End-of-Term Presentations
June 27, 2019

Architectural Association School of Architecture
City/Architecture PhD Programme
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Programme

33 Bedford Square, First Floor, Front Room

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14.15 Enrica Maria Mannelli
15.00 Cosimo Campani
15.45 Lukas Pauer
16.30 Aylin Ayse Tarlan
17.15 Ioanna Piniara
18.00 Gili Merin
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Drawing is interpretation and further development (by the author) based on a 1989 sketch by Kazuyo Sejima as an original proposal for the Saishunkan Seiyaku Dormitory for Women.

Typology in architecture refers to the knowledge of Types, which can be described as composed of abstract ideas, criteria, categories, and rule systems for the concrete distribution of form, programme and symbolism. Housing became a biopolitical, ‘professional’ architectural, and typological project when the strategically managed reproduction of labour emerged as the focus of a cultural project as political strategy. Since the end of the Second World War in Europe the U.S. and Japan several examples of housing have emerged which tend towards being devoid of, or effacing typological composition, whether spatio-strategic, representational or symbolic. The thesis will focus on a close reading of a selected Japanese houses and housing that tend towards non-typological which have emerged surrounding 3 important moments of historical, cultural-economic rupture in Japan.

The historical aspect of the project picks apart the crucial role of housing form as an ‘instrumentalising node’ or apparatus of organisation in the ‘social factory’ and the indications and implications of the selected examples in their relationship to Capital's dispossession and construction of productive and accumulative assemblages. Most specifically what of concern in relation to housing form here is domestication or the construction of labour subjectivity and the role of spatial-mental distribution as subdivision of space and programming, a tendency towards the disappearance of these features, and the rise of new emotive, aesthetic affect amidst the emergence of new forms of abstraction for provoking and accumulating labour.

The design component of the thesis seeks to, on one hand, critique non-typological thinking and aesthetics in architecture (in their role towards internalisation and sublimation) in relation to forms of Capitalist abstraction and its tendency towards a clearing away of any reference or stability. In this emptiness Capital is able to dominate nervous liberated energies through other more abstract and illegible legal and financial mechanisms for dispossession, production and accumulation. On the other hand, the design thesis will argue that the destructive character of non-typological thinking must in fact go much further in a denaturalisation and destruction of sedimented layers of historical hierarchy, programming, and symbolism. This becomes especially urgent when we recognise that there is a tendency for typological thinking to be constantly reanimated from the grave as artificial, ‘familiar’ territorialities that in their seeming retrospective clarity, naturalness and timelessness help to prolong political consent for the reductive instrumentalisation of life and resources by Capital.

Several tendencies have recently emerged in Japanese housing as a consequence of Capitalism. These tendencies are reflective of and potentially anticipate coming realities outside of Japan. Two are critical to the design thesis. One is ‘a new giant house type’ called ‘share house’ that’s becoming increasingly common because of falling real wages, rejection of status quo ideals, and loneliness. Another is a tendency towards no-house. Sleeping, bathing and eating, as key forms of reproduction once considered the domain of housing, are increasingly dissipating into fragments distributed through the city which one can pay for by the single use or hour. Rather than a means of enforcing precarity, can a groundlessness be a means of liberating the subject from domination by forms of domestication and legal, financial abstractions?

The design will experiment with the deployment of non-typological architectural-procedural devices or briefs for housing identified through several case studies that have been discussed in the thesis so far. These may include (Anti)Universal (Mies, Tange, Kikutake), (Anti)Ritual (Aida, Non-Compositional (Fujii), House with No-Style (Fujikii, Koolhaas), Blank Containment (Sejima), 9 Square Grid (Baan, Hejduk), and Platform as No-House (Sejima, Ito). Instead of, like the architects mentioned above, testing these strategies at the scale and within many of the parameters of the single nuclear family house or compartmentalised family public housing apartment, the design will test these strategies at the scale of and tracing the tendencies described above: the big share house full of strangers and the tendency to no-house or fragmentation of what used to be considered house into the City.
This thesis studies the evolution of the “social factory”, focusing on Italy over the last 60 years as a case study. The concept of the social factory refers to a reading of the city as a system in which production is not limited to the workplace but is instead extended to the whole society. It is the process of exploitation and commodification of every aspect of the city, with the latter intended as the sum of spaces and relationships in which urban life takes place. The concept of the social factory was developed by Mario Tronti in the early 1960s as a reading of the Fordist society: “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”.

Therefore, the city is a factory itself, planned to fulfil the main goal of reproducing the labour force, i.e. making people productive. It is a system driven by capital and profit, where every single part of it (factories, housing, parks) and activity (work, housing, leisure) has a precise role and is planned according to the main production system. In the Fordist era, the factory was the main space of production and the workplace for excellence; today, however, at a time when we see the relentless increase of creative jobs, we are unable to mark the spatial boundaries of the work field. In the last 60 years, we have moved from the factory assembly line to the contemporary creative factory that exploits intellectual work.

As an illustration of this shift in the nature of work, Italy represents an interesting case study on account of the extensive theoretical and political contributions made by Italian thinkers and practitioners in the 1960s and 1970s on this precise topic. This thesis proposes to investigate the evolution of the social factory from the urban perspective, with the aim of creating a compelling history of the spatiality of these shifts that complements existing literature. In order to question the relationship and the influence of these shifts on the urban pattern, this research will analyse several Italian cities during the last 60 years: Turin, the factory; Bologna, the creative city; Rome, the autonomous social centre; Milan, the cooptation of the autonomous social centre. In doing so, it questions the urban form in two ways: as an outcome of the capitalist system, reading urban planning as a means of capitalism itself; and as a contested spatiality in which the struggles of workers and citizens occur.

Ultimately, this research project aims to suggest an urban policy able to tackle the Roman social factory, and to enable a system of social factory workshops. It identifies the Centro Sociale Occupato Autogestito (Self-managed occupied social centre; CSOA) as an important moment within the evolution of Italian theories of autonomy, and as an opportunity to challenge the relentless nature of capitalism.
This thesis is concerned with the difficulties that the disciplines of architecture and urbanism have encountered in articulating the social questions which characterize the contemporary European metropolis (and possibly its future evolutions). The main focus is how material production, such as manufacturing, returns as an important element in reading and designing the city.

Starting with general analysis on the contemporary city, the essay indeed attempts to tackle the broader historical, social and political issues emerging in today’s metropolis. For the past thirty years a growing body of research has observed the socio-political role of immaterial production in a service-based economy (Lazzarato 1996; Negri 2000; Virno 2004); abandoning important fields of research, such as the socio-political role of manufacturing. Along with this intellectual trend, as well as the disruptive forces of globalization, the project to escape the crisis from European industrial policies have to compete with large scale productions, where small and medium-sized economies are left behind (Becattini, 2009). As a matter of fact, this thesis becomes a counter-project, claiming for the emergence of new types of industrial districts, whose concern is to bring production back to the city, starting from the difficulties that the disciplines of architecture and urbanism have encountered in articulating the social questions which characterize the contemporary city.

### Legacy of Fabbrichetta: The Case of Veneto from the 1970s to the 1980s

This chapter explores one specific region in the North East of Italy. Veneto is an administrative region of 4.5 million people. Exporting over 80% of its production the region represent the Ground Zero of material production as one of the wealthiest productive areas in Europe.

However this is historically the site of some of the most reactionary - and localist - political agendas led by the Northern League movement. It was the first to claim for regional autonomy in policing and hard regulation of immigration flows, although this economic model made its fortune on the global market and labor exploitation over migrants.

By exploring the socio-economic transformations in Veneto’s production landscapes over the past decades, it will become evident that the coming to be of the globalized Veneto’s territory can only be understood in the context of the new geographies of production and consumption. According to Francesco Indovina, territorial transformations such as the Veneto’s countryside depopulation as well as changes in production processes - among a wide range of socio-economic factors that this chapter will take later into consideration - has determined a radical urbanization of the countryside, which consequently has led to the citta’ diffusa (literally Diffused City). In order to have a general understanding of this phenomena this chapter takes into account the decentralisation of production to small businesses - such as domestic work -, as a process of productive reorganisation that is closely linked to Veneto’s territorial urbanization.

Therefore, there is an important body of research who observes the economic geography of the “Veneto Model” - or “Veneto Miracle”, as well as numerous studies that have attempted to identify the region’s post-Marshall economic success within the development of local systems of production called Industrial Districts or Clusters, organically spread throughout the territory. Various forms of collectivities, such as “Proximity” and “local trust”, on one hand and individual entrepreneurship on the other - largely mediated by the family and the institution of local Churches -, have allowed the Fabbrichetta to emerge.

As such, Fabbrichetta becomes the key device in the Città Diffusa’s formalization. The isolated countryside villa becomes a domestic space of production where the family controls the organization of labour. Given these points, this chapter indeed attempts to tackle the broader historical, social and political moment which characterizes the shift from the city to the “metropolitan archipelago” - symbolically expressed by the movement of families from the city to the countryside. The “diffusion” that implies these situations, has usually been considered as the product of a laissez-faire stance. In this chapter, the aim is instead to demonstrate that città diffusa has been intentionally pursued - through specific technical mechanisms that I will explore further - and widely accepted by policy discourses.
This dissertation investigates material objects and compounds as sources of evidence for the projection of power, authority, and influence. By portraying nation-state borders as impermeable and easy to demarcate, scholars often fail to address the more porous and fluid realities of borders between politically organized communities across time. Still today, the world is fragmented into issue-related zones which materially surpass the seemingly continuous borders of the nation-state. Frontiers and boundaries are embodied by material objects and compounds. Borders have never entirely been immaterial.

Border markers link authority, an immaterial force, to its claimed domain. Markers materialize social relations in space. As seemingly minor or banal objects, they can nevertheless have enormous territorial implications. Still, intercommunal relations’ actual material devices on the ground have rarely been subjected to theorizing throughout history. How has materiality been employed to legitimize techniques of empire-building through which bodies and spaces were made subjects? In their various historical appearances, border markers are subject and structure to this dissertation. This research hypothesizes the possibility of tracing seemingly continuous borders of the nation-state. Frontiers and boundaries are embodied by material objects and compounds. Borders have never entirely been immaterial.

In its larger aim, this research seeks to define immaterial concepts through their material conditions, becoming apparent through human-made spatial facts on the ground in various types and scales. It seeks to interrogate the ability of architectural design practice to manifest power where stable and extensive means of control are challenged. This will ultimately allow the audience of this research to reconcile with a condition which has always been inherent but never fully untangled.
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 phenomenon, the thesis will analyze a series of examples from Forma Urbis, Bufalini 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 Forma being an abstraction. It is 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.

In this chapter I will investigate maps of Rome that were directly influenced by this gesture and marked the beginning of Figure Ground maps. This chapter will essentially focus on survey maps of Rome by Leonardo Bufalini and Giovanni Battista Nolli. First I will start by looking at different representations of Rome before these survey maps, from iconographic portraits to bird's eye view representation where the main concern is to give a sense of the city, an image. These different representations were used by tourists and pilgrims, and had the purpose of making the city familiar and recognizable, the so called Memorabilia. But with the incessant need to expand the city and manage land there was a need for a more accurate way to represent urban form. This necessity marks a transition from the visual to the measured paralleled by a shift in land management.

The pianta grande of G.B. Nolli besides its iconic character essentially emphasizes this transition by representing the city as a cadastral map. In order to understand the Nolli map we need to look at L. Bufalini's map of Rome and retrace the whole evolution of cartography. It is also important to understand, who sponsored these maps and why? Both surveyors, L. Bufalini as well as G.B. Nolli were commissioned by the papal state and in addition, Nolli had investments from private land owners, aristocrats and free masons involved in this venture. They were both produced in a period in which the city needed renovations and had the aim of understanding land division, securing its civic administration, political leadership and providing taxation reform. These survey maps become an instrument for extension and consolidation of power for both the private owners and the papal state in legitimizing land ownership. The role of the surveyor becomes crucial in the making of these maps, it requires not only scientific knowledge but also jurisdiction and remains as a neutral ground between different authorities. Survey mapping as described by L.B. Alberti was already used by G. da Sangallo and Leonardo da Vinci for the cities of Imola and Pisa for military defensive purposes, but in L. Bufalini and G.B. Nolli maps were mainly used as a cadastral registry dealing with issues of land propriety and ownership.

This map definitely influenced the making of a cadastral map of Rome, but as seen in the previous chapter it was part already of the Roman jurisprudence tradition.

In early representations of the city such as iconographic maps or view-maps there is a built void relationship of what we see, landmarks being Figure and topography or void being Ground. But in survey maps, the city is no longer an image of what we see but a mathematical abstraction; data. This relationship of Figure Ground in the latter, puts in evidence land management that has political and economical connotations.
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 1980s 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. The thesis argues that, due to its economic usage associated with property and individualism, the private has hardly existed as such in the neoliberal era. The daunting failure of the market-based homeownership model and the alarming issues of alienation and care in the urban domestic realm, negate privacy as an affirmation of essential autonomy, while, on the contrary, raise links with its classical concept of deprivation.

The thesis deploys a typological study as the main methodological tool to demystify the rationale of the neoliberal city through selected urban housing schemes in London, Berlin and Athens, which mark both a geographical and chronological arrow of neoliberal advance: from anticipation to severe crisis. The Barbican Estate (1952-82) introduces council housing to a broader cultural project to recapitalize on urbanity by promoting a certain image of subjectivity and lifestyle in the city-centre. The International Building Exhibition (IBA) of 1987 renders housing policy as the regulator of advanced neoliberal conflicts between globally competitive architecture and urban form as the indicator of historical and proprietary relations. The last case study portrays the galloping neoliberalization of a society in lack of a strong welfare state tradition: the derailment of mass petit-bourgeois home ownership into an ill-practiced model of ‘villafication’ of the centre based on unsustainable debt. The conversion scheme ‘One Athens’ (2007-2014) opens up to the latest neoliberal trend: the colonization of urban housing infrastructure in crisis by large-scale international investment capital. Therefore, the projective part of the thesis proposes a shift from economy towards an ecology of the private. Ecology, originally denoting reasonable use of the habitat, is facilitated by Kant’s idea of common sense as a way to temper ill-devised private sense. Thus, the spatial resolution addresses privacy as the possibility of preserving personal autonomy through a practice of commoning.

The proposed framework aims to escape the neoliberal binary logic of private and public as corporate-individual versus corporate-state, and is developed on three levels: juridical, strategic and architectural. Thus, it aims to provide a model which not only secures affordability through the policy of market-removed community-owned land found in the institution of the Community Land Trust, but also demonstrates distinct features of urban form and architectural organization. The development of the design phase will validate the whole proposal through a paradigmatic intervention into the historical, yet deteriorating, ‘Trigono’ community settlement in Kessariani, Athens. It belongs to the ‘refugee block settlements’, some of the most iconic modernist social housing complexes of the 50’s in Athens as part of a state initiative to accommodate a vast influx of Greek refugees. The innovation they introduced in downtown living has resisted neoliberal attempts of privatization and the block structures, freely arranged and recessed within a green cluster, have preserved a sense of neighbourhood and privacy which seems long gone from the city centres. The project aims to radicalize this premise by reconfiguring the role of the state in its potential to put forward a housing alternative; on the institutional level as a possible partnership between the proposed juridical framework and the local (municipal) authorities, and on the architectural level as a manual for strategic, cost-efficient transformations that can yield a quality of domestic privacy in collective living.
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 of collective memory. While these paradigmatic ideas did not necessarily originate in Jerusalem, but in the west, where this ultra-dramatic journey was constructed as a sequence of artistic representations ordered across mountains tops, within the city, or inside a single church. Perhaps the most elaborate example is that of Sacro Monte di Varallo in the Italian Alps, founded in 1491 by a Franciscan monk who built a series of unique chapels that each staged a station in Christ's life. Using colourful, life-size sculptures that were dressed in everyday clothes, real-life objects and scenographic frescoes of vernacular landscapes, these mini-theatres transmitted a religious narrative by drawing pilgrims into the scene where they could be immersed in the Passion as participants. As an ordered sequence of scenes, Varallo constructs theatrical suspense and anticipation that culminates in Christ's resurrection and the pilgrim's own salvation, achieved through an affective identification with Christ and his suffering.

In the context of Counter-Reformation Italy, the Sacro Monte of Varallo (and the numerous Sacri Monti that were constructed according to its blueprint) was used to domesticate and control the affective use of imagery amongst the Catholic believers, who were often of illiterate background. Varallo’s realistic stations mediated a narrative (initially distant both in space time) by familiarizing the scenes and eventually rendering the Scriptures ever more legible. Discarding geographical specificity and opting for a narrative-based devotion, the Via Crucis exemplifies the most creative moment in Jerusalem pilgrimage, when flexibility of place and imagination of the faithful rendered territorial affiliation (hence violent appropriation) unnecessary.
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 intend 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.

Georgios Eftaxiopoulos

STASIS
Towards a Critique of Flexibility in Architecture

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