relational spaces – can also be incorporated in the TPSN as a stage in transition and strategic response to the political-economic restructuring.

This research project involves simultaneously various spatial ontologies to critically engage with the importance of space and its production. Consequently, it attempts to provide space for a common ground for various ontologies to theorize sociospatial relations. In conclusion, the current theoretical framework of this inquiry remains open to incorporation of various notions as long as the dialectical, process-based and relational approach to spatiotemporality are guiding the analysis of the case study, which is situated in socialist and post-socialist milieu in Bulgaria.



**Table 1** Types of Liminal Experiences

<i>Time</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Individual</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Society</i>
<i>Moment</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sudden event affecting one's life (death, divorce, illness) or individualized ritual passage (baptism, ritual passage to adulthood, as for example among the Ndembu).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ritual passage to adulthood (almost always in cohorts); graduation ceremonies, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A whole society facing a sudden event (sudden invasion, natural disaster, a plague) where social distinctions and normal hierarchy disappear.</li> <li>Carnivals.</li> <li>Revolutions.</li> </ul>
<i>Period</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical life-stages;</li> <li>Puberty or teenage years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ritual passage to adulthood, which may extend into weeks or months in some societies.</li> <li>Group travels.</li> <li>Going to university, college or taking a gap year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wars.</li> <li>Revolutionary periods.</li> </ul>
<i>Epoch (or life-span duration)</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals standing "outside society", by choice or designated.</li> <li>Monkhood.</li> <li>In some tribal societies, individuals remain "dangerous" because of a failed ritual passage.</li> <li>Twins are permanently liminal in some societies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Religious Fraternities, Ethnic minorities, Social minorities, Transgender.</li> <li>Immigrant groups betwixt and between.</li> <li>Old and new culture;</li> <li>Groups that live at the edge of "normal structures", often perceived as both dangerous and "holy".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prolonged wars, enduring political instability, prolonged intellectual confusion; Incorporation and reproduction of liminality into "structures";</li> <li>Modernity as "permanent liminality".</li> </ul>

*Note.* Reprinted from Thomassen (2009, p. 17)

**Table 2** Four key dimensions of socio-spatial relations

Dimension of sociospatial relations	Principle of sociospatial structuration	Associated patterning of sociospatial relations
<b>Territory</b>	Bordering, bounding, parcelization, enclosure	Construction of inside/outside divides; constitutive role of the 'outside'
<b>Place</b>	Proximity, spatial, embedding, areal differentiation	Construction of spatial divisions of labor; differentiation of social relations horizontally among 'core' versus 'peripheral' places
<b>Scale</b>	Hierarchization, vertical differentiation	Construction of scalar divisions of labor; differentiation of social relations vertically among 'dominant', 'nodal', and 'marginal' scales
<b>Network/ reticulation</b>	Interconnectivity, interdependence, transversal or 'rhizomatic' differentiation	Building networks of nodal connectivity; differentiation of social relations among nodal points within topological networks

*Note.* Reprinted from Jessop, Brenner, and Jones (2008, p. 393)

**Table 3** Beyond one-dimensionalism: conceptual orientation

Structuring principles	Field of operation			
	Territory	Place	Scale	Network
<b>Territory</b>	Past, present, and emergent frontiers borders, boundaries	Distinct place in a given territory	Multilevel government	Interstate system, state alliances, multi-area government
<b>Place</b>	Core-periphery, borderlands, empires, neomedievalism	Locales, millieux, cities, sites, regions, localities, globalities	Division of labor linked to differently scaled places	Local/ urban governance, partnerships
<b>Scale</b>	Scalar division of political power (unitary state, federal state, etc.)	Scale as area rather than level (local through to global), spatial division of labor (Russian doll)	Vertical ontology based on nested or tangled hierarchies	Parallel power networks, nongovernmental international regimes
<b>Networks</b>	Origin-edge, ripple effects (radiation), stretching and folding, crossborder region, interstate system	Global city networks, polynucleated cities, intermeshed sites	Flat ontology with multiple, ascalar entry points	Networks of networks, spaces of flows, rhizome

*Note.* Reprinted from Jessop, Brenner, and Jones (2008, p. 395)

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Research strategy

In order to answer the research questions, I conducted predominantly qualitative research, containing a case study design:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of recordings, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their naturalistic settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 36).

Qualitative research is a research strategy that emphasizes words and how social actors interpret their world rather quantification in collecting and analyzing data. It embodies a view of social reality in continually shifting emergent properties of social constructions. This research strategy will allow me to go deep and be context-specific, so that I can be involved in a process in which attention is paid to certain world views, theoretical perspectives, research problems, collection of data and data analysis (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2007).

### 3.2 Research design

To gain a detailed and intensive analysis of the complexity and specific features of the wild beach Karadere in northeast Bulgaria, I delineated a case study. The case study is a flexible research design that allows me to use a collection of multiple sources: literature review, participant's observations and in-depth (semi)structured interviews (Bryman, 2012).

Firstly, to demonstrate a connection between different conceptual ideas (e.g., the production of space, spatial fix, spatial justice, liminal beach spaces, spatiality of social movements), I carried out a systematic literature review regarding relevant spatial theories and current approaches to research in human geography. Additionally, I examined news reports, policy documents, investment plans, construction work procedures, weblogs posts and social media communications to gain an extensive knowledge of popular discourses regarding the urbanization and preservation of Karadere.

Secondly, to provide understandings of practices, interactions, symbols, and relevant events, I conducted unobtrusive participant's observations spontaneously or planned during a three-week fieldwork in Bulgaria. Over this period I commuted daily back-and-forth from the town of Byala to Karadere. Although I had an accommodation in Byala, I also camped with representatives of a social movement and nature lovers on the beach. Due to my

involvement with them, I gained a close and intimate familiarity with a diverse group as well as a genuine experience of the beach. Moreover, I took photographs, made short movies, carried out a research diary, and collected opinions and suggestions in a notebook. Consequently, I obtained a situated knowledge to better underline and reflect on the spatial variation in (in)justice.

Last but not least, to suffice concrete and varied empirical data, I conducted in-depth interviews with professionals whose expertise varied from politics, engineering, social work, art to even education and culture. Majority of them were campers and/ or visitors of the beach. Because the phenomena under research do not have a static form and the interviewees cannot be simultaneously situated in all the contexts to witness the operation of all processes, the interviews cannot uncover all the relevant data. However, I consider the interviewees and myself as a researcher to be co-participants in dynamic processes in which we are thoroughly engaged. Moreover, the interviews give valuable hints and suggestions helping me to guide my research. Therefore, I argue this research project is based on more elaborate and satisfactory ontology and epistemology (May, 2002).

### 3.3 Participants

Eleven individuals (age range 30-70, 5 females) in total participated in in-depth interviews. Ten respondents were interviewed between 26<sup>th</sup> of July and 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2014 in Bulgaria. Before departing to Bulgaria, I made interview appointments with three active members of the citizens' movement via the Facebook group "Let's save Karadere" (BG: "Да спасим Карадере"). Once in Bulgaria, other participants were recruited via snow balling and convenient sampling. On 20 November 2014 an interview via Skype was conducted with one active members of the citizens' initiative "Let's save Karadere". This follow-up interview revealed some strategies of the movement and put it in a broader context following the parliamentary elections in Bulgaria. To keep confidentiality, the names of most respondents were changed with pseudonyms. All interviews were in Bulgarian.

### 3.4 Operationalization

The *spatial fix* was examined following Harvey's discussions on capitalism's insatiable drive to resolve its crisis tendencies through geographical expansion and (re)organization. *Contention politics* were approached with Soja's analysis on spatial justice struggles in conjunction with Nicholls and colleagues' (2013), Porta and colleagues' (2013) and Lubin's discussions on progressive grassroots mobilization. To analyze the interplay between the *spatial fix* and spaces of *contention politics*, I employed a multidimensional framework. The anthropological concept of *liminality* was identified with three properties according to the literature: imaginaries, spontaneous encounters and timelessness. Focusing only on one dimension, Karadere beach as a place for example, was only justified as an entry point to more complex inquiry which required continuous reflexive attention to combining multiple dimensions of socio-spatial processes. Different dimensions of the production of space were assessed with Lefebvre's spatial triad. Dimensions of spatial justice and strategies for

working towards it were evaluated through a framework based on the scholarship of critical human geographers like Soja and Design Studio for Social Intervention in Boston (Bailey, Lobenstine, & Nagel, 2012). The injustice of urban development was complemented by Iris Young's five faces of oppression: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence.

**Table 4** Lefebvre's conceptual triad and related frameworks represented as categories of analysis

Field	Aspect of field (Physical space/ Experience)	Examples	Human being
<b>Physical</b>	Spatial Practice	Routes, destinations, way-finding modes of transport	My body/ Your body
	<i>Perceived space</i>	<i>Smelling, seeing, hearing, moving, attending, dissociating</i>	↑ ↓
<b>Mental</b>	Representations of space	Plans, discourses, concepts, methods, models, theories, academic disciplines	My mind/ Your mind
	<i>Conceived space</i>	<i>Thinking, reflecting, systematizing, ideating, imagining, interpreting, measuring, categorizing</i>	↑ ↓
<b>Social</b>	Representational space	Home, graveyard, festival, family farm, office, public monument, Nature, bed	My direct experience/ your direct experience
	<i>Lived space</i>	<i>Living "in the moment," loving, featuring, creating, witnessing, finding intersubjectivity, joining in, recognizing limits, remembering</i>	

Note. Reprinted from Carp (2008, p. 133)



**Table 5** Dimensions of spatial justice

Dimension	Definition	Questions
<b>Spatial claims</b>	the right to be and become	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who uses the place, who does not, and why?</li> <li>• How is the space used?</li> <li>• What talents and gifts do people have here?</li> <li>• What is unique about the history and culture of the area?</li> </ul>
<b>Spatial power</b>	the right to thrive and express	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What qualities would you use to describe the place?</li> <li>• How are people able to practice, contribute and create here?</li> <li>• What messages and behaviors does the space suggest?</li> <li>• What prevents anyone from full participation in personal or public life?</li> </ul>
<b>Spatial links</b>	the right to access and connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What barriers exist in the physical environment?</li> <li>• What breaks and obstacles can be found in the system?</li> <li>• What invisible, historical or social barriers divide people?</li> <li>• What historic memory exists in the place and the people here?</li> </ul>
<b>Ecology of Place</b>	the right to natural and social ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What connects this place to other places?</li> <li>• What natural and social flows exist in the place?</li> <li>• What institutions relate to and influence the place?</li> <li>• What dreams and aspirations exist for the place?</li> </ul>

*Note.* Adopted from Bailey, Lobenstine, and Nagel (2012)

## 4 Bulgaria's urban coastal development

### 4.1 Introduction

The loss of a place like Karadere is a loss of some human dignity. At the moment when man sells such a wonderful area for a few pieces of concrete and urban luxury, he sells himself. The fight against windmills is absurd, but it must continue because this type of construction turns Bulgaria into a concrete graveyard for faded souls and loads of money.

(Anonymous interviewee, July 2014)

The reference to “concrete graveyard” in the above quote evokes the image of the consequence of troublesome urban development on Bulgaria's coast. Karadere is not merely an abstract space isolated from a broader context. The case study points toward a multifaceted inquiry that requires reflexive attention to multiple dimensions of socio-spatial processes throughout the history of Bulgaria. This involves investigation of urban development on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast before and after the fall of the socialist regime. This chapter will set the stage for major social interventions in Bulgaria triggered by the processes and outcomes of troubled urban development on the coast. Urban coastal development before and after the disintegration of the socialist regime in Bulgaria will be discussed in a consecutive order. The discussion would be followed by the striking example of Sunny Beach, one of the most popular resorts in Bulgaria, to illustrate urban transformations on the coast. The overreaching goal of this chapter is to illuminate the logic of the spatial fix, namely, how and why the mass tourist development shifts and transforms geographies on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.

### 4.2 Urban coastal development before the Fall

The socialist system in Bulgaria was officially installed in 1946 following a coup on 9 September 1944 backed by the Red Army. Bulgaria turned from a monarchy into a centrally governed state by the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) and its allegedly “independent” coalition partner National Agrarian Party. The People's Republic of Bulgaria was proclaimed and existed until 1990. It was argued to be the most trusted ally of the Soviet Union during the Cold War era.

The Bulgarian Black Sea coast became a popular holiday destination for both domestic and foreign visitors during socialism. Between 1960s and 1980s a broad range of holiday facilities were developed on the coast (Zinganel, Beyer, & Hagemann, 2013). Leisure activities provided opportunities for the Bulgarian citizens to retrieve from the monotony of daily life at home or work during socialism. However, one could never hide from the socialist ideology. The notion of *socialist escapes* described this paradox eloquently. People escaped socialism without actually leaving it. Holiday development during socialism was an intriguing

case because building up of socialism went hand in hand with capitalist business practices (Giustino, Plum, & Vari, 2013).

The construction of large-scale tourism facilities began in 1950s. During the post-war period, the Bulgarian 380-kilometer coastline, consisting of gentle slopes and long sandy beaches, offered many open spaces. These conditions were perfect for urban development. Glavproekt, the central state institute for architecture and urban planning in Sofia, drafted comprehensive urban plans. According to these plans, tourism development was purposely concentrated in a few distinct locations to avoid destroying coastal natural assets as much as possible (Beyer & Hagemann, 2013).

In the 1960s, Bulgaria successfully promoted its nature resource and entertainment opportunities on the Black Sea (Beyer & Hagemann, 2013). This was complemented by the facts that the People's Republic of Bulgaria wanted to sell its most precious commodities—tobacco and chocolate—that were especially rare in other Eastern Bloc countries. Alcohol was also a valuable product. Moreover, the promotion of “productive” leisure was very well implemented into the socialist discourse likewise was work for the creation the “new man” in Bulgarian (Neuburger, 2013, p. 146). Productive leisure entailed nature-based and healthy “tourist” experiences (Neuburger, 2013, p. 146). Healthy tourism was just as important as visiting museums and other productive cultural activities in cities (Giustino et al., 2013).

The late 1960s and 1970s were characterized by a rapid expansion of holiday consumption venues, including hotels, restaurants, bars, resorts (Beyer & Hagemann, 2013). The urbanization of Bulgaria's coast was representative for the late modernism. The late socialist modernism in architecture on the Bulgarian coast contrasted the standardized and grey high-rise buildings of the capitalist imagination. Although there were high-rise blocks with clear geometric lines, there were also creative forms ranging from hotel towers to low-rise hotels designed to resemble traditional monasteries. The quality of the holiday resorts architectures during that time was “remarkable” and “deservedly acclaimed by internal experts” (Beyer & Hagemann, 2013, p. 87). The playful themed architecture was complemented by booming gastronomy and entertainment options, such as simulacra of fantasy words, casinos, luxury sports and mildly salacious stage acts. Because the capacity of the resorts was fulfilled in the late 1980s, the boom of construction work ceased (Beyer & Hagemann, 2013).

Tourist landscapes on Bulgaria's coast reflected fordist conception of leisure, namely they offered a temporal refuge for people from the daily hassles in the urbanized and industrialized cities (Zinganel et al., 2013). Due to the possibility to take a leave from work and affordability of holiday resorts, majority of Bulgarians could go to recreate and repose on the coast. Despite the shared conception of leisure with western democracies, the spatial fix operated differently in socialist Bulgaria due to distinctions in the planning, organization and ownership structures of the tourist sector. During socialism the urban development on Bulgaria's coast was centrally controlled by the state. The state institute for architecture and urban planning in Sofia designed the Bulgarian resorts. Until the late 1980s, the tourist economy was led by a few state enterprises, among which Balkantourist

predominated (Beyer & Hegemann, 2013). Additional important factor was that land and property were owned by the state. However, Bulgarian socialist resorts provided the space for synthesis between socialist ideology and western commercial tourist model. The synthesis was expressed through modern architecture, supply system and consumer services. This synthesis between socialist and capitalist structures and practices was a necessary condition for Bulgaria to meet the criteria of economy of scale. As a result, Bulgaria was advertised as modern and international holiday destination (Beyer & Hegemann, 2013). There was a diversity of holiday practices ranging from social tourism organized by the state to individual packages for domestic and international guests. Although the majority of tourists were from the COMECON countries, 15% came from countries on the other side of the Iron Curtain. For example, Bulgarian resorts were a common social place for people coming from the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany (Guistino et al., 2013; Zinganel et al., 2013). During socialism, the operation of the spatial fix in Bulgaria was dictated predominantly by the state.

### 4.3 Urban coastal development after the Fall

Following the disintegration of the socialist system, at least four types of transformations occurred in Bulgaria to affect multifaceted structural changes on the coast:

- 1) From totalitarian (mono-party rule) to democratic society (pluralistic political system), from planned/ supply to market based/ demand driven economy;
- 2) From industrial to service economy and culture;
- 3) From an isolated to an incorporated position in the world economy;
- 4) From state to private property.

(Anderson, Hirt, & Slaev, 2012)

Bulgarian resorts after the fall continued to be sites for the specialization of power projects. The tourist sector in Bulgaria initially plummeted following the disintegration of the socialist system in 1990. The country followed a new path towards a democratic and capitalist future. The formerly nationalized assets had to be privatized. Major Bulgarian resorts were mostly broken down into smaller units before the privatization intensified in 1997 (Zinganel et al., 2013). Thereafter, the tourism regions witnessed urban development boom. Consequently, large resorts turned into urban grotesque. The enlargement of existing hotels combined with new developments disregarding the urban layout and maximum capacity rhetoric from socialism facilitated the development of the remaining open spaces in major resorts. The parallel population increase (local residents and tourists) was also one of the hazardous factors for coastal zone sustainability. Furthermore, the existing facilities in some municipalities could not meet the additional pressure and reduce adequately the anthropogenic impact on the marine and coastal ecosystems (Palazov & Stanchev, 2007).

However, the unavailability of open spaces in resorts did not limit the urban development. Speculative property development, comprising of holiday apartment complexes and residences, began eating up the unspoiled plots on the coast (Zinganel et al.,

2014). Urban sprawl and monopoly steadily put pressure on small-scale local businesses on the Bulgarian coast. The spatial fix in post-socialist Bulgaria looked for unexplored territories to invade. Relentless urbanization has now devastated the well-marketed product from the socialism. Major coastal resorts have now turned into places for crime, alcohol paradise, prostitution, and cheap clientele (Beyer & Hagemann, 2013). The high priority Black Sea region suffered the effect of “wild capitalism” in Bulgaria.

Wild capitalism in Bulgaria was predominantly led by individuals from the former socialist structures. People, who ruled the country for decades, were well infiltrated in the new governing model and administration. Political and economic corruption combined with environmental degradation of major resorts followed the political and economic disruptions of the 1990s. Agonizing transitional period did not seem to seize even after Bulgaria’s accession in the EU in 2007. It is still debatable whether Bulgaria is still stuck in the transitional period.

#### 4.4 Sunny Beach – compressed by the logic of the spatial fix

Sunny Beach—Bulgaria’s biggest and most popular holiday complex on the Black Sea coast—is the most sticking showcase contrasting the socialist latest achievements before the Fall and relentless urbanization after the Fall (Beyer & Hagemann, 2013).

The construction of the resort began quietly and without a party on 1 September 1958 following a Decree No 120 of 30 June 1958 of the Council of Ministers of the Peoples’ Republic of Bulgaria. Glavproekt’s team lead by architect Kolyo Nikolov designed the resort in 1957. Nikolov’s team consisted of young and unknown architects – Lili Stoicheva, Alexander Ovtcharov, Ivan Kassarov, Emil Koev, Sabina Kouteva, D. Salabashev, P. Sokolovski and engineers - Lyudmil Antonov and S. Kovachev (Shikerova, 2009; Momchilov, 2009).

Urban designers and workers were involved in the construction of the holiday complex, located on a crescent of soft sand forming dunes populated by snakes and hedgehogs, to the north of the town of Nessebar, close to regional centers Burgas and Varna. Alongside the construction of the resort, the green park and areas were designed and implemented. Fertile soil and variety of vegetation (300 000 large-sized coniferous and deciduous trees, 770 000 ornamental shrubs, 100 000 rose bushes, 200 000 dune grasses) were transported from the countryside. The investment was estimated over BGN 150 M. The first director of the holiday complex was Anastas Karolev (Shikerova, 2009; Momchilov, 2009).

Sunny Beach was conceived as a family resort embedded in greenery offering comfort and nature-based leisure. The construction of the new resort was a priority of the Bulgarian Communist Party, which directly supervised it (Shikerova, 2009).

In the bTV’s documentary titled *Concrete Gardens*, Ivan Chernokozhev, chief director investment control of Sunny Beach during socialism, said: “The aim was to create a completely Bulgarian resort, with Bulgarian architecture and without huge hotels” (Shikerova, 2009). The modern architecture embedded in traditional Bulgarian design was romanticized as shown in an old promotional video:

The romance of the old streets, the comfort of the shady rural yards are carried over to Sunny Beach. Here they warm the modern architecture, make it original – Bulgarian. In this way, the presence, recreating tradition, yields a new value and meaning.

(as cited in Shikerova, 2009)

The holiday complex featured nature-based and healthy tourism that was essential to the communist ideology (Shikerova, 2009). Although it offered a change from the monotonous working day in the city to recreation in the nature, the communist ideology would always be omnipresent (socialist escapes). The image of the resort, embedded in communist ideology, was acknowledged by architect Vladislav Nikolov, son of the chief architect of Sunny Beach.

Sunny Beach was envisioned as a resort with a lot of greenery, rich greenery and low-rise buildings, namely allowing a drastic change in the principle of leisure. I mean, a change from work in the city to going out in nature. Due to a high demand, this currently is even an expensive tourist service. (architect Nikolov as cited in Shikerova, 2009)

On 8 June 1959 Frantisek Silvester, a Czech gentleman from the town of Ostava, was registered as the first tourist in Sunny Beach at Kalina Hotel. From 1 September until July 1959 the resort witnessed the opening of the first 30 hotels and 4 huts with 2 655 beds, 5 restaurants with 4 102 seats. Sunny beach welcomed 18 099 tourists in total during that period. By the end of the holiday season in 1959, the resort was visited by 14 150 foreign tourist, of which 128 came from non-Eastern Bloc countries (Shikerova, 2009; Mihailov, 2009). The first tourists' favorite commodities were the cognac "Pliska", cigarettes "Sluntse", strawberries, peaches, cucumbers and tomatoes (Momchilov, 2009; Beyer & Hagemann, 2013 ).

Following thorough marketing research and debate, the number of hotels and urban forms increased in 1969 to 85 hotels with 18 600 beds, 26 restaurants, 17 attraction-themed ventures, 33 bars, 4 snack bars, 22 coffee shops, 6 bakeries. After this enlargement, 200 087 tourists in total visited Sunny Beach. The number of foreign holidaymakers from the capitalist countries increased 300 times - from 128 in 1958 to 38 028 in 1969. "Tourist", the first local newspaper of the resorts' employees, was printed on 23 April 1966. Since 17 May 1972, the newspaper was renamed into "Sunny Beach" and was issued by a body management of Balkantourist – Sunny Beach. The first edition of the world-known pop song (*estrada*) festival *The Golden Orpheus* was held in Bar Variety on 1 August 1965 under the motto "Songs for the Bulgarian Black Sea coast". From its second edition in 1967 until the termination of the musical events in 1999, the festival took the name of *The Golden Orpheus* (Momchilov, 2009).

In the 1980s, the construction of the resort stopped due to the exhaustion of its capacity. Georgi Atanasov, professor in history, acknowledged that the communists were very careful in planning the resort and that 10% increase in the bed capacity cost yearlong serious discussion and debate (personal communication, July 27, 2014). In 1985 Sunny Beach expanded only to the north. On 9 June 1985, Elenite Holiday Village was opened as a part of Sunny Beach. The first director of Elenite Holiday Village was Marin Garnenkov. From 1959 to 1989 Sunny Beach was visited by over 9 147 000 domestic and foreign holidaymakers. In 1989, when Sunny Beach celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the complex had 108 hotels with more than 27 000 beds, 130 restaurants as well as many amenities ranging from attractions and folkloric clubs, nightclubs and discos, to coffee and pastry shops (Shikerova, 2009, Momchilov, 2009; Beyer & Hagemann, 2013). Located on one of the main promenades, the 20-storey hotel Kuban is still the highest hotel in Sunny Beach (see Figure 8).

The political and economic changes after the collapse of the state socialist resulted in the privatization of Sunny Beach. The Privatization Agency had the task to sell the state property in the holiday complex. Sunny Beach holiday complex was state owned until 14 March 1994 when the Privatization Agency launched a privatization procedure. Alongside the first wave of mass privatization in Bulgaria, 25% of the company's capital was sold to a private owner. On 16 July 1996 the company's names changed to Sunny Beach PLC (Shikerova, 2009; Momchilov, 2009).

Following land release scheme, the Privatization Agency facilitated the sale of the land, on which hotels had been built on the basis of the right to build (property law according to which a person or a group of persons acquires separately from the land ownership of an existing building or the opportunity to construct a building on a foreign terrain), in installments for seven years. This process would allow owners to renovate, demolish and rebuild. The force of *creative destruction* was unleashed. Finally, the Privatization Agency had to sell the last remaining 12 hotels renovated with state money. Instead of offering the hotels in a single package, Levon Hampartsumyan, director of the Privatization Agency, launched 12 separate deals to reduce the political and corruption pressure. Alongside the privatization, Municipality of Nesebar and Sunny Beach PLC decided to create a new building regulation plan of the complex. "VIK Engineering" was charged with this task. According to the plan, the capacity of the holiday complex could be increased with 33% (Shikerova, 2009).

Taking into account these initial conditions and the rapid change of governance and administration in all levels, Sunny Beach witnessed enormous urban development since 1995. Old hotels were enlarged and many others were demolished to free the space for bigger constructions, some of which could arguably be unlawful. The capacity of the hotel was changed several times over the years to include the pool and green area adjacent to the hotels. Furthermore, the intensity and density coefficient of the resort were amended at least four times in the period between 2001 and 2005. From a holiday complex, Sunny Beach turned into an urban agglomeration with infrastructure (sewage, plumbing and electricity) that could not sustain it. Because rigorous statistical data is missing, it was speculated that



the number of beds in the resort varied from 70 000 to 200 000. Buildings slowly ate up the carefully designed greenery. From a strictly planned resort during socialism, Sunny Beach was characterized with its unplanned self-destruction under neoliberalism (Beyer & Hagemann, 2013, Shikerova, 2009).

Nobody currently follows the normative documents. Sunny beach was a heaven for holiday – with many bungalows and much greenery, with a lot of spirit in it. It is now an urban agglomeration. In many cities, the urban agglomeration looks better than this resort.

(Atanasov, personal communication, July 27, 2014)

From a representative business card of Bulgaria during socialism, Sunny Beach was arguably notorious for crime, prostitution and alcohol tourism (Beyer & Hagemann, 2013). Georgi Iliev, a notorious boss of a criminal organization and businessman, was gunned down in Sunny Beach in 2005. The romanticized socialist image of the resort disintegrated, so that a mass consumer culture could homogenize the landscape. Currently, Sunny Beach is preferred destination for a low-end package tourist (Beyer & Hagemann, 2013). From a strictly planned family resort embedded in greenery during socialism, Sunny Beach turned into a chaotically growing urban agglomeration attracting low-end package tourists during neo-liberalism (Shikerova, 2009). Although with different velocity, the spatial fix worked to attract foreign currency in Bulgaria through the construction of resorts on the coast.

## 4.5 Conclusion

The spatial fix, namely the mass tourism development, on the Bulgarian coast was very well embedded in the *socialist escapes* and capitalist market logic. The work of the spatial fix was dictated by the state and its planning and economic structures before the Fall. Main holiday destinations, such as Sunny Beach, personified the liminal utopian dream of the communist party. Following the disintegration of the socialist regime and the consequent political and economic upheavals, major resorts, such as Sunny Beach, were divided into pieces, for which private investors fought over. The construction booms before and after socialism undeniably created jobs in both tourist and construction sector as well as increased gross revenue. According to a report on the tourist sector in post-socialist Bulgaria by Anderson and colleague's (2012), sustained growth was only observed in the short run in early 2000s. Private investors, in conjunction with constant changes in administration and regulations, managed to transform the strictly planned resorts into chaotic urban agglomerations and arguably lower quality (Anderson et al., 2012). These urban agglomerations attracted their clientele with various spectacles and real estate properties. Overall, the spatial fix before and after the fall attempted to attract foreign currency and secure it on the coast. However, the hunger for money capital secured on the cost required

its fixation in place and therefore constant expansion of the spaces of mass tourism development.



**Figure 8** a) Hotel Kuban – one of the few architectural legacies from the socialist past b) overcrowded beach c) Sunny Beach promenade – homogenization of space © Miroslav Damyanov





**Figure 9** Location of Sunny Beach and conurbation of the southern seaside in Bulgaria. *Source:* Google

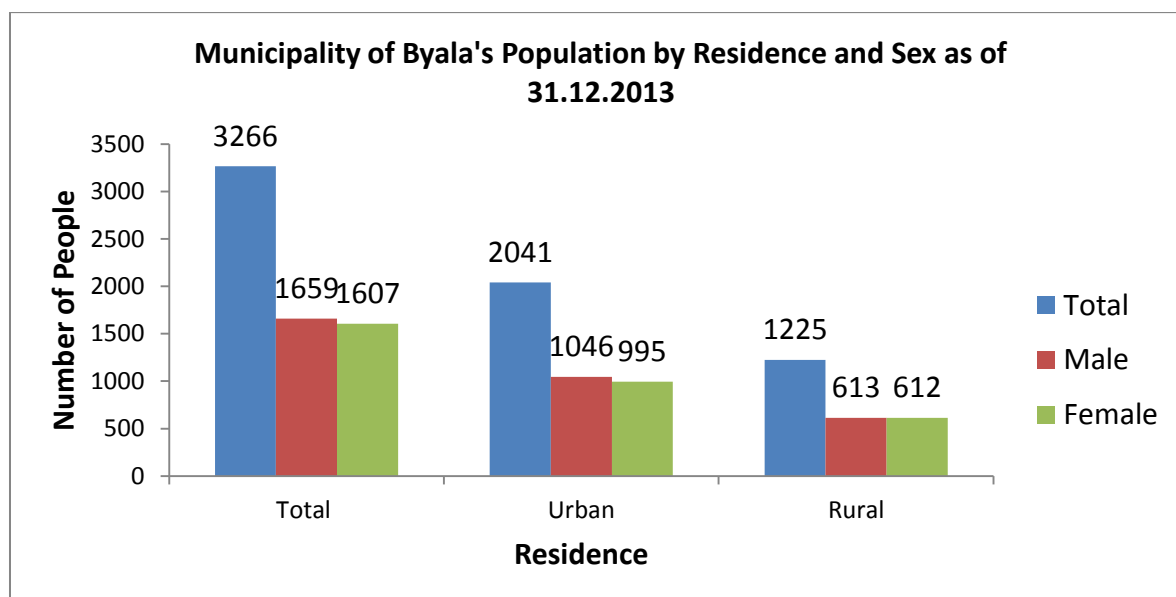
## 5 Mass tourism development in Karadere

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the immediate context of Karadere. The gully of Karadere is situated in the Municipality of Byala, northeast Bulgaria. This chapter deals with spatial dimensions of relations between and within companies and multiple levels of governance in general. Specifically, the two investors—the offshore corporation Madara Europe and the Sofia-based Maxi I—will be described in a consecutive order to clarify mass tourism development in the area of Karadere. Attention will be paid to various urban forms, Natura 2000, ownership of the companies and their capital as well as responses by the government and institutions on multiple levels. Last but not least, the amendment of the Master Plan of the municipality of Byala will be discussed to delineate some prerequisites for the urbanization of Karadere. The overreaching aim of this chapter is to illustrate that the general restructuring forces on Bulgaria's coast affect also Karadere. This chapter will demonstrate how the spatial fix is forcefully trying to cross a new geography on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast through consolidation of land, offshore jurisdictions, interdependence of private investors and political figures.

### 5.2 Municipality of Byala

#### Demographics



**Figure 10** Municipality of Byala's population by residence and sex as of 31.12.2013 © National Statistical Institute

The municipality of Byala spans on 162 km<sup>2</sup> total area in the central part of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. It has a total population of 3 266 residents, of which 2041 live in the administrative center – the town of Byala (see Figure 10) Five villages are part of the

municipality: Popovich, Dyulino, Gospodinovo, Goritsa and Samotino (Municipality of Byala, n.d.-c).

## **History**

The town of Byala has a long history dating back to 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC when the first settlement—Thracian cult center—appeared around the bay of St. Atanas Cape, south of the current town. During the late antiquity—the time of the emperors Anastasius I (491-518 AD) and Justinian I (527-565 AD)—the cape became an early Byzantine fortress with a winery and a church. The fortress was destroyed and abandoned during the incursions of the Avars and Slavs between end 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD and beginning 7<sup>th</sup> c. AD. No other settlement appeared on this site later on (Municipality of Byala, n.d.-b; Minchev, 2013).

The region became part of the First Bulgarian Kingdom in 681 AD when the Bulgars, allied with the South Slavs, settled in the northeast Balkans. It was suspected that the Bulgarian fortress of Vicca stood on the White Cape, north of the town. During the Ottoman Rule (1396-1978), a village known as Akdere (White creek) existed on the town's current location. Until the early 1900s, the majority of the population was ethnic Greek. From 1925 to 1928, about 200 families immigrated to Katerini, Korinos, Kitros, and Aspros in Greece. Their houses were occupied by migrants from Macedonia and later by migrants from Thrace and Dobrudja. The improvement of public services began after the WWII during the communist rule of Bulgaria (1948-1989) when labor service was obligatory. Thanks to the utilization of the labor service, the school, the community center, and bridges as well as the road, electric and water networks were built. Funds were allocated to the construction of public buildings and the forming of a new town's center. In 1976 a new kindergarten and pharmacy were opened; the post office was reconstructed. In 1893 a new polyclinic was opened. Byala was officially recognized as a town on 5 September 1984 (Municipality of Byala, n.d.-b; Minchev, 2013).

## **Economy**

Main economic activities in municipality of Byala are tourism and agriculture. There is immense investors' interest in Byala. Hotels, residential buildings, villas, houses as well as various amenities and services are being built quickly. Furthermore, the municipality makes efforts to develop yacht tourism. Winery and viticulture are among the main and traditional occupations. Vineyards are planted on the widespread coastal hills of the municipality. Fishery is also a well-developed occupation. The banking and insurance sectors are well covered. There are several branches of banks and insurance companies in Byala. The only ATM in the municipality can be found in the city center of Byala (Municipality of Byala, n.d.-a).

Overall, Byala's demographics, history and conditions for economy have made it an attractive location for investment. Real estate investments, hotel buildings and amenities have even reached the boundaries of the city. Evidence for this are the numerous construction works in the south of Byala, in the vicinity of the Late Antiquity Fortress on the

St. Atanas Cape near the city of Obzor. It seems that there is hardly any limit to the global capital flows to find a ground to land. North of Byala is still undeveloped. How long can this be the case considering that there are two notorious construction works under way? In following sections the projects of two developers in North Byala will be elaborated followed by a discussion of the amendments of the Master Plan of Byala to illustrate the work of the spatial fix.

### 5.3 Black Sea Gardens Eco Resort

The first developer is Madara Europe AD<sup>1</sup> (with a former business name Mayfair Group AD)—a joint-stock company with headquarters in Varna, Bulgaria. The investor plans to construct a luxury holiday complex called Black Sea Gardens Eco Resort. According to the publicly announced investment proposal on Madara Europe's website, the project would consist of three types of hotels with 600 living units in total and height of buildings from 1 to 5 stories: (i) hotel 5 stars de lux, (ii) hotel 4 stars – family, and (iii) family holiday village 5 stars. The investor also plans to build public service areas, including medical center with a polyclinic, cinema, gallery, spa center with a sea view, business center, and a restaurant (Madara Europe, 2014a). Besides, the document<sup>2</sup> that the investor allowed the Ministry of Economy to make public on 14 April 2014, contains additional information about the construction of areas for sports, leisure and recreation for permanent or temporary. These areas will include eco-tracks, climbing walls, cycling center and so forth. Additionally, an underground parking on two levels at the periphery of the village will be built to accommodate the vehicles, which will not be allowed in the center of the complex. To move inside the village, dwellers will have to walk, cycle or drive an electric vehicle through a network of streets and paths.

In practice, Madara Europe renewed its initial intention to build a holiday complex in the area of Karadere beach. Under its initial version from 2007, the project covered 700 000 m<sup>2</sup> for a holiday village with nearly 5000 apartments and a bed capacity for 15 400 people. It was estimated EUR 1 B ("Bulgaria govt", 2014; Leshtarska, 2013). Moreover, it gained popularity because it was designed by the top architectural firm Foster + Partners in cooperation with architect Georgi Stanishev, brother of former Prime Minister, formal leader of the ruling then Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and current leader of the Party of European Socialists (PES) Sergey Stanishev (Leshtarska, 2013). In 2008 The Guardian reported that the project might have been the biggest mistake in Norman Foster's career (Connolly, 2008). The investigative journalist bureau Bivol (2014d) revealed documentation about conflict of interests and state land swap. Six months after Norman Foster presented his architectural project at an exhibition in Sofia in 2007, the State Forestry Agency (EFA) carried out 700 000 m<sup>2</sup> land swap in Karadere in favor of Madara Byala North AD (see the connection of the company with Madara Europe on Figure 13) (Bivol, 2014d). Georgi Stanishev, however, vehemently denied any allegations and claimed his name had inappropriately been involved

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<sup>1</sup> UIC 200341288 and management address 82, Kniaz Boris I Blvd., 2nd floor, ap.3, 9002 Varna, Bulgaria.

<sup>2</sup> Available upon request from the author



in a graft scheme (Hristova, 2014). Following the scandalous, the swapped in 2008 plots were removed from the current version of the project because they now belong to the state's list of forbidden for removal from the forestry fund land (Leshtarska, 2014a).



**Figure 11** Sir Norman Foster (middle) shows Sergey Stanishev (left) Black Sea Gardens project at an architecture exhibition in Sofia in 2007 © Balkan Reporter (Hristova, 2014)

Following a revision, the parameters of the project have been reduced. The gross floor area of the hotels and service buildings is 85 000 m<sup>2</sup>. Twenty-one regulated plots with a total area of 247 353 m<sup>2</sup> are included in the investment project. One third of these regulated plots are 100 m away from the shore; they fall in zone A under the Black Sea Coast Spatial Planning Act. The investor is yet to buy some of the land (Madara Europe, 2014a). The investor and MEE denied public access to documentation regarding the exact land property and financing of Madara Europe (MEE, personal communication, January 14, 2014). Under its current version, the project was estimated BGN 105.333 M in total. According to the investment plan, the major shareholder—Rainbow Malta (Holdings) Limited—had already provided the needed EUR<sup>3</sup> 54 M as one of the requirements the holiday complex to be certified a priority investment project. The investor claimed that major shareholder would also provide a loan in need of additional financing (Madara Europe, 2014a). According to a reference in the Trade Register on 22 January 2015, the company has a capital of BGN 50 000 (Bivol, 2014a).

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<sup>3</sup> 1 EUR = 1.96 BGN





**Figure 12** Revised project Black Sea Gardens Eco Resort © Madara Europe (Leshtarska, 2013)

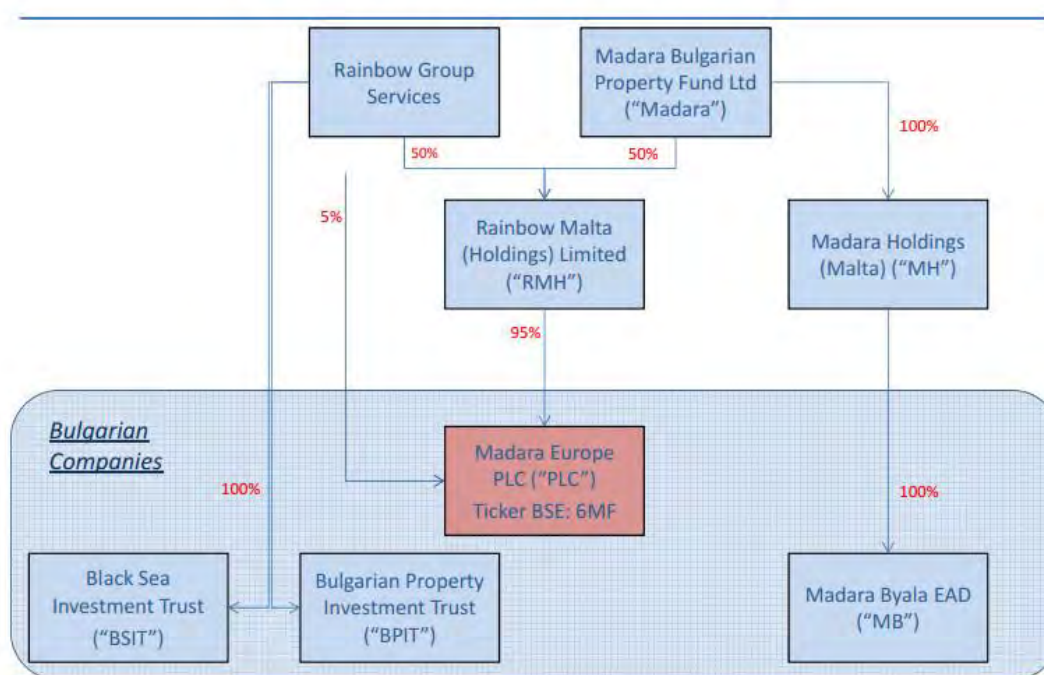
Overall, the investor boasted with several advantages of their project. Black Sea Gardens Eco Resort was argued to differentiate from other holiday products with a minimum value added with pre-zoned individual components, a carbon neutral construction, an exclusive design by a leading architect, established contacts with global chains, and high-end market segmentation. Furthermore, the investor stated that their project would result in 500 direct and 2500 indirect jobs in the municipality of Byala whose unemployment rate is currently above the national average (Council of Ministers, 2014; Madara Europe, 2014a)

The aforementioned promises persuaded the previous government formed by the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) to sign a memorandum of understanding for a high priority investment project under the Investment Priority Act (IPA) with the offshore company Madara Europe on 19 March 2014 (Council of Ministers, 2014). Referring to leaked documentation of Madara Europe and the Ministry of Economy, Bivol (2014c) questioned how the company refined its application for priority investment certificate from 4 April 2014 after MEE reported flaws in the project on 6 June 2013 due to incompatibility with the Investment Promotion Act (IPA) and Rules for Applying the IPA. Nevertheless, the consequences of the signed memorandum were that the investor would benefit an institutional support and fast-track administrative services. On the bases of

the memorandum the Invest Bulgaria Agency (IBA) could award Madara Europe a Class A certificate for an investment project which will grant the developer financial advantages including complete infrastructure construction by the state, namely the tax payers (“Bulgaria govt.”, 2014; Leshtarska, 2013).

Ever since the first announcement of Madara Europe’s investment plan, investigative journalists and citizens questioned the companies and individuals behind Black Sea Gardens Eco Resort. According to Madara Europe’s (2014a, 2015b) website and investment proposals as well as journalist reports, the company was represented by the British citizens Paul Riley (Executive director Rainbow Malta (Holdings) Limited) and Scott James Perkins (Chairman of Board of directors) as well as the Bulgarian Ludmil Vladimirov Gatchev (Independent member of Board of directors). Additionally, Ludmil Gatchev was reported by journalists to be an independent financial expert working for several bankers and a former employee of the State Security (Nikolov, 2014). According to journalists and Madara Europe’s (2014a) public investment project, the company was owned by Rainbow Malta (Holdings) Limited (94.99% and registered in Malta), Rainbow Group Services (5% and registered on the British Virgin Islands) and the real estate Bulgarian entrepreneur Radoslav Dimitrov (0.1%) (Bivol, 2014c; Leshtarska, 2014a). According to a personal reference in the Trade Register at the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 22 January 2015, Ludmil Gatchev left the company’s management. In October 2014, Hristo Sokolarski joined the management board. Although the management board was easily assessed, the shareholders were hard to trace.

## Structure of Madara Europe



**Figure 13** Structure of Madara Europe © Balkanleaks

According to Figure 13 published on Balkanleaks, Madara Europe is concealed in a maze of companies (“Structure of Madara Europe”, 2014). Further inquiry by journalists and information from FE Investigate (comprehensive data sources for UK companies’ announcements) uncovered that the initial rights to the Black Sea Gardens project as presented in 2007 belonged to Madara Bulgarian Property Fund Limited (parent company of Madara Europe) and its co-developer BBT projects EAD (Madara Bulgarian Property Fund, 2007). Madara Bulgarian Property Fund Limited, an offshore company registered in Jersey, was reported to be a high-end developer drawn by prospects of a high yield in Bulgaria following the country’s accession to the EU in 2007. The people behind the company at that time were Scott Perkins (Chief Executive Madara Capital LLP), Tom Griffiths and Richard Wood (Arbuthnot Securities Limited), Jonathan Gollins and Marylene Guernier (press relations at MBPF). However, Bivol (2014a, 2014b) stated the end owners of the offshore company were hard to unveil even after the Offshore Companies Act, written by the notorious MP Delyan Peevski, was implemented in 2014. The end owners of Madara Bulgarian Property Fund Limited were not declared because Anglo-Norman islands were not an offshore zone under the Offshore Companies Act. Because of his regular appearance in media, Timothy Chadwick, the chairman of the offshore company, was the only known representative (Bivol, 2014a).

BBT Projects (previously known as Byala Beach Tour) is a Bulgarian company owned by Dimitar Borisov and Ivo Ivanov, owners of the notorious Titan AS (real estate deals, construction business and waste management). The company, as known back as Byala Beach Tour, was reported for a scandalous swap of about 40 000 m<sup>2</sup> regulated plots near Karadere with cultivated and hard-to-reach land 20 km inland. Saint Paraskeva Orthodox Church in Byala had previously owned the regulated plots. After the two parties signed the contract, it turned out that the deal was unfair because the regulated plots were later estimated EUR 4 compared to the low market price of the cultivated land. It was also reported that the potential developer of the 40 000 m<sup>2</sup> regulated plot would be Titan (Vasilkovski, 2014). BBT projects withdrew from Black Sea Gardens Eco Resort project in 2010 (Leshtarska, 2013).

A document issued by the Financial Supervision Commission (FSC) on 4 January 2013 showed that Mayfair Group (the previous name of Madara Europe) requested FSC to approve a transfer of “rights and obligations under a contract between Madara Bulgarian Property Fund Limited and BBT Projects JSC” (p. 11). Noteworthy, this contract held the rights to Black Sea Gardens projects, designed by Norman Foster. Additionally, Mayfair Group wanted to buy 100% of Madara Bulgarian Property Fund’s capital (Bivol, 2014a). This meant that the company had to assume all obligations of Madara Bulgarian Property Fund to BBT Projects (Bivol, 2014b). Because Mayfair Group did not indicate specific information about the rights and obligation under the proposed transaction, the FSC refused the transaction and expressed doubts about the project (Bivol, 2014b; FSC, 2013). The report showed also that Rainbow Malta (Holdings) Limited possessed 99.99% shares of Mayfair Group. Furthermore, the report indicated that Rainbow Group Services Limited owned “significant stakes” of Rainbow Malta (Holdings) Limited and Madara Bulgarian Property

Fund Limited owned “significant stake” of Rainbow Malta (Holdings) Limited. However, Mayfair Group did not indicate what the significant participation of the aforementioned companies was in Rainbow Malta (Holdings) Limited.

On 7 January 2013, following the rejection of the FSC, Mayfair Group’s board decided to change the company’s name to Madara Europe, its headquarters from Sofia to Varna and its principle business (Bivol, 2014b; Madara Europe, 2013a). Registry Agency registered the changes on 6 February 2014. Despite the changes, the company did not abandon the idea to use the design of Norman Foster to market its development product (Bivol, 2014b). Based on a document filed by Madara Europe to the Trade Register on 7 July 2013, (Bivol, 2014a) reported that the Madara Europe’s ownership changed. Rainbow Group Serices Limited (registered on the British Virgin Islands) owned 809 shares of one pound each from the capital of Rainbow Malta (Holding) Limited while Madara Bulgarian Property Fund (registered in Jersey) owned one share of one pound. According to a response of Madara Europe to Capital Daily, major shareholders of the investment funds were English investment institutions, pension funds and wealthy private investors (Leshtarska, 2014a). As argued by Madara Europe, the main shareholder and private investors would provide the needed financing in terms of loans.

However, Bivol (2014a) argued that the investors, who were generally hard to trace, did not have an impressive business and therefore their reference to as wealthy investors was very debatable. According to a personal reference in the Trade Register published on 18 March 2014, Rainbow Group Serves Limited was registered on the British Virgin Islands and owned by eight British private investors: Francine Gail Wickham, Ewan Gail Short, Nigel Vernon Short, Louise Elizabeth Short, Mark John Davis, Sarah Janet Davis, Paul Riley, Nicholas David Gully (Bivol, 2014a). These owners, aged between 50s and 60s, were from South Wales (Dimitrova, 2014). One of the Short family—Nigel Short—was presented by Scott Perkins in an interview for bTV (a private Bulgarian TV channel) as a former owner of a successful steel business. Short was known as the chairman of Scarlets rugby club, the owner of Brown’s Hotel and the manager of The Welsh Wishey Company (Georgiev, 2014).

Additionally, Nigel Short was unveiled as an owner of a company for recycling scrap metals- Shorts Industrial Services Limited- that had a capital of GBP 100 and operated in two-year period before going bankrupt (Dimitrova, 2014). Moreover, Nigel Shorts was also reported a shareholder of two other companies - REDI 256 Limited and Short Bros. Both companies had no contacts, website or any other available information. REDI 256 possessed a capital of GBP 2 and operated in the field of construction projects and real estate rentals (Dimitrova, 2014). Bivol (2014a) argued that Short’s whiskey and hotel business was not worth millions. Another British citizen – Nicholas Gallivan – was revealed as a business partner of Shorts in REDI 256, the Welsh Whiskey Company, and the business legal consultancy firm Scarlets Regional Limited (Dimitrova, 2014). Not only did he have business with Shorts, but also with Paul Riley (representative of the major shareholder of Madara Europe). Bulgarian Property Investment Trust (Paul Riley and Nicholas Gallivan in the management board) and Black Sea Investment Trust (Nicholas Gallivan as a member of the

supervisory board) were reported to be owned by Rainbow Group Services Limited (see Figure 13). Information that is more detailed can be found in *Who wants to build on a rare wild beach in Bulgaria?* by Bivol (2014a).

In a two-part documentary about offshore companies in Bulgaria, Stoyan Georgiev tried to uncover the investors of Black Sea Gardens Eco Resort. The Russian nested doll principal personified the structure of the Varna-based Madara Europe. Madara Europe was owned by Rainbow Malta (Holdings) Limited, registered in Malta. Rainbow Malta (Holdings) Limited was owned by Rainbow Group Services Limited, registered on the British Virgin Islands. In search for anonymity, the British Virgin Islands were preferred jurisdiction alongside Belize (country on the eastern coast of Central America) and the Seychelles (archipelago in the Indian Ocean). A fourth company registered in another offshore zone – Isle of Man, carried out the management of Rainbow Group Services Limited from Guernsey (see Figure 14). The offshore jurisdictions offered not only tax revenues, but also the service of buying a nominee director, a retired British gentleman for example, whose personal details would appear on a public register and who would act on behalf of the real owners. All these legal services secured the anonymity of the end owner and concealment of the money flows<sup>4</sup>. Due to complicated interdependencies, revealing the end-owner of Madara Europe is beyond the scope of this academic research. Nevertheless, it exposed the structure of Madara Europe as much as possible.

Although Madara Europe's project has been termed an eco-village, the intense construction work of various urban forms will endanger the wildlife and habitants in Karadere. Black Sea Gardens Eco Resort covers completely lands within EU's Natura 2000 eco network, in the protected site Kamchiyska Mountain, for the conservation of wild bird species, and protected site Shkorpilovtsi Beach, for the conservation of natural habitats, wild flora and fauna. The development will encompass 0.031% of the total area of Kamchiyska Mountain and 0.68% of the total area of Shkorpilovtsi Beach (Madara Europe AD, Investment Project Proposal, 17 April 2014). Moreover, the signing of the memorandum clashes with the stance of the previously ruling Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), which had submitted to the Parliament a draft memorandum on banning construction work on Black Sea coast in January 2013. The Madara Europe's project was planned to begin in September 2014 and finish in September 2017, but it currently on hold because it has yet to pass through Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and evaluation of compatibility with Natura 2000 ("Bulgaria govt", 2014; Leshtarska, 2014c).

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<sup>4</sup> The Offshore Secrets investigative series illuminate the nature and behavior of oversea havens <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/series/offshore-secrets>



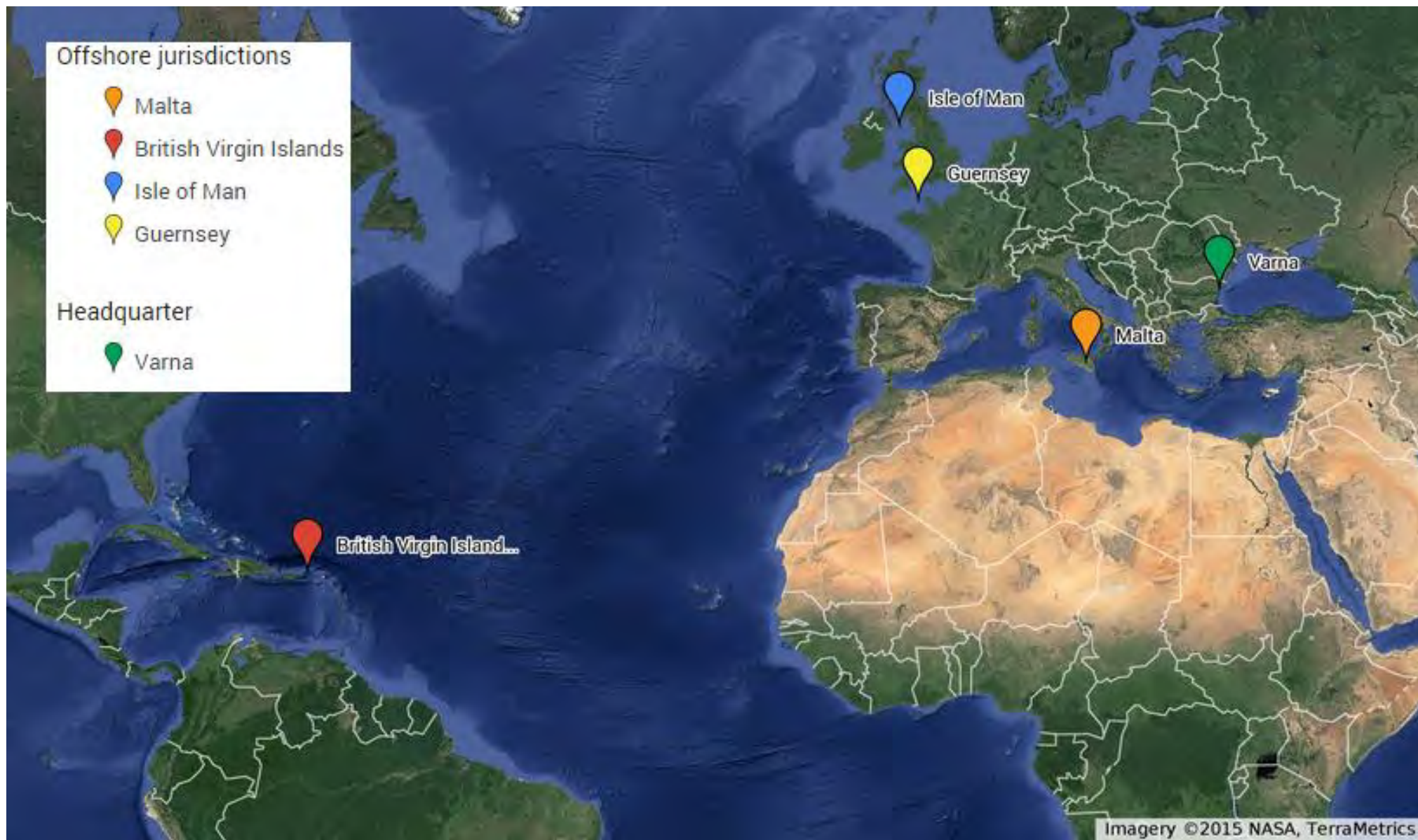


Figure 14 Madara Europe's offshore havens



**Figure 15** Diagram of property and correlations in the Black Sea Gardens project © Bivol (2014b) in partnership with OCCRP - Visual Investigation Scenario 53



## 5.1 Luxury Campsite

The second developer is Maxi I AD<sup>5</sup>— a joint-stock company with a headquarters in Sofia, Bulgaria. The company plans to construct a legal and luxury campsite on a gross floor area of 162.458 m<sup>2</sup>. In 2014 Maxi I bought the land from BSPF Project 1 for BGN 1.66 M (see Figure 16). This means that a square meter of land costs barely BGN 10 and the previous owner experienced a considerable loss of nearly 90% (Krusteva, 2014). In 2009 BSPF Project bought the land from Bulgarian Property Investment Trust AD, currently bankrupt and out of Bulgaria, for BGN 18.9 M. It is worth noting that the latter fund was owned by Rainbow Group Services Limited—one of the shareholders of Madara Europe AD whose project for a luxury holiday complex in Karadere was designed by Foster + Partners (Leshtarska, 2014c).



**Figure 16** Maxi I buys land in Karadere for a luxury campsite © Translated from Capital (Leshtarska, 2014c)

<sup>5</sup> UIC 127041392 and management address 110, Simeonovsko Shose Blvd., 1700 Sofia, Bulgaria

According to a reference in the Trade Register at the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Maxi I AD currently has a capital of BGN 12 802 850. Nikolay Angelov Ranchev, a Bulgarian citizen, represents the company. The board of directors include also two other Bulgarian citizens – Dimitar Aleksandrov Vatsev and Stoyan Nikolaev Iliev. Maxi I possesses two hotel complexes—one in Sofia and one in Velingrad—with luxurious rooms and high-end consumer services (Maxi Club, 2014). An interviewee, however, shared that the person behind the company was its initial owner – Nikolay Iliev (Sophia, personal communication, July 26, 2014). This information was also confirmed by a news report on the private television channel bTV on 19 August 2014 (Krusteva, 2014). According to Sophia, Nikolay Iliev was listed as one of the richest men in Bulgaria (personal communication, July 26, 2014).

Maxi I's project for a luxury campsite in Karadere seems to target high-end consumers, too. The project will restrict the current free camping with tents and caravans in Karadere (Krusteva, 2009). Besides places for tents, campers and caravans, the investor will build family bungalows, villas, public service buildings, restaurants, shops, bars, playgrounds, toilets, a park, a spa center, streets, a parking and various amenities. The campsite is envisaged to accommodate up to 1860 people and 670 vehicles. Overall, the investor boasts with several advantages of their project, such as low-rise buildings under the legally allowed 10 m and no construction of new roads. However, a mass scale construction work lurks behind the name of a camping. The above information is apparent from the investor's notification<sup>6</sup> about the project sent on 30 June 2014 to RIEW Burgas as well as from news reports (Bivol, 2014e; Krusteva, 2014).

Furthermore, the consolidation of land, which dated back in 2003, was also an intriguing subject (see Figure 16). Byala Beach Tour (formerly known as Bulgargro and owned by Dimitar Borisov from Titan and the businessman Tencho Lilyanov) began to buy frantically the land of private owners north of Byala and close to Karadere. In the end of 2006, Delyan Dobrev, economy minister in the government of Boyko Borisov (2009-2013), bought 100 000 m<sup>2</sup> for BGN 200 000 from Byala Beach Tour. Byala Beach Tour swapped 268 000 m<sup>2</sup> cultivated land in the nearby Municipality of Dolni Chiflik (bought a month earlier for BGN 4500) with 94 000 m<sup>2</sup> state owned land near Karadere. Byala Beach Tour sold the newly acquired cultivated land for BGN 9 M to Bulgarian Property Investment Trust (owned by Rainbow Group Services, main shareholder of Norman Forster's project), which had also began to buy frantically land near Karadere at the end of 2004. In total, Bulgarian Property Investment Trust bought 155 000 m<sup>2</sup> for BGN 14.1 M from Byala Beach Tour. The rest of Byala Beach Tour's land, which was bought between 2005 and 2006, went to Madara Byala EAD, one of the initial investors of luxury resort in Karadere. In 2009 BSPF Project 1 bought 165 500 m<sup>2</sup> for BGN 18.9 M from Bulgarian Property Investment Trust; as stated before, the latter fund bankrupted in 2014. In the end Maxi I bought this land profitably for BGN 1.66 M (Leshtarska, 2014c).

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<sup>6</sup> Documentation available upon request from the author

Although Maxi I's project in Karadere has been termed an "eco-camping", the mass construction might endanger the wildlife and habitats in the area. The luxury campsite covers completely lands within EU's Natura 2000 eco network, in the protected site Kamchiyska Mountain, for the conservation of wild bird species and protected site Shkorpilovtsi Beach for the conservation of natural habitats, wild flora and fauna. The development will encompass 0.018% of the total area of Kamchiyska Mountain and 0.3% of the total area of Shkorpilovtsi Beach. The data is available in Maxi I's notification to RIEW. Construction work was expected to begin in September 2014 and finish in a couple of months, but the project is currently on hold because it has yet to pass through Environmental Impact Assessment and evaluation of compatibility with Natura 2000.

## 5.2 Master Plan of Byala

Both investment projects were planned on terrains which were unintended for construction work according to the Master Plan, known also as Common Development Plan (CDP), of the municipality of Byala, funded by the World Bank in 1997 (see Figure 17) (Bivol, 2014e; Goranova & Leshtarska, 2014).

However, a request in 30 November 2004 by several investors (Byala Beach Tour AD, Bulgarian Property Investment Trust AD, T-S Leasing Tencho Emilv Lilenov, City Property Groups EOOD – Andriyas Engibarov Engibarov and Golf Tours OOD – Yassen Vasilev) urged the municipal council of Byala to approve the project of Detailed Development Plan (DDP) – regulation plan (RP)<sup>7</sup> for villa resorts and leisure "Byala-North" (Municipality of Byala, personal communication, November 9, 2014) (see Figure 18). The municipal council of Byala approved DDP Byala-North with Decision No 16-311 from 10.02.2005 (Municipality of Byala, personal communication, November 9, 2014; MOEW, personal communication, January 5, 2015). Since the decision was not objected, the DDP-RP Byala-North came into force on 4 April 2005 (MOEW, personal communication, January 5, 2015). The DDP-RP Byala-North represents the changes to the Common Development Plan (CDP). According to this DDP agricultural lands in the area of Karadere can be urbanized, namely the permanent use of the territory is urban with plots rezoned from commercial development allowing urban forms up to 10 m. Moreover, this plan allows investors that build in Karadere to connect their wastewater to the approved drainage system of Byala-Obzor.

It is worth noting, however, that the DDP-RP Byala-North was approved without any environment assessment and in violation of the Environmental Protection Act and Spatial Planning Act. Because of this offence, Regional Inspection of the Environment and Water (RIEW) in Burgas referred this DDP to the prosecution in September 2007. On 7 December 2009 the minister of Environment and Water at this time—Nona Karajova—issued a decision

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<sup>7</sup> DDP-RP "Byala-North" quadrants 16, 116, 313, 314, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, includes lands located in the area Polihorova, Gurnis, Varka Rahi in the municipality of Byala and the area Kardere in the vicinity of the village of Samotino, municipality of Byala, district of Varna. See Figure 18.

to stop the amendment to the Territorial Development Plan (TDP), which provided to have construction work in the area of Karadere (MOEW, personal communication, January 5, 2015). The Territorial Development Plan (TUP) with its amendments in 2007 is currently the active Common Development Plan (CDP) of the municipality of Byala (Bivol, 2014e). Despite these facts, the main architect of the municipality of Byala issued building permits to Madara Europe and Maxi I based on the unlawful Detailed Development Plan (Bivol, 2014e). Moreover, on 10 October 2014 the caretaker minister of Environment and Water—Svetlana Zhekova—reported in her letter to the mayor of Byala and the director of the Regional Inspection for the Environment and Water that 70 building permits for construction of holes, residential buildings or villas were issued in 2007 based on the Detailed Development Plan. At present, there are only 18 active building permits for construction of fences issued in accordance with procedures in RIEW Burgas based on the Environmental Protection Act and Biological Diversity Act. The letter stated also that new building permits must not be issued without new procedures based the Environmental Protection Act and Biological Diversity Act (MOEW, personal communication, January 5, 2015). Nevertheless, the DDP is currently the active Master Plan of Byala.

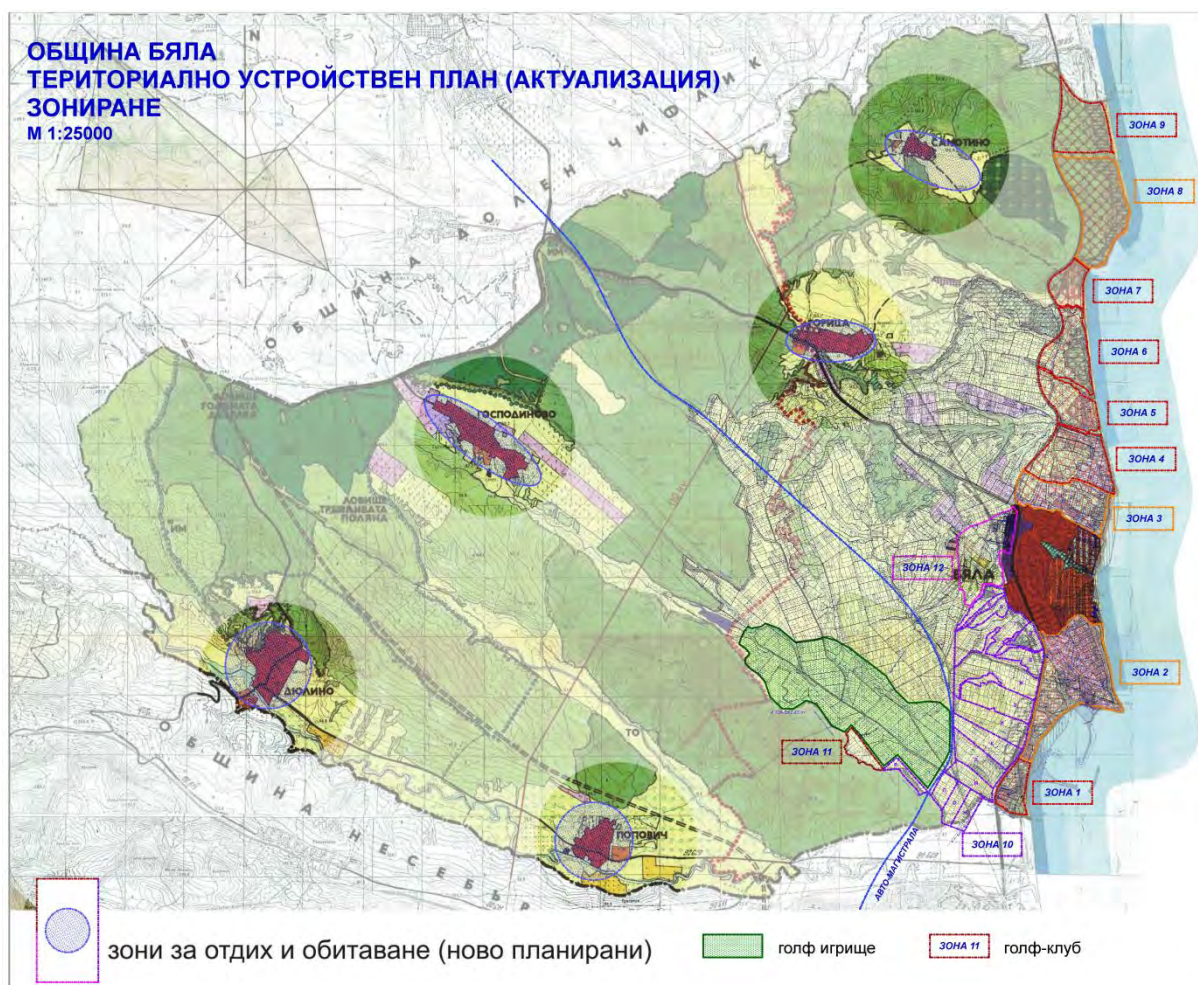


**Figure 17** Territorial Development Plan - June 1997 © Municipality of Byala





**Figure 18** Detailed Development Plan (DDP) – Regulation plan (RP) for villa resorts and leisure “Byala-North” © Municipality of Byala



**Figure 19** Territorial Development Plan – actualization 2007 © Municipality of Byala

### 5.3 Preliminary data analysis and interpretations

The up-and-coming urbanization of the wild beach Karadere opens discussions about how a whole system of capital accumulation works on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. Several contingencies were met in order for the spatial fix to be enforced in Karadere. The two logics of power, which Harvey described in his analysis of the spatial fix, are entangled in this case study too. The historically rich and economically receptive municipality of Byala provides relatively good conditions for development. Both the local government and the private sector share will for further enlargement of the tourist sector. Consider the amendment of the master plan of the municipality. At the request of the private sector, the town council accepted changes to the master plan of the town. On the one hand, private investors expressed their will to invest in the municipality. On the other hand, the municipal council expressed their need of capital influx in Byala. With a letter of support to the Invest Bulgaria Agency (IBA) in 4 April 2013, Atanas Trendafilov, mayor of the town of Byala, expressed the unconditional support of the local administration for Madara Europe's investment project. Additionally, the national government also expressed its support for investments in the municipality of Byala. Remember the memorandum of agreement signed by the Council of

Minister and the developer Madara Europe. According to this memorandum, the notorious project was certified as priority.

The relationship between the government on multiple levels and the investors personifies the dialectical twin between the state logic of power and the capitalist logic of power. According to the state logic of power, the political elite will seek collective advantages its inner circle – party or family members or other elite group. While the investors, based on the capitalist logic of power will seek their own benefit. The examples of land swap and land sale clearly illustrated the links between the two.

Furthermore, the elevation of unemployment in the municipality of Byala is powerful rhetoric and a typical example of a necessary condition for a new capitalist market to find a territorial expansion. According to the theory of the spatial fix, capital seeks ways to resolve the crisis of overaccumulation. The higher average unemployment rate in the municipality of Byala compared to the national average is an example of a surplus labor. This surplus labor can only be utilized if a new market is opened.

The new market, which is proposed to be opened, will offer a “new” product. This product is luxury experience based on the region’s environmental and cultural endowments. The spatial fix entails exactly the expansion of new production where there is deficiency of certain type. Both investors boast to offer high-end consumer products with low carbon emissions involved which are “unique” to Bulgaria. According to their investment proposals, Karadere provides space and conditions for this certain type of product. However, this is power rhetoric for the expansion of tourist production to the undeveloped Byala-North.

What will follow is not merely a production of a tourist product, but it will be a production of global capitalist space through urbanization. The production of space through urbanization, as elaborated by Harvey, is a subtle example of the attempt of global capitalist system to solve its crisis tendencies. “Urbanization has always been about mobilization, production, and appropriation of economic surpluses (Harvey, 1985, p. 53). It is a site where the contradictions of capital can be seen. Through urbanizationsurpluses are mobilized. There is a high likelihood that the built urban forms might lose their attraction and value in the future which might lead to their destruction; the process known as creative destruction. Therefore, the management of the surpluses will only be temporal. The critical questions indeed will be how different this tourist product will be from all the others on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and on what costs?



## 6 Karadere as a liminal space

### 6.1 Introduction

For developers Karadere is merely an empty undeveloped site ready to be exploited. For diverse dwellers, however, Karadere is full of specific meanings and associations that defies and is defied by its use. In this chapter, the materiality and idealism of Karadere beach will be explored through the lenses of liminal space literature. Although there is no single imperative that sets the conditions for experiencing liminal beach spaces, Karadere will consecutively be examined with three identified in the literature properties—imagination, spontaneous encounters and timelessness. Karadere as a liminal beach space allows the manifestation of alternative spaces of representations to form. These alternative forms of representations contest the work of the spatial fix on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. Interviews and site observations will reveal how dwellers manipulated their physical environment with its associated images and symbols. Karadere as a liminal beach space will include behaviors and practices that shape and are shaped by the beach. Encounters and human interactions as well as social norms are embedded in the lived experiences of Karadere. The overarching goal of this chapter is to understand the construction of Thirdspace through liminal experiences.



**Figure 20** Top view of Karadere beach © Miroslav Damyanov

### 6.2 Imagination

The beach and its hinterland of encompassing forests and cultivated fields shape and are shaped by visitors' imaginaries. Imaginaries constitute the collective life of social agents. These imaginaries communicate outstanding aesthetics contrasting the spectacles produced by the spatial fix. Imaginaries are expressed in artistic and spiritual space. Karadere is the space of artists and spiritual activities. In his theorizing about the inhabitants of the social lived spaces, Lefebvre referred to artists, writers and philosopher as the inhabitants of such

spaces. Indeed, Karadere attracts artistically minded individuals who prefer the solitude of the beach to get inspired and create new pieces of art. The art forms vary from painting, performance, handicraft, photography, literature to even film and music.

### Open-air atelier

The artists turned the beach into some sort of an open-air atelier. For example, painted tents, engraved trunks and handicrafts with textiles, seashells, plant fibers and any available materials adorn the beach. Colorful flags and pirate flags decorated the temporary dwellings on the shore or in the forest. Visitors appropriated various artifacts and assigned them additional meanings. For example, engraved trunks were usually referred to as totems (observation, July 22, 2014).



**Figure 21** Painted tent and totem © Miroslav Damyanov

### Performance

The forest and the shore were also sites where complete strangers could spontaneously meet to perform magnificent musical pieces. What made their improvisation incredible was not only the mix of instruments they used—sunpan, acoustic guitar and darbuka—but also the sound of the sea waves in the background (observation, July 28, 2014). Besides musicians, there were also fire performers who juggle, baton twirl, poi spin or manipulate any other objects on fire. Sophia was a representative of the fire performers. As a fire juggler, she would feel without a soul if her fire disappeared (i.e., a lighter or a match). She shared she felt anxious one day when she could not find her lighter. However, she later realized she had forgotten it on Karadere. After realizing this, she felt relieved because she would not worry if her soul was lost on the wild beach (Sophia, personal conversation, July 31, 2014).

### Cinema and literature

Additionally, the beach and the encompassing it forest are inspiration for writers and moviemakers. For example, Grigor shared he wrote about his adventure with co-campers in search for a ghost village near the gully of Karadere. *Samotino-a novel about one forgotten*

*seaside village*, which is published in Bulgarian online, portrays a group of four people— the narrator, Bai Ivan, a Czech man and a young woman—walking without a map from Karadere through the forest in search for a village that was believed to be inhabited by only one person. The story tells about lived space of spontaneous encounters, way finding difficulties, hopelessness, surprising discoveries and determination (robotoviktor, 2014).

Alongside this adventure, moviemakers were also inspired by the beach. The plot of two movies unfolded in Karadere. The first movie, *Sneakers* (Toneva, Kirilov, Yordanov, & Vladimirov, 2011) tells about six young people who attempted to escape from their personal failures in love, family, money and high-ambitions. The protagonists left the bleak and dreary city to go to a faraway place on the coast. They find each other on a pristine beach that reopens the prospects of hope to all of them. The movie is a juxtaposition of the urban reality society is stuck in. It also unfolds the challenges protagonist face in their alternative search. The second movie, *The Last Pirates of the Black Sea*, tells about Captain Jack the Whale and his crew that are hunting for a bloody treasure hidden in the gully of Karadere (Bozhilova & Stoyanov, 2013). The crew drinks alcohol, smokes cigarettes, plays cards, hunts game on the pristine beach they call home. However, they are not alone because someone else is also eyeing on the hidden treasure. When the news about investment plans on the gully arrive in the pirate oasis, which is filled with desires and testosterone, personal conflicts arise. The movie refers to Norman Foster's urban project as the main antagonist. *The Last Pirates of the Black Sea*, which is tragic and comic at the same time, is a creative critique against the urbanization of the beach. Both movies are a powerful medium through which the problems of socially produced spaces are addressed and contested.

### **Spirituality and festivity**

Not only is the gully of Karadere very inspirational, but also sacred. Many visitors did yoga and mediated. Neli shared that such places like Karadere are the “lungs of the civilization” and they were needed for the people to come and purify themselves (personal communication, July 31, 2014). Neli and Grigor told extensively about a stream of thought— Human Design and Gene Key. Human Design was defined as some kind of self-knowledge. According to the proponent of Gene Keys Richard Rudd—a UK-based poet, mystic and teacher—every human being has a unique information designed in their DNA that can be unlocked. This information is, however, hidden and sixty-four *Gene Keys* help to reveal it. The Gene Keys were argued to show the deepest potential of everybody by teaching him or her to embrace their *shadows* and recognize their *gifts*. This spiritual path of contemplation incorporates astrology, mediation, Zen, Taoism, and many more. Neli even argued that Gen Keys were science. She could make everyone a *Hologenetic Profile* based on the exact time of birth to help someone understand patterns in governing their relationship, health or finance for example. Besides the yoga, meditation and the Gene Keys, I was acquainted a bit with Sufism. Sufism was defined as the mystical dimension of Islam and philosophy that predated religion (Nikolay, personal communication, July 27, 2014). Additionally, annual event July morning were reported to be celebrated on Karadere. July morning is a ritual of



meeting the first sunrays on 1 July. This tradition originates from the hippy subculture. This festivity involves playing music, dancing, and sharing drinks around the campfire in anticipation of the first sunrays. Karadere is one of the few places on Bulgaria's coast where the festivity has not been commodified by the spatial fix.



**Figure 22** Man practicing yoga and a sign with social norms © Miroslav Damyanov

Tents might be painted and decorated. Two novels were published online about personal experiences on and around Karadere. Two movies have recently been produced to creatively criticize development of the beach and introduce the symbolism of the place for any adventurer. Additionally, the self-made comfort through appropriation of the materials found on the beach or brought from home is an expression of imaginaries. Material symbolism of the beach (e.g., pirate flags, engraved trunks, painted tents, message boards, constructed toilets etc.) is part of an important iconography that communicates social norms, membership and change of attitude. The reference to pirates tells that people envisioned a rule not governed by institutions but by the community themselves.

### 6.3 Spontaneous encounters

The beach was generally perceived as a social place where people enjoy the company of others. While being on the beach one feels welcomed. People were very hospitable. This created some sort of social harmony that induces the liminal experience. People commonly erase the boundaries between each other on Karadere. Spontaneous encounters were common—around the campfire, on the shore, at someone's camp. People who regularly visit

Karadere made friendships and established contacts. Heterogeneous activities on Karadere were shaped by and shaped the liminality of the beach.

### **Social space for families and nature lovers**

Due to its remoteness from the city and its unique nature offerings, Karadere is visited by families with children, couples, nature lovers, extreme water sportsmen and people with various professions. For some the boundary between home and holiday dwelling was even more blurred as expressed by one of the interviewees.

But we are constantly here. Do you understand? We live here!

Yana (personal communication, July 28, 2014)

Karadere turned into a preferred holiday destination for families with children and couples in love not only because it was cheap, but also because provided tranquility and incomparable beauty in contrast to mass tourist resorts.

It's very beautiful on Karadere. We come every year with a tent or caravan. I come here since I remember myself. Many times the waves are big. The beach is very beautiful and wild. I want it to remain the same. I don't want to be developed.

Athena, 10-years old (July 2014)

We are a young couple in love living mainly abroad, but we visit our motherland annually because of its nature, spirituality and everything that can make you happy and find something special. Karadere is our special place [...]. Let us keep Bulgaria green!

Slav and Kapka (personal communication, July 26, 2014)

Bases on interviews and observations, it was apparent that the beach was visited by people from different occupation, nationality and age. There were musicians, educational scientists, professors, engineers, medical doctors, actors, administrators just to list a few. People from all over Bulgaria as well as from abroad (e.g. Germany, Slovenia, the Netherlands or Ireland) could be met there. Visitors ranged from children to a few senior citizens. The liminality of the beach facilitated the dissolving of dwellers' social status.

### **Social space for sports**

There are good conditions for big waves on Karadere because the seacoast is predominantly open. The small bay is situated to the northern side. This condition attracts extreme water sportsmen. Surfing was a common activity alongside kayaking and wakeboarding (observation, July 28). Swimmers enjoyed the clean water. For example, everyday Grigor swam at least for about 200 m in the sea. Not only did people practice water sports, but also did they jog along the shore, play chess or cards in the camp, and play

beach football or volleyball on self-made fields. Other aerobic exercises were walking and hiking, cycling. People could also be seen practicing anaerobic exercises, such as push-ups and crunches.

### **Other daily activities and nudism**

Besides playing sports, other daily rituals of Karadere's dwellers generally included bathing, relaxing and cooking. Upon waking up in the morning, people would rush to dive into sea. Completely naked bodies were not a peculiar scene (observation, July 27, 2014). Nudism on Karadere was generally tolerated. The discourse of wild nature on Karadere emphasizes this tolerance. Moreover, the enthusiastic acknowledgement of nudism is supported by the fact that clothes were associated with power, gender inequalities, and social status, which are challenged by the liminal character of the beach.

There was a recognized support for nudism on Karadere. Symbols and signs assigned to wearing clothes that communicated social status and gender norms are shattered in the liminal space of Karadere. There is a sense of liberation. The discourse of nature facilitates people's tolerance and acceptance of nudity on the beach. Besides the beach has a tacit recognition from other people and local authorities as a nudist beach too. Visitors are conscious that they have to put on clothes when leaving the beach. The many mask one wears at home and in the city result in exhaustion. People felt the need to take off the layers of falsehood though practicing nudity. This suggests that the nudist beach is a place for free thinkers to relax and relief the tension.

After taking a bath, people could be seen sitting down on the soft not-yet-hot sand to mesmerize the waves and the sun's rays. Then people got together to drink coffee or tea over breakfast. During the hot hours of the day, inhabitants of Karadere would relax in shade somewhere in the forest or under a makeshift canopy in the beach. In the evening, a team of people cooked and others did the dishes. If there were dry branches found fallen in the forest, a campfire would be set around which various individuals from different camps would gather. These activities create opportunities to socialize. Additionally to nudism that communicated temporary dissolving of status, power and inequality, the focus shifted from the individual "I" and "mine" to the collective "we" and "us". This reinforced an egalitarian atmosphere reinforced.

### **Constructive conflicts**

Nevertheless, tension between the individuals existed. Conflicts were part of the group dynamics and were not intended to completely spoil the holiday. However, they were constructive to help the group reach a goal. For example, the conflict, which erupted during my stay, involved a construction and renovation of the man-made toilets in close proximity to the camp. The problem was that the capacity of the toilets reached its limit due to the fact they were not exclusively used by the dwellers of the camp, but also by their guests and coincidental visitors. Some people made a fence while other insisted that everybody joined

the digging of new holes. In the end, the toilets were reconstructed (Neli, personal communication, August 1, 2014).

## 6.4 Timelessness

Intertwined with the aforementioned properties of liminality, timelessness is also a defining character of Karadere. The heterogeneous activities (bathing, doing sports, cooking, eating etc.) complemented by the fact that there was no mobile network coverage and electricity on the beach, created a sense of timelessness. The astronomical time of the clock was not important. The daily life was directed by the rhythms of nature – sunrise, sunset, tides. Despite its popularity in recent years, the beach is not like the busy tourist resorts along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. Karadere is not a resort to begin with. It is a wild beach where people temporally seek retrieval in nature from the daily hassles encountered in any human settlement.

A place for self-discovery, tranquility, peace with yourself. The last place for the real human away from the daily life pressure and the 'modern' world. Alone with thoughts!

Anonymous interviewee on Karadere (July 26, 2014)

Karadere is paradise for me! A place for free people who wish to escape from the daily grid of the urban life. Here I forget about the time and all worries in my life.

Anonymous interviewee on Karadere (July 26, 2014)

Timelessness speaks to the need of self-discovery and temporal escapes. The users and visitors of Karadere idealize these temporal escapes.

Looking at the waves, I feel I am coming back to my grandmother, to my mother, to myself. This fills me up with love and faith. Fills me! I would like to bring my future children and to give them the opportunity to find themselves, their way, their roots...They will be able to do it when they can get a grip on the primitiveness that this place will offer them. Let such places remain, so that we can seek, be found and answer. Let us not wait for someone to find us, answer us, serve us, satisfy us. Let there be wild! Let them leave us to survive. Let the sea flood us directly, powerfully, disastrously, warmly, real, clean! Leave at least one undeveloped place! If Karadere is urbanized, I will emigrate.

Anonymous interviewee on Karadere (July 26, 2014)

Noteworthy, timelessness involves a struggle over memory and time. As expressed in the above quote, this is a struggle to find oneself. Additionally, timelessness on Karadere does not imply erasure of its history. Conversely, the evoked tranquility provides the perfect conditions for storytelling. Through storytelling, the history of Karadere is unfolded. Personal



narratives revealed that Karadere was not a devoid space. The stories about interviewees' lived experiences on Karadere revealed its mysteries and secrets. Consequently, the beach identity became more coherent. Karadere was contextualized by its inhabitants.

### **Restricted zone**

The gully of Karadere was a military base during the WWII when the Nazi Germany used it as a strategic site to dunk Russian submarines (Boris, personal communication, July 22, 2014). During socialism the gully of Karadere was a military zone suitable for landing simulation operations according to the Warsaw Pact [formally the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance akin in format to NATO was a collective defense treaty among eight communist states of Central and Eastern Europe in existence during the Cold War] (Emil, personal communication, July 28, 2014). There used to be signs "restricted" as well as the military shot without any warning. According to the Dinevs, the site's restricted regime lasted almost to 1988-89.

Yes, indeed, when the ships anchored somewhere up there, military officers and soldiers came out. The officers played backgammon and drank rakia [Bulgarian national alcoholic drink] while the soldiers were doing some tedious chores [...] There used to be an asphalt road. There are now only some remains.

(Emil, personal communication, July 28, 2014).

Despite the fact that the beach was a restricted zone, enthusiasts still managed to enter and hide in the forest. They used "partisan-like" methods to remain unseen. Strahil wrote in the notebook for opinion and recommendations that he had visited Karadere since 1972 (personal communication, July 25, 2014). Ivan shared he found the beach with a friend of his 30 years ago and that they wanted to keep it a secret.

Well, the coniferous forest was still very small and the pine trees were little. It was like a desert island. To tell you the truth, we were few people and kept the place a secret, so that it would not be visited a lot [by others] and we could visit it more often. You know what it is when there are many people. Previously it wasn't so clean as it is now. You could see thrown junk by the sea – plastic etc. We cleaned around the camps ourselves, but there was still a lot of rubbish. There were oil spills. A British company drilled gas 30 miles inside the sea. We were careful to clean the sand before sitting down. (Ivan, personal communication, July 28, 2014)

At that time, the law enforcement officers were patrolling and evicting any intruders. Ivan told about an officer, who was shot because he was notorious for his nagging. Spontaneous encounters were also common. Ivan and his friend accidentally stumbled upon a Czech camp one day. The Czech campers were hiding in the forest and were keeping dead silence in order not to be found and evicted by the border police (Ivan, personal communication, July 28, 2014).

## **Mouflons**

There was a moufflon (a subspecies group of the wild sheep) hunting lodge nearby Karadere. Pencho Kubadinski, a politician from the Bulgarian Communist Party, owned it. Kubadinski became fond of these animals after he had visited the Caucasus, which fell within the Soviet Union at that time. He decided to breed the animals in Bulgaria, but he forgot to take into account the landscape differences between the Caucasus and the Bulgarian Black Sea coast “because he was a fool, absolute fool” (Emil, personal communication, July 28, 2014). These animals needed rocky mountainous terrain to rub down their hooves. If not rubbed down, the hooves rot and the animals die.

## **Ghost village**

People talked about a ghost village five kilometers north-west from the gully of Karadere. Ironically, the village is called Samotino, a derivate of the Bulgarian word lonely. The village was surrounded by a forest and could only be reached via dirt roads from Byala, Goritsa, Staro Oryahovo or Shkorpilovtsi. My collocutors argued about who was inhabiting the village. Some said that there was only one inhabitant - named Kosti - who had a house and a small farm. It turned out that the questioned man was dead and only his daughter probably lived there. “Yes, during the population and housing census in 2011 or 2012, there were three enumerators and one inhabitant. What a curious!” (Grigor, personal communication, July 28, 2014). Grigor shared that he visited the village in 2010 with a group of people who he had met on Karadere. Upon his visit of Samotino, he then wrote a short story about his adventure. The village of Samotino was argued to be populated by the Cherkes (a people from North-Caucasus) until the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman Rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. During the 1950s, there were about forty families, a community house with a shop and cinema. The village is currently desolated and without any public utilities.

## **6.5 Inhibitors of liminal experience**

Although the liminality of the beach comforts the visitors, there are certain inhibitors, which can spoil the wonderful experiences. Throughout the interviews and talks with people, two crucial factors emerged as potential inhibitors of liminal experience. Regular visitors of Karadere and vacationers in Byala emphasized overpopulation of the beach. Due to the popularity gained in the aftermath of the street protests and movies portraying Karadere, the beach was steadily becoming overcrowded. Some considered that even if the investors did not succeed urbanizing the area around the beach, the consequences of saving the beach might unleash a wave of enthusiasts who want to get a sense of the last wild beach. Importantly, this season the number of visitors was balanced probably because those who were afraid that the beach would be overcrowded did not come and because the new comers were not so many after all (Neli, personal communication, July 31, 2014; Vera, personal communication, November 20, 2014).

Garbage can induce repulsive response in enthusiast determined to spend a holiday in Karadere. Although interviewees acknowledged that littering behavior was reduced compared to previous years, they also stated that garbage management remained a serious challenge. However, volunteers actively persuaded visitors through signs and personal example to collect their garbage. Moreover, involvement of the municipality in the collection of the garbage was also negotiated. Several cleaning actions were organized pre and post the holiday season. As evident from photographs and commentaries on the Facebook page “Let’s save Karadere” after Karadere’s autumn cleaning (11-12 October 2014) as well as from the press conference on 16 October 2014, participants reported that the beach had never been so clean before.

## 6.6 Conclusion

The anthropological concept of liminality embodied the personal experience of temporary and voluntary leaving one’s home and work to relax, recreate and rejuvenate on the beach. The liminality of Karadere was explored through imaginaries, spontaneous social encounters and timelessness. Social imaginaries of Karadere, that were systems of meanings governing the social structure of the beach dwellers, were expressed through art and storytelling. Storytelling served as medium to address struggles over time and history. Through the stories, interviews and observations Karadere’s mystery and secrecy were put into a context. Consequently, the beach was not merely conceived as an empty space. Liminal beach experiences were part of the social construction of space that confronted the consumer culture and spectacles reinforced by the spatial fix. The spatial fix encountered severe challenges in its attempt to pin down investments in build environment on Karadere. In its powerful attempts to tame molecular global forces, the spatial fix would capitalize on the inhibitors of the current liminal experiences on Karadere to portray the locality as repulsive. Consequently, the spatial fix would provide its “luxury” solution to the repulsive landscape. Liminal collectives capitalized on the opportunities Karadere provided. Due to the manipulation of the liminal space of Karadere, social actors managed to play up the strengths of their environment to turn the beach into a position of power. Different aesthetics were expressed, other meanings were attached, and different symbolic codes were generated. By taking on this position of power, a coalition of social actors can find itself in a space where the marginalized become empowered. Therefore, liminal experiences in Karadere create a vivid image of Thirdspace. This image of Thirdspace is created in conjunction with spatial justice practices. The following chapter will elaborate on the coalition of diverse actors, their concerns and spatial justice tactics on and beyond the beach.

## **7 The right to the beach: A social movement resists mass tourism development in Karadere**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The urbanization of Karadere unleashed a wave of social disapproval throughout Bulgaria. The rise of spatial consciousness was leading to a decisive form of social organization throughout the country. Social responsibility and accountability were taking place along economic values. The private investors were nervous and the government was struggling to respond. Gaps were identified on multiple levels of governance and in predominant business models. These gaps reflected injustice embedded on multiple axes of and intersections between space, nature, society, politics and economy. To condemn the various practice of injustice in relation to the urbanization of Karadere, a diverse group of people mobilized in a network of solidarity. Citizens' initiative "Let's save Karadere" epitomizes perfectly a progressive grassroots movement in action. Through various spatial justice practices, they aimed to preserve the wild beach in its unspoiled form. This chapter elaborates on the social movement to voice injustice on the Black Sea coast in Bulgaria as well as reveal tactics and strategies toward its preservation. In the end, spatial justice struggles in Irakli and Coral campsite will be discussed followed by the success story of Karadere.

### **7.2 Characteristics of the resistance movement**

Citizens' initiative "Let's save Karadere" is a horizontal civic organization without formal leaders –shared one member of the group on Facebook on 6 September 2014. Although "Let's save Karadere" is not officially registered, institutions know it. It is a functioning platform of networked communication (Sophia, personal communication, July 31, 2014). Diverse groups of people are connected to this platform to defend local and sectoral interests as well as specific values even beyond the formal political apparatus. The network includes local, national and international civil society actors with different background and occupation. Not only environmentalists, but also artists, political scientists, educational scientist, engineers, local businessmen, academics, families, pensioners, and students, just to mention a few, belong to "Let's save Karadere". They connect among themselves and to the world persistently, using mainly the Facebook groups (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/karadere.save/>, <https://www.facebook.com/spasi.kara.dere>, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D0%9A%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0-%D0%B4%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B5/560389274007588>), but also short message services (SMS) and emails, phone calls, blogs and websites. The major website of the initiative is <http://www.karadere.info/>. Updates on the initiative and their activities can also be found on <http://karaderebeachlove.tumblr.com/>. Volunteering was a defining feature of this community (stated another member in the Facebook group on 6 September 2014) that shares a set of norms and ethos to preserve a scarce nature resource on the Bulgarian Black

Sea coast. Together with the eco coalition Let Nature Remain in Bulgaria (<http://en.forthenature.org/>) and the NGO BlueLink (<http://www.bluelink.net/en>), the citizen's initiative forms a bigger partnership.

### 7.3 Justice to nature

Although both development projects were termed eco, the resistance movement warned that the intensive construction of urban forms would damage irreversibly the habitats and their populations subject to conservation in the protected sites Kamchiyska Mountain (BG0002044) and Shkorpilovtsi Beach (BG0000100) of the EU's eco network Natura 2000 (Andrey, personal communication, August 6, 2014). On the bases of the Habitats Directive (92/ 43/ EEC) and Birds Directives (2009/147/EC), Natura 2000's objectives are to secure the long-term survival of the most valuable and threatened species and habitats in Europe (EC, 2014). The process of creating eco network Natura 2000 in Bulgaria began with the adoption of Biological Diversity Act (BDA) in 2002 (MOEW, n.d.).

The site Kamchiyska Mountain "supports 189 bird species, 47 of which are listed in the Red Data Book for Bulgaria (1985). Of the birds occurring there 81 species are of European conservation concern (SPEC) (BirdLife International, 2004), 9 of them being listed in category SPEC 1 as globally threatened, 22 in SPEC 2 and 50 in SPEC 3 as species threatened in Europe (EEA, 2015d). The area provides suitable habitats for 63 species, included in Annex 2 of the Biodiversity Act, which need special conservation measures, of which 56 are listed also in Annex I of the Birds Directive (EEA, 2015b). Furthermore, Kamchiyska Mountain is one of the most important sites in Bulgaria for the honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), booted eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*), saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*), woodlark (*Lullula arborea*), nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*), ortolan bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*), semi-collared flycatcher (*Ficedula semitorquata*), as well as for four species of woodpeckers—the middle spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos medius*), syrian woodpecker (*Dendrocopos syriacus*), black woodpecker (*Dryocopus martius*) and grey headed woodpecker (*Picus canus*) (EEA, 2015d). The European Environment Agency (2014b) provides free accesses to detailed ecological data about the characteristics of the protected site Kamchiyska Mountain and 139 species that use it for roosting, feeding and migrating place.

New urban settlements on Karadere would directly impair bird habitats leading to downsize and deterioration in vitality of several groups of birds—stated the environmentalist Dimiter Katsov in a letter addressed to the director of RIEW Burgas and upload on the Facebook group Let's save Karadere on 2 August 2014. The first group of birds consists of species predominantly living in close proximity to the shore, such as Calandra Lark (*Melanocorypha calandra*), tawny pipit (*Anthus campestris*) and pied wheatear (*Oenanthe pleschanka*) (Katsov, personal communication, August 2, 2014). The second group of birds consists of species living in scrub habitats or areas with scattered vegetation groups or strips of trees and shrubs. Species of this group are European roller (*Coracias garrulus*), Eurasian blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*), lesser grey shrike (*Lanius*

minor), ortolan bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*) (Katsov, personal communication, August 2, 2014). Although these species are common, a drastic change in their habitat will severely harm their population and especially those species that are not synanthropic (species benefiting from human settlements) (Katsov, personal communication, August 2, 2014). Moreover, the sheer scale of holiday resorts and the influx of tourists on Karadere will disturb one of the world's major migration flyway – Via Pontica. Kamchiyska Mountain is an international bottleneck migration site for the pelicans, storks and birds of prey. Before crossing the Balkan Mountain, migratory birds concentrate on the region because it is one of the lowest points of the mountain range and the easiest obstacle to overcome (EEA, 2015d; Katsov, personal communication, August 2, 2014).

Shkorpilovtsi Beach supports 15 habitats, of which 4 fall within Karadere area. These include Embryonic shifting dunes (code 2110), Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes") (code 2120), Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak –sessile oak forests (code 91MO), Estuaries (code 1130) (EEA, 2015a; Ralev, personal communication, June 10, 2014). The site is valuable due the conservation status of many plants and comparatively good conditions for their populations (EEA, 2015a). The European Environment Agency (2014a) provides free accesses to detailed ecological data about the characteristics of site Shkorpilovtsi Beach and 146 plant and animal species supported by the habitats. The European otter (*Lutra lutra*), spur-thighed tortoise (*Testudo graeca*), Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*), European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), four-lined snake (*Elaphe quatuorlineata*), marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna*) are among the rare species which are likely to occur on and near Karadere-stated the manager of NGO Balkani Wildlife Society Andrey Ralev in a letter posted on 10 June 2014 on the Facebook group Let's save Karadere. The intense construction work on Karadere will modify the existing habitats, which have European value for conservation sites of rare and threatened plant and animal species. Once modified, the habitats will not be able to support the extremely rich flora and fauna. Consequently, the conservation value of Karadere habitats will be lost. Considering the conservation value of Karadere for the wildlife species and their habitats, how is then possible that Karadere can be urbanized?

From the interviews, a general recurring phrase emerged – “everything is possible in Bulgaria” and “closing eyes to”. “This is a country of unlimited possibilities” – stated Andrey Kovachev, chair of Balkani Wildlife Society and co-founder of Bulgaria's The Greens party (personal interview, August 6, 2014). Andrey said that construction work should not be allowed according to the European Directives (personal communication, August 6, 2014). He argued that if something had been built, the habitats and the species they support would have been destroyed. Andrey (personal conversation, August 6, 2014) noted that according to the Bulgarian legislation, Karadere was an urban territory. He referred to the amendments of Byala's Master Plan and the fact the Detailed Development Plan was implemented without an ecological evaluation. Sophia (personal conversation, July 26, 2014) explained that construction of low-rise buildings was possible because Karadere was not a protected territory according to the Protection Territories Act. According to Vera, Natura



2000 did not restrict construction work on Karadere due to the lack of management plans of the protected sites. Indeed, actual management plans for Kamchiyska Mountain and Shkorpilovtsi Beach do not exist currently to regulate their use and protection (EEA, 2015a, 2015d). Vera stressed the need of regulation plans, which would serve also as development plans regulating various aspects, as for example, the urban density (personal communication, November 20, 2014). She was informed that management plans existed, but the problem was that MOEW received a statement that there were no habitats on the territory of DDP-RP falling within Shkorpilovtsi Beach protected site. Therefore, to assure “objective evaluation of compatibility of plans, programs, projects and investment proposals with the subjects and aims of securing the protected site [Shkorpilovtsi Beach]”, MOEW entrusted the Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research at the Bulgarian Academy of Science with the task to investigate the distribution of habitats (MOEW, personal communication, January 5, 2010). According to Andrey and Vera, this was at least the third investigation by BAS (personal communication, August 6, 2014; personal communication, November 20, 2014).

The government of Plamen Oresharski (May 2013 – August 2014) entrusted BAS to create National Park “Bulgarian Black Sea”, whose objective was to protect animals and plants, rock formations, sand dunes, sea underwater caves and reefs. Andrey claimed that this was initial idea of The Greens (personal communication, August 6, 2014). He reported that the project was a challenge because majority of coastal land was not state owned. Even with the inclusion of municipal land, the project looked like a mosaic. Andrey also emphasized that Karadere, along with other valuable nature sites, was excluded from this project while he thought it should have been part of. Additionally, predominantly mediocre political position regarding the urbanization of Karadere interfered with concrete steps toward its preservation. Before the parliamentary elections in October 2014, the citizen’s initiative “Let’s save Karadere” sent an inquiry to all political parties about their position regarding Karadere. From the evaluated replies of the political parties on the Facebook page Let’s save Karadere, it can be concluded that all respondents, some being more concrete than others, were in favor of preserving Karadere and they called for a compliance with all legal procedures. MP Lilyana Pavlova’s (GERB) inquiry to the Ministry of Investment Planning about DDP and construction permits for Karadere, the Block of Reformers’ complain to the prosecution because the financial minister approved construction on Karadere without the investor Madara Europe having won a public competition, and the Greens’ objection to SAP about Oresharski’s cabinet granting Madara Europe a priority investment class, were some concrete steps initiated by political parties (Antonov, 2013; Sofia Globe, 2014). According to prof. Atanasov, the absence of a strong and parliamentary presented green party in Bulgaria was a major disadvantage in protecting Karadere (personal communication, July 27, 2014).

## 7.4 Justice to economy

Economic aspects of injustice were revealed through interviews, online documentations and media reports. Main arguments against urbanization were collected from a brochure<sup>8</sup> published on 10 April 2014 on the Facebook page “Let’s Save Karadere”, media reports and interviews. Spatial aspects to the urbanization refer to the relation between the local municipality of Byala and the socioeconomic situation in the country. Additionally, the investors also used spatial strategies to conceal their identity and capital as explained below. Generally, the knowledge of interdependences between different spaces is crucial to comprehend the complexity of the forthcoming urbanization – who benefits, on what costs and how they attempt to achieve it.

### **Concealed shareholders**

According to a brochure published on 10 April 2014 on the Facebook page “Let’s save Karadere”, the shareholders of Madara Europe were merely a cover behind unclear end-owner. As previously presented in chapter 5, the officially announced shareholders behind Madara Europe were eight individuals in their 50s from a mining town in Wales. Half of them were relatives. One of them was the owner of a bankrupted company for scrap metal with a capital of GBP 100. The brochure questioned how these individuals would turn the forthcoming holiday complex into a high-quality product for high-end tourists as well as why the state did not question this. Based on this brochure and investigation by Bivol (2014c), Madara Europe’ capital of BGN 50 000 capital was not sufficient to finance a project of BGN 100 M. Although the investors claimed that there were banking documentation proving the availability of sufficient capital, this documentation was never made public as well as the signed memorandum between the government and the investor. Bivol (2014c) also reported that the Ministry of Economy made a U-turn to approve the project despite the fact the ministry itself discovered that the main shareholders had less than 1million pounds in their disposal. The resistant movement was concerned that financing a project with unknown origin was a prerequisite for corruption. According to the brochure, corruption was the main barrier for fair local business because it created a condition for unequal competition. Moreover, interviewees warned that construction work might stop at any point without any prospective to be finalized, as it was evident in many other places on Bulgaria’s coast, if money capital was not ensured in advance (Sophia, Emil, Yana, personal communication, July 26, 2014).

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<sup>8</sup> Available upon request from the author



**Figure 23** Eyesore and For Sale sign in Byala South close to the town of Obzor © Miroslav Damyanov

### **Minimum value added to the local business**

Both complexes would be all-inclusive. This means that there will be many shops, restaurants, pubs, entertainment venues, and even medical personnel. Sophia stated that tourist resorts from all-inclusive type, offering packages of services all included in the price, would hold the customers within the space of the complex and therefore would not provide value added to the local business (personal communication, July 31, 2014). According to Sophia, both complexes would provide a full spectrum of services, which would not stimulate the customers to use services by the local business (personal communication, July 31, 2014). According the brochure, the mass tourists in these complexes would be low-paying customers who do not use services besides these offered in the price.

The big complex [of Madara Europe] will be a closed type. This means that nobody will do groceries from the local shop, go to the local pub. Few people will only come. But they will not come to buy tomatoes from uncle Georgi, to drink the rakiya [Bulgarian national alcoholic drink] of uncle Miho. (Sophia, personal communication, July 31, 2014)

Additionally, the construction of large-scale resorts, including the luxury campsite, in Karadere might set back the regular customers of private lodgings and family hotels in Byala, who come because of the pristine beach. His concerned expressed Valentin Stoyanov, an owner of family hotel in Byala, in an interview published on 16 October 2014 on the website of the civic initiative “Let’s save Karadere”.

All my customers come because of Karadere. If it is urbanized, I will lose them. What I have to say is what I do lead by the thought to preserve nature for the future generations. (Stoyanov, personal communication, October 16, 2014)

Furthermore, local businesses may not be able to compete with an entrepreneur with money that needed to be laundered - stated the aforementioned brochure. Two main arguments were given. Firstly, all doors to administrative bodied and umbrellas to control

bodies might be opened to money launderers. Secondly, it might even be dangerous for the local entrepreneurs' health or security to compete with the large-scale investors. Bai Ivan, a hippy and yearlong visitor of Karadere since the communist time, talked about instances of racketing initiated by mobsters (aka *mutra* in Bulgarian) (personal communication, July 27, 2014). Following the accession of Bulgaria in the EU, such gang groups were not visible much because they infiltrated very well legally in various business practices.

### **No permanent employment**

According to the aforementioned brochure, the tourist complexes cannot provide a permanent employment due to their seasonal character. The employers can count on good profit only in the summer. There would be permanent low-paid jobs only for a small number of people. The brochure questioned whether jobs for local would be guaranteed. Bai Ivan also expressed doubts that locals would be hired (personal communication, July 28, 2014). Further, the brochure read that with the signed memorandum, the state did not oblige the investor to higher locals. Sophia shared that hotels usually hired personnel from the countryside that had a good command of foreign languages and had experience with services to foreign tourists (personal communication, July 31, 2014). Because of long-term unemployment and desperation, residents from the countryside were easily urged to accept low-played jobs offered by owners of large hotel complexes – shared Bai Ivan (personal communication, July 28, 2014). In case any local was hired, it would be for the short term during the season (Sophia, personal communication, July 31, 2014). The brochure even read that employees of large-scale resorts might work without any protection because in most cases they would work illegally.

### **Expensive life and crime**

According to the published brochure, life might become more expensive if large-scale projects were finalized on Karadere, as this was the general situation in every Bulgarian resorts. Although one's average annual income would increase due to the seasonal employment, it would not able to sustain the inevitable increase in prices of consumer goods during the summer - stated further the brochure. Additionally, people practicing wild and free camping were not the real danger - read the brochure. Contrary, big holiday resorts were considered the breeding grounds for drug dealers, thieves, prostitutes and any kind of criminal tourists - claimed the unknown author of the brochure. If Karadere become overcrowded resort, one might regret the loss of people who were referred to as "drug addicts and naked hippies" by people in favor of Karadere's urbanization - concluded the brochure.

### **Real estate speculation**

Andrey expressed his concern about the money flow with unknown origin penetrating Bulgaria. "The volume of dirty money is pretty big and this distorts the market demand. Namely, the real estate and tourist complexes speculation is always directed to unsustainable investment" (Andrey, personal communication, August 6, 2014). He said that

such speculative deals were lead only by the personal interest of their investors. He regretted that there was not an effective institution in Bulgaria to monitor the origin and designation of suspicious money capital. His statement exemplified that Bulgaria was connected with other spaces through the flow of dirty money. This links to the suspected overseas havens which private investors use strategically to cover their business. Boris told extensively about the behavior of investment funds. He explained that the investment funds that possessed land on Karadere sold it cheaply to investors, related to their structures, following the eco protest in favor of protecting Karadere in 2008. Because of the protests and the global economic crisis in 2008, the construction works ceased and the price of the plots plummeted. To ensure that plots stayed within the ownership of the investment fund, they sold it cheaply to individuals and companies linked to the fund. Boris stated that this resulted in the investment fund bankrupt. However, the plots remained for development of Karadere and in time their price was expected to increase (personal communication, July 29, 2014).

According to the aforementioned brochure, the construction of living units on Karadere was another major speculative property deal – acquisition of land at a low price, construction of big holiday complex and resale without any intention of participation in the management of the project. Bivol (2014c) reported that it could only be assumed that Madara Europe gave up its initial idea, apparent in previous top-secret investment proposal leaked on Balkanleaks, to sell real residential properties (Madara Europe, 2013b). It is also unclear whether Maxi I intends to sell residence property.

Boris acknowledged that the property market for Russian buyers would hardly be exhausted (personal communication, July 29, 2014). From personal observations in Byala, it was clear, however, that there were indeed many real estate agencies targeting Russian-speaking customers. For example, one billboard advertisement on a hotel across the municipality building read in Russian: “We build your future” (RU: Строим Ваше Будущее). Further qualitative observations reveal the noticeable presence of Russian speakers in Byala (observation, July 21, 2014). Arising questions include the exact number of these visitors and whether they live in vacation and/ or permanent homes in Byala.

## 7.5 Justice to urban planning

Interviewees shared that the holiday complexes on Karadere required serious infrastructure— roads, sewage, wastewater treatment plant with huge capacity, reliable electric system, modern landfill site (Emil, Yana, Sophia, personal communication, July 27, 2014; Boris, personal communication, July 29, 2014). The authors of the published online brochure stated that even rich municipalities like Nessebar could not invest huge amount of money in such infrastructure. The result would be low quality end product for mass tourism and devastated nature. Yana and Emil emphasized that the wastewater might end up in the sea just like in many other places along the coast (personal communication, July 28, 2014). The authors of the online brochure warned that developers would not invest in

infrastructure that is not their own property and not providing financial return of investments.

Based on his experience with developers on the Black Sea coast, Boris was skeptical about the quality of construction work on Karadere. He gave an example with yooBulgaria, a residential complex with 257 apartments in Obzor (5 km south of Byala). Madara Europe acknowledged in the publicly released investment proposal by MEE that the company had not realized any investment projects. However, the company boasted with the completion of yooBulgaria, a project by Bulgarian subsidiaries of Madara Europe's main shareholder (Leshtarska, 2013). However, the investor was argued to experience difficulties selling a large number of the living units (Boris, personal communication, July 29, 2014). Boris was asked to assess the quality of the complex and fix some technical problems. He told that the apartments could easily be flooded by heavy rain due to the carelessly constructed balconies. The sewage pipes were pressed underground and could not allow the free flow of water. Because the hotel was situated on the seafront up the hill, it was vulnerable to rain. The slope of the road allowed torrential rainwater to flood the electricity panels of the water pumps leading to stopping of the pumps and wastewater collecting on the ground floor of the hotel before draining into the sea.

Such a striking work! [...] If they are smart, they should have drawn on a lesson. The smart people learn from the mistakes of others, not from their own. If they have drawn on some lesson, they may not repeat it. But I simply don't trust them" (Boris, personal communication, July 29, 2014).

Boris acknowledged that municipality of Byala would only benefit from the holiday complexes in Karadere by collecting some taxes, which would not be very impressive (personal communication, July 29, 2014). However, mass tourist complexes require coherent urban planning from the municipality and the state. According to prof. Atanasov, urban agglomeration should not be allowed on Karadere (personal communication, July 27, 2014). He said that he was not against tourism development, but he emphasized that hotels should be built further inland. He stated that the asphalt roads should not lead to Karadere and the beach should be a free zone. In an interview for the Guardian, the ornithologist Dimiter Georgiev expressed concerns about urban planning on the Black Sea coast in relation to forthcoming construction work on Karadere:

We're not against mass tourism but it should be planned in a proper way, with areas set aside for wildlife to breed. But the problem is so much of the coastal areas have been developed, there's now hardly any space left, which means the ecosystem's resilience is greatly weakened, so any new site does not have the moral right to call itself 'eco'.

(Dimiter Georgiev, ornithologist, as cited in Connolly, 2008)



## 7.6 Spatial justice practices and spatiality of resistant movement

### Street Protests

Mass eco protests were organized in Sofia and major Bulgarian cities where nature lovers voiced their disapproval of large-scale tourist resorts on Karadere. On 20 March 2014, about 1500 people went out to the streets of the capital Sofia immediately after the Oresharski cabinet approved a memorandum, without much debate, granting the possibility for the developer Madara Europe to obtain Class A investment certificate. Three days later, protests were also held in Varna and Plovdiv (Leviev-Sawyer, 2014). The occupation of public space was the spatial tactic protesters used to reach out to other citizens and politicians in Bulgaria. Swayed by the job creation promises, residents of Byala held a parallel counter protest in support of the mass tourist development. The signs of the protesting predominantly elderly men read: “We are poor, we want employment” and “Enough of drug addicts and naked hippies” (see Figure 24). The later sign speaks to a derogatory image of Karadere’s visitors created by some media and residents of Byala. Moreover, about hundred counter protesters created their initiative committee, consisting of seven board members chaired by Nikolay Gospodinov, in favor of Byala’s development (Dariknews, 2014). On 5 April 2014 local residents of Byala, property owners and longtime visitors of the municipality, organized an art demonstration in Byala to express their will to preserve the few remaining pristine nature of Black Sea for future generations (see Figure 25) (Btvnovinite, 2014a; Milanov, 2014; Hadzhiyska, 2014).



**Figure 24** Counter protest in the town of Byala © Media Pool



**Figure 25** “Let’s save the colors” art demonstration © <http://evromegdan.bg/>

The spring eco protests revived the spirit of the national protest against the cabinet of Plamen Oresharski. Although the focus of this protests spoke about nature injustice on Karadere, protesters also reminded the demand for government’s resignation. Faced with protestor’s anger, the national and local governments responded very defensively. It was clear from a leaked transcript that the PM Oresharski was reluctant, but nonetheless encouraged the project. “Unfortunately, it’s not a high-tech investment, but it’s welcome. Let’s approve it.” – said Oresharski (Leviev-Sawyer, 2014) The municipality of Byala insisted on following the laws without any compromise no matter who the investor was (Leviev-Sawyer, 2014).

On 13 April 2014, charity concert was held in the central park – Knyaz-Borisova gradina - in Sofia under the motto “We want nature, not concrete”. During the same day, children were also includes in the initiative to save the beach, by drawings on the asphalt to express how they imagined the Black Sea (“Charity concert”, 2014).

Enthusiasts from the citizens’ initiative “Let’s save Karadere” performed a flash mob in front of the Council of Ministers’ building in Sofia on 25 September 2014. With this creative act, the demonstrators wanted to remind and urge the Council of Ministers, the prosecution, the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Ministry of Regional Development to take decisive action to comply with the law and to prevent the construction work in the area of Karadere (“Citizens’ initiative”, 2014).

Other demonstration in front of the Council of Ministers was organized spontaneously on 10 October 2014 – a few days after the regional eco inspection had approved the construction of luxury eco camping of Maksi I without the need of Environmental Impact Assessment. Protesters gathered in from the building of the Council of Ministers and demanded decisive and fair action from the government. The invasive



construction of urban forms and the unlawful Detailed Development Plan of the municipality of Byala were among the protestor's arguments. People demanded the minister of environment to abolish any construction work in Byala until the case was clarified (Antonov, 2014). Following the protests, the regional inspector withdrew his decision and demanded the need of EIA.

The street protest date back to 2008 when the mass scale development project Black Sea Eco Gardens, designed by sir Norman Foster exclusively for the rich, was publicly presented at the end of 2007 in Sofia (Conolly, 2008).

### On-site interventions

Counter-demonstrations in Byala, media reports in a local newspaper, and reports by National Agency "Bulgarian Black Sea" (NABS) declared the users of Karadere naked hippies who are drunk and drug addicts littering all over the beach (Atanasova, 2014). Urged to overcome the limiting stereotypes and negative attitudes towards the users of Karadere, volunteers organized several interventions on the beach. By manipulating the immediate space in the dispute, nature lovers attempted to create a differ representation of the beach. The beach was a meeting space for people to participate in collective place making.

In the spring of 2014, the NGO "Ideas for Change" constructed several simple composting toilets along the shore of Karadere (Lazarov, 2014). Their action was playfully titled "Naked hippies – responsible campers". Other groups of people organized annually cleaning of the beach before and after the holiday season (earthling, 2014; "We cleaned Karadere", 2014). Boris negotiated with the municipality of Byala to provide containers at the beginning of the road going to the beach. To the exit roads of the beach, information signs were constructed (personal communication, July 22, 2014). Behavioral norms, instructions and the anthem of Karadere were hanging on the info boards.



**Figure 26** Information board constructed by volunteers © Miroslav Damyanov

The last on-site intervention, playfully termed “To prepare Karadere for the bulldozers”, happened on 11-12 October 2014. Activists cleaned the beach for the fourth consecutive year. Diverse group of people took part in this beach acupuncture (“We cleaned Karadere”, 2014). One of the participants shared in the Facebook group:

Let me only mention some of the participants in the cleaning: a doctor came all the way from Kyustendil [a town far west in Bulgaria], a businessmen owning a [family] hotel in Byala, an engineer investing for 25 years the profit of his company in Byala, a housewife from Sofia, a student from Varna, a young men from Slovakia coming to clean our beach, a waitress...some of these people have never been to Karadere before. Let these 1-2% who litter and those 99% who use this as an argument for the construction at least be ashamed” (personal communication, 15 October 2014).

All these aforementioned circumstances complemented and were complemented by the liminal experiences of the beach. Karadere’s material symbolism (e.g., pirate flags, engraved trunks, painted tents, message boards, constructed toilets etc.) was part of a crucial iconography, which communicated social norms, membership, and change of attitude. To emphasize, the beach was the strategic locality for coalition building. Not only did people socialize through heterogeneous activities on the beach and on-site interventions, but did they also gather to discuss the urbanization and possible counter actions.

### **Legal strategies**

Members of the citizens’ initiative “Let’s Save Karadere” formed National Citizens’ Initiative to preserve the last wild beach of Bulgaria – “Karadere” in its present undeveloped form on 1 August 2014 on the beach itself (Neli, personal communication, August 1, 2014). The national citizens’ initiative was in accordance with the Direct Citizen Participation in Government Act and resulted after a meeting of three activists in a pub in the village of Goritsa a day earlier (observation, July 31, 2014). The national citizens’ initiative consisted of seven board members and 50 others were members of the council. Although “Let’s save Karadere” is a leaderless social movement, some individuals had to assume the leadership position and put on their names in the documents to legitimately address their concerns to the Council of Ministers. Following a month of petition campaigns in Karadere, in Byala, Sofia, and in the municipality of Nessebar, volunteers managed to collect 5800 signature. Members of this initiative and volunteers submitted personally the petition to representatives of the cabinet of the interim PM Georgi Bliznashki in the Council of Ministers on 8 September 2008 (BlueLink, 2014) (see Figure 27).



**Figure 27** Submitting a petition with 5800 signatures to the Council of Ministers © Victor Victorov

Dobromir Dobrinov and Pavel Antonov appealed the decision of the Ministry of Economy issuing Madara Europe a class A certificate to the Supreme Administrative Court. The SAC judged in favor of the administration of the Council of Minister. The activists will refer the case to the European Union institutions (Bocheva & Popova, 2014).

On 16 October 2014 members of the citizens' initiative "Let's Save Karadere" expressed their support to NGOs from the tourist sector in an open letter. The NGOs had signed a memorandum earlier on 17 July 2014 to support eco and family tourism as well as expresses their discontent with Madara Europe's class A (Dnevnik, 2014).

### **Online and media presence**

As reported previously, the coordination of the citizens' initiatives was mainly done via the Facebook group. Besides for coordination, the group is used for information sharing and discussions. The website of the citizens' initiative (<http://karadere.info/>) presents information about the beach and activities done for the Bulgarian speaking audience. The website <http://karaderebeachlove.tumblr.com/> informs the English speaking audience about the investment plans, interventions to the beach, and actions in saving Karadere from urbanization.

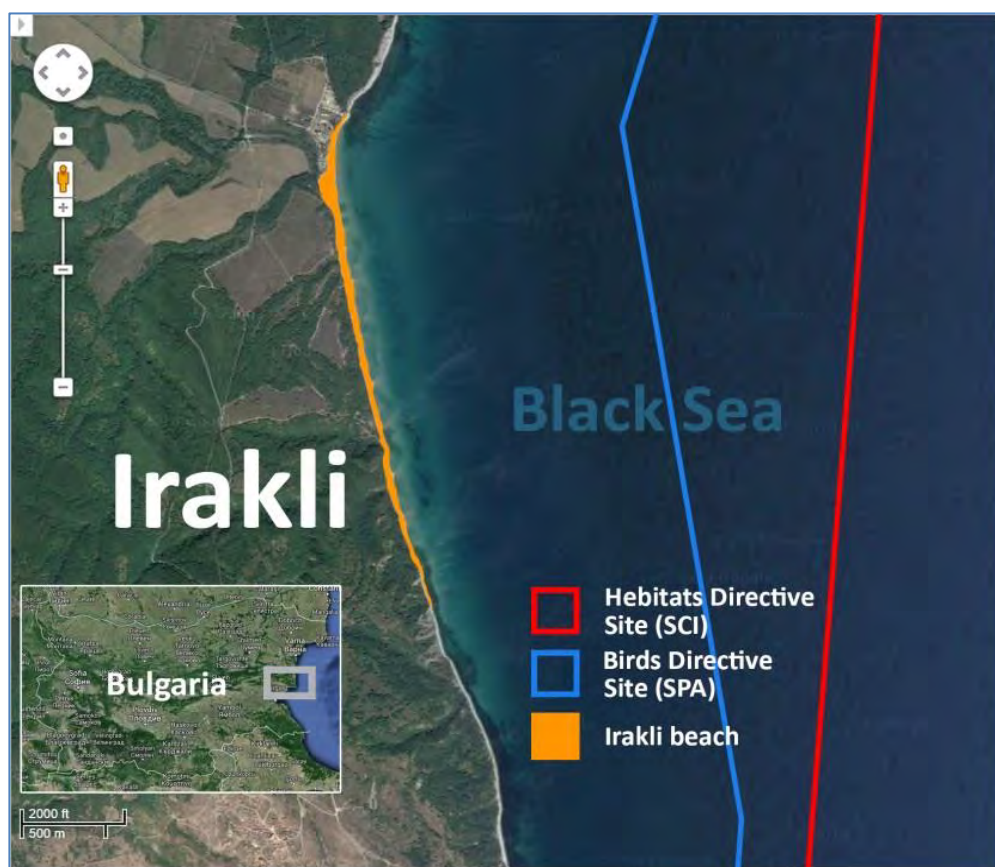
The actions of the initiative as well as the preservation of Karadere were covered by media Bivol, Offnews, Dnevnik, Capital Daily, bTV, NovaTV and others. To make their actions more visible, the initiative collected donations and organized press conference on 17 October 2014 in which Liuba Batenbergska, Dobromir Dobrinov (representative of the initiative) and Toma Belev (president of the Association of Parks in Bulgaria) took part. The

participants discussed the beach at the end of the season, the investment project of Madara Europe, and the initiative's upcoming actions (BTA, 2014). During the press conference, Belev criticized ironically Maxi I's luxury campsite definition: "I always put campsite in quotation marks because 165 decrees [165 000 m<sup>2</sup>] campsite with 3-storey bungalows is something unique in the world tourist industry."

Consider that the movement exists on multiple spatiality and that any one will play stronger or weaker importance in any specific time and place. Not all of nature lovers will participate in all activities, but any member would have had contributed to the movement and its actions accordingly. One would donate money, collect garbage or construct signs on the beach; others would appeal decisions to the court etc. People contribute to the cause according to their skills and possibilities (Vera, November 20, 2014). In consequence, the citizens' movement existed in multiple loci of resistance. Space was important for the social movement to reach out to allies and politicians, to draw on the resources of the state and to jump scale.

## 7.7 Spatial justice movements on Bulgaria's coast

### 7.7.1 Irakli



**Figure 28** Location of Irakli. *Source:* Google, EEA, BSNN



Construction work also threatens Irakli, a protected site with a camping in the middle of Bulgaria's coast famous with its pristine 3-kilometer long beach ("Irakli", n.d.). In 2006 the private offshore company Swiss Properties planed the construction of a holiday village—Riverside Village. Due to severe public pressure, the project was never completed. The Bulgarian Supreme Administrative Court declared the project illegal in 2012 because of serious violations committed by the investor and the local Municipality of Nessebar. The resort should have consisted of 16 single houses, 35 apartments in a 3-storey building, a restaurant, a café, spa center, playgrounds and various other amenities on 10 434 m<sup>2</sup> building surface (Riverside Village, n.d.; "The threat", n.d. ). Unfinished construction work currently remains on the coast.

Despite the defeat over the project of Swiss Properties, construction works of the joined Bulgarian-based companies—Emona 2000 and DARS Invest—are pending. A holiday village—consisting generally of one-family houses, a residence with apartments, a spa center, a restaurant, an underground parking, a pool and a beach bar—was planned on three properties with a total gross floor area of 26 091 m<sup>2</sup> near Irakli beach, south of the small river Vaya (Misheva, 2013) . The first stages of the construction began in the end of 2012. Comparing documentation filed by the investor and site visits of the construction work in the Kladeri area (a territory of the village of Emona in the municipality of Burgas), inspectors from DNSK found discrepancies between the number and types of building being built during the first stages of the project (Bosev, 2013; "Bulgarian Minister halts", 2013).

Dobromir Ivanov owns Emona 2000 and family members of Ivanov own DARS Invest. In 2009 DARS Invest was owned by the partner of GERB MP Emil Dimirtov Slavyan Teofinov (Goranova, 2013). The consolidation of land began in 2003 when most of the properties were bought from private property owners. According to a reference in the Cadastre and Land Register of Bulgaria, Slavyan Teofanov sold land property to Emona 2000 or its owners. Other plots were appropriated though land swaps and cheap buy (i.e., 1.700 m<sup>2</sup> for 19 BGN per m<sup>2</sup> from the municipality of Nessebar) (Bosev, 2013).

Unlike Karadere, Irakli is slightly modified. Although no major holiday complexes have been realized in its immediate hinterland, remnants of construction works are present-shared interviewees. There is also a small complex of bungalows next to the estuary of the small river Vaya (EEA, 2015b). Mixed forest and cultivated lands surround the beach. "Irakli is paid and surrounded by an iron fence; there are lifeguards etc. and concrete. There should have allegedly only been bungalows and camping, but concrete was poured and big lamps are on all night (Grigor, personal communication, July 27, 2014).

With Order No RD 110 of 6 May 1994 Irakli was proclaimed a protected territory preserve coastal habitats of rare and endangered plants (sand lily, sea woundwort, spurge, Tatar spurge) and birds. Some plant species are listed as endangered or threatened in the Red Book of Bulgaria and therefore they are protected under the Biodiversity Act ("Irakli – Preserved Area", n.d.) protects them. Moreover, Irakli falls also under Natura 2000 within Emine-Irakli site (code BG0001004) and Emine site (code BG0002043) that protects valuable habitats and their species (EEA, 2015b, 2015c). As it is at the end of the Balkan Mountain,

Emine-Irakli is both an important bio-corridor and migration barrier for a variety of species. The European Commission launched infringement processing against Bulgaria because of the construction works in the Irakli-Emine protected site on 9 October 2009.

Despite or because of almost no infrastructure, the beach is preferred destination by nature lovers, families with children and enthusiasts who are not fond of mass tourist resorts like Sunny Beach or Golden Sands. July morning—started by hippies from Varna—is now a popular event attended by many (“Irakli – Preserved Area”, n.d.). Irakli also attracts nudists. Urged by the eminent threat that the nature and culture of Irakli might be lost, enthusiasts formed a resistance movement “Let’s Save Irakli” as soon as the first investment plant was proposed. They have a Facebook group ([Да спасим Иракли](#)) and a website (<http://daspasimirakli.org/>). They storm the streets of major Bulgarian cities and organize demonstrations on the beach to voice their discontent. They file petitions and do on-site interventions, such as annual cleaning of the beach. Moreover, they work closely with eco-organizations, such as Green Balkans and Let Nature Remain. Generally, they define themselves as an informal group:

We are not an organization of any kind, nor are we a committee, an association, or any word of that sort. We are not professional activists. We simply realized that things are solely up to us. To every person living in our small country. We realize that our passivity might lead to the irreversible extinction of all our national and natural heritage.

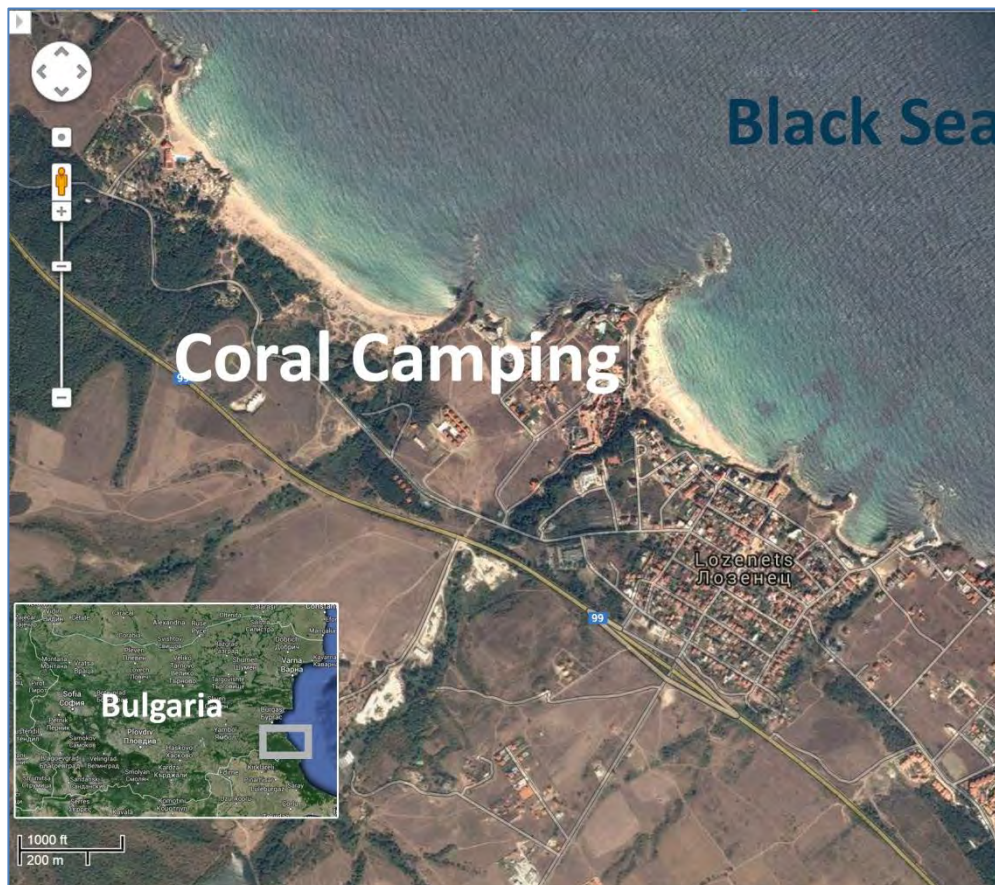
(“About”, n.d.)

Not only did green enthusiasts form a coalition, but also did the private investors and landowners. Investors and landlords found the “NGO Irakli” through which they opposed the inclusion of their properties in Natura 2000 and demanded their personal right to be able to build or sell. In an interview the owner of Emona 2000 Dobrin Ivanov insisted that his projects encompassed existing urban land, which was a former Pioneer camp (children’s organization operated by the Bulgarian Communist Party) in the Kladerite area (“Emona 2000”, 2013). Overall, Irakli is also a representative example of urban development flaws on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.

### 7.7.2 Coral

Construction work was planned on campsite Coral – one of the few undeveloped places on the southern Black Sea coast near the city of Tsarevo. The Spanish “Iberdrola Inmobiliaria” and “Prime Property BG” were the main investors (Bivol, 2014f). The Spanish real estate developer intends to build a holiday complex—Koral Beach Elite—comprising of luxury hotels, a luxury real estate complex with 2 500 apartments, retail center and sport zones. The holiday complex moto was “Be different feel the privilege” and estimated EUR 44 M (Bivol, 2014f). Stefan Dobrev, with the assistance from the planning department of Harvard University, designed the plan. The developer is part of the big Spanish holding,

Iberdrola, which was worldwide known as one of the four major energy companies (Iliev, 2009a). The second developer intended to build a holiday village—Coral Residence Resort—comprising of a 5-storey hotel, VIP houses, a real estate complex with 230 apartments and leisure amenities on 40 407 m<sup>2</sup> gross-floor area. The holiday village targets exclusively the rich. Galin Vasilev and a team from the architectural bureau Proarch created the design. Proarch Coral Residence Resort was a joint project between Prime Property BG and Imoeast from Austria (“Construction of a holiday village”, 2007).



**Figure 29** Location of Coral. *Source:* Google

Due to civil pressure and the fact the construction works would harm three types of dunes and six plant species, the interim environment minister Svetlana Zhekova banned the construction and installation works of investment projects at Coral camping site in September 2014. Not only were the urban development plans of Iberdrola Inmobiliaria and Prime Property BG banned, but also those of Real Estate Investments EOOD, Vutatour Invest AD, PGA FOOD EOOD, and Koral Residence EAD. Additionally, interim Deputy PM Ekaterina Zaharieva referred a signal to the prosecution over the issuing and re-certification of the construction permits by the chief architect of the municipality of Tsarevo. The Supreme Administrative Prosecution Office (SAPO) found that more than 35 construction permits were issued illegally, including those of Iberdrola Inmobiliaria and Prime Property BG. The investigation reported flaws in the administrative acts of the Municipality of Tsarevo.

Responsible persons were Mayor Petko Arnaudov (BSP) and the consecutive Mayor Georgi Lapchev (GERB), architect Kalin Tiholov and lawmaker Yordan Tsonev (MRF). Investigation of journalists from Bivol (2014f) exposed land purchase deals in participation of the members of the board of Burgas-based sugar factory Pobeda (Victory) - current Burgas Mayor Dimitar Nikolov, Simeon Simeonov and businessman Sava Choroleev. They were partners though other firms associated with Vitatur. Until 2009 Pobeda's board of directors included Vladimir Karolev, economist and current advisor of the economy Minister Bozhidar Lukarski (Bivol, 2014f).

Although it is not urbanized, Coral is slightly modified unlike Karadere. Because Lora had visited both Karadere and Coral, she was able to compare and contrast them. She shared that a coastal "battle" was fought on both sites:

There were previously people camping on the shore and in the nearby forest. The beach bar is gone. There was a well-known bar "Play de Chamboa", which is currently dilapidated. The people from the camping told me that the concessioner, who took care of the beach for many years, gave up. He probably had an argument with the mayor of the village of Lozenets. The mayor then cut the electricity to all at Coral. In fact, there is also a battle there. As far as I know, one person paid for the concession from his own pocket, so that the beach can be preserved [from development]. Perhaps someone has also interfered [...] It is a fact that there are lifeguards, which speaks to a process of urbanization. I mean it is good that there is a lifeguard, but on the other hand, the place begins to be urbanized – sunbeds, paid parasols and so on.

Lora (personal communication, 6 August 2014)

Unlike Karadere, Coral is regulated as a camping site. There is a wiring and plumbing. Like Karadere, there is also an active resistant movement by enthusiast in favor of preserving the beach in its undeveloped state. The resistant movement has a website (<http://www.koralbeach.com/>) and two Facebook groups (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/koralbeach/> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/campug/>). Browsing through their online channels, a kite surfer's letter confirmed Lora's explanations and clarified the problems currently at Coral camping site. In his satirical piece, Atanas Rusev (2014) exposed the difficulties the concessionaire experienced due to the racketeering schemes and slow-track administrative procedures by the local Municipality of Tsarevo. Municipal authorities and especially the mayor were portrayed as a local feudal who could apparently influence the "Water Supply and Sewerage-Burgas" EAD, whose sole stakeholder is the Ministry of Regional Development, and even the private electricity company EVN to cut the water supply and electricity of the camping. The surfer elaborated further. Without fresh water and electricity the medical center and the bar could not work properly as well as the campers were unable to perform daily household and hygiene activities. Because of the

deprivation of basic resources, the pending development plans and unlawful governance practices, enthusiasts held their latest public demonstration on the beach of Coral on 16 August 2014. Moreover, people would like to preserve the beach intact because it attracts kite surfers and nudists among many other nature lover enthusiasts. Due to the lack of buildings next to the shore to divert the sea wind flows, the beach has perfect conditions for the development of kitesurfing, a sport extremely difficult to practice in Bulgaria due to the overdevelopment on the coast. The shoreline between Coral camping site and South camping site is a preferred nudist space.

### 7.7.3 The success story of Karadere

The defense against urbanization on the Bulgarian coast boasts with a successful case near Karadere beach. In 2010 Darmatex Bulgaria, owned by the offshore company Darmatex Limited registered in Malta, planned the construction of a holiday village, comprising of 20 single family houses for 200 people on 55 000 m<sup>2</sup>. The density was set to be 30% with a maximum height of the buildings up to 10 m. The project was to commence in the area of Sveteritsa, village of Goritsa, municipality of Byala, district of Varna. The area is situated approximately 3 km north-west to the wild beach Karadere in the upper reaches of the small river Karadere. It borders the protected site Shkorpilovtsi Beach and falls within the protected site Kamchiyska Mountain of the eco-network Natura 2000 (Iliev, 2009b).

The Dinevs – Yana and Emil – as well as Sophia told extensively about Darmatex's project and its incompleteness. They explained eloquently the arguments against urbanization, described vividly the context and reminded useful lessons learned. Additionally, documentation posted on the resistant movement's website (<http://www.karadere.info/>) revealed astonishing fist-hand information about how the project was proposed to and discussed with the locals of the village of Goritsa.

According to Emil and a letter of an anonymous local, which was sent to several ministries and media, the investor planned to construct the houses exclusively for their employees to recreate during the summer holiday on the Bulgarian coast (personal communication, 28 July 2014; kdAdmin, 2009). The anonymous local objected the construction work on a number of accounts, some of which were also shared by the interviewees.

Firstly, Darma Tex's project required the construction of not only houses, but also infrastructure. However, Sveteritsa area consisted of abandoned cultivated and forest land without any urban infrastructure. The village of Goritsa, situated 1.6 km west to the area, did not have well-functioning infrastructure either. The plumbing system was constructed in the 1950s during socialism and regular leakages caused inconvenience to the households. Additionally, the asphalt roads and sideways were damaged. Moreover, there was not a functioning sewage system in the village. The anonymous person reported further that the old electric transformer of the village conducted 380 – 400 V resistances, which caused damage to many household appliances in the beginning of the summer 2009. Furthermore, inhabitants of the village, which account about seventy people predominantly unemployed



and over their fifties, were constantly promised by municipality of Byala every four years before the local elections that the infrastructure would be fixed once financing was available. Considering the impossibility of the municipality to invest in infrastructure, the private company had to invest in extensive infrastructure, including a sewage system and wastewater plant in addition to the construction of the houses. Additionally, Darma Tex proposed to build an asphalt road from their resort to the beach Karadere. Interviewees were generally puzzled how would the road be constructed, and more importantly maintained, considering the terrain was treacherous during even a little bit of rain or snow. The anonymous local ironically exclaimed: "So, in this way our village would experience great revival, development and progress". Overall, it was unclear whether the investor had the potential to bear the total cost burden (kdAdmin, 2009).

Secondly, construction work in the area of Sveteritsa would have facilitated the urbanization of the area around Karadere beach. Interviewees shared that the holiday village of Darma Tex would have led to a chain reaction of urban coastal colonization (The Dinevs and Sophia, personal communication, July 28, 2014). Provided that even one urban project was carried out, the cultivated and forestland status would be changed into urban. As long as the land acquired urban status, other private investors would face one obstacle less. Consequently, urban sprawl would occur - stated further the letter (kdAdmin, 2009).

Thirdly, any urban agglomeration would threaten the wild flora and fauna and consequently alter the beauty of the countryside preferred by many. Interviewees and the anonymous local feared the landscape would be irreversibly modified (The Dinevs and Sophia, personal communication, July 28, 2014). Once the landscape was modified, various animals and plants would have lost their natural habitat. The author of the letter stated that the pristine nature made the area attractive. Enchanted by the beautiful countryside and the sea, more than eighty people from countries ranging from the former Soviet counties to the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and so on, bought land and build houses or renovated the old ones - continued the letter (kdAdmin, 2009).

Fourthly, the adoption of the Detailed Development Plan of Sveteritsa and the communication of the investment Darma Tex's project were achieved through surreptitious and underhanded tactics - argued the anonymous person. In the winter of 2008, the Municipal Council of Byala, following all legal procedures, approved the amendments to the Detailed Development Plant of the municipality, which included territories in the village of Goritsa, namely the Sveteritsa area-stated the anonymous person. According to the amendments, low-rise buildings up to 10 m and urban infrastructure could be built on the regulated plots. The anonymous local underlined that this amendment did not meet any public objections due to the absence of critically-minded individuals who lived usually in other cities or abroad in the winter. This group of people was misinformed or perhaps not aware of the developments in the municipality of Byala. The predominantly elderly inhabitants left in the village in the winter of 2008 did not object because they might have easily been persuaded that the amendment of the Detailed Development Plan would lead to skyrocketing of the price of their formerly agricultural plots (kdAdmin, 2009). In the end, the



Detailed Development Plan was an undeniable fact. However, the Municipality of Byala informed in a personal email that the municipal council did not approve changes to Sveteritsa area (personal communication, December 23, 2014).

Darma Tex's investment project was publicly discussed on 18 November 2009 at 11:00 h in the former community center. - told the anonymous person in the letter. The meeting was in the middle of a regular workday in the autumn when the majority of people cannot, of course, be present because they worked or/ and lived somewhere else - condemned the anonymous person (kdAdmin, 2009).

At the meeting in question an "impressive" was the representation of the municipality of Byala in the face of Deputy Mayor Georgi D. Kasabov and Chief Architect Saraliev, as well as the protocoling senior ecologist – presumably these are the legal requirements for the implementation of the procedure. Sitting quietly at the official table were two women - representatives (I'm sorry that I cannot quote their names, but their innocent youth made be good impression as well as the different ethnicity of one of them) of RIEW Burgas.

(kdAdmin, 2009)

The anonymous person reflected also on the active involvement of Mrs. Lilyana Marinova, deputy mayor appointed by the municipality of Byala, but not directly elected by the residents of the village of Goritsa due to their paucity. Mrs. Marinova was walking around the room with a list in hand to diligently sign up the attendance - read further the letter. The anonymous resident refused to sign up the attendance list concerned that the list might have later been used as a proof to legitimate the locals' approval of the investment project. The author of the letter reposted that everybody else willingly signed and listened to the investor's presentation. The investors swayed the residents with promises that the project would be environmentally sustainable (no waste in the river and in the sea, low-density land development), exclusively for their employees and not a property for sale - continued the anonymous local (kdAdmin, 2009).

Nevertheless, active and critically minded individuals like the person, who wrote the anonymous letter, condemned the project. As long as more information was disseminated about the holiday villages and the administrative procedures, which the investor had to undergo, a diverse group of people and green organizations mobilized in to resist the realization of the urban project in Sveteritsa area near Karadere (Emil, personal communication, July 28, 2014). Despite the odds, the director of the regional eco inspection in Burgas concluded on 11 March 2011 that the project would not have harmed the wild flora and fauna and therefore he allowed construction work without the need of Environmental Impact Assessment (Emil, personal communication, July 28, 2014). Urged by this decision the green NGO Balkani Wildlife Society sent an expert appeal to the Minister of Environment and Water on 16 May 2011 to demand the holiday village project undergo Environmental Impact Assessment (kdAdmin, 2011a). On the following day, the coalition of

environment organizations and civic movements consisting of “Let’s Nature Remain” and “Let’s save Karadere” sent an alarming message to the media about the secrecy of the developmental project that attempted to ravish the pristine nature around Karadere (kdAdmin, 2011b). Because of the civic pressure, the Regional Environment and Water Inspection scheduled a public discussion in the village of Goritsa on 16 June 2011 about the environmental impacts of the holiday village. The eco inspection also announced a 14-day statutory period for any objections and positions. Activists used this statutory period to collect position letters, which were applied to the public discussion attended by many because it was organized in the summer when people had, in general, more availability. The Dinevs vividly remembered that the dispute was very heated. They excitedly told their experience at the day of the public discussion.

They [attendees] blew off the steam<sup>9</sup>. We quarreled, we fought there. The one [the officer from the eco inspection in Burgas], who carried out the Environmental Impact Assessment, cried because I refuted very seriously. You cannot build there [in the Sveteritsa area]. But he had said that construction work could be completed there. And we put pressure on him. Because of the government changed, I don’t know exactly, but it probably had some significance, [...] we managed to stop this thing. And now thankfully it is gone. (Emil, personal communication, July 28, 2014)

Emil emphasized that a young woman managed to collect over 5000 signatures in support of preserving Karadere’s nature during the statutory period (personal communication, July 28, 2014). He said, “She did a tremendous job!” (Emil, personal communication, July 28, 2014). Yana added, “They were stunned when she came in with these folders [with the letters signed]. They literally shit in their pants” (personal communication, July 28, 2014).

## 7.8 Conclusion

The coalition of active citizens represented by “Let’s save Karadere” and NGOs epitomized a spatial justice practice on Bulgaria’s coast. The activists’ mobility, horizontal and leaderless organizational model as well as the access to communications have shifted their campaigns and resources on multiple spatiality – the beach, the streets, government buildings, court and online venues. Several flaws of the investment projects were identified. Environmentalists warned that Karadere’s urbanization would irreversibly harm the habitats and their populations subject to conservation in the protected sites Kamchiyska Mountain and Shkorpilovtsi Beach of the EU’s eco network Natura 2000. The social movement argued that the all-inclusive type resorts would be unfair competition to the local business would not guarantee jobs for the locals and would involve estate speculation. The activists argued that without infrastructure and coherent urban planning, the construction works might turn

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<sup>9</sup> Literal translation of the Bulgarian idiom - “вдигам много пара” - denoting excitement and a tempestuous response.

into an eyesore. To become more visible and connect to other partners, individuals from the social movement used social media, established contacts with journalists and organized press conference. Thought street protests, art demonstrations, and interventions on the beach, the social movement expressed publicly its concerns and attempted to communicate a change of attitudes. All these strategies have spatial aspects and communities effectively use space to jump scale, reach out the resources of the state and connect to partners. Interviewees envisioned different future of Karadere, namely no large-scale constructions, a less crowded and clean beach, development of local and sustainable small-scale business, a management plan of the area as a protected zone, and civil concession or even a nature reserve (Sophia, Neli, personal communication, July 31, 2014; Atanasov, personal communication, July 27, 2014; Vera, personal communication, November 20, 2014; Lora, personal communication, August 6, 2014). Karadere's urbanization was not an isolated case of coastal invasion by the spatial fix and coastal defense by citizens. Debates about Karadere's urbanization and protection link to other spaces of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. Similar restructuring processes are present in Coral and Irakli. The local administration seemed an easier obstacle to overcome by the investors in all cases. Nevertheless, critically minded individuals managed to mobilize and respond timely to withhold urban development. One of the success stories came from Karadere. The citizen's movement "Let's save Karadere" can use the lessons learned from the success story, but identifying flaws in two urban projects require a lot of resources and expertise. No matter the outcome, namely whether or not Karadere would be urbanized, the energy from "Let's save Karadere" would spill over in other civic initiatives as individuals come and go. As shared by interviewees, the civic informal organization will remain to demand progressive and participatory form of democratic politics and social activism in Bulgaria.



**Figure 30** Location of Sveteritsa. *Source:* Google

## 8 Discussion

This research investigated the struggle for spatial justice as epitomized by the forthcoming urbanization of the wild beach Karadere on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. This inquiry focused on multiple spatial dimensions of societal processes, urban developments at the Bulgarian seaside, and challenges for spatial justice in order to engage critically with the struggle to save the varied nature and culture of Karadere beach. This academic work considered the importance of the concept of space and different spatial metaphors as powerful analytical tools. Foregrounding space was a strategic choice to open creatively new horizons for theoretical and practical political innovations. Building on the increased spatial consciousness, a state-of-the art critical spatial theory was applied. The research questions were approached in line with this theoretical framework.

The main research question encompassed dimensions of socio-spatial relations, new geographies of capital accumulation, and social-scientific account of contentious politics in Bulgaria:

How do socio-spatial processes, such as the *social construction of space* and *spatial fix*, produce spatial (in)justice as elucidated in the urbanization of a wild beach on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and how can social movements resist the mass tourism development projects through spatial justice strategies and tactics?

To answer this multifaceted question, three sub-questions were posted:

- 1) How can various spatial dimensions of societal relations reveal the production of new geographies of accumulation and injustice on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast?
- 2) Who are the collective agents trying to save Karadere beach and what are their strategies and tactics?
- 3) How does space (i.e., spatiality) play a role in constituting environmental and social movement mobilization reflecting *spatial justice* in Karadere?

This enquiry considered the importance of space and the processes of its production to illuminate the forthcoming urbanization and conservation struggles of the wild beach Karadere. Following an extensive elaboration on the developments of critical spatial theory, space was approached as a relative concept rather than as a given object. Henri Lefebvre's scholarship on space was one of the main inspirations for academics in various fields to consider space and society as mutually constituted (aka *spatial turn*). Accordingly, space should not be understood as a pre-given or taken for granted material entity that exists objectively as a container of human relations and means of production. Conversely, the concept of space entails dynamic processes of its creation. Therefore, space is a multifaceted



social construction based on values and meanings that influence spatial practices and perceptions. According to Lefebvre, who shifted the theoretical focus from the production *in* space to the production *of* space, the social production of space involved three modes of production: *spatial practice*, *representation of space* and *representational space*. Although these aspects of space are distinct from one another, they exist simultaneously in a spatial triad. This dialectics of triplicity, further developed by Edward Soja, encompasses perceived space of materialized spatial practice (Firstspace), discursive representations of space (Secondspace), and the space of social imaginaries emerging from lived grassroots experiences (Thirdspace).

Driven by the territorial and capitalist logics of power, the spatial fix, which refers to the enlargement of mass tourism development on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, operates within the aforementioned triad in socialist and post-socialist Bulgaria. During socialism, the communist party controlled the modes of production in and of space. Its ideology was well reflected in urban development on the coast. Bulgarian resorts personified the communists' liminal utopian dream. The notion of *socialist escapes* captured vividly the aforementioned idea. The socialist discourse promoted productive leisure, namely nature-based and healthy tourist experiences. Although citizens could escape the routine and hassles of their spatial practice in the industrial city by spending a holiday on the coast, they could not escape the communist ideology, which was made ubiquitous in the architecture and services on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.

The communist party through its subordinate organizations ordered the holiday development in Bulgaria. The space representing the communists' liminal utopian dream was conceived by a team of initially unknown but later renowned architects and engineers at Glavproekt, the central state institute for architecture and spatial planning. The topography of the 380-kilometer Bulgarian coast—encompassing long stretches of dunes and sandy beaches, Varna and Burgas as regional centers, and cultural heritage dating back in antiquity—provided an open space for comprehensive resort plans in post-World War II period. Holiday development was purposefully concentrated in a few locations in order to preserve as much as possible the nature assets along the coastline. As discussed in chapter 4, spatial imaginaries of the communist party manifested in strictly planned and highly romanticized holiday complexes. Modern architecture combined with traditional Bulgarian style was embedded in man-made greenery to evoke the comfort of home and rural idyll. Simulacra of fantasy worlds and diverse venues for entertainment ranging from folkloric clubs to cabarets attracted domestic and foreign holidaymakers.

Based on the discussion in chapter 4, it is apparent that the spatial fix conceived leisure spaces for consumption on the Black Sea coast since the People's Republic of Bulgaria. Giustino and colleagues (2013) as well as Zingel and colleagues (2013) reported that the communist government invested substantially in large-scale tourism development, such as Sunny Beach, to market Bulgaria as a holiday destination and channel international money flows in Bulgaria. The spatial fix on Bulgaria's coast during socialism existed in a peculiar synthesis between socialist and capitalist structures and practices. This synthesis



was expressed through modern architecture, supply system and consumer services. The paradoxical synthesis was a necessary condition for Bulgaria to meet the criteria of economy of scale especially when the country wanted to sell its precious and some even unattainable for the common citizen commodities, such as cognac, chocolate, tobacco, fruits and vegetables. Unlike capitalist states, where private investors compete and run the economy, Balkantourist, a state-owned monopoly, ran the tourist industry in the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

The production of socialist space on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast emerged in conjunction with the country's mass industrialization and urbanization, which resulted from the communist policy in the post war era. The nationalization of land and planned economy was achieved by the 1950s. Alongside, urban population grew rapidly in expense to rural population. Consequently, a large mass of skilled labor was concentrated in the cities. The spatial fix during socialism brought the surplus capital (e.g., state investment, valuable commodities, productive capacity of the vacant coastal land) and surplus labor (e.g., working force in planning, construction, leisure services) together to profitably achieve socio-economic and political tasks. The limit to the logic of the spatial fix was reached in the 1980s when the fulfilled bed capacity and the strict state policy seized the enlargement of the coastal resorts.

However, the spatial fix was remobilized following the disintegration of the socialist regime and the consequent political and economic upheavals in the 1990s. With the regime change, the social production of neoliberal space on Bulgaria's coast was done through series of dialectics that were the result of the process and mechanism that kept it going. These dialectics reveal the purpose of the process and intrinsic political aspects of space. The spatial fix divided the neoliberal space into units of dominating and dominated spaces (the logic of the conceived space) in order to install its hegemonic power to everyday life. Major Bulgarian resorts were mostly broken down into smaller units to ease their mass privatization in 1997. For example, the privatization of Sunny Beach was one of the priorities for the new political order. In contrast, Byala was not a major resort in 1997 and its Master Plan at that time did not envision construction work in Karadere.

The release land schemes, flourishing corruption and nepotism combined with rapid change in administration and governments responsible for delayed construction regulations lead to relentless urbanization of the Bulgarian seacoast. The spatial fix initiated transformations within the previously strictly planned Bulgarian resorts. Sunny Beach, the pearl in the crown of Balkantourist and the visiting card of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, was emblematic of this internal transformation. Not only did private investors began enlarging the existing hotels, but also constructing new hotels, bars, discos, entertainment venues and amenities. Overdevelopment, which was the investors' imaginary of return of investment as well as the state's imaginary of a stimulus to the beleaguered national economy after the collapse of the banking system in 1996, was fueled primarily by speculators, corruption-generated acquisition of hotels and construction permits as well as mafia groups laundering money.

The creative destruction consisted of enlarging and/ or tearing down the existing buildings to erase new and much bigger constructions combined with wiping out the green parks. Mad overconstruction, greed and kitsch turned major resorts, such as Sunny Beach, into concrete jungles notorious for the overloaded electrical and plumbing systems, ultimate European cheap party destination, crime, sex and drugs. The perceived post-socialist urban environment articulated the political and cultural changes in Bulgarian society. New architectural style known as *Mafia Baroque* marked the rejection of the socialist modernism (minimalist and functionalist) with garishness appeal for attention, kitsch and purposeful excess (Holleran, 2014). It is difficult to define the exact characteristics of the style because of its apparent incoherence and tendency to shock. Nevertheless, some of the elements that constitute it include cupolas, Corinthian columns, porticos, mansard roofs, marble panels, mirrored glass, all of which can be combined in one structure. Moreover, this style is often identified with bad taste and ugliness. It was recognized for inadequate plumbing and low-quality constructions associated with environmental hazards at the seaside. It also characterizes the status anxiety of the new neoliberal society and especially the rise of organized crime in the 1990s. The status anxiety manifested in conspicuous consumption and public display of wealth visible in the build environment. The name of the architectural style is known as *Mutro Baroque* in Bulgaria. *Mutro* is the adjective derived from the noun *mutra* meaning a mobster and literally a mug in its informal sense. Several interviewees talked about the racketing and division of territories by the rising group of mobsters at the Bulgarian seaside. Baroque refers to the “ ‘Las Vegas-like’ refusal to commit to a coherent style” in response to socialist aesthetics (Holleran, 2014, p. 25). *Mafia Baroque* became a heuristic for the post-socialist spatial fix in line also with the diminished prestige of Bulgarian architects and urban planners who were sidelined as arbiters of urban design (Holleran, 2014). The work of these professionals was subordinate to a triad between construction, private investors and new political elite. Architects and urban planners struggled to regain recognition because they were caught in the dialectics between the need to reject the socialist past, but without any existing coherent strategic framework how to do that, and the beholdenness to clients who were regarded as poor decision-makers (Holleran, 2014).

*Mafia Baroque* was the imperative of relentless urban development at least until 2008 when the global economic crisis hit Bulgaria and many real estate properties on the coast remained vacant and for sale. As stated by one of the interviewees, British citizens rushed to buy properties on the coast in the 2000s and especially after Bulgaria’s accession to the EU in 2007. Due to the crisis, however, they were forced to sell them. The paradoxes of the spatial fix to solve its inner crisis of overaccumulation unfolded also on the Bulgarian coast. Because of the global crisis, the real estate properties were devalued (“Russians rescue”, 2011). The Bulgaria’s real estate market, which had depended substantially on UK buyers, relied heavily on Russian holiday-home buyers (“Russians rescue”, 2011). Russian-speaking overseas property buyers were reported to have preferred Bulgaria as a low price category destination (Chebykin, Kachmazov, Kozhevnikova, & Flichkina, 2014). Moreover, they were reported to have preferred seafront properties. The similarities between the

Bulgarian and Russian language as well as their shared communist past allowed the Russian-speaking property buyers to rediscover one of their favorite travel destinations from the communist time.

The spatial fix at the Bulgarian seaside did not leave the region, but instead moved within the space of the tourist region giving a very localized expression of Harvey's notion. Importantly, the spatial fix was in big demand of Russians and Ukrainians to stabilize the real estate. According to one investment website in Bulgaria, this was achieved hardly in 2014 (A Place in the Sun, 2014). One of the interviewees believed that the market for Russian-speakers would not soon be exhausted. Other interviewees shared that the Russian population established their own communities in many municipalities on the Bulgarian coast. To a certain degree, this explains the Russian speakers' invasion of the perceived space of the small seaside town of Byala. It is intriguing then how the recent geopolitical conflict in the Russian-Ukraine borderland would affect the property market at the Bulgarian seaside. Will Russians keep buying properties considering the EU sanctions on the Russian Federation? Will the supply and demand of holiday homes for Russian-speakers reach equilibrium in the long run or will the continuously constructed resorts remain empty? How would the presence of Russian-speakers in the Bulgarian resorts affect the country's geopolitics? Future research can investigate these questions in relation to the effect of the spatial fix on the geopolitical situation in Bulgarian and in the EU using the critical spatial theory.

The spatial imaginaries of the politicians and private investors about resort construction relied heavily on the influx of Russian holidaymakers as real estate buyers. Alongside the argument that Russian-speakers preferred seafront properties, Ms Polina Stoykova, Head of Operations and Property Research at [www.bulgarianproperties.com](http://www.bulgarianproperties.com), shared that Russians also liked high-end complexes (Place in the Sun, 2014). These statements give a clue on the need of the spatial fix to look for other unspoiled spaces along the coast to satisfy the spatial imaginaries of the Russians as potential buyers.

Because major resorts had been heavily developed, as seen for example on Figure 9 where the spatial fix merged the spaces of separate holiday complexes into Aheloy-Ravda-Nessebar-Sunny Beach-Sveti Vlas-Elenite big urban agglomeration, they became unattractive. Moreover, the public discourse of urban development at the Bulgarian seaside abounds with rhetorics of failed and incoherent urban planning as well as low quality constructions. Because of the major resorts' negative evaluations, the value of less developed places, such as Byala and most specifically the unspoiled wild beach Karadere, skyrockets. Karadere beach emerged as the perfect location to realize the liminal utopian dream of the elite holidaymakers, investors and statesmen. One of the reasons why Karadere is a valuable place for investment is the commodification of luxury holiday experience. The urban luxury imaginaries spilling from Madara Europe's and Maxi I's investment plans are very suggestive for the aforementioned commodification of luxury holiday experience. Additionally, the proponents of urbanization—generally the local administration, private investors and some residents of Byala—envisioned the high-end

holiday products in Karadere as a way to boost the economy of the municipality of Byala. They also capitalized on the devastated major seaside resorts as a result of troubled regime change to legitimize the coming of Madara Europe and Maxi I's projects to the municipality and imagine that the "luxury" urbanization as a better alternative for economic growth. However, Black Sea Gardens Eco Resort and Luxury Campsite would not be located in an established human settlement, for example, the town of Byala or ghost village of Samotino, but the pristine beach Karadere.

Karadere is not merely a physical space perceived by the visitors who can describe its ambience with a reference to the swash and backwash of the waves, lush vegetation, chirping of the birds, warm sun and soft sand (Firstspace). Karadere is also a conceived space (Secondspace). The spatial fix differentiated the space in order to control the means of its production. It appropriated the nature environment and transferred it to the drawing board. Through spatial modeling and exact mathematical measurement, Karadere was ordered. The Detailed Development Plan (DDP) of Byala divided the space of Karadere into urban units. Based on the municipality's plan, Madara Europe and Max I could hire architects to assert their own vision of the space. When space is divided into separate units and marketable parcels, it is commodified and abstractly homogenized. Furthermore, the commodification of foreign architect's prestige, such as Sir Norman Foster's, was utilized as a persuasion technique to push Madara Europe's project forward. The commodification of the prestige of foreign architectures was also present in the cases of Irakli and Coral Camping. Remember that the prestige of Bulgarian urban professionals decreased resulting in their participation in projects as a mere formality of putting down a signature. On the one hand, the participation of Georgi Stanishev, brother of PES leader Sergey Stanishev, could be interpreted as a mere formality requirement. On the other hand, it could be interpreted as the need of the spatial fix to look for local allies to push its logic forward. Furthermore, foregrounding "eco" in both investment projects aims to convey some legitimacy and gain approval by the general public. However, this is an empty signifier, "meaning everything and nothing" (Gunder, 2009, p.1). This buzzword is some standard of aspiration and hope, which is beyond human experience and therefore an illusion. This illusion is introduced hegemonically by business and planning elite to convey some sense of completeness and identity of the urban projects

The spatial fix seeks corrupt geographies because they are easy to colonize. Parallel to providing close relationships between political and economic elite, this might also involve promises of immediate material gain to the local administration by the investors. The latter is highly debatable since only few interviewees pointed out to such practices, which were never explicitly proven by a document. Furthermore, the readiness of the local property owners to sell is a crucial factor. Although some were reported to have indeed needed money to cover the expenses for urgent matters (e.g., the surgery of a relative), others were tempted to sell either because they did not envision alternative use of their property or because they wanted to buy new commodities. Noteworthy, with the liberalization of the market and privatization of state property in Bulgaria following the collapse of the socialism,

individuals alike in post-socialist courtiers engaged in conspicuous consumption. People were anxious to acquire new prestige and identity through consumption as previously discussed. One respondent shared that in the 1990s a family in Byala bought a new car and commodities for their house as well as invested the rest of the money in Ponzi-like scheme and consequently lost it all.

Additionally, the spatial fix seeks legal mechanisms to bind statesmen and investors, so that new geographies of accumulation could arise. The signed memorandum for a priority investment between Oresharski's government and the offshore company Madara Europe is an example of the conditionality that is required for the work of the spatial fix. Another legal mechanism is the commodification of a nominee director. Companies like Madara Europe seek jurisdictions where they can conceal their identity and capital legally. This example highlights the importance of space for the private investors. Overseas havens like Malta, the British Virgin Islands, Belize, Seychelles, Isle of Man, Guernsey and so forth evoke the imaginary of pirates burring treasure and the association of pirate beaches with shadow economy. The investors in Karadere, Irakli and Coral campsite use similar oversea jurisdictions to conceal the money flow and their company's identity. Furthermore, the Detailed Development Plan, which regulated the plots in Karadere, is another crucial condition. On the bases of this amendment to the Master Plan of the municipality, investors keep sending their investment urban projects. Importantly, however, this DDP turned to be unlawfully implemented, namely without Environmental Impact Assessment. Nevertheless, it is still the active Master Plan of the municipality allowing urbanization.

Urbanization, as the immediate visible result of restructuring processes, is the best example of the work of the spatial fix. It is one way to absorb the money and labor surpluses. Unlike Maxi I, Madara Europe did not provide publicly an evidence of having enough money capital to invest in its project that was estimated BGN 100 M. It is questionable what money would the offshore company invest. According to the Trade Register, Maxi I possessed enough capital, arguably due to the company's tourist business in Sofia and Velingrad targeting high-end holidaymakers. However, interviewees were concerned with the "dirty" money that was circulating on the coast since the 1990s and they feared that the investment projects were another scheme for money laundering. Additionally, Byala's unemployment rate was reported to be higher than the national average. Although the investors argued to provide employment, they did not legally guarantee that the locals, majority of whom in pre-retirement age, would be hired. Environmentalists argued that if any local were hired, he or she would have a temporary job during the holiday season only.

In addition to the discussion on the collusion of local elites with private sector as some indication that the spatial fix was underway, urban projects in Karadere were argued to concentrate the global economic flows outside the town. Consequently, Madara Europe and Maxi I would benefit from their urban projects at the expense of the town of Byala, regardless of the received taxes in the local treasury from their resorts. The interviewees and the brochure published by the social movement argued that the local economy would suffer because the resorts were conceived as all-inclusive. The all-inclusive resorts entail provision

of services within the boundaries of the resort. Therefore, the holidaymakers would not spend their money in the town of Byala. Consequently, the local hotel business and private lodgings' owners would experience hardship as discussed in chapter 7.4 because Karadere's urbanization would marginalize, to put it in Young's term, and drive the regular visitors of the beach away. In fact, these visitors were argued to contribute to the local economy.

Furthermore, the emerging spatial rearrangements contribute to the production of injustice. Due to the private investors', political leaders' and rich tourists' spatial imaginaries, the development projects would be located on the seafront of a wild beach 5 kilometers away from the nearest human settlement. Major investment would be concentrated in Karadere at the expense of the town of Byala, which also counts on the influx of domestic and foreign capital. This enclosed regionalization is a result of an orthodox business model inherited in the spatial fix and it can be understood through the interrelated dimensions of spatial justice as outlined by Design Studio for Social Intervention in chapter 3 and Young's faces of oppression as mentioned in chapter 2.

Firstly, the investors make spatial claims. Having the right to private property, they can grab as much land as possible. The result would be an established duopoly of Madara Europe and Maxi I in Karadere disregarding the unique culture and history socially created by diverse dwellers as discussed in chapter 7. The new spatial formation on the gully of Karadere, as revealed from the investment plans, would be monocultural—high-end clientele enjoying typical spectacles of large-scale resorts. The spatial fix is very skillful in producing monocultures. For that reason, the tranquil space of elite urban escapes is appropriated within the touristic gaze. From the interviews and observations, it became clear that resorts on Bulgaria's coast look and feel the same. This idea is captured by the notion of homogenization of space. Due to the penetration of global capital flows, resorts have been transformed to attract consumer culture. Consumer culture and commodities are made visible and re-asserted on the Black Sea coast in Bulgaria. Common labels, such as spa, palace, gardens, royal, plaza, residence, oasis and so forth are attached to the names of hotel complexes and venues in resorts to communicate unrealistic prestige and sense of completeness. Authentic social life in resorts has been replaced by its representations. It is the spatial fix's job to create, pack and ship desires and representations. The spatial imaginaries of the elite tourists are therefore associated with Young's cultural imperialism which attempts to exert superiority of the homogenizing consumer culture over the free camping and alternative spaces of representation as discussed in chapter 6. Families with children, hippies, nature lovers and sportsmen give additional meaning to Karadere. For them Karadere is not merely a consumer good. By practicing free camping, they resist dominant market logics omnipresent in the country, both during socialism and currently in neoliberal Bulgaria. Free camping does not necessarily mean it is cheaper than a holiday in a resort, because campers still buy food and spend money in the town of Byala. However, free camping and the other alternative spatial imaginaries, such as nudism, extreme water sports, spirituality and so forth, encompass a lifestyle a community fights to preserve.



Secondly, the companies exert spatial power in relation to their homo oeconomicus' egocentrism to accumulate capital that is embedded in a static centralized management system. This static hierarchical structure representing large-scale projects directs and orders employment. The interaction between the learned helplessness of the locals, in the sense they are passive receivers of jobs and thus powerless to put it in Young's term as well as the readiness of government on multiple levels to accommodate "fresh" investments from large-scale projects results in effective deception that reinforces new spatial formations. Following Young's discussion on justice, it can be argued that the economic burden of the locals is used as a tool to exploit them and give them false hopes.

Thirdly, it is uncertain where the entrance to the beach would be once it is fenced by the investors, although the beach is a common public good. If the beach were managed by a private concession, paid sun beds and parasol would colonize Karadere like other resorts at the Bulgarian seaside. The above mentioned concerns relate to the notion of spatial link and indicate how the private investors would insert obstacles in space.

Fourthly, the two companies would have an exclusive control over scarce nature resource in order to exploit it. Consequently, the nature of Karadere would be commodified, namely it would be assigned a market value. The right to nature would therefore belong to the private sector and their customers. The commodification of nature denies access and possibilities to obtain other cultural services provided by Karadere's ecosystem services, such as spiritual enrichment and aesthetic experiences that were discussed in chapter 6. This concern relates to another dimension of spatial justice – ecology of space, which encompasses the aforementioned right to natural and social ecology.

Additionally, the political and economic decisions about the ordering of space and human relations in respect to issues of resource (re)distribution are made predominantly by the political and economic elite. In his discussion about spatial justice, Soja elaborated on the communities that had to bear the costs also in respect to their exclusion from the decision-making process. Thereby, the notion of space involves challenging the power of agents on top of the decision making process. In response to the spatial fix, which colonizes everyday life and spatial practice, the spatial justice seeks a more democratic control over the production and uses of surpluses that are concentrated in space. Therefore, spatial justice in Karadere is not merely a right to consume and exploit space, but a right to produce space as a site for heterogeneous encounters. Therefore, it is the right to become a collective user of the liminal beach space of Karadere rather than a high-end consumer of homogenized space.

The competition and need for a "new" and "luxury" consumer service in the municipality of Byala was articulated in Karadere's urbanization discourse. These ideas were introduced forcefully by the logic of the spatial fix that is violently searching for new markets of accumulation.

The hegemonically imposed aesthetic by the spatial fix and its operational logic was contested by concerned coalition of eco organizations and the citizen's initiative "Let's save Karadere". They occupy the Thirdspace, the space of lived grassroots experiences, to voice

discontent with oppressive forces of the spatial fix and centralized power. None is formally affiliated to the network of collective solidarity, but any person concerned with the preservation of Karadere has direct and indirect influence over the resistance and its cause. In any given time and space, those capable to carry out and organize certain tasks that best suit their competences subsume leadership. The concept of space is very crucial for deciphering the strategies the social movement uses in its attempt to preserve the gully of Karadere.

The space, which is created through liminal beach experiences of nudism, water sports, spontaneous and creative encounters as well as occupation of urban spaces and online venues, is meant to open alternatives according to the logic of Thirdspace that distorts the totalizing and homogeneous high-end tourist products. The difference in space and difference of space, which emerge from expert interviews, field observations, news reports and protest materials, are factors for sociopolitical struggles in Karadere, but also in other territories of Bulgaria's coast, such as Irakli, Coral campsite and Sveteritsa. The spatial fix induces intentionally difference in time and space, not only through dividing space into separate units, but also through us-versus-them discourse in relation to pro and against urbanization activists, in order to control the means of production and society. This principle of sociospatial structuration is referred to as bordering. Bordering is a continuous and purposeful process of making or eliminating differences (i.e., homogenization) in time and space among the movement of money, commodities, or people (van Houtom & van Naerssen, 2002). Conversely, the difference the space make for the social movement as evident from the empirical findings does not entail segregation, but rather multiplicity and opportunity for marginalized groups to actively coproduce imagined alternatives. This is the logic of Thirdspace that points towards creativity, multiplicity, emotions, festivity and Young's right to be different.

Space is part of the social dynamics of "Let's Save Karadere" that is influenced by and also shape. In line with Leitner and colleagues' (2008) discussion on the spatiality of resistance movement, "Let's save Karadere" is also positioned simultaneously in multiple spaces. The movement occupied the liminal beach space of Karadere, urban public spaces, administrative buildings, the court, and even online venues and media. The different spaces were of greater or lesser importance at different times and in different places and they were associated with the mobilization, capacities, and resources found in the socio-political movement. The occupation of public spaces in major Bulgarian cities by "Let's save Karadere" supporters was a classical spatial strategy used globally by social movements. The interventions on the beach, namely the cleaning and constructing of the composting toilets and signs for example, challenged the negative attitudes about the users of Karadere formed predominantly by the residents of Byala. This spatial tactic demonstrated the responsibility of the beach dwellers who insisted that waste management did not require urbanization. Another positive spatial outcome is the formation of a diverse resistance coalition through liminal beach experiences, street protests and online social forums.

The sociopolitical movement, which contests the forthcoming relentless urbanization of Karadere, uses space to strategically further their goals and call on partners. Members of the movement warned about irreversible loss of biodiversity. They supported their arguments with reference to the European legislations about nature conservation. The reference to Natura 2000, which has strict spatial dimensions, was used to legitimize the concerns and persuade not only key policy makers on multiple levels, but also the public to pay attention to the problem. Natura 2000 provided the exact location of the impact of the Madara Europe' and Maxi I's investment projects. The social movement used spatial strategies when they draw on the resources of the state or make claims to the state. They used legal mechanisms to intervene and participate in decision-making. For example, the collection of 5800 happened in several municipalities in Bulgaria. This legal mechanism had a spatial dimension and aimed to reach out the Council of Ministers in Sofia. Additionally, the success story of preventing the urbanization of Sveteritsa, the area 3-km close to Karadere beach, was not only a good inspiration, but also an excellent showcase of how government institutions and private companies interacted on multiple scales as well as how to intervene the unjust outcomes of this interaction.

Space, however, embodies some weaknesses of the social movement. Space requires physical presence and occupation outside online forums and discussions. Interviewees shared that this was tiresome and time-consuming. Not always would people be able to be physically present at meetings and debates that take place especially in the regional centers during business hours. Interviewees stressed that the local administration was very skillful in making themselves visible during such debates at the local level while members of the social movement were seriously outnumbered. When members of the social movement were well represented during public debates, consider the case of Sveteritsa, they could effectively influence sociospatial developments. Therefore, interviewees highlighted the need of solid majority representatives. This was an important objective the social movement tried to achieve.

The case study Karadere speaks to the tension between urban and nature. As presented in this research, Karadere's urbanization was contested from diverse perspectives. The state on multiple levels and private investors highlighted that the urban projects would consist of low-rise constructions and with low carbon emissions. However, the troubled Bulgarian transition that lead to devastation of seaside resorts evoked emotions of fear and disgust in the social movement. Given the urban sprawl along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, and specifically in Byala, the social movement despised the urbanization process, which they considered anti-rural and anti-nature. They capitalized on the fact that Karadere was one of the last remaining unspoiled beaches and their urban imaginary – escaping the city to go to pristine nature – was every suggestive for that. Although urbanization can be truly liberating by granting the dwellers the right to the city as argued by Lefebvre and Jacobs, the forthcoming urbanization of Karadere does not grant the right to the beach to its current dwells who do not belong to the luxury branded place.

The above discussion suggests that space is also open to emotions. Parallel to the emotions of fear and disgust in response to the forthcoming urbanization, love and happiness were associated with liminal experiences in Karadere. Karadere has deep meaning, significance and symbolism for the current users of the place. The beach constitutes a component of one's personal identity through which the beach dwellers described themselves in terms of belonging to this place. The physical characteristics, the activities and semiotics discussed in chapter 6 constitute a delicate place identity. Consequently, the interaction between people and the fundamental characteristics of the environment had a profound effect on how place identity was perceived and understood. Couples in love, art, and the search for a connection with previous generations make the character of the place alive. Furthermore, people had emotional, social and symbolic bond with the place. One interviewee's declaration - "We live here!" - was highly suggestive for a strong place attachment. Individual and collective memories associated with the place as well as sensations and perceptions created a vibrant place attachment with Karadere. Beach dwellers and social movement members expressed *topophilia*, to put it in Tuan's (1947) term, when they referred to their love in and of Karadere.

Attracted by the liminality of the Thirdspace, nature lovers before and after the fall of the socialist regime in Bulgaria retrieve from the logic of the spatial fix, namely from ideologies of communism and neoliberalism. Motivated by the concept of liminality, Giustino and colleagues' (2013) socialist escapes and Soja's spatial metaphor of Thirdspace from where all other socially constructed spaces are visible, I therefore propose a twist in spatial theory – the notion of Thirdspace escapes. This notion captures the embodied personal experiences of temporary leaving the comfort of home and monotonous of work to move away from ideology (although temporary because individuals are always trapped in ideology) in order to rejuvenate, form coalitions and imagine different possibilities. Thirdspace as a beach borderland of liminal experiences allows multiplicity, namely the right to be different. Karadere accommodates people from varied age, occupation, nationality, and with different worldviews. It also aspires a merge of culture-nature, time-space, past-present. Additionally, the liminality of the Thirdspace through practicing of daily rituals (bathing naked, sitting around the campfire, creating art, practicing sport) is characterized by dissolving of social status. Furthermore, the materiality of the beach is effectively appropriated as creative iconography communicating social norms and change of attitudes (shift from the identity of the derogatory naked drug-addict hippies who litter).

Spatial imaginaries shaping and shaped by the beach, the forest, the cultivated fields are creative resistance tool. The resistance movement does not only count on legal means to counter the urbanization, but also on the manipulation of rich symbolism embedded in the beach through the liminal experiences. It is often assumed that resistance form in public spaces in the city center. However, the cases of Karadere, Irakli and Coral Camping showed that the general occupy movement could not only occur in the urban centers, online or in media, but also betwixt-and-between – on the beach.

Alongside the usage of the spatial metaphors, the notion of liminality can be implemented as a technique to scrutinize the strategies of the resistance movement. Firstly, the diverse agents used the statutory periods to object decisions of institutions. Secondly, the change between the two governments – the transition from the Plamen Oresharski's government following yearlong national protests and the newly elected government of Boiko Borisov – was used as the uncertain period to set a national petition in favor of preserving Karadere. Thirdly, the change of the summer with autumn is the period of the annual cleaning of the beach.

Moreover, the notion of liminality allows reflection on the socio-political shifts in Bulgaria too. The notion captures the transition from socialism to neoliberalism in Bulgaria marked by the fall of the Berlin wall and consequently the dissolving of socialist regimes in Europe 25 years ago. Bulgaria has long been stuck in the transition period in which the cleavage between rich and poor enlarged, corruption and oligarchs continue to exert their power. However, as Foucault stated, power is not something static that certain elite possesses, rather it can be contested. The national protests against the government of Plamen Oresharski (2013-2014), triggered immediately after the appointment of the media mogul with shady past Delyan Peevski (the MP who wrote the Offshore Companies Act) as the head of the state security agency, epitomized that the corrupt structures in Bulgaria can be challenged through collective efforts. The energy of the national protest network spilled over and from "Let's save Karadere". The engagement of active citizens in both social movements, but also in other pro-environmental campaigns, informed critical consciousness in Bulgaria. Not only is Karadere a beautiful place unspoiled by development, but also a symbol and therefore a crucial place for the aforementioned troubled Bulgarian transition – something like Waterloo, Borodino, Normandy or Kosovo Field. It may be the last battlefield between the oligarchs and civic society, between the parvenu and nature lovers.

Is Bulgaria witnessing a sustained shift in consciousness and politics or is this characterized as separately emerging momentums? Does the contentious politics in Bulgaria mark the end of the transition period in Bulgaria, a state torn by its socialist past and current EU membership? Although these are lines of further research, the social movement attempting to save Karadere speaks to broader aspirations of justice embedded in the interaction between historicity, sociality and spatiality.

The current work has some limitations, which are worth considering for future research. Due to the time frame, the investigation is based on limited numbers of original documents (especially the showcases of Coral, Irakli and Sunny Beach) although cross reference was used to assure the truth of information. The findings were informed predominantly by the single case Karadere that was partly complemented by the cases of Irakli, Coral and Sunny Beach. To unravel the general restructuring processes and the spatial (in)justice practices, systematic research needs to encompass the whole Black Sea region. Because the concept of space was taken seriously, several implications of the state-of-the-art spatial theory can be drawn: (i) to dissolve binaries, (ii) to see power in action, (iii) to provide practical spinoffs, (iv) to encompass interdisciplinary perspective, (v) to

contextualize on multiple scales. This research may motivate others to investigate contentions politics and spatial reconfigurations with the proposed theoretical framework. Furthermore, a systematic investigation of land consolidation on the Bulgarian coast through the lenses of critical spatial theory might be a fruitful field of revealing patterns of spatial (in)justices.



## 9 Conclusion

The gully of Karadere, in northeast Bulgaria, is one of the few remaining unspoiled by development areas along Bulgaria's coast. Karadere beach and its hinterland are simultaneously an unexploited terrain for investment and a terrain of resistance. Two companies—the offshore Madara Europe and Bulgarian-based Maxi I—proposed large-scale urban project on Karadere area. Bottom-up coalition of eco organizations and the citizens' initiative "Let's save Karadere" voiced concerns about environmental, economic, social, and legal aspects of the urban projects.

Based on systematic examination of urban developments on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and specifically two urban projects in Karadere as well as spatial justice practice aiming to preserve the nature of the wild beach, several conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, Karadere's topography and location as well as its previous status of restricted zone and the lack of infrastructure had preserved it from development. However, the approved without an ecological evaluation Detailed Development Plan Byala-North by the municipal council in 2005 provided private investors with a legitimate reason to file their development plans. Noteworthy, private investors themselves had suggested the amendments of the Master Plan of the municipality of Byala north to the town. Secondly, two investors—the offshore company Madara Europe and the Bulgarian Maxi I—envisaged large-scale development, consisting of hotels, bungalows, public service building and various amenities in Karadere. Although their projects for a holiday village and campsite respectively were dubbed "eco" based on innovative architecture by the prestige of well-known architects and low-rise construction (up to 10 m), they impose a threat to the wild life and their habitats. Although the investors promise employment, it is not guaranteed for the locals or if provided it will be temporal. Although the municipality will collect taxes from the projects, the development will put pressure to the local economy more than it will boost it. Furthermore, the case of Karadere intensifies the political scene in Bulgaria. On the one hand, the certification of Madara Europe's project as a priority investment by the state despite the reported project flaws and previous stance of the government. Additionally, the administrative procedures and acts, in several cases clashing with one another, slow down the decisive positions of governing bodies on multiple levels as well as impair transparency of investments in the country. Moreover, investors managed to cover various legal requirements with or without the help of individuals in the government or jurisdictions oversea. Despite the spatial fix, namely, the mass tourism development has not yet managed to cross the betwixt-and-between space and land in Karadere, it forcefully mobilizes resources. The spatial fix is embedded in socialist escapes (communists' utopian resort dream), consolidation of land (investment funds and private landowners), power relations, offshore companies, and architects' prestige, priority investment certificate, amendments to the Master Plan of the municipality of Byala, Russian-speakers holiday home buyers.

Disproving how politics and investments are carried out in Bulgaria, citizens mobilized in a progressive network of solidarity to demand their right to the beach. Discontented with

the relentless urbanization on Bulgaria's coast, they struggle to save one of the last remaining pristine sites along the Black Sea. Although the active citizens did not state firmly they fought for spatial justice, they mobilized spatial justice discourse exuberantly. The resistant movement tactics varied from onsite interventions, sustained media presence, objecting decisions of governance institutions, participation in public discussions, to national petitions. The coalition of NGOs and citizen's initiative "Let's save Karadere" is not an isolated case of resistance movement on the coast and in Bulgaria. It shares the aspiration of other struggles in Bulgaria as well as some general characteristics, such as horizontal organization without formal leaders and establishment. The collective agents need to address many challenges and combat stereotypes.

Through liminal experiences on the beach, they imagined new creative tactics and envisaged alternative to the mass tourism development future of Karadere. Pirate flags, engraved trunks, painted tents, message boards, constructed toilets and various art forms were part of an important iconography that communicated social norms, membership and change of attitude. Every member of the civic movement had their own vision of the beach. The ideas ranged from paid campsite to completely unpopulated beach, but overall interviewees shared that they wanted the beach to remain unspoiled. My dealings with members of the citizens' initiative and visitors of the beach showed that they envisioned an alternative future for Karadere, namely no large-scale constructions, a less crowded and clean beach, development of local and sustainable small-scale business, a management plan of the area as a protected zone, or/ and civil concession.

This qualitative research project investigated the spatiality of the wild beach Karadere on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. Using critical spatial theory, I scrutinized not only the physical environment of the beach, but also the socially produced space of the beach to reflect systematically on the forthcoming urbanization and responses to it. I focused on urban developments on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, multiple spatial dimensions of societal processes, and challenges of spatial justice in order to engage critically with the struggle to save the wild beach Karadere from development. Foregrounding space was an important research strategy allowing me to open a new perspective beyond environmental or social justice. Spatial metaphors, such as, Firstspace (perceived space), Secondspace (conceived space), Thirdspace (lived space), *spatial justice*, *spatial fix*, were important analytical tools. The anthropological concept of *liminality* complemented the analyses as a means to understand the real and imagined Thirdspace—an incubator for radical imaginaries and coalition building contesting predominant discourses.

Throughout the inquiry I attempted, to put it in Marcuse's (2009) terms, to expose the roots of the problem, propose alternatives based on engagement with those affected and clarify the political acts of what was exposed and proposed in respect to the urbanization of Karadere in order to come closer to spatial justice. Neither am I and this research in particular fully keen and convinced of capitalist reductionism, nor am I excited about socialism. Rather, I try to move beyond dualism as the critical spatial theory suggests in order to seek actively interventions in society.

In conclusion, the up-and-coming urbanization would soon ravage the culture and nature of Karadere. Therefore, it is now more than ever the time to fuel a debate, explore possibilities and act critically. The scarce beautiful places like Karadere are common resource, bound by common responsibility. Thus, they should not be subordinate strictly to the private domain. This research demonstrated that the struggle for space, the defense for place, the fight for justice, and possibilities for a dialogue are already in progress in Bulgaria. Based on the analysis of this academic work, several recommendations can be offered.

### **1. Transparency and civic engagement**

The Bulgarian government at all levels and European institutions should be alarmed and take serious actions for more transparency in investments (especially those concealed overseas) on the high-priority Black Sea region as well as facilitate direct participation of civil society in decision-making and work towards reforms in the Bulgarian judicial system. Citizens not only from the municipality of Byala should be involved in discussions and decision-making, but also individuals from Bulgaria and experts from abroad, because Karadere is a problem of national and EU importance.

### **2. Regulatory urban planning and management of Natura 2000**

The problem with Karadere beach calls on a strategic urban agenda and regulatory planning as well as management plans of sites under Natura 2000 in Bulgaria to ensure that future generations would enjoy a harmonized urban life and natural wildlife. This means that investments should be put on hold to gather detailed data exposing the land ownership, land swaps, wild life diversity, and alternative visions for the area.

### **3. Spatial justice as a political objective**

To sharply address their concerns, which are not exclusively environmental, the coalition of NGOs and citizens should adopt spatial justice as their political and strategic objective. Spatial justice can serve as mobilizing discourse and critique to oppressive forces. Additionally, active civic participation would continuously be needed. This means that when there are statutory periods, people should be physical presence during public discussions and demonstrations in addition to collecting important position letters. The case studies demonstrated that through collective action more spatial justice results can be achieved.

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## Appendix

### Brief chronology of Karadere's problem

#### 1997

Territorial Development Plan (TDP) of the municipality of Byala was approved. TDP did not provide construction work north of the town.

#### 2004

Contrary to this plan and without conducting the mandatory procedure for evaluation of the necessity of ecological assessment, municipal experts in spatial planning allowed the drafting of Detailed Development Plan (DDP) - regulation plan (RP) for villa resorts and leisure "Byala-North".

#### 2005

The municipal council of Byala approved DDP "Byala-North", which provided urbanization of the coast north of Byala in conflict with two laws – Biodiversity Act and Spatial Planning Act.

#### 2007

Following a signal from the Association of Parks in Bulgaria, the Director of RIEW Burgas conducted an investigation, concluded the illegal actions of the municipal council, and referred the case to the prosecution in Varna. Parallel, the municipal council approved changes to the active TDP from 1997.

#### 2007

Norman Foster and his Bulgarian partner Georgi Stanishev presented a large-scale resort project with exclusive design - Black Sea Gardens - in Sofia. Some of the investors of the project – the owners of Titan company were argued to back the socialist party during those same years.

#### 2008

Madara Byala Nord gained 174.7 acres of land in the municipality of Byala following a scandalous land swap with the state. In 2011, EC put up a trial against Bulgaria due to the land swap with forest falling in Natura 2000 that had been carried out during the government of Sergey Stanishev (brother of Foster's Bulgarian partner).

#### 2008-2013

The project was temporary stopped because of the global recession and uncertain financing. It received rejection to be certified as a Priority Investment Project.

#### 2009

The municipal council of Byala submitted to MOEW a request for a procedure for evaluation of the necessity of ecological assessment of changes in the Common Development Plan. Three months later MOEW terminated the procedure due to conflicts with Spatial Planning Act, Environmental Protection Act, Black Sea Coast Act, and Biodiversity Act.

#### 2013

The offshore company Madara Europe (re) started the Black Sea Gardens project. One of its shareholders was reported a former agent of the state security during communism.

**July 11th, 2013**

Sergey Stanishev submitted to the Parliament a draft decision for park "Bulgarian Black Sea Coast", which provided some moratorium over construction works, excluding priority projects of local and national importance. The moratorium spanned the areas of Karadere, Irakli, Krapetz, Dyuni and de facto legalized non-returned land replacements and other constructions in the Bulgarian national ecological network, also eliminating the eventual competition.

**July 12th, 2013**

As a coincidence, a project for amendments in the Law on Foreigners in Bulgaria and the Law on Bulgarian Citizenship was submitted to the Parliament. It provided that foreigners who had invested at least half million EUR in Bulgaria to obtain Bulgarian (European) citizenship, together with their families. This project was been submitted by Coalition for Bulgaria (aka. BSP).

**March 2014**

Madara Europe's project received Class A and consequently Karadere's urbanization became a "priority" for the government. The certificate provided fast-track administrative procedures and partial financial help by the state, including complete infrastructure construction provided by the state. Investigative journalist of different media proved that the company had concealed ownership and capital. Protests occurred in several Bulgarian cities, and the decision to grant "Class A" was attacked with civil complaints.

**September 2014**

In accordance with the Direct Citizen Participation in Government Act, citizens submitted a petition with 5800 signature to the Council of Ministers in support of Karadere in its unspoiled state.

**October 2014**

Another investor – the company Maxi I – received scandalous permission from RIEW Burgas to construct a camping for 1860 people with bungalows, villas, restaurants, pools, bars, streets and numerous parking lots without the need of Environment Impact Assessment. The decision was based on the illegal DDP. Following complaints from eco organizations and citizens, the regional eco inspector changed his decision. New MP elections in Bulgaria following yearlong national protests.

**January 2015**

The Administrative Court of Burgas rejected Maxi I's objection of the regional eco inspector's final decision about the need of EIA.

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## Curriculum Vitae



**Selfie on Karadere beach**

I am action-oriented human geographer and social psychologist with a broad knowledge of social sciences and specific training in the interplay between human relations and the environments they unfold. My area of expertise includes generally spatial development, cultural diversity, bottom-up initiatives, socio-political processes, decision making, cognitive emotion regulation and communications among many others. I

was born in Bulgaria in 1988 and moved to the Netherlands in 2008 to enrich my competences. I obtained BA in Liberal Arts and Sciences from University College Roosevelt in 2011 and MSc in Behavioural Science from Radboud University in 2013. In March 2015 I completed Master's in Human Geography with a specialization in Urban and Cultural Geography at Radboud University. As a result of the aforementioned highly selective academic programs, I became a quick and effective learner as well as a skilled quantitative and qualitative researcher. Throughout my education, jobs and autonomous lifestyle abroad I learned to navigate challenges and adapt to unforeseen circumstances in an interdisciplinary and international environment. Should you need a hand with any project or pressing issues, feel free to contact me directly at [damyanov.mt@gmail.com](mailto:damyantov.mt@gmail.com).



