THE UNSTABLE GROUND

(final thesis)

Eva Garibaldi
Rotterdam, 2021

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Chapter 1: Spaces Built and Unbuilt by Water: Amphibious Landscape as Productive Space of Rupture of the Stable Ground

INTRODUCTION

> As long as the earth seemed stable, we could speak of space and locate ourselves in that space and on a portion of teritory that we claimed to occupy. But how are we to act if the territory itself begins to participate in history, to fight back, in short, to concern itself with us - how do we occupy a land if it is this land itself that is occupying us? (Latour, 2018, pp. 41 - 42)

The surface of the planet has been idealized as a world of static landmasses. Water and land have been perceived as binaries separate from each other. Land, characterized as a stable mass allowing for human habitation, and water characterized by its constant movement. When we experience water and land as separate entities it is by design, articulating land as a surface for human habitation (Mathur, da Cunha). But what happens when we find ourselves in spaces where the established division is not so clear? Spaces built and unbuilt by water such as coasts, intermittent lakes, shifting river deltas, and swamps? What happens when boundaries become un-stable, messy, murky and they entangle between each other? Suddenly, the perceived stability becomes blurred.

The abstracted lines, however, do not traverse a smooth uniform plane, but one full of variation, dynamism, and fluidity. Terra is not only a flat solid dry land but also includes river deltas, mountain ranges, seas and oceans, coastlines, and swamps. Political geographer Stuart Elden (2018, pp. 55) notes that these are 'conditions where the relations between the geophysical form and geopolitical regimes are complicated and fluid'. Water as a fluid entity is the fundamental force displacing the stability of these landscapes. Water and land are in continuous relation, constantly blending between each other. Amphibious landscapes become a space through which the static framework can be de-constructed.

The complexities and possibilities of fluid spaces built and unbuilt by water in relation to the production of stability in the context of capitalist production will be explored through the amphibious landscape of Lake Cerknica, an intermittent karstic lake in south-western Slovenia, cyclically flooding the karstic field it lays on. These landscapes possess a sense that they are almost impossible to be completely stabilized. Because they are constantly built and unbuilt by water, they require a more layered and fragmented understanding of space that renders them in all their complexity.

How might the complexities of this landscape become a productive space of rupture of the manufactured imaginary of the stable ground, breaking the predetermined framework imposed onto territories?

Chapter 2: The Lake: 45°45'57.9"N 14°21'15.8"E

A local man is sitting in a boat on the dry bed of the lake watching the grazing cattle, an engineer from Ljubljana comes by with another local and asks:

> What's up? – Nothing, I'm watching…clouds…it's going to rain…I'm waiting for the water to come so I can row the boat home. – Does the water really come that fast? – Let him think about it. (Jence, personal communication, 18th March 2021)

Figure 1: Local in Self Made Traditional Dugout Canoe. When the water was high, he transported children across the lake so they could continue their way to school in Cerknica.

A, a
Amphibious (adjective)
living or able to live both on land and in water; belonging to both land and water, also amphibian capable of operating on both land and water (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2021, amphibious entry)

G, g
Greyzone (noun)
an area or situation in which it is difficult to judge what is right and what is wrong (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2021, gray area entry)

Amphibious landscapes are landscapes existing between the terrestrial and the aquatic realm. They are at times water, at times land, an ever-changing in-between. Even though these landscapes literally flow, they have been approached through a static framework. The fluid materiality within amphibious landscapes exposes the banality of the stable frame. They exemplify that the ground is not a stable entity; it never has been. It is a constant process of becoming, acting, and reacting to various forces.

They are inflection points between the extrema of water and land. Their indeterminacy is a positive condition. Cache institutes the inflection image as a juxtaposition to the stable frame, where objects are opened up to a totality of possibilities (quoted in Boyman, 1995, pp. vii). He categorizes a universe in which objects are not observed as stable but undergo variations, opening up new possibilities of seeing (Cache quoted in Boyman, 1995, pp. viii). The frame is therefore no longer understood as a predetermined framework imposed onto any territory. Instead, it is understood as mobile, constantly shifting to establish an equilibrium as a 'result from the play of tensions that run through the system as a whole' (Cache, 1995, pp. 108 - 109). The inflection allows to glimpse a radical temporality of the world; it is thus ungraspable and fleeting. By observing the ground through the point of inflection, the ground no longer appears immovable but begins to fluctuate (Cache quoted in Boyman, 1995, pp. x - xi).

By examining these landscapes, the movement quality of water must be acknowledged. By acknowledging the dynamism and flux of water, we also acknowledge the movement of land. This challenges the vision that landscapes are entities fixed in time. Gagné and Borg Rasmussen in Introduction - An Amphibious Anthropology (2016, pp. 139) establish that 'land as it is submerged in water, becomes movement and gets unsettled, whereas the temporal dimension of water crystalizes as its flow demarcates space.' This establishes that water as it encounters land evidently de-stabilizes it. The fluid characteristics of water become that of land.

Nevertheless, amphibious landscapes have been approached from a land-based perspective, understanding water and land as binaries separate from each other. To de-construct this, it is worth mentioning the concept of Tidalectics. Coined by Kamau Brathwaite, Tidalectics aims to shatter the separate binaries of water and land and understand them as forces in continuous relation (Brathwaite quoted in DeLoughrey, 2018, pp. 94). This provides an alternative model of engagement with amphibious landscapes to explore their shifting entanglement. Thus, it assumes the world as an unresolved cycle rather than a linear progression. Tidalectics enables us to think through the dissolving of the stable ground, producing a space of 'active and participatory engagement' to examine the entanglement of various forces (DeLoughrey, 2018, pp. 94). Amphibious landscapes, by that, then allow us to think hybridity, incompleteness, and fragmentation. This conceptual shift, in turn, directs our attention to material elements, environments, and their edges. These edges become, as Tsing (2015, pp. 28) argues, productive sites through which complex assemblages and collaborations begin to emerge.

The complexity of amphibious landscapes enables us to begin to de-stabilize the capitalist manufactured imaginary of the stable ground. They allow us to think anew, de-construct universal forms of knowledge, and think the relationships between all the agents within them. They possess a different volume and complexity; they have height and depth and, most notably, constantly change their form.

The ambiguity of amphibious landscapes exposes the friction between locality and universality, rendering them contested grounds. Water's fluid material qualities become a central starting point to this contested ground, expanding to broader sociopolitical contexts. This is explored by examining the history of stabilization attempts deployed at the amphibious landscape of Lake Cerknica. Because of its unstable waters, the lake has been through history approached and subjugated to the state through a different set of frameworks attempting to stabilize its nature.

Instability and constant flow are the most significant characteristics of Lake Cerknica. Pagan folk stories speak of white fairies from the neighboring mountain descending to the karstic field singing to warn locals of the coming storm that would flood the lake (Jence, personal communication, 18th March 2021). The images below show the lake's changing landscape during different seasons and the local population's engagement with it. The top left represents the saving of the fish, a traditional practice where fish are caught in the disappearing water basins; in the top right, the harvesting of reeds used for hay grass called »jezernina« on the dry bed of the lake is shown; in the bottom left we can see men hunting for deer on the flooded lake in a traditional dugout boat surrounded with tall reeds; while in the bottom right hunting deer in winter time on a full frozen lake is shown, the figure in the back wearing ice skates (von Steinberg, 1758). This shows that the local communities living with the lake adapted to its unstable water body, developing alternate forms of knowledge to thrive in such a landscape.

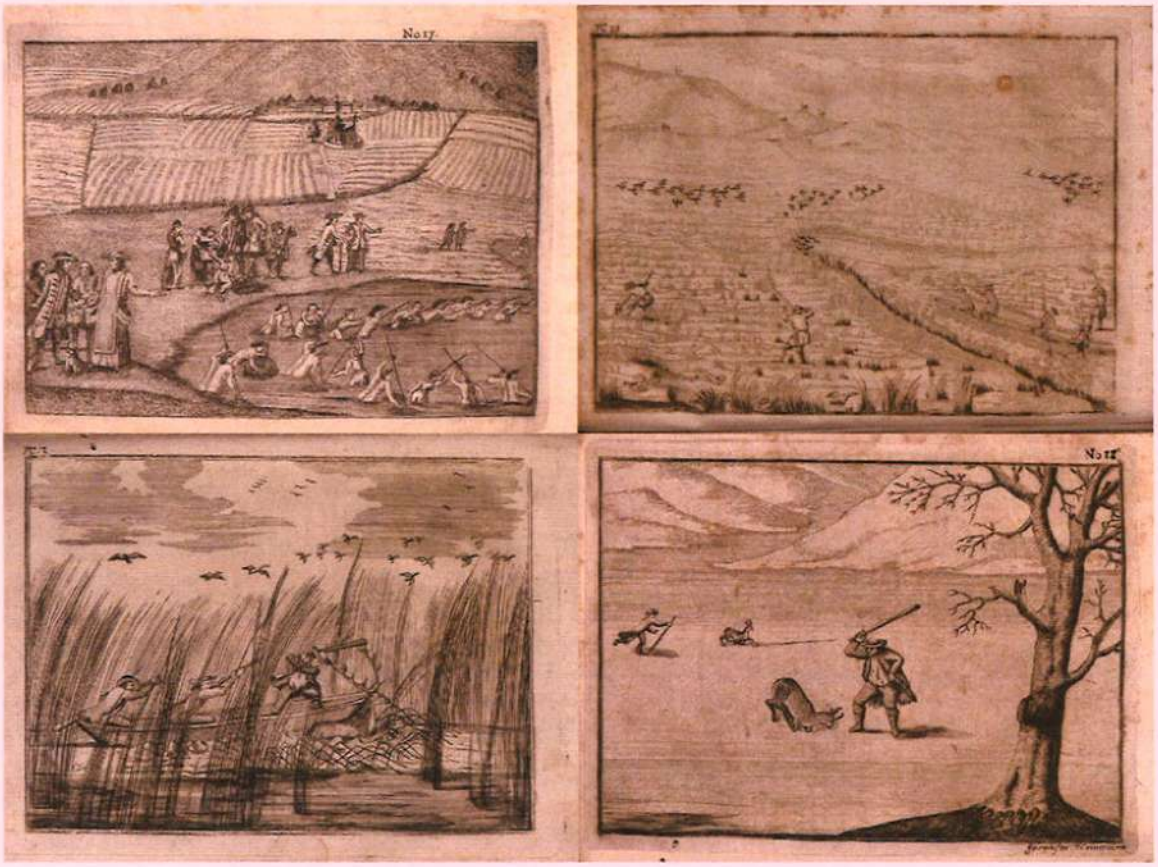

Figure 2: Anton von Steinberg chronicled the various forms of hunting, fishing and foraging in different seasons and lake conditions around the area.

The lake cyclically floods the karstic field[1] it lays on, depending on the rainfall in the region. Its largest surface area is 29 km2, and water is retained for an average of 8 - 10 months per year (Notranjski regijski park, 2008, pp. 104). Generally, the water comes to the surface in the autumn and spring months, when precipitation is high. In contrast, in the summer, with more dry spells, the water disappears back to the underground, the bed of the lake becoming covered in rich vegetation. The lake not only consists of the water visible above ground but is connected to a number of sub-terrain reservoirs, which further connect to surrounding regions. It belongs to the geological landscape of the Dinaric Karst[2] characterized by unique phenomena, establishing a complex hydrology and relationship to water. The karstic field is surrounded by high karst plateaus from which water flows downward, filling the lake. In 2006 the lake was recognized as an important ecosystem under the Ramsar Convention, emphasizing the conservation of wetlands (Notranjski regijski park, 2008, pp. 103).

Figure 3: Areal photo of Lake Cerknica. Even in satelite imagery the wetness of the landscape is visible.

1 A karst field is a large flat plain found in the world's karstic geological regions, with areas usually 5 to 400 km². It is a large, flat-floored depression within karst limestone, whose long axis develops in parallel with major structural trends. A karstic field typically shows complex hydrogeological characteristics such as exsurgences, estavelles, swallow holes, and lost rivers, ponors.

2 The Dinaric karst is geographically and geologically the carbonate part of the Dinaric Mountains on the Balkan Peninsula between the Adriatic Sea and the Pannonian Basin. The most characteristic relief forms are high karst plateaus and numerous karstic fields elongated in NW-SE direction, leveled surfaces, caves, sinking rivers, and abundant springs. The Dinaric karst is known as a limestone desert, a bare rocky landscape that results from climate conditions and mainly because of intense land use in past centuries.

The interval of flooding has been changing rapidly and becoming more and more unpredictable in recent years due to various interventions executed both by state bodies and locals through history. In the past, locals could predict with accuracy when and in which order the lake would begin to disappear (Kebe. 2011, pp. 77). Sources from the 18th century describe the lake disappearing at times only every seven years, while nowadays, the lake may disappear seven times in the same year (Kebe, 2011, pp. 45). The area is becoming dryer and dryer. Anecdotal stories describe water persisting in villages close to the lake for up to 2 months. Thus, sleeping quarters were traditionally raised above the ground level (Jence, personal communication, 18th March 2021).

The constant fluctuation of water affected soil fertility, making it hard to sustain a substantial crop. Considering this, many activities, such as smuggling, hunting, and fishing, developed aside from agriculture. The locals engaging with the landscape gained the embodied knowledge that enabled them to understand the instability and turn it to their benefit. The locals will always say about the lake: 'Leave it as it is' (Kebe, 2011, pp. 77). The embodied knowledge, however, was often ignored by the governing bodies desiring to stabilize the landscape. This led to frictions between local knowledge and universal institutional knowledge.

The varying approaches to stabilize the lake shifted the way water, particularly the space of convergence of water and land, was conceived. The ideals of a productive landscape influenced these strategies of control at various points in time. The common point of these being that the lake had to be stabilized and fit into a category to be aligned with progress. It had to be stable rather than ambiguous.

First, an agricultural paradigm was introduced, producing value by constructing as much arable land as possible to increase crop yields. Following that, with the rise of the modern state, a tourist paradigm emerged, desiring to produce value by constructing an imaginary of sublime nature where one could experience leisure. This landscape's complexities and resistance to forms of stabilization expose the need to render spaces built and unbuilt by water in all their complexity.

Chapter 3: episode I: Land Reclamation

> What does natural beauty help people if they suffer next to it? Only if the lake were dried up, or at least its drainage accelerated, how many fields and meadows could there be, where now only barren grass or worthless whip grow!
> (Likar 1862 in Kebe 2011, pp. 38)

The first attempts to stabilize Lake Cerknica's amphibious nature emerged in the 19th century when the lake was fit into the plantation model to produce uniform value through agriculture by the Habsburg Monarchy. This model led to the division of the earth into precise units to maximize profits. The plantation model was used to stabilize universal ideas of progress, understanding the environment as a stable entity to be exploited. This division enabled strategizing bodies to control landscapes and the bodies residing within them. Following initial cadastral surveys, the area of Lake Cerknica was categorized as a wetland[3]; therefore, it had to be constructed into a productive landscape. Wetlands have been in the context of the plantation model treated as margins, as they were harder to stabilize and produce profit because of their complexity. The interventions, therefore, focused on land reclamation to increase arable land.

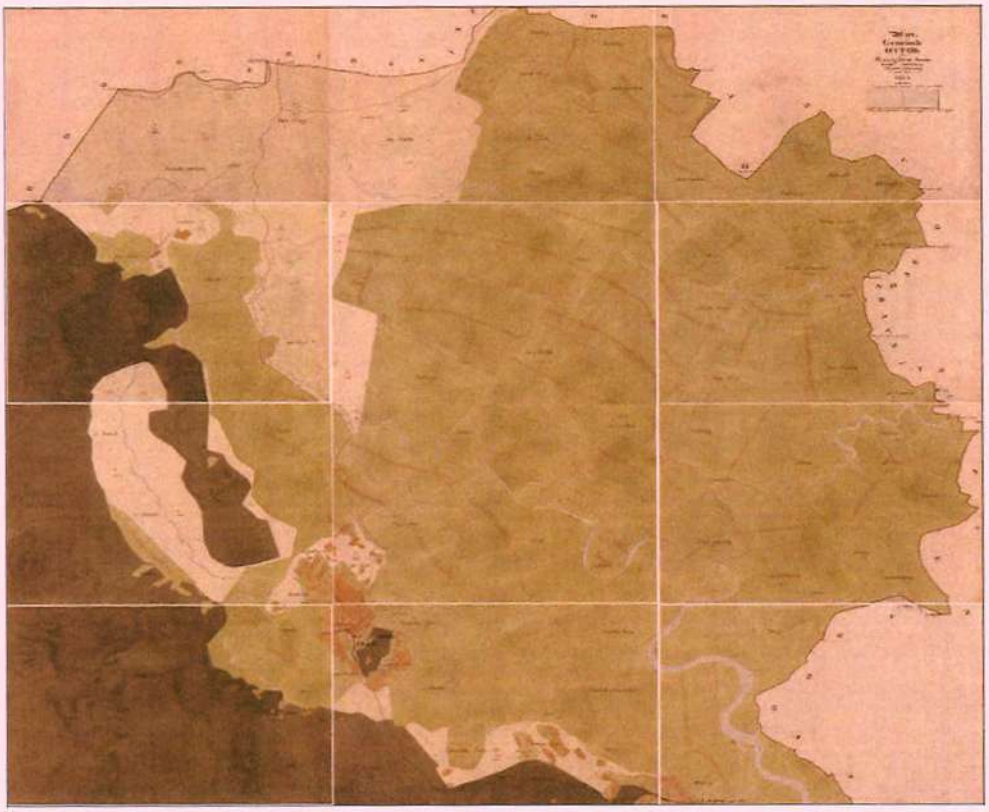

Figure 4: Cadaster Map of village Otok (translates to Island), 1817 - 1827. Before an embankment was constructed to connect the village to non-flood zones, it would become an island as the lake flooded.

3 This occurred after the first cadaster surveys conducted in the area: Theresian Cadastre (1748 - 1756), followed by the Josephine Cadastre (1789 - 1790) and the Franciscan Cadastre (1818 - 1828). All were conducted under the authority of the Habsburg Monarchy. These are some of the most valuable sources of this time, giving an overview of land use and division, showing the road network and the watercourses. In 1769, the Habsburg empress Maria Theresa ordered a decree to begin preparations to begin draining the wetlands in Carniola.

The landscape was assigned an absolute stable value and form, and as Tsing (2015, pp. 38 - 40) establishes, crafted as a self-contained unit. It had to be stable and predictable. Therefore, it was carefully framed and controlled by the cadastral mapping. Bernard Cache (1995, pp. 24) in Earth Moves establishes the 'frame situated on a directional vector' as a tool that was used to produce ever more singular effects by selecting and re-establishing only the desired connections. The monarchy prioritized the cultivation of crops and livestock over fishing and hunting practiced by locals as they produced more predictable outcomes, making them easier to control. This produced a friction between local situated forms of sustenance and agrarian capitalism.

By exponentially selecting these more and more carefully, the frame was arranged to eliminate anything unpredictable outside of the desired outcome (Cache, 1995, pp. 24). The landscape was abstracted and understood as a self-contained unit. The presence of water was assessed as negative by the governing body, despite the landscape having much more complexity.

Within this context, the unstable water of the lake was constructed to fit into the agricultural paradigm. Within it, water is understood as the essential substance to produce crop yields. It is needed for irrigation in order to sustain the land. It is used as a source to produce value of the crops. Concretely in the context of the lake, it should not take up space that could potentially produce more profit. The water is understood as a resource, subjugated and constructed in service of crop yields. Its capital value allocation can be calculated concretely: this amount of water produces this much crop equals this amount of monetary profit. Water and land are understood as binaries separate from each other. The cadastral mapping of the space makes this a clear distinction, becoming a tool for this misunderstanding. This is why amphibious landscapes in the context of this paradigm become marginal, as such binary thinking does not stick to them. The lake becomes an anti-plantation space resisting the stabilization.

However, this resistance, as Tsing (2015, pp. 22) notes, does not mean that such spaces escape stabilization and commodification; they merely become more precarious. In the instance of Lake Cerknica, the precarity emerged as a reaction to tax reform following the cadastral surveys. The Austro-Hungarian monarchy was divided into new tax and cadastral municipalities, taxing all fertile land based on net crop yield (Notranjski regijski park, 2008, pp. 12). This is most likely the reason why the efforts to dry out the lake initially emerged. Due to frequent floods, the soil was washed out and lacking in nutrients. Therefore, there was high interest in drying the land both on the locals' side, depending on the land to survive, and the state depending on the tax.

Gregor Kebe, a local from the area, writes:

> Because of the abundant taxes on the one hand and poor harvests on the other, the farmer cannot cope. However, the greater the poverty, the more help is needed. There is no power nor to live or pay taxes until the land is more fertile and better cattle are born. All of this could happen if the lake were taken advantage of better. An abundance of good hay would be harvested then; the lake is not swampy; under one foot of mud is good soil. (quoted in Kebe, 2011, pp. 28)

The first written ideas of land reclamation by Tobias and Gabriel Gruber emerged at the initiative of local farmers, asking for help in mitigating the water level as it was hurting crops.[4] These, however, remained merely plans due to unavailable state funding (Notranjski regijski park, 2008, pp. 22 - 30). Following this, many other studies were conducted, but no interventions were executed. Because the area was categorized as a wetland and was not significant in terms of transport or trade, state funds did not go towards them, but the locals were still expected to turn a profit. Because of this, locals began executing reclamation works on their own, without any state funding. In the mid-19th century, the first interventions to the landscape were initiated by Gregor Kebe, a local from the area. He was the first to raise awareness for self-initiated actions to arrange local cleanups of the ponors blocked by debris. Soon these attempts to increase drainage became much more permanent, as the locals blew the main ponor to improve drainage (Notranjski regijski park, 2008, p. 31 - 32).

The framework of the plantation system produced by the state deemed the landscape marginal but demanded it to be as productive as the plantation. This action speaks to the fact that the local community was forgotten, treated as marginal as the landscape. The model of the plantation and the construction of water within the agricultural paradigm created a situation in which locals could not sustain without transforming the ground.

The stabilizing view abstracted space, producing a binary understanding of water and land. All landscapes were approached from the same vantage point, without any nuance. However transformative the division of landscape was, it was based on an abstraction of space to a flat surface without any variation. It ignored the specificity of the site and the complexity of its interrelation. The lake's attempted manufactured stability did not eradicate conditions of complexity; it merely pushed them aside to the edges. Tsing (2015, pp. 21) writes that directing our attention to these unruly edges enables us to observe 'what has been ignored because it never fit the timeline of progress' but survived despite it. By their juxtaposition to the plantation, the edges become a demonstration of the banality of the manufactured stability. The lake as an amphibious landscape refuses to stay within the stable frame's borders; it disappears, becomes mud, then water.

4 In 1781 the Gruber brothers published a hydrological study of the area, for the first time portraying the lakes sub-terrain drainage basins as a cross-section of terrain and connecting Lake Cerknica to the Ljubljanica river basin.

Chapter 4: episode II: The Permanent Water Body

Following reclamation efforts in the 19th-century, ideas entirely at odds with previous interventions emerged in the 1960s, the second act of stabilization deployed at Lake Cerknica: the permanent damming of its water body. Through this, the oscillation of water between symbol and substance of strategic value and the shift in state narrative around the production of water will be examined.

As a new modern post-war state Yugoslavia, was formed, a new idea of the modern landscape emerged. The state saw tourism and leisure activities as one of the most prosperous economies. This consequently led to major federal investment to revive, expand and transform tourism into a significant source of income for the state (Obcinska turisticna zveza Cerknica, 1964). Considering this, the development of tourist centers, particularly on the coasts of the republic, was of the highest priority. The state's assemblies strongly emphasized that investment funds should be directed towards developing tourist centers, and Lake Cerknica was seen as an ideal place to transform into a center full of natural wonder where visitors could escape to (Obcinska turisticna zveza Cerknica, 1964). The water was to be instrumentalized and produced to manufacture this fantasy. The waterscape, therefore, becomes, as Swyngedouw notes (quoted in Gagné, Borg Rasmussen, 2016, pp. 139), a hybrid produced at the crossroads between the materiality of water and the political, cultural practices that control its flow.

Because of the constant fluctuation of water between substance and symbol of strategic value, it is no surprise that the management and control of water have been used as a way for nations to establish their identity of a modern state mainly through infrastructure projects (Gagné, Borg Rasmussen, 2016, pp. 141). In 1965, the municipality of Cerknica, without consulting or notifying the locals, commissioned the Institute of Water Management in Ljubljana to develop a conceptual proposal for the project of permanent damming, including the construction of a tourist zone together with approximately 5000 lodging opportunities (Notranjski regijski park, 2008, pp. 54). Archival documents show that the ideas of the damming strongly relied on characterizing previous attempts of stabilization as unproductive and unsuccessful. The narrative is even supported by claims that the damming will bring the lake back to its original natural state, reversing previous interventions that impoverished the ecosystem.

The permanent state of the lake is central to the conceptualization of the productive landscape - all facilities were based on the fact that the lake is permanently present. The water constructed within the tourist paradigm was entirely different from the water constructed within the agricultural paradigm. Now, the presence of water was conceived by the state as positive and desirable. Water is designed and used as an element through which the sublime nature where one takes pleasure is staged. This water is not capitalized on directly but is used to stage the scene of the untouched nature, free of capitalist commodification, where one could escape to.

The interventions deployed by the state exemplify the view from the vantage point of the universe, abstracting the space. As common in the context of such unstable sites, the new ideal of the permanent lake too became a space of friction between the local inhabitants living with the intermittent nature of the lake and the universal ideas of stabilization from state bodies. After the locals found out about the plan for the permanent damming in 1966, they demanded more information.

Figure 5: Map in Touristic Flyer of Lake Cerknica and its Surroundings, 1965. The lake is presented as the main attraction, with multiple activities such as boating, fishing, skiing presented around it. In the same year the plan to make the lake permanent to increase tourism emerged.

The locals came together, signing a resolution expressing their strong opposition to the project. They wrote that the area's economic condition would improve only by lowering the high waters of the lake and not by damming, which would hurt agricultural plots. The intervention would destroy the unique historical cultural heritage conditioned by the lake's unstable nature. Furthermore, considering their embodied knowledge of the lake, they asserted that a stable, permanent body is a highly unlikely achievement considering its karstic geology (Kebe, 2011, pp. 66).

The resolution, however, was met with a dismissive response. The proponents of the project refused to listen to the locals' concerns. They claimed that the intermittent lake has no economic basis, which is why it must be turned into a tourist paradise with a permanent water body (Kebe, 2011, pp. 69). The locals were accused that their opinions are outdated. When asked about local farmers' living conditions with the high water, the governing bodies responded that under this project, they should switch to tourism and abandon farming altogether (Kebe, 2011, pp. 67). The state's new ideal of the modern landscape anticipated tourism and recreational activities as most profitable. Consequently, the locals were expected to conform to this idea. This meant that their relationship to the unstable nature of the water body would have to adjust as well.

The modernization of the landscape was of highest priority. These efforts attached metaphors of meaning to the landscape, informed by universal ideas of progress, which in turn reproduced detachment from people living in the landscape. This becomes an example of how state power and industrial actors can mold the social imaginary produced around water by deploying infrastructural projects. Infrastructural projects are never a neutral process but are, as Wu

Ming 1 (2018, pp. 209) explains, always shaped by the dynamics of state power and capitalism.

The locals kept fighting to prevent the project from taking off. This, however, was stopped in 1967 in a voter assembly, when SBK, the institution in charge of the project, redefined the infrastructure project constructing a tourist paradise with a permanent water body as a research project focusing on karst studies (Kebe, 2011, pp. 69). Objective scientific knowledge was used to essentially quiet the locals, despite their concerns. The leader of the assembly dismissed the locals once again. The Municipal Assembly had already decided to confirm the research project and the experiments that had already been prepared by experts. The official decision was read 28. 6. 1967, the committee now had a pass to do what they pleased at the site (Kebe, 2011, pp. 69 - 70). Despite reassuring locals, the experiments would not be permanent; from 1968 to 1972, the project would execute various interventions, such as building dams and shutting the main drainage ponors with concrete.

The story of the effort to manufacture a tourist paradise around a stable water body ended after many experiments and studies concluded that permanent damming is, in fact, not possible. It would cost as much as if not more than previous efforts to stabilize the landscape. Some control was gained over the presence of water; however, ultimately, the attempt of permanent damming was not successful. In the end, it is the local populations who had to live with the precarity the manufactured stability created. The physical traces of concrete remained in situ a long time after the studies' conclusions, transforming the landscape. Locals noticed that due to frequent floods and prolonged water retention, the structure of the landscape changed. Hayfields formed swamps, the areas where locals used to mow hay feed now only grew bedding straw, previously grassy lands have become grassless mud (AADJ 1991 in Kebe, 2011, pp. 74).

In 1991, the locals addressed the remaining structures' issue, urging the municipality to remove them. It was uniformly established that the intermittent lake should be restored to its previous state (AADJ 1991 in Kebe, 2011, pp. 75). The investment project was officially annulled in 1992, recognizing the lake's intermittent nature as a unique characteristic of the landscape (Uradni list RS, 1992, pp. 2003). All barriers and concrete structures were removed. It was later pronounced as a protected area.

The production of water acts both on concrete material and abstract levels. The way spaces at the confluence of land and water are produced on a concrete level influences sedimentation, while on the abstract level, it influences local ideas of water. As established in Introduction - An Amphibious Anthropology (Gagné, Borg Rasmussen, 2016, pp. 136), the redefinitions of water by state, industry, or potentially climate change, change the meaning of water and local identities of water. Large-scale projects producing water in complex sites have the potential to fragment water-related knowledge, unique to local communities living within regions of amphibious landscapes (Gagné, Borg Rasmussen, 2016, pp. 141).

Through such projects, shaping the flow of water and ultimately its relation to it, particular configurations of modern society were produced. The design of spaces where the stable terrain meets water is always connected to notions of power. The changing flows of water, water and land establish a relational process spanning across social, economic, political, and geographical contexts (Gagné, Borg Rasmussen, 2016, pp. 135). Landscapes in-between spaces of water and land can therefore become vulnerable sites for these kinds of exploitations.

Chapter 5: Manufacturing Stability: Cartographic Imagination

To enforce the vision of the permanent lake, many cartographic representations of the landscape were produced by biased research (Figure 6). These were used to help give the project of the permanent damming more legitimacy. Through these, the state attempted to produce stability where stability, in fact, does not exist. There is a conflict of space that appeared in representation. The lake is depicted in a technocratic manner, without any broader spatial context, as an entity existing in a non-referential space. This lack of context detaches itself from the spatial context and camouflages the complexities of the site. As Weizman notes, mapping as such is never an objective practice but always plays an intervention in the field of the visible, a play of what is being foregrounded, what is being hidden, what is being shown (Weizman, Davis, Turpin, 2013, pp. 72).

As Bruno Latour (2018, pp. 66 - 68) notes, the ground has been observed, 'from the vantage point of the universe - the view from nowhere,' which in turn produced an abstraction of space devoid of depth, complexity, and fixed in time. This was further solidified with inventions both in cartographic representation and the exponential precision of measuring devices, shifting the view from locality to universality. These practices have reduced the perception of landscape to a flat surface from which value can be extracted. The cartographic imagination made the world a cartesian space, traversed by an abstraction of lines upon which the ground was stabilized (Ferrari et al., 2018, pp. 49). The map became a political tool of control based on a stable 'frame of natural borders' (Ferrari et al., 2018, pp. 13). When this was universally recognized, any environment and the bodies within that environment could be »legitimately« conquered (Ferrari et al., 2018, pp. 49).

Spaces built and unbuilt by water become a ground for political negotiation, often negotiated through representation. Here, only the desired outcome - the permanent lake - is put forth. The circumstances in which images are produced establishes a set of relations between the space and the body representing it (Weizman, 2017, pp. 27). Such representations hold within them information of the context of why, how, and by whom they were represented. In this instance, the map is produced by a state body as a discussion proposal to explore possible profit opportunities. In a sense, the map produces stability not through the representation of landscape as such but through the activities constructed around it that would bring stable profit. Water and land are framed as binaries separate from each other. The desired permanent water body is shown as the central object around which infinite tourist opportunities are staged. The shape of water is used to construct the landscape around it. This shows how water can shape the perceptions of the landscape. Furthermore, the map exemplifies the flattening cartographic view used to re-enforce stability where stability, in fact, does not exist. The complex karstic terrain, significantly defined by its subterrain, is abstracted to a flat surface, the water body to an abstracted shape.

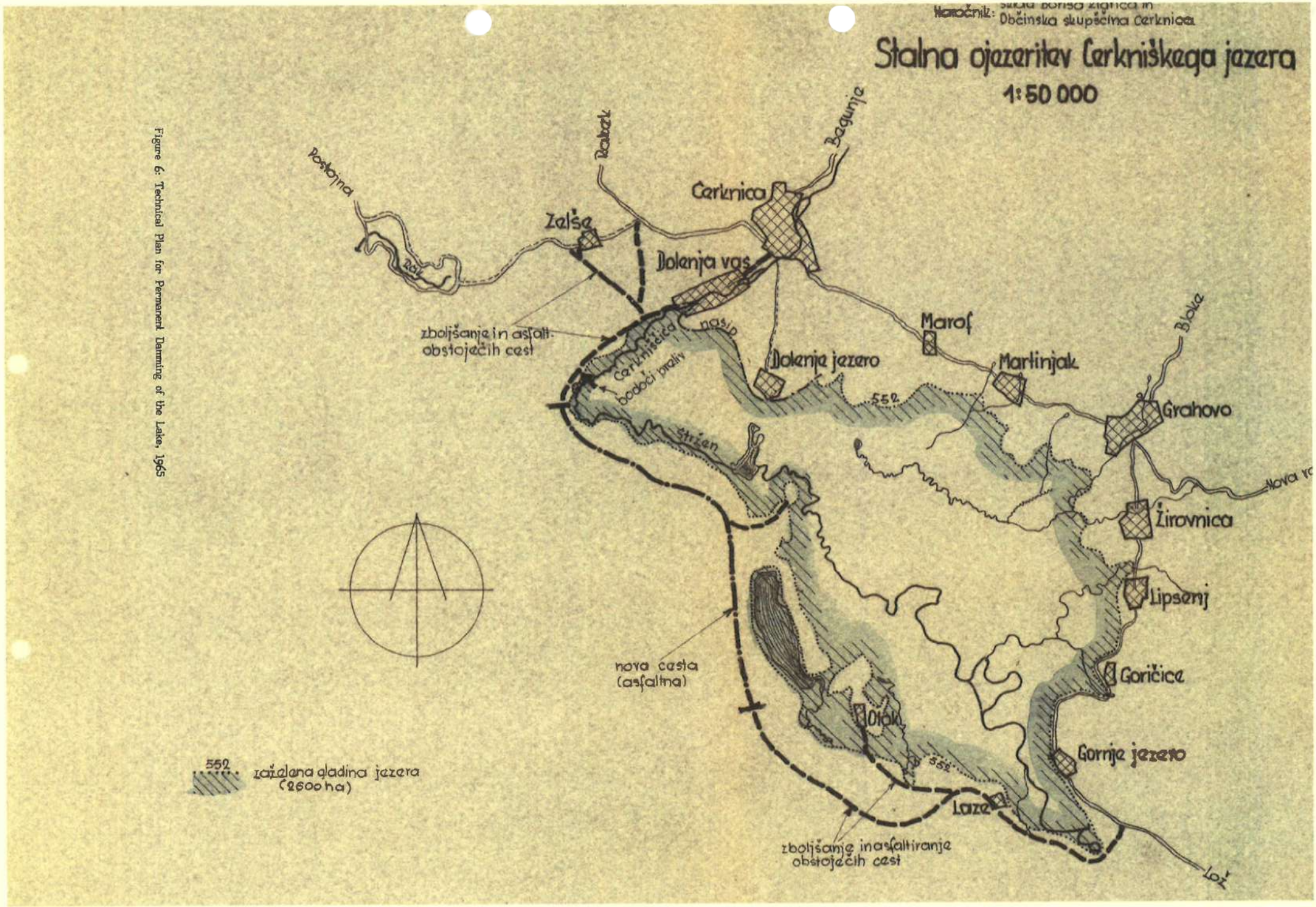

Figure 6: Technical Plan for Permanent Damming of the Lake, 1965

These representations produce stability by situating the desired landscape within a stable frame; therefore, the world is also understood in the context of this frame. Cache establishes that the tendency of architecture to frame territories produced an understanding of the Earth as immovable (quoted in Boyman, 1995, pp. x – xi). The architectural frame isolates, selects, and finally arranges a portion of ground to increase the probability of the desired outcome and eliminate everything that does not contribute to it (Cache quoted in Speaks, 1995, pp. xvii – xviii).

Land is understood as the space of human habitation and water as an environment where humans as a terrestrial species, in theory, do not thrive. Water and land have been observed as binaries separate from each other; water is seen as fluid; land as static. Water and spaces at the confluence of water and land have been approached from a land-based point of view. Political geographer Philip Steinberg notes that this gaze can be attributed to the fact that 'watery spaces are not permanent spaces of sedentary habitation' (quoted in Peters et al., 2018, pp. 2). The attention is focused on land because that is where we mostly find ourselves. Water has been understood as static without taking into account its material qualities. The colonization of territories coupled with this static understanding produced an abstraction of space and bureaucratized views both on water and land grounded in specific Western conceptualizations.

This reductionist approach to landscapes, assessing outcomes on a binary scale of positive vs. negative, depended on creating (artificial) conditions of stability (Cache, 1995, pp. 59). This is the angle upon which rationality and objective science have been built upon. 'To know is to know from the outside' (Latour, 2018, pp. 68). This understanding is rooted in a clear separation of human and non-human. Nature, then becomes merely a 'factor in production, a resource precisely external [from the human]' (Latour, 2018, pp. 77). Acting as a background that can therefore be dominated, consequently justifying its exploitation. "Objective" scientific knowledge was and still is used to justify the transformation of sites and the commodification of its resources, justified using »objective« cartographic representations. This view re-enforced a complete detachment from the specificity of sites in order to be able to abstract the ground and exploit it (Latour, 2018, pp. 66 – 68). From this vantage point, any ground could be characterized as stable.

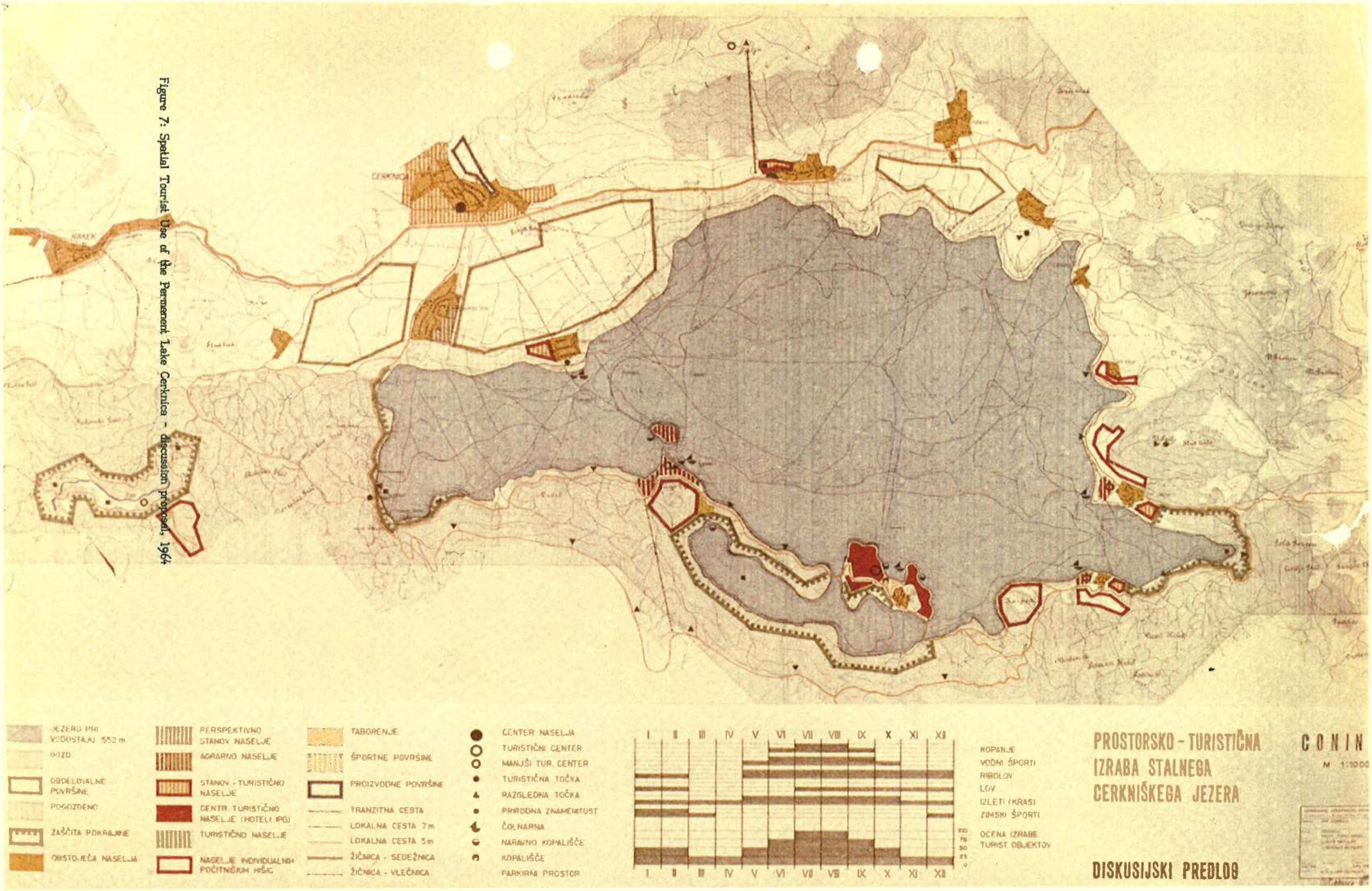

Figure 7: Spatial Tourist Use of the Permanent Lake Cerknica - discussion proposal, 1964

Conclusion: The Destabilization of Stability: Landing in the Unstable Ground

> You want me to land on Earth? Why? — Because you're hanging in midair, headed for a crash. — How is it down there? — Pretty tense. — A war zone? — Close: a Critical Zone, a few kilometers thick, where everything happens. — Is it habitable? — Depends on your chosen science. — Will I survive down there? — Depends on your politics. (Latour, Weibel, 2020, pp. cover)

The manufactured imaginary of the stable ground is one hard to shed as everything of this world is settled on this perceived stability. Landscapes are fit into stable categoric frames, which enables us to "understand the world." However, these categories, as discussed, are not stable at all.
Examining landscapes built and unbuilt by water, the smooth surface of the abstracted ground seems to slip away. The ground had been through the logics of the stable frame abstracted to the point of a smooth and continuous surface, its grip being reduced to a minimum (Cache, 1995, pp. 25 - 26). Spaces, where the manufactured imaginary of the stable ground seem to shatter, require a deeper understanding of the complexity of sites. They require an understanding of a shared geological materiality. To face the complexity of the world, indeterminate ideas of nature must be built up to 'reclaim uncertainty as a positive condition' (Ferrari et al., 2018, pp. 24).

As observed in Lake Cerknica, the intermittent karstic lake, being fit into various categories to produce stability - once water, once land, the categories are banal structures. Due to the lake's intermittent nature, it escaped easy classification, and it is precisely this amphibious nature of the landscape, being once land once water, that allowed for such conflicting ideas of stabilization to emerge. Because of the nature of the lake, it could be fit into multiple opposing categories, defending for either the absence or the presence of water. These contradictory efforts show that with the same ingredients, a multiplicity of ideas can be reproduced, the same landscape can be appropriated for different arguments. The inscription of power on landscape simplifies the complexity of terrain to fit it into specific political agendas to reproduce a desired landscape. This is most often accompanied by representations that produce stability where it, in fact, does not exist. The stabilization attempts at Lake Cerknica ultimately failed because of the stubborn resistance of the ecology to conform. The local population and the state become stuck on opposite sides of this refusal, managing its consequences on one side and the desire to control on the other.

Opening up the understanding of the ground and the space that it constitutes as unstable allows one to see new interrelations constantly emerging. As Tsing writes (2015, pp. 20), thinking through precarity makes it evident that indeterminacy is what makes life possible. The unstable ground as an inflection point is understood as a fundamental characteristic rather than a phase of indeterminacy on its way to determinacy (Cache, 1995, pp. 38 - 39). The ground is an undetermined assemblage of interrelations constituting an unresolved cycle of a constant evolving.

Amphibious landscapes, because of their complexities, produce slippages of the stable frame. By establishing the view of the ground through the inflection point undergoing endless variations, Cache understands that no environment can essentially be controlled as it is constantly in motion. Within every environment, a sense of movement can be released, a potentiality of unpredictable variation - inflection point. Cache writes that these inflection points 'neither produce the presumed unity or identity of a place nor obey the rule of an abstract Cartesian space' (in Boyman, 1995, pp. x - xi). Understanding the ground via the inflection point thus means falling from the vantage point from nowhere that Latour establishes. Landing in the unstable ground from which the complexity of the ground can be observed as a radical temporality.

The complex geology and hydrology of Lake Cerknica rendered it a grey zone. It could not be fit into a stable category through which it could be exploited. The complexity of the site established it as resistant to stabilization. Because of its unstable ground, the lake produced a slippage; it resisted being fit into a stable frame of expected outcomes. The stability existed only in cartographic representations. In reality, the lake is much more challenging to grasp. Its amphibious nature makes it impossible to map as stable. It is dynamic, situated, and changing. It is impossible to tell where its edges are even when you are standing inside it, immersed in mud.

Figure 8: Fisherman standing in the disappearing lake saving fish, 1972.

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