



Architectural Association School of Architecture
City/Architecture PhD Programme
End-of-Term Presentations
December 12, 2018

Wednesday, December 12, 2018
Programme

32 Bedford Square, First Floor, Front Room

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15.10 Gili Merin

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16.30 Ioanna Piniara

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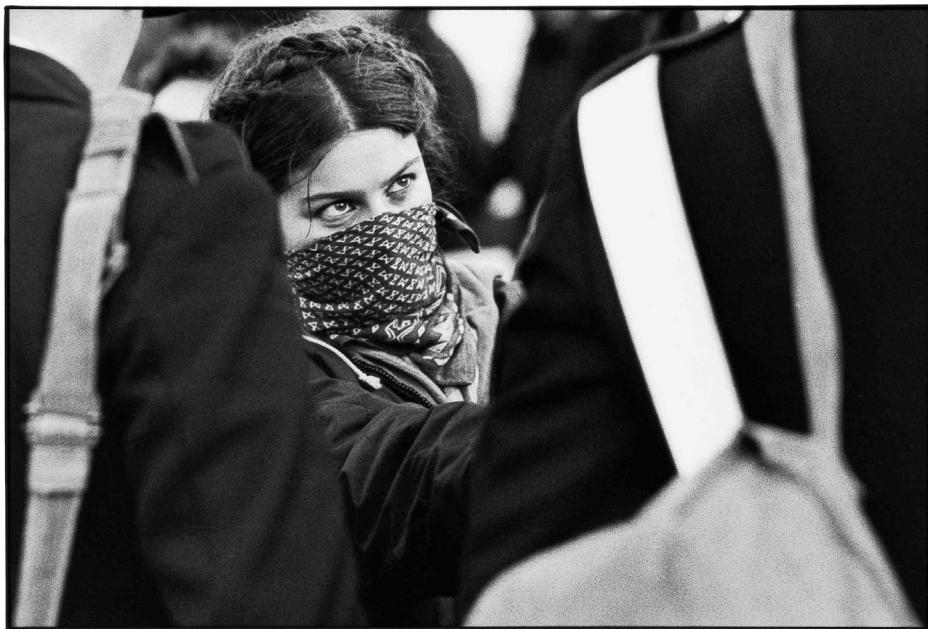
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Enrica Mannelli

THE SOCIAL FACTORY

Social Movements from Autonomy to Precarity: Italy, 196X-201X



ROMA 1977. Ragazza e carabinieri.

TANO D'AMICO

Tano D'Amico, *Girl and Guards, Rome (1977)*

The Social Factory is a concept developed by Mario Tronti as a reading of the Post-Fordist era; as he wrote in an essay published in 1962 in "Quaderni Rossi", "At the highest level of Capitalist development, the social relation is transformed into a moment of the relation of production, the whole of society is turned into an articulation of production, that is, the whole of society lives as a function of the factory and the factory extends its exclusive domination to the whole of society." For this precise reason, if in the 50s the Factory was the one and only space of production, today we are unable to mark precise spatial boundaries of the latter.

More recently, Richard Florida claimed that "creativity is the new economy", contributing a theoretical backdrop on top of which creative hubs and cultural institutions have proliferated with an impact on urban economics. These are promoted as places scattered around the city where creativity is supposed to be *free to develop* and, ultimately, challenge itself. Looking closer at this phenomenon, we can easily notice that the production of creativity has been exploited and commodified, as testified by the increasing rental price of a desk in co-working spaces - a trend that unfolds concurrently with the relentless privatisation of the cities. Based on this assumption, the research propose to investigate the urban phenomena of self-managed communities and squatting in relation with the wider theoretical framework summarised under the notions of "autonomy" and "city as commons". The goal is to reassess notions that have recently been reduced to the status of slogans such as creativity, culture and knowledge, and investigate their role in the processes of city making - speculating on a "Social Factory" rather than on a "Creative City".

Looking back at one of the most groundbreaking periods of recent history, the 1970s' experiences of squatting and bottom-up social gatherings such as the Italian Centri Sociali represent an interesting starting point. Should we read these contemporary institutions – the creative hubs - as the capitalist exploitation of an unanswered problem raised by the illegal social centre where creativity and ideology were challenged for free?

In Italy, during the 60s and 70s creativity and design represented a way to criticise society, to resist the capitalistic system and its logic of commodification through phenomena such as the "Indian Metropolitani", Theories of Autonomy, *self-valorization*, and Auto-Production. During the same period, Italy was witnessing phenomena of squatting in the form of illegal occupations of abandoned buildings. The autonomous social centre (CSOA - Centro Sociale Autogestito) is the most fertile expression among numerous occupied realities: it is a space "free" because of its "occupied" nature; a space where culture is produced, politics is challenged, and creativity is autonomous from the places of production, in an overall attempt to escape capitalism.

Today case studies like MACAO, MAAM and Forte Prenestino - all born from illegal occupations - in their everlasting attempt to resist the system and hardly questioning private property, express the urgency to define a form of democracy that shapes an alternative to the public/private dichotomy. Building upon the concept of the autonomous social centre - understood as a spatial, social and political statement - the project question the possibility to conceive a structure - spatially, sociologically and politically - that is neither commodified nor illegally occupied, a place that is literally out of the market.

Thesis Structure

I. The 50s-60s

Struggles from the factory to the street: the self-awareness of the working class

II. The 70s

The decade of the Revolution:
the '77 Movement among the Metropolitan Indians and the "Autonomia" Theory

III. The 80s

Looking for a place where to nourish the radical thought:
the CSOA, a self-managed occupied social centre

IV. The 90s-early 00s

The Counter-Revolution.

Facing the commodification of freelance jobs: the exploitation of creative work

V. Last decade.

The Social Factory

An overview of the entire Thesis
will be presented on Wednesday, December 12

Gili Merin
TOWARDS JERUSALEM
The Architecture of Pilgrimage



Gili Merin, *The View from Station n. 8, Sacro Monte di Varese (2018)*

The thesis explores the ritual of sacred travel to the City of Jerusalem. It places pilgrimage as a project in which the pilgrim, as an independent subject who is led by spiritual orientation, contributes to the appropriation of the cities and landscapes that he or she is perpetually crossing. While pilgrimage is indeed acknowledged as a journey in pursuit of a religious objective, it will nevertheless be studied, in this thesis, as a powerful social and cultural vector that often destabilized the economic, civic, and political conditions of the places of worship. The thesis will expand the definition of pilgrimage to Jerusalem by including a variety of analogous 'Jerusalems' that proliferated around the world as pilgrimage sites in their own right. As such, it will place the ritual of travel to the City of Jerusalem as a flexible practice that is not geographically confined but could be enacted by the varied combination of text, place, memory, and visual imagination—all of which are inherent components of Christian devotion.

The thesis will unfold both chronologically and thematically in order to explore how the mentality of pilgrims and the scenography of pilgrimage has produced particular structures, landscapes, and representations that I refer to as the *Architecture of Pilgrimage*. Each of the five chapters looks both into a specific era in the history of Jerusalem pilgrimage (early Christianity, the Middle Ages, the beginning of Modernity and the 20th Century), as well as a particular theme, such as the fabrication of sacred landscapes, the intelligence of analogical thinking, the importance of movement in ritual, the politics of heritage and preservation, and the formation of collective memory. While these paradigmatic ideas did not necessarily originate in Jerusalem, the city's condition allows their examination in a state of acceleration and saturation.

The design component of the thesis is a photographic guide of Jerusalem pilgrimage. It will depict archaeological sites of pilgrimage, analogical Jerusalems in Premodern Europe; and key sites of formal and spatial transformations by pilgrims-turned-occupiers of Jerusalem itself. As documentation, it will provide primary evidence of the current condition of Jerusalem pilgrimage. As representation, it will join a lineage of past endeavours that has used the medium of photography to frame spaces as a tool of architectural design. As a series, the images will unfold along the itinerary of the thesis and form a cartography of pilgrimage. As a project, it will trace, define, and speculate on a possible new route *Towards Jerusalem*.

Thesis Structure

I. Introduction

A Brief History of a Contested City

II. The New Topographics

The Invention of Christian Pilgrimage in the Fourth Century

III. Analogous Jerusalem

The Concept of Analogy and the Proliferation of Pilgrimage Sites in the Medieval West

IV. Station to Station

The Crystallization of the Way of the Cross in the *Sacri Monti* of Northern Italy

V. Locating the 'Real' Jerusalem

The Scientification of Pilgrimage through Archeology and Photography Modernity

VI. Main Street Jerusalem

The Commodification and Heritage-isation of Pilgrimage in the 20th Century

V. Design Project

Abstract of Chapter III

which will be presented on Wednesday, December 12

Analogous Jerusalem

The Concept of Analogy and the Proliferation of Pilgrimage Sites in the Medieval West

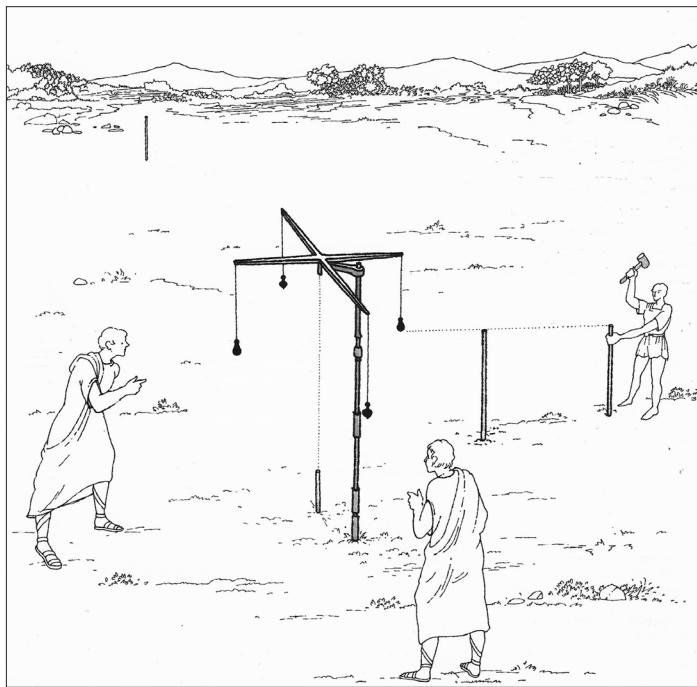
The chapter will explore Medieval pilgrimage sites that acted as an alternative to the City of Jerusalem. These other Jerusalems proliferated in scale, quantity, and complexity from the Seventh to the Fifteenth Century across Europe, mostly in today's England, Germany, and Italy. Their construction responded to a growing need of pilgrimage sites as the ritual was becoming both popular and difficult: on the one hand, it was now quantified by the Church into indulgences and pardons; at the same time, Jerusalem itself was closing its gates to Christians and Jews following the arrival of Islamic rulers. Hence, a multitude of sites had to serve as a replacement to the city in the East.

This chapter will examine these case studies using the concept of *Analogy* by treating these sites as analogous Jerusalems. Analogy (from the Greek *analogia* or the latin *proportio*) is a similarity found between two structural patterns or compositions. Plato suggested that analogous objects share an idea, an abstraction or a composition; Giorgio Agamben's reading of Aristotle defines analogy, not as an induction nor a reduction, but a transfer of intelligibility from one singular to another singular. A specific terminology identifies the analogy between a *source* and a *target*, the latter being analogous to the original. The target is then not a copy of the source: it borrows an abstract idea or a logic and is then recomposed in its own manner. In the context of this chapter, the *source* - that is, the structural pattern that is abstracted from the larger context, is found within Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Its *targets*, or its analogies across the West, share, in this case, its spatial configuration: the architectural coupling of a Rotunda and a Basilica.

In Jerusalem, or the *source*, these two substantial components mark not only two historically-charged sites (the place of burial and the hill of crucifixion) but also two types of devotional containers - a centrifugal room encompassing a holy object, and an elongated, linear space for processions. The existence of these two points within one complex enables the reenactments of the ritual of movement between stations, a seminal component of Christian worship in general and Holy Land pilgrimage in particular.

FIGURE/GROUND

The Process of Prioritization in the Representation of Urban Form



G. Moscara, Roman 'agrimensores' surveyors at work

This thesis studies the position of Figure and Ground in urban representation, from the Roman urban survey plans to today's digital cartography. It will start by investigating the origins of the terms Figure and Ground in different fields such as optics, perception, Gestalt psychology, art and early representations of cities. Then, it will unfold both genealogically and thematically in a series of case studies of different representations of urban form.

The thesis problematizes the process of prioritization of information during the production of urban form, the object through which we can directly assess Figure Ground. This question becomes more and more relevant in digital cartography where the organization of data relies on software, thus leaving the process of foregrounding and backgrounding unsettled. The thesis will initially study this process through an investigation of the use of this terminology in urban representation and theory. The word "Forma" was first used to address an object during the Roman Centuria. "Forma", a document inscribed in a bronze tablet, collected the evidence of subdivision and privatization of land during colonization. It was a process of recording land ownership done by surveyors, marking the beginning of representation of urban form. Also the theme Figure Ground has been a major topic in more recent architectural discourses, since it was placed by Colin Rowe in Collage City. Though Figure Ground isn't merely an exercise of form; a black-white or mass-void drawing, as he mentioned and developed, it is an instrument of clarity. It creates legibility in the sake of hierarchy bringing with it ideological, cultural, political consequences. To further investigate this phenomena, the thesis will analyze a series of examples from Forma Urbis, Buffalini and Nolli to Cassini maps.

The genealogical research intends to explore the increasing scientific methods and technology used in the production of urban form. These representations, maps as we know them serve to make land ownership a readable data. First, it will explore Forma Urbis which is the projection of the city's footprint on to a two-dimensional plane marking the beginning of cartography, therefore the production of urban form. Although, there are many other ways of producing urban form; such as figures, monuments, memory, imagination and symbolism-a. All of these are displaced by the Forma being an abstraction through measure, which is instrumental to cadastral knowledge of the city. Then it will look at maps done by Leonardo Bufalini and Giambattista Nolli, who were both experts in cadastral survey and applied this specific technique into the maps of Rome which they produced.

These maps are particularly relevant because they created a gradual displacement of architecture as an artifact by the abstraction of cartography. These maps defined land ownership in the eighteenth-century Rome and were the basis for urban reform. We can observe a similar approach in the Cassini maps produced with a geodetic triangulation grid and served to detect limits of the kingdom's territory thus consolidate internal economic markets. So, to understand the process of making urban form, it is imperative to investigate closely the scientific methods developed in these specific case studies. The design component will follow this, aiming to explore digitally produced maps. As a documentation, it will provide an evidence on the current condition of mapping processes and as a project, it will speculate the process of prioritization of data using contemporary technologies.

Thesis Structure

Introduction

I. Origins and Use

II. Figure and Ground in Illustrative Maps

III. Figure and Ground in Iconographic Maps

IV. Figure and Ground in Road Maps

V. Figure and Ground in Orthogonal Maps

VI. Design Project

Abstract of Chapter I *which will be presented on Wednesday, December 12*

Figure/Ground: Origins and Use

This first chapter will investigate different philosophical interpretations of the origins of the terms Figure Ground. These terms have their roots in semantics, optics, visual perception, Gestalt psychology and Art. In the architectural discourse it is chiefly introduced by Colin Rowe in the late 1970s with his book *Collage City*. He adopts this concept as a mere formal exercise, influenced by the representational technique used in the Nolli map.

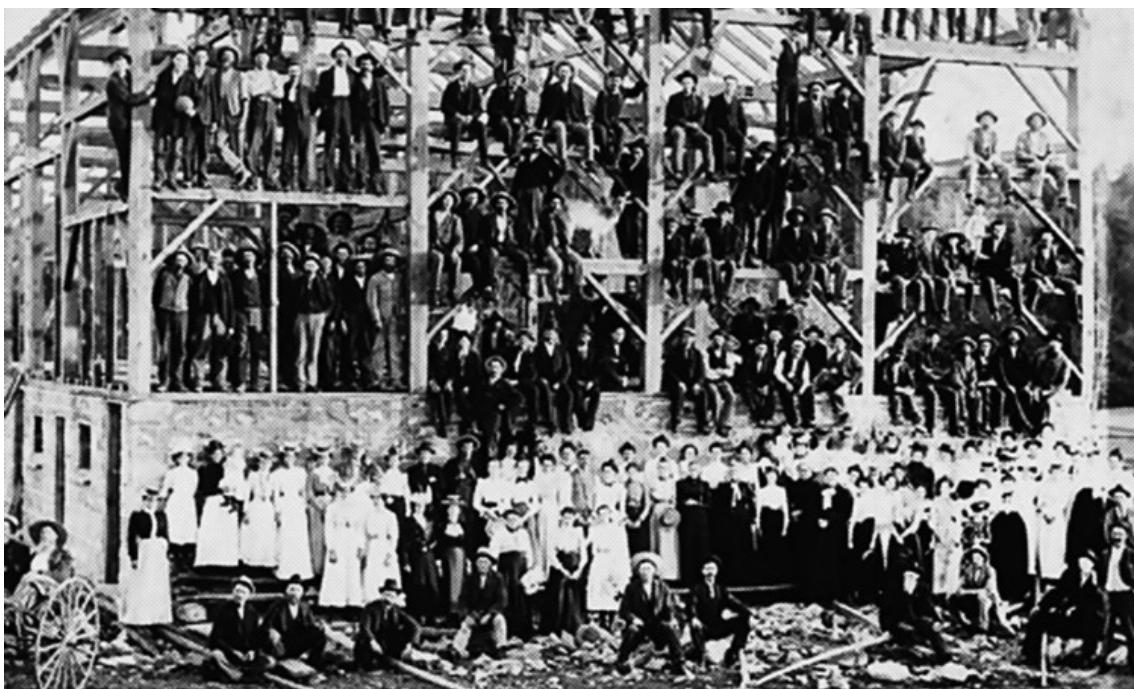
We can see it in the examples of plans he shows in his books as well as his own proposal for Roma Interotta and plans produced by his students at Cornell. Those plans are pure abstractions, omitting most information regarding the city, thus reducing it to a solid void diagram. However Figure Ground is mainly related to the quantification of the political economy of land that has its historical roots in land survey.

Originally “Forma”, a document inscribed in a bronze tablet, collected the evidence of subdivision and privatization of land during colonization. It was a process of recording land ownership done by surveyors, marking the beginning of representation of urban form. Figure Ground becomes crystallized and naturalized in this system of land appropriation and land ownership through survey and geometry. We can say that the Colin-Rowesque reading misguided us from the deep roots of the whole idea. The misuse of these concepts still influences the whole culture of urban design which is stuck in this formal manipulation while all the questions of land ownership and economy is actually left behind.

In this chapter I will examine a genealogy of figure Ground not only in a formal manner but also in political and economical categories of the concept of Figure, the concept of form and concept of ground.

WE HAVE NEVER BEEN PRIVATE!

The Housing Project in Neoliberal Europe



The ritual of barn raising in Brampton, UK: building community trust on the socialization of labour

The thesis puts forward an interpretation of the management of domestic space through the transformation of the concept of the *private* within the socio-economic regime known as neoliberalism. In this light, the thesis proposes a critical reassessment of housing *privatization* not merely as a policy introduced in the 1980's to promote new contractual relationships, but as a state-market partnership strategy, already stemming from post-war ideas on urban restructuring, to establish a change of ethos, culture and organization of housing. This marks a transition from urban/regulatory planning based on social criteria to *comprehensive* planning (or strategic planning or visioning) based on economic criteria, where housing becomes another *project* for the extraction of urban value.

To explore how domesticity was reconfigured by the architectural imagination to address the abstract demands of financial capital (e.g. place marketing), urban housing schemes in London, Berlin and Athens are selected as case studies throughout the history of neoliberalism: from anticipation to severe crisis. Specifically, the research investigates three 'master projects' of inner-city living. The Barbican Estate (1952-82) in London represents council housing in the transition from post-war austerity to the vision of ever-increasing economic growth that led to the unaffordability of city centres. The International Building Exhibition (IBA) of 1987 in Berlin mobilizes housing policy and urban form in the struggle between ascending globalization and the establishment of existing property relationships. The 'rehabilitation' or attempted gentrification of the Athenian centre in the face of the Olympic Games 2004 boosts the existing mass petit-bourgeois home ownership into an ill-practiced model based on unsustainable debt. The last case study culminates in the conversion of an iconic modernist building into the luxurious housing scheme 'One Athens' –ironically undertaken at the dawn of the mortgage crisis in 2008– which opens up to the latest neoliberal paradigm shift; the colonization of urban areas in crisis by large-scale international investment capital.

In this context, neoliberalism is not to be identified with specific political doctrines –such as Thatcherism or Reaganism– rather it is scrutinized as a broader cultural project to recapitalize on urbanity by building a certain subjectivity of the *private* through ownership and alienation. Therefore, the design component of the thesis is inspired by the abolition of individual land ownership for the sake of permanent affordability in the concept of the *land trust* and by the ethos of sharing in current *community-led* and *self-built* housing initiatives. However, the project will try to go beyond and really radicalize these premises by designing a model of living which is not entirely driven by economic necessity.

Thesis Structure

Introduction

The Public Production of the Private: A Brief Genealogy

I. Neoliberalism, Planning, and the Housing Sector

II. Neoliberalism as a Project of Urban Marketing

Ideas tested at the Barbican Estate (London 1952-1982)

III. 'The Inner City as Residential Area', IBA Berlin 1984/87

Housing Policy and the Preservation of Urban Form (Berlin, 1978-1989)

IV. The Vill(a)fication of the Athenian Centre

The Rise and Fall of the Asset-Seeking Society (Athens, 1999-2018)

V. Redesigning the Private

Building the Community Land Trust Portfolio

Abstract of Chapter V

which will be presented on Wednesday, December 12

Redesigning the Private

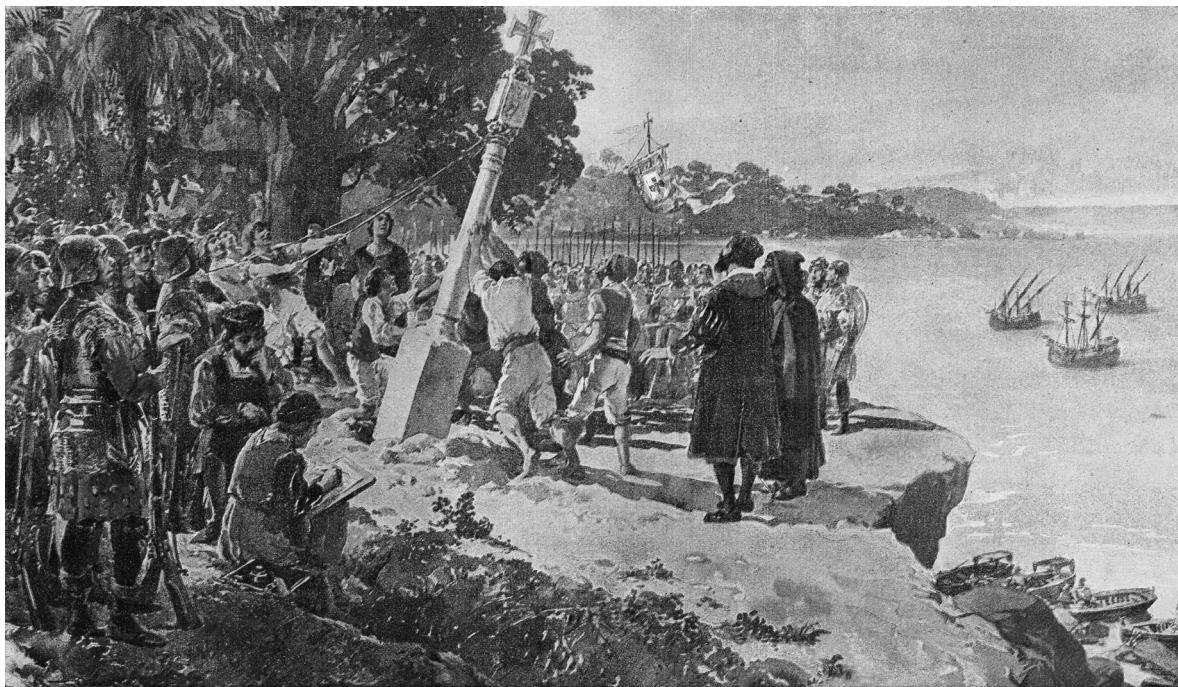
Building the Community Land Trust Portfolio

This chapter is dedicated to putting forward a model of inner-city living by reinstating private space on both its institutional and organizational aspects. In the framework of this presentation, the chapter presents preliminary research in alternative forms of tenure and housing production through their distinguishing features in regards to ownership, organization and operation. The proposal explores the potential of a *Community Land Trust portfolio*, as a designer's tool, to inspire groups of citizens, city councils and neighbourhood development practices (small-scale architectural and construction firms) to form 'the third way', after the state and the market, in the administration of housing; that of grassroots organizing.

The research first attempts to tackle the problematic alienation of planning and architecture in the neoliberal context which has concealed the fact that the housing crisis is inextricable from the issue of land. It does so by examining the radical novelty but also the limits of the *land trust*, a robust movement nowadays in several countries that promotes a combination of market-removed community-owned land and individual title of buildings/flats. However, a sought after land reform needs to explore beyond "a modern-day model of private, non-market ownership"¹ to completely substitute private property with cession of use as an incentive to housing and a contribution to a community's well-being. The municipality is seen as the driving force in setting up an inventory of available land / built stock to acquire/repurpose. Then, the Community Land Trust's strength in protecting a municipality's investment and a community's interests in the long run is tested through the ethic of stewardship, inherent in the concept, towards the socialization of captured gains for the betterment of community life.

The second part of the research investigates promising community-led/ cooperative housing initiatives in order to inform a design agenda and, in fact, to build a CLT portfolio through a more comprehensive approach on community empowerment. As the movement is still young, all the examples illustrate problems but mainly a shortcoming of radicality and hence of an alternative quality as a model of living in such antagonistic terrain as a city centre is. In these cracks lies the potential of the architect's role to visualize and design the new shared activities of this extended domesticity and imbue this mentality by involving residents' shared labour on all possible levels (grassroots organizing). Building a CLT portfolio of activities according to a community's specific needs might seem quite bespoke a project; but on the premise that it becomes desirable to this community and attractive as a model, then it might unsettle the established tropes of domestic privacy.

STAGING FACTS ON THE GROUND On Territorial Markers in Contested Territories



Padrão Gameiro, *Erguido pelos Portugueses na Foz do Zaire (1917)*

Objects that are seemingly minor or banal can nevertheless have enormous territorial implications. Artifacts can legitimize the demarcation of boundaries to acquire authority on the ground. Presently, contemporary discourse tends to portray nation-state borders as thoroughly impermeable and easy to physically demarcate. However, the reality of physical demarcation between political entities throughout history is more vague, porous, and fluid. Still today, the world is fragmented into issue-related enclaves, which surpass the seemingly continuous borders of the nation-state; gated districts, segregated districts, sanctuary districts, special purpose districts, special economic zones, demilitarized zones, internment camps, refugee camps, etc. Their exception to the nation-state border forms the predominant condition of urbanization.

The problematic of this research is that scholarly discourse predominantly focuses on the concepts envisioned to frame territorial sovereignty such as the umbrella term of globalization. However, social relations are materialized in space. Still, sovereignty's actual materials implemented and executed as devices on the ground have rarely been subjected to theorizing throughout history. These often primitive but specific devices in their various historic appearances are subject and structure to this research; sanctuaries as markers in ancient times, freeports as markers in medieval times, beacons as markers in modern times, and co-lo facilities in contemporary times. The hypothesis of this research is that it claims the possibility of defining sovereignty as a material condition, becoming apparent through human-made spatial facts on the ground at various scales and technologies. In other words, this research links authority, an immaterial force, to its ground via the marker, a material form.

In its larger aim, it seeks to interrogate the ability of architectural design practice to manifest sovereignty in contested conditions where stable and extensive means of demarcation are challenged. This will ultimately allow the audience of this research to reconcile with a condition which has always been inherent but never been untangled.

Introduction: Identification of Theoretical Framework

I. Sanctity Markers

Ancient Sanctuaries and Scenographic Practice

II. Mercantility Outposts

Medieval Freeports and Segregatory Practice

III. Telecommunication Stations

Modern Beacons and Geodetic Practice

IV. Distribution Centers

Contemporary Co-Located Facilities and Cybernetic Practice

V. Projective Kit-of-Tools

Identification of Applicable Design Techniques

Conclusion: Discussion of Implications and Recommendations

Abstract of Chapter II

which will be presented on Wednesday, December 12

Mercantility Outposts: Medieval Freeports and Segregatory Practices

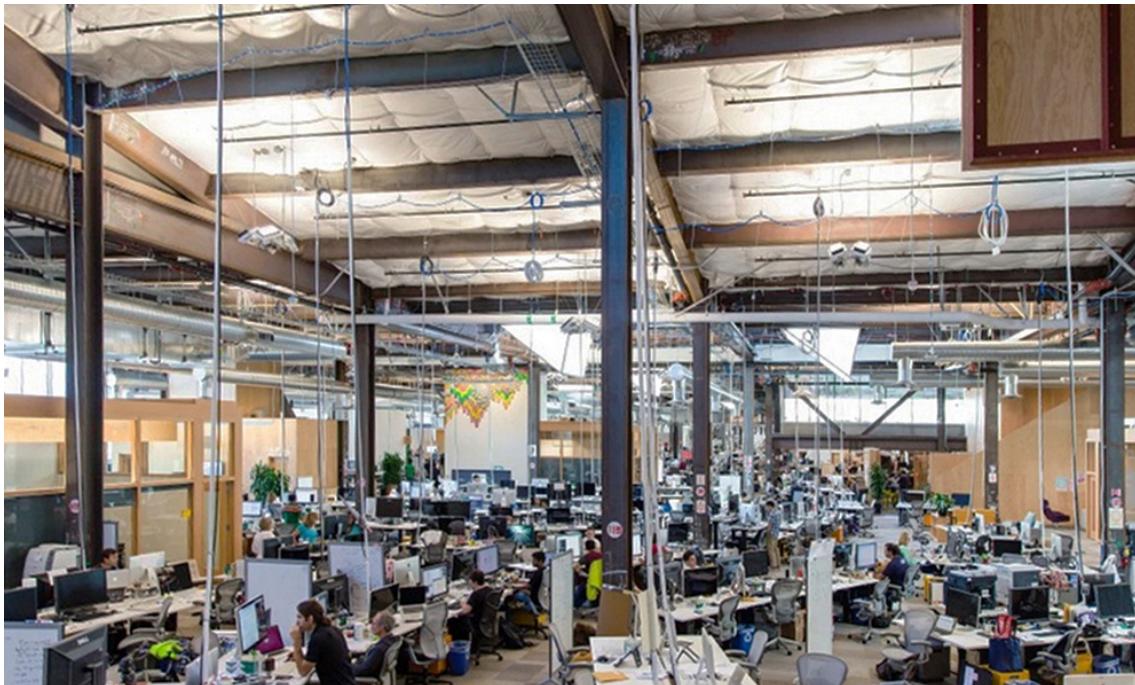
This chapter establishes how commercial compounds played a fundamental role in how politically organized communities projected authority and influence over their land. It draws from social constructionism in its realization that meanings and associations placed on architectural types of merchant inns, market crosses, and counter houses were regionally and culturally constructed through contextual activities within medieval communities. This chapter illustrates how medieval communities appropriated the freeport as a device for laying claim to space through segregatory practice, which remains relevant until today. Through the design of enclosed compounds such as the aforementioned types, associations of merchants were clustered to exercise their communities' rights, privileges, and obligations. Hereby the chapter distinguishes between an Oriental paradigm of Arabo-Persian and Latin practices that originated along the Mediterranean Sea and an Occidental paradigm of Hanseatic and Portuguese practices that originated along the Atlantic Ocean.

The medieval Oriental practice of Ahdname as a type of negotiated charter capitulated a domestic authority's personal rights over specific subjects to a foreign authority. A merchant inn provided foreign merchants with a place of hospitality in order to ensure protection during their commercial activities across intercommunal trade routes. The multifunctional compound was outfitted with spaces to allow associations to temporarily lodge, store (warehouse), and sell (courtyard) their goods as well as to carry out community-building activities through locally provided amenities (altar, bathbasin, oven, etc.). The merchant inn embodied an approach to intercommunal relations based on the reciprocal recognition of foreign virtues.

The medieval Occidental practice of Cartaz as a type of imposed charter conceded a domestic authority's territorial rights over specific grounds to a foreign authority. Otherwise unauthorized to settle, a counter house enabled foreign associations of merchants to jointly own or rent property. The multifunctional compound allowed associations not only to permanently lodge, store (warehouse), and sell (courtyard) but also to lift (cranehouse), measure (weighhouse), tariff (customhouse), and insure their goods in-house. The fortified architecture of the counter house embodied an approach to intercommunal relations based on the asymmetric disregard of foreign virtues, which were viewed as outside the 'pale of civilization', beyond the sphere of 'international law'.

Hereby the chapter traces a shift from an Oriental to an Occidental paradigm in the approach to seeking protection from the imposition of trade duties and barriers. On the one hand, the Oriental approach is based on a personality of consular jurisdiction. Arabo-Persian and Latin envoys of commercial fraternities, guilds, or nations arbitrated disputes to defend common professional interests when maintaining intercommunal relations along trade routes. On the other hand, the Occidental approach is based on a territoriality of sovereign jurisdiction. Hanseatic and Portuguese trade agents did not rely anymore on the protective hospitality of domestic authorities but took matters in their own hands through often coercive means of imperialistic expansion, literally putting their stake in the ground.

Georgios Eftaxiopoulos
STASIS
Towards a Critique of Flexibility in Architecture



Interior View of Facebook's MPK20, Menlo Park, USA (Washington Post, 2015)

Flexibility, nowadays, constitutes the canon. Within an environment of constant estrangement and uprootedness, it is applied as a technique in order to achieve living spaces that are able to accommodate a series of different occupations, lifestyles and needs. This thesis argues that flexibility, antithetically, operates as an architectural tool towards the transformation of spaces that become far from being ‘free’, and instead alienate and restrict their inhabitants. In a period during which production has become a totalizing condition and has spread into the entire city, flexibility translates into a contemporary disguise covering the rigidity and stiffness of the market. Camouflaged through its rhetorical etymology, it produces a strange paradox; on one hand, enabling change and potential, and on the other hand, dictating it.

Introduced as a concept in parallel to the rise of industrialization, flexibility’s embodiment became the architecture of the industrial city. Providing a more efficient organization of production and larger construction possibilities capable of housing the grand machines of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, it manifested itself through the implementation of capital’s demands. From the early warehouses and textile mills, to the invention of the assembly-line and the single-story multifunctional shed, it offered a high level of optimization, surveillance and control. It was its embedded attribute—to anticipate changes and develop a fertile ground for production to advance—, which at the end of the twentieth century emerged into a rationale for the unfolding of the domestic life and the guarantor of new ways of living.

Problematizing this positive aura, the project will read flexibility in its critical dimension and conceptualize it through the idea of stasis. In particular, it will claim that, within our constant flux, flexibility unfolds as a technique to achieve a state of stillness and stability, relinquishing change and fixity as a mutually exclusive condition. Conclusively, with the intent to look beyond its phantasmagoria, the thesis, rather than distinguishing between ‘bad flexibility’ and ‘good flexibility,’ will claim that flexibility can neither act nor represent the potentiality and the refuge from production and exploitation; suggesting a new condition. A design system that rethinks the city as a storage.

Thesis Structure

Introduction

The Genealogy of Flexibility

I. Just-In-Time

West India Docks and the Urgency for Accumulation

II. Flexibility takes Command

Crystal Palace and the Rise of Liberalism

III. Permanent Flexibility

Fun Palace and the Surplus Value in Free Time

IV. Hyper-Flexibility

MPK20 and the New Flexible Accumulation

V. Frangar, Non Flectar

A New Grammar

Abstract of Chapter IV

which will be presented on Wednesday, December 12

Hyper-Flexibility

MPK20 and the New Flexible Accumulation

In spring 2015, the new Facebook MPK20, designed by Mark Zuckerberg and Frank Gehry, opened its doors. *Presenting a step further from the much discussed model of a theme-park office that Googleplex sought to achieve, it surpassed the latter's phantasmagoria and set forward a bare setting that functioned as a never-ending "work in progress."* The building, spatially translated into the largest single open room in the world, was conceived as a flexible environment able to be continuously renewed. From the roughness of its construction to the emptiness of the desks' surfaces, its responsiveness and adaptability became expressed across all the scales of the project.

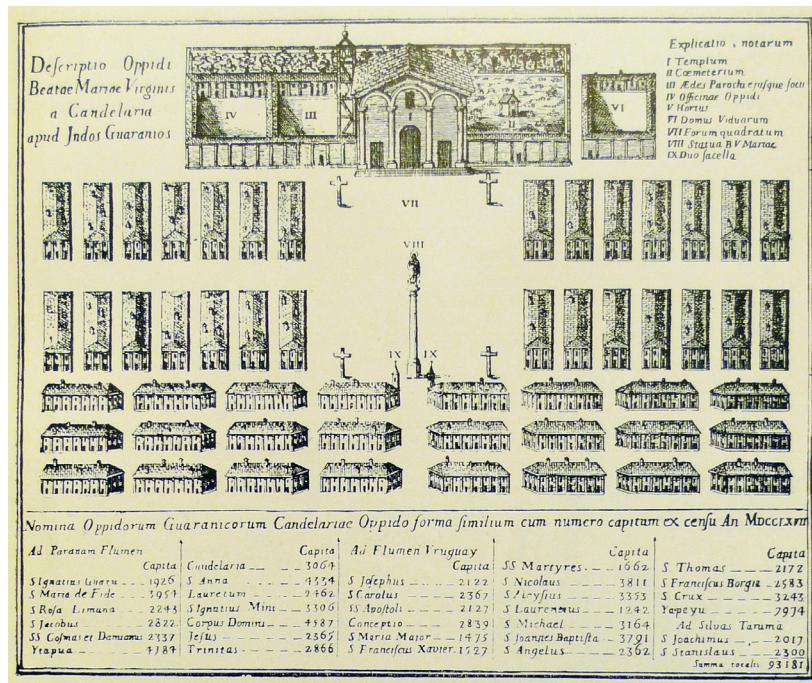
It was a glorified sense of incompleteness which was meant to be completed by the constant innovation, creativity and flexibility of the users themselves. With almost 3,000 employees and collaborators occupying this post-Fordist arena, new connections and encounters—thanks to its openness—seemed inevitable. This way, the space developed into a factory of optimal productivity able to be disguised under a flexible atmosphere of appropriation, play and free vending machines, by capitalizing on the insecurity and flexibilization that emerged following the 1970s.

The presentation will argue that the MPK20 took advantage of flexibility's inherent ambiguity and became the state-of-the-art architectural manifestation of today's form of life and hyper-flexibility.

Davide Sacconi

ARCHETYPES

A Project for the Brazilian City



The Archetype of the Reduction: plan of the Reduction of Candelaria.

José Manuel Peramás, *Descriptio Oppidi Beatae Mariae Virginis a Candelaria apud Indos Guaranos*, 1791

In the endless field of urbanization where every resource, every woman and man, every thought and relationship is put to work for one single end, for the production and reproduction of capital, can architecture still have a critical and projective role? Can architecture still resist to the all-encompassing managerial logic of the masterplan that flatten the political conflict to a false dichotomy between bottom-up and top-down approaches? Responding to this question the thesis proposes the archetype as a conceptual and methodological tool to reclaim the relationship between architecture and the city, between built form and the desires, hopes and ambition of emerging collective subjectivities.

The thesis retrieves and challenges the canonical typological discourse by understanding the archetype as opposed to type. If type is an abstraction that underpins the organization of space and thus implicitly imposes norms and behaviours, the archetype is a paradigmatic built form that, through its material presence, establishes an explicit rule that can be accepted or refused. In other words, while the type attempts to smoothen the conflicts inherent to power relationships, the archetype makes those conflicts legible and thus can foster the emergence of collective subjects antagonistic to the dominant ones. In fact archetypes emerge in response to specific conjunctures when the shifting of politico-economic conditions demands the reorganization of power relationships, opening the possibility for appropriation and re-appropriation of territories and the establishment of new forms of dwelling.

The notion of archetype is investigated within the particularly relevant context of Brazil, where, due to the specific geographical and historical conditions, colonization operate less by imposing an all-encompassing order than by strategically deploying archetypes that could give organization and orientation to the material and symbolic vastness of the territory.

The thesis examines three examples that epitomise crucial historical shifts.

In the early period of colonization the Jesuit Reduction is the archetype that emerges from the encounter with the radical alterity of the Brazilian territory and its native people, radicalising the role of urban and architectural form in constructing the common ground for the project of conversion and colonization. In the shift between the Empire and the Republic of the late 19th century, the Avenida is the archetype through which the elite of “coffee barons” and the “creole bourgeoisie” of entrepreneurs conquer the city and establish urbanization as the new paradigm of domination through capital reproduction.

Finally in the second half of the 20th century the archetype of the Cover proposes a form of resistance to the “developmentist” ideology established in the 1950s and embraced by the military dictatorship. The hovering presence of the Cover reclaims the possibility of a “savage monumentality” which opposes the domesticated space of the home and liberates the collective sphere by the economic dimension of the program. Building on this conceptual and methodological framework the thesis proposes the Open as an archetype for the organisation and representation of the emerging collective subjects of São Paulo. Challenging the equivalence of housing, privacy and property which underpins the paradigm of vertical urbanization and fortified enclaves in an evermore segregated and unequal Brazil, the Open proposes to reformulate the relationship between the urban and the rural, the domestic and the productive, the individual and the collective in São Paulo, to analogously expose a project for the Brazilian city at large.

Thesis Structure

I. Designing a Method

The Archetype as a Project for the City

II. Building the Other

The Jesuit Reduction and the Construction of a Form of Life

III. Conquering the City

The Avenida and the Paradigm of Urbanization

IV. Resisting Development

The Cover beyond Shelter

V. The Open

An Archetype for the Territory of São Paulo

An overview of the entire Thesis

will be presented on Wednesday, December 12