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**Cover image**

Yácata pyramid in Tzintzuntzan built communally by the Purépecha, an indigenous group from Northwest Mexico, never conquered by the Aztecs, taken to represent the local ethnic identity. Photo by Felipe Hernández.

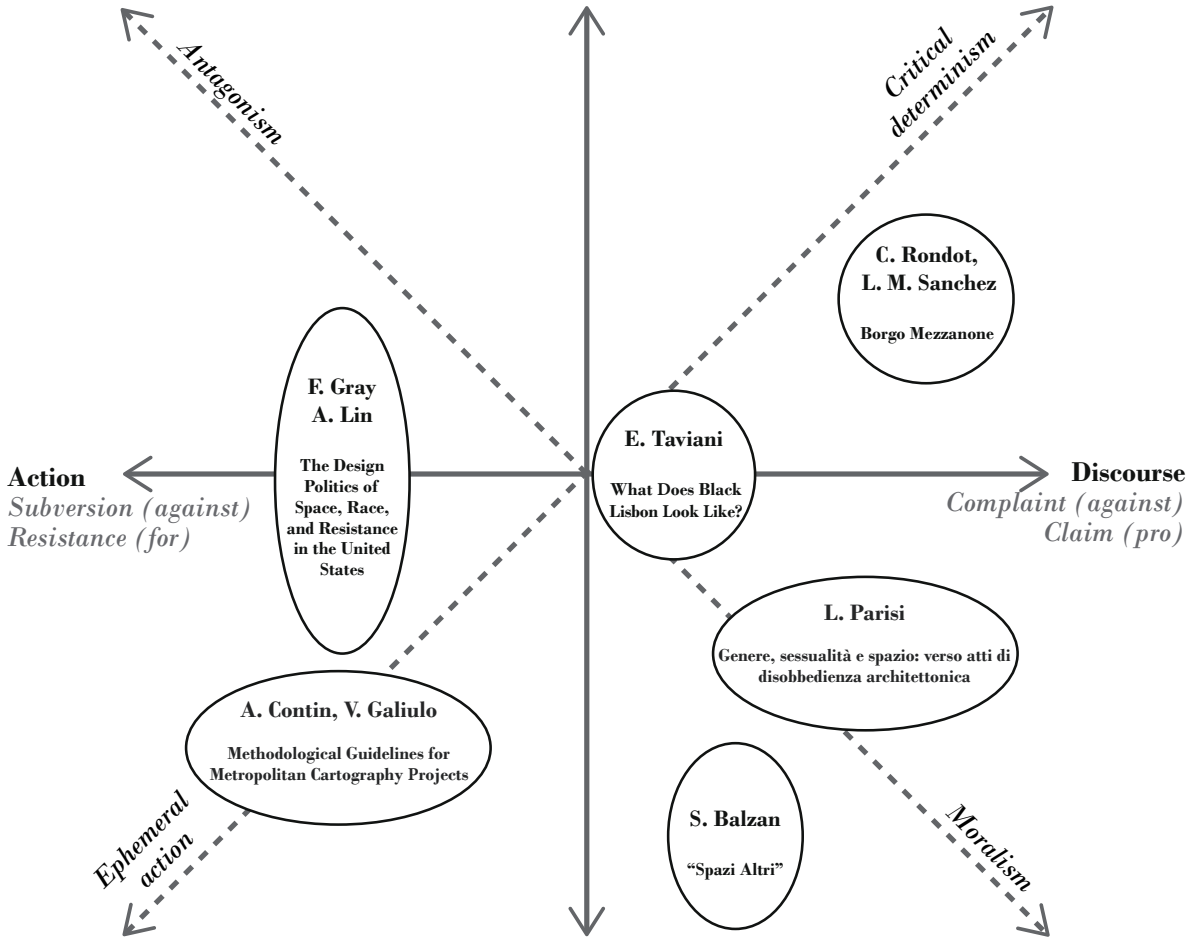
# Ardeth #09

## contents

- 5 **Space of Domination or Domination of Space?**  
The Editorial Board of “Ardeth”
- 23 **RACE. Exploring the Modern-Colonial Legacy in Contemporary Architecture**  
Felipe Hernández
- 29 **The Design Politics of Space, Race, and Resistance in the United States**  
Stephen F. Gray, Anne Lin
- 51 **Borgo Mezzanone. Rurality, Ethnic and Race Conflict**  
Camilla Rondot,  
Luis Martin Sanchez
- 77 **What Does Black Lisbon Look Like? Urban Online Imagery and the Place of Race**  
Elena Taviani
- 95 **“Spazi Altri”. Razza e classe nel Mozambico tardo coloniale**  
Silvia Balzan
- 117 **Methodological Guidelines for Metropolitan Cartography Projects. Mapping the Accumulation of Contested Territories in Southern Latitudes Metropolitan Cities**  
Antonella Contin,  
Valentina Galiulo
- 135 **Metaphorizing Burn-out or Missing the Point of the Project. Exhaustion Otherwise**  
Camillo Boano
- 149 **Gender, Sexuality and Space: Towards Acts of Architectural Disobedience**  
Luisa Parisi
- 157 **Reviews**
- 163 **Ardeth #11**  
Simona Chiodo

**Machine**

*Coercion, segregation, control  
(domination over bodies)*



**Mirror**

*Locality, identity, collective memory  
(domination over representations)*

**RE: #08**

**C. Boano**

Metaphorizing  
Burn-out or Missing  
the Point of the  
Project

# Space of Domination or Domination of Space? Spazio del dominio o dominio dello spazio?

**The Editorial Board of "Ardeth"**

With this issue, "Ardeth" opens the debate on the project to an unsettling issue, due to the articulated controversies that discussing race in connection to space and its design may have, and before that for the difficulties in focusing on what race implies depending on by who and in what context the term is appropriated. On this latter point, the editorial decision to keep the title of the call for papers *Race* in English, without translation into Italian, reflected the concern that a limited conversation in languages other than English might lose the current use of the term. In Anglo-Saxon contexts, especially when used by racialized subjects, race recalls a social construction and a structural phenomenon with effects on the material world and technologies, to the point of questioning whether race is "a technique that one uses, even as one is used by it – a carefully crafted, historically inflected system of tools, mediation, or enframing" (Chun, 2009: 7). During the long elaboration for this "Ardeth" issue, Silvia Montis – the Italian translator of *Why I'm no Longer Talking to White People about Race*, by Renée Eddo-Lodge – wrote in a note to the volume that, "with reference to the issues addressed in the original

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**ARDETH #09**

**1 – Translation in English of all texts originally published in Italian is by the authors.**

**2 – We use this word in a very broad sense, which presupposes a reference to the notion of domination as it has been consolidated in critical theory, starting with seminal texts such as the *Dialectics of the Enlightenment* (Horkheimer, Adorno, 2010).**

**3 – The documentary takes up Langdon Winner's famous article, *Do Artifacts Have Politics?* (Winner, 1980), which blamed Robert Moses for purposely having the bridges on the parkways to Long Island built at such a height that buses, almost exclusively used by the African-American population, could not pass. We thank Albena Yaneva for discussing this with some of us a few years ago.**

text, the absence of a code shared by a fairly large community of speakers – and the observation that, for some concepts, perhaps new words were needed, which naturally could not be artificially made up”, would not urge “to solve terminology questions, but to open them up”<sup>1</sup> (Montis, 2021). In February 2021, the podcast “On Race” by Nadeesha Uyangoda, Natasha Fernando and Maria Catena Mancuso proposed to “open up a conversation on the race issue in Italy – and to do so with up-to-date language and in a format that voices Italians of color”, noting that “Race, in the United States, is a commonly used word; instead in Germany it is used within quotes, in France has a footnote added (to say: ‘races don’t exist’), in Italy it’s avoided”. In the academic field, Alana Lentin has analyzed this “silence” around the word race in continental Europe, after the Second World War (Lentin, 2008 and 2020), while Mackda Ghebremariam Tesfaù and Giovanni Picker have described the Italian context as “post-racial”, or one that excludes “not only the relevance of race (which colorblindness chiefly does), but the very possibility of naming facts, organizational logics, official discourses and circumstances” (Ghebremariam Tesfaù, Picker, 2020: 3) as pertinent to racialized subjects in Italy. These are the arguments underlying *Race* beyond the Anglo-Saxon perimeters of use. In addition, in academia and in the design professions, wherever the perception prevails of a primarily national and homogeneous community of practices, there are no explicit conversations using such a lens to discuss the transmission of historical knowledge and technical standards related to the transformation of space, the reconstruction of innovation trajectories and patrimonialization. It would take more layered and plural voices (and points of view) to undertake such a challenge.

Back to the built and designed environment, it condenses the effects of multiple dynamics: forms of life intersecting with present and past power relations, conflicts between groups, classes, social bodies, economic trajectories and paths of individuals. These effects, insofar as they are inscribed in space, retroactively offer a broad spectrum to interpret in the matrices of agentivity (human and non-human) a palimpsest of domination<sup>2</sup> (of practices and policies of extraction, control, segregation, colonisation...). Recognizing correlations does not legitimize the recognition of an ever coherent system of causes and intentional actions of this matrix of agentivity, revealed through the traces imprinted in the material body of inhabited space. The age-old question engulfs the social sciences and, perhaps, will never find a peaceful answer. Francesco Garutti and Shahab Mihandoust's 2014 documentary, *Misleading Innocence (Tracing what Bridge Can Do)*, was perhaps one of the most recent examples of critical discussion on this point (Garutti, Mihandoust, 2014).<sup>3</sup> The film investigates the effects of technology and artifacts, their political use and intrinsic agency, beyond declared intentions, without glossing over issues of transparency in decisions and the exercise of power.



To use the lexicon of design, then, once a necessary relationship between cause (of domination) and effect (of space form) has been identified, would it be possible to operate in the opposite direction, modifying that effect of space to the point of giving it a power capable of intervening at the level of domination relations? If it is already difficult to be sure that the form of space *mirrors* the form of domination (as well as bearing the signs and scars of it), proposing to change dominion orders by transforming space risks being *out of reach*.

Assuming, if only as a limiting hypothesis, that these two conditions are plausible: that is, that (1) the form of space is the effect of a dominant order – of exploitation, segregation, extraction, control – and that (2) by acting on space one can modify that order – making the effect a new cause, in turn able to produce new emancipatory effects. Even with these assumptions, for a magazine that calls itself “a magazine on the power of the project”, the fundamental question remains: what role would the architectural project play in this transformation? What power could we attribute to the project as such? Because, of course, while it is true that a transformation of physical space could have many effects *if it were implemented*, an architectural project goes through trials and tests that are inscribed in existing power structures and institutions. So, is it possible for an architectural project to be subversive and act against the order that creates it?

Far from being a neutral and, in the end, conciliatory practice, since it is inherent to the project to act in a network of determining relationships that refer to the external power of politics, institutions, capital, etc.,<sup>4</sup> the imagined neutrality of the architect presupposes a task carried out on a different plane of controversy (a creative, or technical plane, capable of conciliation). In order to practise this imagined neutrality, the architect can assume the responsibility of *staying outside*, deciding not to become an accomplice, from time to time, of property speculation, worker exploitation, spatial segregation or other nefarious intentions.<sup>5</sup> But, with respect to the previous assumptions, neutrality can in no way serve as a rhetorical pivot for the legitimization of architects’ practices: because the challenge posed is precisely not to remain outside the controversies around the issues that the Race call mobilizes – segregation, discrimination and systemic racism – but to play a tangible subversive role in them. If this role is out of reach, then for the architectural project we should speak of *impotence*.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the most relevant examples on this horizon of challenges concern operations of a cultural nature. Take, for instance, Sumayya Vally’s design for the Serpentine Pavilion 2021, with its four Fragments spread across London (Serpentine Galleries, 2021). Responding to the historical erasure and scarcity of informal spaces, the pavilion was a tribute to existing and erased places that hosted diasporic and multicultural communities and aimed to reveal and make visible places and practices of non-dominant culture. A different sensibility

**4 – This is what Stephen Gray and Anne Lin observe in their piece: “we aim to reorient planning and design away from a do-no-harm approach, with a neutrality that only serves to perpetuate legacies of racism, and toward one of explicit anti-subordination”.**

**5 – See, for example, Franco La Cecla’s polemic in *Against Architecture*, regarding Renzo Piano’s design for the Columbia University campus in Harlem (La Cecla, 2008).**

produced other interesting examples – such as the Museum of Modern Art’s New York exhibitions *Reconstructions. Architecture and Blackness in America* (MoMa, 2021), and *The Project of Independence. Architectures of Decolonization in South Asia, 1947-1985* (MoMa, 2022) – which show how the issue directly affects architecture. However, it is fair to ask what the reception of operations such as these has been, in addition to restoring a different plurality of voices in highly educated and generally already sensitised audiences. How much can we be satisfied with critical representations of the relationship between *Race* and architecture?

### *Pars construens*

The articles in this issue contend specifically with the conceptual impossibility and political impotence of the project when confronted with this challenge. Speaking of Race and the architectural project, a hypothesis emerges from the multiplicity of positions on how to situate the project in relation to the scope, scale and rank of the phenomena with which the authors are faced. In many cases, architecture and its design seem to be more the scene that “reflects” conditions of a social and racial nature, but there is no lack of operative suggestions, stories and descriptions of particular places and situations. The illusory character of project neutrality seems to be better revealed: especially in cases of peripheral, ordinary projects, managed in the folds of communities, architectural design practices appear inextricably interwoven with many other types of practices. In each of these cases, contingently, the forms of the interweaving between what we would identify as the “architectural project” and other activities and phenomena give substance to specific conditions of domination. There is no possible neutrality for a project that happens and struggles to be brought to life in a neighbourhood; if anything, this is impotence. However, it is precisely along the margins of impotence that one can trace a partial reversal: architectural projects bring with them *potential* for interference, effectiveness and capacity for action, within conflictual situations, whose multidimensionality is always much more extensive than the perspective connected to a merely architectural intervention. It would seem that the question needs to be reframed. Not a general question, such as: how can we imagine a fair, non-discriminatory, non-segregating city through architectural design? But rather a specific question: To what extent does this project, which takes place *here and now*, offer the possibility of displacing *this* situation of domination? What opportunities does it open up? What equilibriums does it unblock? Of course, such a radicalization of the contingency of design power has many consequences, in the first instance because it becomes very difficult to make a generalization and theory out of it. There are many different answers, but they are almost always based on localised circumstances and situations.

The plane in which we feel we can place this issue is therefore based on two pairs of complementary extremes. The first pair positions the articles

in relation to a series of fundamental dilemmas, which emerge from the considerations just made:<sup>6</sup> What relationship can we define between the forms of power and domination and the material form of space? Is it space that produces domination, through measures of separation, control and coercion, or is it domination that forges space in its own image, manipulating the mechanisms of representation, identity and collective memory? Should we recognise the characters of a device that produces effects on bodies, or should we decrypt the values that give identity to places? What are the most appropriate forms of resistance and action: is it a question of dismantling a machine, or of breaking a mirror? The two possibilities do not exclude but complement each other. In some articles, a hypothesis emerges according to which it is material space that embodies domination and segregation – as in the case of **Gray** and **Lin**, who describe “racialized spaces [...] [They were] socially engineered by racial zoning and restrictive deeds”. Whereas in other texts, the idea that domination generates and orients values by translating them into space clearly prevails – so much so that for **Parisi**, for example, it is necessary to “reveal how architecture contributes to the production of gendered, racial, sexual subjectivity”.

The second pair in our outline concerns the programmatic dimension of the articles, which, depending on the situation, either construct arguments oriented towards a proposal for action and a project, or enunciate a discourse of a critical nature, if not outright denunciation. Here a problem of ambivalence arises, which in some texts remains unsolved: given a certain place, one can consider it either as a spatial matrix of a (negative) situation that should be modified or eradicated, or as a particular (positive) configuration of an identity or memory to be defended. Thus for example (but this is not the only case) **Rondot** and **Sanchez** describe Borgo Mezzanone as both a hell of slavery and a place of unexpected vitality and urbanity. In the oscillation of this ambivalence, between what should be defended and what should be subverted, critical discourses of vindication and denunciation emerge on the one hand, and pragmatic proposals for intervention and resistance on the other.

In summary, the horizontal axis represents the programmatic dimension, between the more *action*-oriented hub of proposals (of resistance or transformation) and the hub that leans toward a *discourse* of a critical nature (of denunciation or vindication). The vertical axis, on the other hand, attempts to measure the positions, more or less explicit, that the various authors express regarding the relations between material space and the many forms of domination: reciprocal and symmetrical relations, or of prevailing determination, of one term over the other depending on the cases shown. Thus, upward indicates the prevalence of the spatial *machine* that produces domination directly over bodies, while downward indicates the prevalence of the dominant system that reflects its values and representations in space, as in a *mirror*.

**6 – Dilemmas**  
reminiscent of one  
other, addressed  
in the fourth issue  
of “Ardeth,” *Rights*,  
about the relation-  
ship between norm  
and form.

**Gray** and **Lin** regard urban space as a vector of political values, in two senses. On the one hand, “[politically constructed] meanings of race and identity shape our built environments”; on the other hand, the built environments “politicize individuals within them”. Such urban space is considered as much on the level of its identity power, which is symbolic in nature, as on the material level, which is of an exclusive and segregationist nature. The purpose of the Community First Toolkit developed in conjunction with Harvard Design School is to make design a “generalizable human practice”, capable of “aligning architects, planners, and designers with struggles for racial equity” in both symbolic and material terms. Although, in the end, the dimension of collective representations and vindications seems to prevail in the practice of design futuring, geared toward “channeling design imagination towards reparative, just futures”. The field of the symbolic would thus be the complementary key to action, since, as the authors write, *representation is a privilege, and representation is power*. **Contin** and **Galiulo** recapitulate research on “Metropolitan Cartographies” in Latin America. In this case, the crucial assumption is the *otros saberes*, the local intelligences and skills that are in danger of being erased by colonialist and extractivist metropolitan development. The research aims to “represent the values of the contested territories” and moves on a plane that programmatically includes the dimension of values and affections. **Rondot** and **Sanchez** investigate the case of Borgo Mezzanone, an “extreme” territory, a segment of a sub-Saharan city occupying Italian territory, in the heart of the countryside in the province of Foggia. Through photographs and cartographic visualizations, the authors expose the fragile and inequitable conditions of those places, dependent on extractive logics and exploitative dynamics. The exploration of the forms of territory restores the ambivalent character of space, both as a device of segregation, control and coercion, and as a tool of resistance and diversity. **Taviani** investigates the urban dimension of “blackness”-“urban racialization” and its materialization in places and architecture, through digital visualization tools to try to shed light on the complexity of the relationships between race and places in Black Lisbon. Racialization manifests itself through the *omission* of spatial elements, recognizable through phenomena of exclusion and marginalization, which is opposed, while resisting, by the concrete garrison of places by the people who materially inhabit them. Spatial practices, such as suburban informal farming, limit the consequences of relocations to increasingly marginal areas: “They are the fruit of daily resistances and essential economic support for a number of families. They are also the hub of old friendships”. **Balzan** explores paradoxes and ambiguities in the late Portuguese colonial experience in Africa. Based on a historical case study investigation, she problematizes the notions of race and class through the perspective of intersectionality. The production of space is reread in light of the “multiplicity of social players and ideological instances involved in co-determining notions of race and

class". Moving beyond the static category of race there is an in-depth examination of the "other protagonists of colonization, initiators of other spaces that struggle to find an easy place in the strictly oppositional logic between colonizers and colonized, blacks and whites". Physical architectural-urban space is then reread as a translation of "class and race consciousness in order to understand the conditions under which they develop and how they are intertwined". Finally, **Parisi** proposes to critically read the relationships between gender, sexuality and architectural space. The discourse is essentially based on the plane of representations: "reality has shown that the seemingly innocent conventions of architecture operate covertly within a system of power relations to convey social values". Consequently, the design dimension is oriented toward interventions that are essentially performative and cultural in nature.

**7 - A built in** example of this is the story of the monument erected in 1936 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to celebrate 14 years of the fascist party: a spiral staircase of 14 steps that Haile Selassie decided not to demolish, but to re-signify by placing the Lion of Judah at the top (Decolonizing Architecture Art Research, 2019).

#### *Four forms of impotence*

We conclude with a summary that is a resolution for the future. The distribution of items in our diagram is skewed toward discourses of a critical nature, but also toward a focus on those forms of domination that are manifested through the monopoly of representations and signifying connotations of places. Proposals for the transformation of space oriented to intercept the material dimension of this dominion remain in the background. The published texts are a contribution, limited in comparison to the enormous possibility of exploration, to going beyond the dominant collective narratives, helping us to see and decipher spatial manifestations and practices layered, hidden, and overlapping in them. Learning to give voice and relevance to these insights that emerge from other perspectives, so that they may find expression and speak out as distinctive modes of existence and truth in the arenas that make up the space of common living, is an unavoidable challenge.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, with respect to the material dimension of the problem posed in this issue of "Ardeth" and the possibilities for action that architectural research and the journal could develop to effectively transform the world, the spectre of impotence does not seem to have faded at all.

Each quadrant of the diagram represents, on the one hand, a potentially relevant aspect of the *Race* theme to which the project might attempt to respond. But at the same time the quadrants manifest, on the dividing line of their diagonal, a peculiar form of impotence, which is also a risk of radicalization. We could even name four types of impotence, into which architectural design, and its theories, are in danger of falling: critical determinism, moralism, ephemeral action, and antagonism.

Moving away from the items actually present and looking at the plan and its axes, proceeding clockwise, we could say that the first quadrant (top right) allows us to see the way in which the conditions of domination materialize in space, creating separation effects, fostering surveillance, discrimination and exclusions with respect to resources, environmental

**8 – The example of L. Winner cited above is, in some ways, an example of this.**

**9 – In the sense in which Latour defines the attitude of “moralists”. “There will always be a strong temptation to include in the world of facts one of the values one wishes to promote. By dint of small nudges, the reality of what is will gradually become loaded with all that one would like to see exist” (Latour, 2000: 111).**

quality, etc. But the radicalization of this stance produces forms of *critical determinism*, which end up attributing effects to spatial configurations that probably emerge from a much more intricate set of factors.<sup>8</sup> The second quadrant (lower right) is the field in which critical analyses are structured, that are capable of demystifying the arrangements of values, memories, and implications declared as *natural* or *historically determined*, with which inhabited space is imbued. The urban semiosphere is a battlefield that requires continuous deconstruction operations. On the other hand, at the point when the signifying dimension of space is assumed in its autonomy, there is a risk of overestimating the ability of critical discourse to affect the built environment, falling into forms of new idealism and *moralism*.<sup>9</sup> The third quadrant (lower left) allows us to focus on the potential that places offer for tangible operations of critical resemantization of the semiosphere. But, at its extreme, it can result in a program of exclusively performative actions that aim to act on values and symbols with inevitably *transient* effects because they fail to permanently change the material palimpsest of the city. Finally, the fourth quadrant (top left), considering the action and material dimensions of domination, can effectively aim to challenge the very infrastructure and its socio-technical power, in which the conditions of segregation, control and value extraction reside latently. Yet, even in this case, the claim to transform this material arrangement in an immediate way, without recognizing its institutional, legal and even symbolic substance, can lead toward forms of *antagonism* that purport to impose themselves on space without mediation, refusing to submit to the convoluted game of procedures and norms – and end up remaining marginal, or abusive. The challenge that unfolds, in the face of what *Race* poses to us as a necessary horizon, is to be aware of these forms of impotence. Project research can deploy strategies that make critical discourse and concrete interventions complementary, moving in a circular fashion from the form of physical space to the multiple implications of its meanings, constraints, memories and identity connotations. Designing is like transiting from one point to another of the field we have drawn, through its center, to increase the effectiveness of architectural designs within these tensions. Concluding with a purpose for the future suggests that we present the issue as open-ended. We believe that republishing the call for papers in full, instead of the usual editorial by the guest editor, frames the collected contributions and relaunches crucial topics many months after – and in a context that has profoundly changed – the time in which they were initially conceived (Autumn 2020). We look forward to receiving further ruminations to be accounted for in future issues.

Con questo numero, “Ardeth” apre il dibattito sul progetto a un tema scomodo da trattare, per le articolate controversie che parlare di razza in relazione allo spazio e al suo progetto può avere, ma prima ancora per le difficoltà a mettere a fuoco cosa *race*/razza sottintenda a seconda di chi e in che contesto si appropria del termine. Su questo secondo punto, la decisione redazionale di mantenere il titolo della call for papers *Race* in inglese, senza traduzione in italiano, rifletteva la preoccupazione che una conversazione limitata nella nostra lingua non mettesse a fuoco l’uso corrente del termine nel mondo anglosassone. In quel contesto, soprattutto quando usato da soggetti razzializzati, *razza* richiama una costruzione sociale e un fenomeno strutturale con effetti sul mondo materiale e le tecnologie, fino a chiedere se non sia «una tecnica che si usa, anche quando se ne viene usati – un sistema di strumenti, intersezioni, o cornici, attentamente costruito e storicamente declinato»<sup>1</sup> (Hui Kiong Chun, 2009: 7).

Durante la lunga elaborazione di questo numero di “Ardeth”, Silvia Montis – traduttrice italiana di “Perché non parlo più di razzismo con le persone bianche”, di Reno Eddo-Lodge – scriveva in una nota alla traduzione che «l’assenza, relativamente ai temi affrontati nel testo, di un codice condiviso da una comunità di parlanti abbastanza ampia – e la constatazione che, per alcuni concetti, occorre forse parole nuove, che non si potevano naturalmente inventare a tavolino» non rende urgente «esaurire la questione della terminologia, ma di aprirla» (Montis, 2021). Nel febbraio 2021, il podcast “Sulla razza” di Nadeesha Uyangoda, Natasha Fernando e Maria Catena Mancuso proponeva di “intavolare una conversazione sulla questione razziale in Italia – e di farlo con un linguaggio aggiornato e in un format in cui le voci degli italiani di colore sono pressoché assenti”, a partire dalla constatazione che «*Race*, negli Stati Uniti, è una parola di uso comune; invece in Germania la virgolettano, in Francia inseriscono una nota a piè di pagina (che dice “le razze non esistono”), in Italia la rifuggono». In ambito accademico, Alana Lentin ha analizzato tale “silenzio” attorno alla parola *razza* nell’Europa continentale del secondo dopoguerra (Lentin, 2008 e 2020), mentre Mackda Ghebremariam Tesfaù e Giovanni Picker tratteggiano il contesto italiano come “postrazziale”, portato cioè ad escludere «non solo la rilevanza della *razza* (come proprio del *colorblindness*), ma la possibilità stessa di dare un nome a fatti, logiche organizzative, discorsi ufficiali e circostanze» (Ghebremariam Tesfaù, Picker, 2020: 3) come pertinenti a soggetti razzializzati in Italia. Questi sono alcuni dei ragionamenti sottintesi a *race*/razza oltre i perimetri dell’uso anglosassone del termine. A cui aggiungere che nell’accademia e nelle professioni progettuali, ovunque prevalga la percezione di relativa omogeneità propria di una comunità di pratiche prioritariamente nazionali, non esistono conversazioni esplicite con questa lente sulla trasmissione delle conoscenze storiche e degli standard tecnici legati alla trasformazione dello spazio, sulle ricostruzioni delle catene di innovazione e di patrimonializzazione. Per farlo, servirebbero molte voci e punti di vista stratificati e plurali.

**1 – La traduzione in lingua italiana delle citazioni tratte dai saggi pubblicati in inglese è a cura degli autori.**

**2 – Usiamo questa parola in un senso molto ampio, che presuppone un riferimento alla nozione di dominio così come si è consolidata nella teoria critica, a partire almeno da testi seminali quali la *Dialettica dell'illuminismo* (Horkheimer, Adorno, 2010).**

**3 – Il documentario riprende il celebre articolo di Langdon Winner, *Do Artifacts Have Politics?* (Winner, 1980), che imputava a Robert Moses di aver fatto costruire appositamente i ponti sulle *parkways* per Long Island a un'altezza tale da non consentire il transito ai bus, quasi esclusivamente utilizzati dalla popolazione afroamericana. Ringraziamo Albena Yaneva per averlo discusso con alcuni di noi qualche anno fa.**

**4 – È ciò che osservano Stephen Gray e Anne Lin nel loro pezzo: "we aim to reorient planning and design away from a do-no-harm approach, with a neutrality that only serves to perpetuate legacies of racism, and towards one of explicit anti-subordination".**

Ritornando alla dimensione dello spazio costruito e progettato, esso condensa gli effetti di dinamiche molteplici: forme di vita intersecate con le relazioni di potere presenti e passate, conflitti tra gruppi, classi, corpi sociali, traiettorie economiche e percorsi di individui. Tali effetti, in quanto iscritti nello spazio, offrono, retroattivamente, un ampio spettro per leggere nelle matrici di agentività (umane e non) un palinsesto del dominio<sup>2</sup> (delle pratiche e politiche di estrazione, controllo, segregazione, colonizzazione). Riconoscere correlazioni non implica, tuttavia, che questa matrice di agentività si configuri come un sistema sempre coerente di cause e di azioni intenzionali, rivelate attraverso le tracce impresse nel corpo materiale dello spazio abitato. L'annosa questione investe le scienze sociali e, forse, non troverà mai una risposta pacificata. Il documentario del 2014 di Francesco Garutti e Shahab Mihandoust, *Misleading Innocence (Tracing what a Bridge Can Do)*, è stato forse uno degli esempi più recenti di discussione critica su questo punto (Garutti, Mihandoust, 2014)<sup>3</sup>.

Il film indaga gli effetti della tecnologia e dei manufatti, il loro uso politico e l'intrinseca agentività, oltre le intenzioni dichiarate, senza sorvolare sui temi della trasparenza delle decisioni e dell'esercizio del potere. Utilizzando il lessico del progetto, quindi, una volta individuata una relazione necessaria tra causa (di dominio) ed effetto (di forma dello spazio), sarebbe possibile agire in senso inverso, modificando quell'effetto di spazio fino a dargli un potere capace di interferire al livello dei rapporti di dominio? Se già è difficile essere sicuri che la forma dello spazio *rispecchi* la forma del dominio (oltre a portarne i segni e le cicatrici), proporsi di cambiare gli assetti di dominio trasformando lo spazio rischia di essere un obiettivo *fuori portata*.

Nonostante questo rischio, proviamo ad assumere, anche solo come ipotesi limite, che queste due condizioni siano plausibili: ovvero che (1) la forma dello spazio sia l'effetto di un assetto dominante – di sfruttamento, segregazione, estrazione, controllo... – e che (2) agendo sullo spazio si possa modificare quell'assetto – facendo dell'effetto una nuova causa, a sua volta capace di produrre nuovi effetti di emancipazione. Anche con queste assunzioni, per una rivista che si definisce «a magazine on the power of the project» resterebbe aperta la domanda fondamentale: *che ruolo avrebbe il progetto di architettura in questa trasformazione? Che potere potremmo attribuire al progetto in quanto tale?* Perché, naturalmente, se è vero che una trasformazione dello spazio fisico potrebbe avere molti effetti *se fosse realizzata*, un progetto di architettura attraverso prove e verifiche che sono iscritte negli assetti di potere e nelle istituzioni esistenti. Dunque, è possibile che un progetto di architettura possa essere sovversivo, agendo contro l'ordine che lo istituisce?

Dal momento che agisce in una rete di relazioni determinanti, che rimandano al potere esterno della politica, delle istituzioni, del capitale, ecc., il progetto è ben lontano dall'essere una pratica neutrale<sup>4</sup> e, in fondo, conciliante: l'immaginata neutralità dell'architetto presuppone un compito svolto su un piano diverso da quello delle controversie (un piano



creativo, o tecnico, capace di conciliare). Per praticare questa immaginaria neutralità, l'architetto può assumere la responsabilità di *restare fuori*, decidendo di non diventare complice, di volta in volta, della speculazione immobiliare, dello sfruttamento dei lavoratori, della segregazione spaziale o di altri intenti nefasti<sup>5</sup>. Ma, rispetto alle assunzioni precedenti, la neutralità non può in nessun modo fungere da perno retorico per la legittimazione della pratica degli architetti: perché la sfida che si pone è proprio di non rimanere fuori dalle controversie attorno ai temi che la call *Race* mobilita – la segregazione, la discriminazione e il razzismo di sistema – ma di avere in esse un ruolo sovversivo tangibile. Se questo ruolo è fuori portata, allora per il progetto di architettura dovremmo parlare di *impotenza*.

Forse non è un caso che gli esempi più rilevanti che si possono cogliere in questo orizzonte di sfide riguardino operazioni di natura culturale. Prendiamo per esempio il progetto di Sumayya Vally per il Serpentine Pavilion 2021, con i suoi quattro *Fragments* dislocati per Londra (Serpentine Galleries, 2021). In risposta alla cancellazione storica e alla scarsità di spazi informali, il padiglione era un omaggio a luoghi esistenti e cancellati che hanno ospitato comunità diasporiche e multiculturali e si proponeva di svelare e rendere visibili luoghi e pratiche della cultura non dominante. Una diversa sensibilità ha prodotto altri esempi di grande interesse – come le mostre del Museum of Modern Art di New York *Reconstructions. Architecture and Blackness in America* (MoMa, 2021), e *The Project of Independence. Architectures of Decolonization in South Asia, 1947–1985* (MoMa, 2022) – che mostrano quanto la questione investa direttamente l'architettura. Tuttavia, è lecito chiedersi quale sia stata la ricezione di operazioni come queste, oltre a restituire una diversa pluralità di voci in circuiti di pubblico altamente istruito e generalmente già sensibilizzato. Quanto possiamo accontentarci delle rappresentazioni critiche del rapporto tra *Race* e architettura?

### *Pars construens*

Gli articoli di questo numero si misurano proprio con l'*impossibilità* concettuale e l'*impotenza* politica del progetto, di fronte a questa sfida. Parlando di *Race* e progetto architettonico, emerge dalla molteplicità delle posizioni un'ipotesi su come collocare il progetto rispetto alla portata, alla scala e al rango dei fenomeni con cui gli autori si confrontano. In molti casi l'architettura e il suo progetto sembrano essere più la scena che "riflette" condizioni di natura sociale e razziale, ma non mancano i suggerimenti operativi, i racconti e le descrizioni di luoghi e situazioni particolari. Sembra svelarsi meglio il carattere illusorio della neutralità del progetto: specie in casi di progetti periferici, ordinari, gestiti nelle pieghe delle comunità, le pratiche progettuali architettoniche appaiono inestricabilmente intrecciate con molti altri tipi di pratiche. In ciascuno di questi casi, in modo contingente, le forme dell'intreccio tra ciò che individueremmo come "progetto architettonico" e altre attività e

**5 – Vedi, ad esempio, la polemica di Franco La Cecla in *Contro l'architettura*, nei confronti del progetto di Renzo Piano per il Campus della Columbia University ad Harlem (La Cecla, 2008).**

**6 – Dilemmi che ne ricordano un altro, affrontato sul quarto numero di “Ardeth”, *Rights*, a proposito del rapporto tra norma e forma.**

fenomeni, danno consistenza a condizioni specifiche di dominio. Non c'è neutralità possibile per un progetto che accade e faticosamente cerca di attuarsi in un quartiere; semmai, appunto, si tratta di impotenza. Tuttavia, è proprio lungo i margini dell'impotenza che si può rintracciare un parziale rovesciamento: i progetti di architettura portano con sé dei *potenziali* di interferenza, efficacia e capacità di azione, entro situazioni conflittuali, la cui multidimensionalità è sempre molto più estesa della prospettiva connessa ad un intervento meramente architettonico. La domanda allora sembra dover essere riformulata. Non una questione generale, del tipo: «in che modo possiamo immaginare una città equa, non discriminante, non segregante, attraverso il progetto di architettura?»; quanto piuttosto una domanda particolare: «In che misura *questo* progetto, che avviene *qui e ora*, ha la possibilità di destituire *questa* situazione di dominio? Che chances apre? Che equilibri sblocca?». Naturalmente una tale radicalizzazione della contingenza del potere dei progetti ha molte conseguenze, in primo luogo perché diventa molto difficile farne una generalizzazione e una teoria. Le risposte sono diverse, ma fondate quasi sempre su circostanze e situazioni localizzate. Il piano in cui ci sembra di poter collocare questo numero si fonda pertanto su due coppie di estremi complementari. La prima coppia posiziona gli articoli rispetto a una serie di dilemmi fondamentali, che emergono dalle considerazioni appena fatte<sup>6</sup>: che rapporto possiamo definire tra le forme del potere e del dominio e la forma materiale dello spazio? È lo spazio a produrre dominio, attraverso misure di separazione, controllo e coercizione, oppure è il dominio a forgiare lo spazio a sua immagine, manipolando i meccanismi di rappresentazione, identità e memoria collettiva? Dobbiamo riconoscere i caratteri di un dispositivo che produce effetti sui corpi, oppure dobbiamo decrittare i valori che danno identità ai luoghi? Quali sono le forme di resistenza e azione più adeguate: si tratta di disinnescare una macchina, oppure di rompere uno specchio? Le due possibilità, appunto, non si escludono ma si completano. In alcuni articoli emerge l'ipotesi secondo cui è lo spazio materiale a dare corpo al dominio e alla segregazione – come nel caso di **Gray e Lin**, che descrivono «spazi razzializzati (*racialized spaces*) [...] ingegnerizzati secondo uno zoning razziale e atti restrittivi». Mentre in altri testi prevale decisamente l'idea che il dominio generi e orienti i valori traducendoli nello spazio – tanto che per **Parisi**, ad esempio, è necessario «svelare come l'architettura contribuisce alla produzione di soggettività di genere, razziale, sessuale».

La seconda coppia del nostro schema riguarda la dimensione programmatica degli articoli, che a seconda dei casi costruiscono argomenti orientati verso una proposta di azione e di progetto, oppure enunciano un discorso di natura critica, se non di vera e propria denuncia. Qui si pone un problema di ambivalenza, che in alcuni testi resta insoluto: dato un certo luogo, lo si può considerare sia come matrice spaziale di una situazione (negativa) che andrebbe modificata o eradicata, sia come

configurazione peculiare (positiva) di un'identità o di una memoria da difendere. Così per esempio (ma non è l'unico caso) **Rondot e Sanchez** descrivono Borgo Mezzanone tanto come un inferno di schiavitù, quanto come un luogo di vitalità e urbanità inaspettate. Nell'oscillazione di questa ambivalenza, tra ciò che deve essere difeso e ciò che andrebbe sovvertito, si delineano discorsi critici di rivendicazione e denuncia, da un lato, e proposte pragmatiche di intervento e resistenza, dall'altro. In sintesi, l'asse orizzontale rappresenta la dimensione programmatica, tra il polo delle proposte più orientate all'*azione* (di resistenza o di trasformazione) e il polo che inclina verso un *discorso* di natura critica (di denuncia o di rivendicazione). L'asse verticale invece tenta di misurare le posizioni, più o meno esplicite, che i vari autori esprimono a proposito dei rapporti tra spazio materiale e le molte forme del dominio: rapporti reciproci e simmetrici, o di determinazione prevalente, di un termine sull'altro a seconda dei casi illustrati. Così, verso l'alto, si indica la prevalenza della *macchina* spaziale che produce dominio direttamente sui corpi, mentre verso il basso si colloca la prevalenza del sistema dominante che riflette i propri valori e rappresentazioni nello spazio, come in uno *specchio*.

**Gray e Lin** considerano lo spazio urbano come un vettore di valori politici, in due sensi. Da un lato, «i significati di razza e identità danno forma al nostro ambiente costruito», dall'altro l'ambiente costruito «politicizza gli individui al proprio interno». Tale spazio urbano è considerato tanto sul piano del suo potere identitario, di natura simbolica, quanto su quello materiale, di natura escludente e segregazionista. Lo scopo del *Community First Toolkit* messo a punto con la Harvard Design School è di rendere il progetto una «pratica umana generalizzabile», capace di «allineare architetti, urbanisti e designers con le lotte per l'equità razziale», sia in termini simbolici che materiali. Anche se, alla fine, la dimensione delle rappresentazioni collettive e delle rivendicazioni sembra prevalere nella pratica del *design futuring*, orientata a «canalizzare l'immaginazione progettuale verso futuri giusti e riparatori». Il campo del simbolico sarebbe dunque la chiave complementare dell'azione, dal momento che, come scrivono gli autori, *representation is a privilege, and representation is power*. **Contin e Galiulo** ricapitolano una ricerca sulle «Cartografie Metropolitane» in America Latina. In questo caso il presupposto cruciale sono gli *otros saberes*, le intelligenze e le competenze locali che rischiano di essere cancellate da uno sviluppo metropolitano di tipo colonialista ed estrattivista. La ricerca si propone di «rappresentare i valori dei territori contesi», e si muove su un piano che include programmaticamente la dimensione dei valori e degli affetti. **Rondot e Sanchez** indagano il caso di Borgo Mezzanone, un territorio «estremo», un segmento di città sub-sahariana che occupa il territorio italiano, nel cuore della campagna della provincia di Foggia. Attraverso fotografie ed elaborazioni cartografiche, gli autori denunciano le condizioni di fragilità e disuguaglianza di quei luoghi, dipendenti da logiche

estrattive e dinamiche di sfruttamento. L'esplorazione delle forme del territorio restituisce il carattere ambivalente dello spazio, sia come dispositivo di segregazione, controllo e coercizione, sia come strumento di resistenza e diversità. **Taviani** indaga la dimensione urbana della "blackness" – "urban racialization" – e la sua materializzazione nei luoghi e nelle architetture, attraverso strumenti di visualizzazione digitali per provare a fare luce sulla complessità delle relazioni tra *race* e i luoghi nella Black Lisbon. La razzializzazione si manifesta attraverso l'*omissione* di elementi spaziali, riconoscibili mediante fenomeni di esclusione e marginalizzazione, a cui si oppone, resistendo, il presidio concreto dei luoghi da parte delle persone che materialmente li abitano. Le pratiche spaziali, come l'agricoltura informale suburbana, limitano le conseguenze dei ricollocamenti in aree sempre più marginali: «Sono il frutto delle resistenze quotidiane e del sostegno economico essenziale per alcune famiglie. Sono anche il fulcro di vecchie amicizie». **Balzan** esplora paradossi e ambiguità nell'esperienza tardo coloniale portoghese in Africa. Basandosi su un'indagine storica per casi studio, problematizza le nozioni di razza e classe attraverso la prospettiva dell'intersezionalità. La produzione dello spazio viene riletta alla luce della «molteplicità di attori sociali e istanze ideologiche implicate in nozioni di razza e di classe che si co-determinano». Superando la categoria statica di razza sono approfonditi quegli «altri protagonisti della colonizzazione, iniziatori di spazi *altri* che difficilmente trovano una facile collocazione nella logica strettamente oppositiva tra colonizzatori e colonizzati, bianchi e neri». Lo spazio fisico architettonico-urbanistico viene quindi riletto come traduzione della «coscienza di classe e di razza per capire le condizioni in cui esse si sviluppano e in che modo si intrecciano». Infine, **Parisi** propone di leggere criticamente le relazioni tra *gender*, sessualità e spazio architettonico. Il discorso si fonda essenzialmente sul piano delle rappresentazioni: «la realtà ha dimostrato che le convenzioni apparentemente innocenti dell'architettura operano segretamente all'interno di un sistema di relazioni di potere per trasmettere valori sociali». Di conseguenza la dimensione progettuale si orienta verso interventi di natura essenzialmente performativa e culturale.

#### *Quattro forme di impotenza*

Concludiamo con un bilancio che è un proposito per il futuro. La distribuzione degli articoli nel nostro diagramma è sbilanciata verso i discorsi di natura critica, ma anche verso un'attenzione per quelle forme di dominio che si manifestano attraverso il monopolio delle rappresentazioni e delle connotazioni significanti dei luoghi. Restano sullo sfondo le proposte di trasformazione dello spazio orientate a intercettare la dimensione materiale di tale dominio. I testi pubblicati sono un contributo, limitato rispetto all'enorme possibilità di esplorazione, per andare oltre le narrative collettive dominanti, aiutandoci a vedere e a decrittare manifestazioni spaziali e pratiche in esse stratificate, nascoste, e sovrapposte. Imparare a

dare voce e rilevanza a questi saperi che emergono da altre prospettive, perché trovino espressione e prendano parola come peculiari modi di esistenza e di verità nelle arene che compongono lo spazio del vivere comune, è una sfida imprescindibile<sup>7</sup>. Allo stesso tempo, rispetto alla dimensione materiale del problema posto in questo numero di “Ardeth” e alle possibilità di azione che la ricerca architettonica e la rivista potrebbero sviluppare per trasformare efficacemente il mondo, lo spettro dell’impotenza non sembra essere affatto svanito.

Ciascun quadrante del diagramma rappresenta, da un lato, un aspetto potenzialmente rilevante del tema *Race*, a cui il progetto potrebbe tentare di rispondere. Ma allo stesso tempo i quadranti manifestano, sulla linea di fuga della loro diagonale, una peculiare forma di impotenza, che è anche un rischio di radicalizzazione. Potremmo persino nominare quattro tipi di impotenza, in cui il progetto architettonico, e le sue teorie, rischiano di cadere: il determinismo critico, il moralismo, l’azione effimera e l’antagonismo.

Allontanandoci dagli articoli effettivamente presenti e osservando il piano e i suoi assi, procedendo in senso orario, potremmo dire che il primo quadrante (in alto a destra) ci consente di vedere il modo in cui le condizioni di dominio si materializzano nello spazio, creando effetti di separazione, favorendo la sorveglianza, le discriminazioni e le esclusioni rispetto alle risorse, alla qualità ambientale, ecc. Ma la radicalizzazione di questo atteggiamento produce forme di *determinismo critico*, che finiscono per imputare alle configurazioni spaziali effetti che probabilmente emergono da un complesso molto più intricato di fattori<sup>8</sup>. Il secondo quadrante (in basso a destra) è il campo in cui si articolano le analisi critiche che sono capaci di demistificare quegli assetti di valori, memorie, implicazioni dichiarate come *naturali* o *storicamente determinate*, di cui lo spazio abitato è intriso. La semiosfera urbana è un campo di battaglia che richiede continue operazioni di decostruzione. D’altra parte, nel momento in cui la dimensione significativa dello spazio viene assunta nella sua autonomia, si rischia di sopravvalutare la capacità di incidenza del discorso critico sullo spazio costruito, cadendo in forme di nuovo idealismo e *moralismo*<sup>9</sup>. Il terzo quadrante (in basso a sinistra) consente di mettere a fuoco il potenziale che i luoghi offrono per operazioni concrete di risemantizzazione critica della semiosfera. Ma, al suo estremo, può tradursi in un programma di azioni esclusivamente performative che puntano ad agire sui valori e i simboli con effetti inevitabilmente *effimeri*, perché non riescono a modificare stabilmente il palinsesto materiale della città. Infine il quarto quadrante (in alto a sinistra), considerando l’azione e la dimensione materiale del dominio, può efficacemente puntare a mettere in crisi proprio le infrastrutture e il loro potere sociotecnico, in cui si annidano in modo latente le condizioni di segregazione, controllo ed estrazione del valore. Eppure, anche in questo caso, la pretesa di trasformare questo assetto materiale in modo immediato, senza riconoscerne la consistenza istituzionale, giuridica e anche simbolica, può condurre

**7 – Un esempio** costruito in questo senso è la storia del monumento eretto nel 1936 ad Addis Abeba in Etiopia per celebrare i 14 anni del partito fascista: una scala elicoidale di 14 gradini che Haile Selassie decise di non demolire ma di risignificare ponendovi in cima il Lion of Judah (Decolonizing Architecture Art Research, 2019).

**8 – L’esempio di** L. Winner citato in precedenza ne è, per certi versi, un esempio.

**9 – Nel senso in cui** Latour definisce l’atteggiamento dei “moralisti”: «Sarà sempre forte la tentazione di includere nel mondo dei fatti uno dei valori che si desidera promuovere. A forza di piccole spinte, la realtà di ciò che è si caricherà a poco a poco di tutto ciò che si vorrebbe veder esistere» (Latour, 2000: 111).

verso forme di *antagonismo* che pretendono di imporsi sullo spazio senza mediazioni, rifiutando di sottoporsi al contorto gioco delle procedure e delle norme – e finendo per restare marginali, o abusive.

La sfida che si apre, di fronte a ciò che *Race* ci pone come orizzonte necessario, è di essere coscienti di queste forme di impotenza. La ricerca sul progetto può mettere in atto delle strategie che rendano complementari il discorso critico e gli interventi concreti, passando circolarmente dalla forma dello spazio fisico alle implicazioni molteplici dei suoi significati, vincoli, memorie e connotazioni identitarie. Progettare è come transitare da un punto all'altro del campo che abbiamo disegnato, attraverso il suo centro, per aumentare l'efficacia dei progetti di architettura in seno a queste tensioni.

Chiudere il bilancio del numero con un proposito per il futuro ci suggerisce di presentare il numero come un risultato aperto. Riteniamo che ripubblicare integralmente la call for papers, in luogo del consueto editoriale a cura del guest editor, possa mettere in prospettiva i contributi raccolti e rilanciare i temi ancora scoperti a molti mesi di distanza e in un contesto profondamente mutato rispetto all'epoca della sua concezione (Autunno 2020). Ci auguriamo di ricevere ulteriori ragionamenti di cui rendere conto nei prossimi numeri.

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# Editorial

**Felipe Hernández**

Architecture is an inward looking discipline. Its history conveys the norms of the discipline to an audience composed mostly of architects, who are familiar with the work of their predecessors – from whom they learnt, or for whom they worked. As such, architecture singularises the multiple processes through which space is produced, excluding difference in the pursuit of coherent narratives to sustain its authority, and does so mainly through the figure of the architect. For a long time now, critics like Beatriz Colomina, Diana Agrest, Mary McLeod, Jane Rendell (to mention only a few) have shown how that figure is principally male. However, little has been said about the fact that the figure of the architect is also white; a racial classification that refers not only to epidermal characteristics, but to their national origin, education, and in most cases their class affiliation.

The history of architecture in general, and modern architecture in particular, is constructed on a very narrow basis: a handful of European and North American architects whose work influenced others around the world generating an international movement. As such, there is an apparently clear origin that

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also establishes a hierarchy and has a colour of skin. Contributions by African Americans in the United States of America, Afro-descendants in South America, Aborigines in Australia, have not been registered in the architectural history book with the same prominence, as revealed in the recent volume *Race and Modern Architecture. A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present*, wonderfully edited by Irene Cheng, Charles L. Davis II and Mabel O. Wilson.

Recent books, especially in the United States of America, are beginning to explore the significant contribution of Black architects to the construction of modern cities in their country. The impact of these studies is enormous, even though the focus remains on “blackness”, reducing the complexity of race as a socio-cultural signifier to one group. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary amply to explore the concept of race, so as to include other terms that have been deployed as, or along with race in recent years, for example Arab, Indigenous, Jewish, or Eastern European. It is equally important to explore other contexts where race continues to play an enormously divisive role, like in Europe, as well as well as the implications of race in countries like China, Japan or Indonesia to mention only a few.

The recent announcement that, for the first time in its 173-year history, the RIBA Gold Medal was awarded to an African-born British architect, Sir David Adjaye, was met with celebration. But it also drew attention to the fact that the number of black registered architects in the United Kingdom has dropped to 1%, while in the USA, only 2% of all registered architects are African-Americans, and of those only 0.3% are women.

Similar statistics are found in countries with large Afro-descendant populations like Brazil or Colombia, and even South Africa where only 65 women were registered as architects in 2017. These figures demonstrated the lack of diversity in architectural practice, and urgent need to review access to the profession. And while these statistics refer to the absence of black architects, little is known about Indigenous Australians, Aymara in Bolivia, or First Nations Peoples in Canada, and their contribution to architecture.

As such this issue of *Ardeth* intends to expand discussions about race in architecture, intersecting a broad range of ethno-racial groups, while simultaneously displacing the debate to include regions where it needs more and urgent attention, like in Europe and Latin America, as well as in countries like China and Japan. Thus, for this issue, we seek articles that explore diversity in the profession as well as in education. We also invite papers that embrace multiple methodological agendas to study the contribution of ethnic minority architects around the world, and articulate the potential inherent in the notion of non-white architectures in an attempt to decolonise the discipline.

Authors can use race as a lens to explore a broad range of issues including, but not limited to:

- Expand the narrow margins of current debates about race in architecture.
- Explore the intersections between race, ethnicity, class and gender in contemporary architectural practice.
- Explore the impact of these intersections in the materialization of cities and architectures around the world.
- Explore the contemporary geography of the profession, engaging academic and first-hand experiences by professionals.
- Revisit the history of the profession in specific regions of the world, providing architectural grounds for a more inclusive debate.
- Investigate the extent to which architectural education perpetuates colonial principles therefore reinforcing ethno-racial boundaries in the so-called non-West.
- Examine critically the construction of inherent ‘classes’, from technologies to forms, related to instrumental use of the locale, as well as national and indigenous styles of work and construction.
- Investigate the possibilities for the existence of non-white architectures through the study of specific buildings.

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L'architettura è una disciplina che guarda a se stessa. La storia dell'architettura trasmette le norme della disciplina a un pubblico fatto soprattutto di architetti, che devono conoscere il lavoro dei loro predecessori – dai quali hanno imparato, o per i quali hanno lavorato. In questo modo, l'architettura rende singoli i processi multipli attraverso i quali lo spazio viene prodotto, eliminando le differenze alla ricerca di narrazioni coerenti che possano sostenere l'autorità della disciplina – e lo fa, soprattutto, attraverso la figura dell'architetto-autore. Da tempo ormai autrici come Beatriz Colomina, Diana Agrest, Mary McLeod e Jane Rendell (per nominarne solo alcune) hanno mostrato che questa figura è, di norma, maschile. Tuttavia, ancora poco è stato detto rispetto al fatto che questa figura è anche bianca; una classificazione razziale che si riferisce non solo a caratteri epidermici, ma anche all'origine geografica, al tipo di educazione ricevuta, e nella maggior parte dei casi alla classe sociale di appartenenza. La storia dell'architettura in generale, e dell'architettura moderna in particolare, è costruita su un orizzonte di riferimento ristretto: una manciata di architetti europei e nordamericani il cui lavoro ha influenzato altri e generato un movimento internazionale. In questo senso, c'è un'origine chiara che definisce una specifica gerarchia ed è connotata da uno specifico colore della pelle. I contributi degli afroamericani negli Stati Uniti d'America, degli afrodiscendenti in America Latina, degli australiani aborigeni, non sono stati registrati nelle storie dell'architettura moderna con la stessa forza, come rivela il recente *Race and Modern Architecture. A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present*, curato magistralmente da Irene Cheng, Charles L. Davis II e

Mabel O. Wilson. Libri recenti, specialmente negli Stati Uniti d'America, stanno iniziando a esplorare il contributo significativo degli architetti neri nella costruzione della città americana moderna. L'impatto di queste ricerche è enorme, anche se l'attenzione rimane concentrata sul concetto di "blackness" riducendo la complessità della "razza" come significante socioculturale a un unico gruppo. Per questo motivo, è urgente ampliare il concetto di razza a includere altri termini che sono stati utilizzati al suo posto, o al suo fianco, in tempi recenti: come Arabo, Indigeno, Ebreo, o Est-europeo. È altrettanto importante esplorare altri contesti nei quali la razza continua ad avere un ruolo sensibilmente divisivo, come in Europa, così come le implicazioni della razza in nazioni come la Cina, il Giappone, o l'Indonesia – per nominarne solo alcuni. Il recente annuncio che, per la prima volta nei suoi 173 anni di storia, la RIBA Gold Medal è stata assegnata a un architetto britannico nato in Africa, Sir David Adjaye, è stato molto ben accolto. Ma ha anche attirato l'attenzione sul fatto che il numero di architetti di colore iscritti all'ordine professionale nel Regno Unito si è ridotto all'1%, mentre negli Stati Uniti solo il 2% di tutti gli architetti iscritti all'ordine sono afroamericani, e di questi solo lo 0,3% sono donne. Numeri simili sono riscontrabili in nazioni con ampi segmenti di popolazione di discendenza africana come il Brasile o la Colombia, e addirittura il Sudafrica dove soltanto 65 donne erano iscritte all'ordine nel 2017. Questi numeri dimostrano la mancanza di diversità nella pratica, e la necessità impellente di rivedere le modalità di accesso alla professione. E se queste statistiche si riferiscono all'assenza di architetti neri, molto poco si sa degli indigeni in Australia, degli Aymara in Bolivia, o dei Popoli delle Prime Nazioni in Canada, e riguardo al loro contributo all'architettura. In questo senso, questo numero di *Ardeth* intende allargare la discussione sulla razza in architettura, intersecando una varietà ampia di gruppi etnico-razziali, e spostando il dibattito in luoghi dove è necessaria una maggiore attenzione, come l'Europa e l'America Latina, e nazioni come la Cina e il Giappone. A questo scopo, in questo numero cerchiamo articoli che esplorino la diversità nella professione e nella formazione. Cerchiamo anche articoli che utilizzino prospettive metodologiche e agende diverse per studiare il contributo di architetti appartenenti a minoranze etniche in luoghi diversi del mondo, e articolare le potenzialità di architetture non-bianche nel tentativo di decolonizzare la disciplina. Gli autori possono usare il concetto di razza come lente per esplorare una varietà di questioni, che includono le seguenti, ma non solo:

- espandere i confini stretti del dibattito corrente sulla razza in architettura;
- esplorare le intersezioni fra razza, etnia, classe e genere nella pratica contemporanea di architettura;
- esplorare l'impatto di queste intersezioni nella produzione dello spazio delle città e delle architetture in luoghi diversi del mondo;

- esplorare la geografia contemporanea della professione, nelle esperienze dirette dei professionisti e nel dibattito accademico;
- rivisitare la storia della professione in regioni specifiche del mondo, fornendo materiale per un dibattito più inclusivo;
- investigare la misura in cui la formazione architettonica riproduce principi coloniali e rinforza confini razziali ed etnici nelle regioni cosiddette non-occidentali del mondo;
- esaminare criticamente la costruzione di “classi” intrinseche, dalle tecnologie alle forme, che sono relative a un uso strumentale del locale e a stili di lavoro e costruzione identificati come indigeni e nazionali;
- investigare le possibilità dell’esistenza di architetture non-bianche attraverso la ricerca su oggetti ed edifici specifici.

***racialization***

• ***antiracist***

***design • anti-***

***racist plan-***

***ning • spatial***

***imaginary***

# The Design Politics of Space, Race, and Resistance in the United States

Stephen F. Gray (1), Anne Lin (2)

## *Abstract*

This essay provides an overview of how space has been linked to racialized systems of oppression in the United States as well as how design and planning present possibilities for action. It outlines historic and relational contexts of culture, geography, and physical infrastructure through which racialized systems, actors, and inherited practices of politicization impart both physical imprints on the landscape as well as impacts on hegemonic or shared identity. It then introduces a conceptual framework for liberatory futuring, considering how architects and planners intersect with systems of race, identity, and place and how they might become advocates and active co-conspirators for liberation.

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Buildings and other physical sites of privilege and power are perceived as incidental to, rather than drivers of, political and cultural values. Yet architects and planners clearly hold agency and decision-making power over the physical form of spaces.

### *Introduction*

The design of cities concentrates resources in some places and marginalizes communities in others. And while the particular histories, policies, practices, and projects producing these socio-spatial divisions may vary by territory, the lines of separation invariably demarcate differences in race, ethnicity, caste, or class (Cox, 1948; Lake and Reynolds, 2008). This relationship between space and politically constructed forms of identity informs where people live or don't live, determines their relative access to resources and opportunities, defines the power dynamics involved with how spaces are used and governed, and over time produces material consequences and new collective identities rooted in physical and cultural geographies. As such, space, manifesting as both public and private infrastructures, becomes a key tool for bringing architects, planners, political actors, and social movements into direct dialogue with prevailing social, economic, political, and ideological discourses and practices. Designers and designed spaces have generally been framed as apolitical actors which merely respond to the policy and civic environments created by actions of explicitly political processes. Buildings and other physical sites of privilege and power are perceived as incidental to, rather than drivers of, political and cultural values. Yet architects and planners clearly hold agency and decision-making power over the physical form of spaces – development and design processes are means of realizing underlying political agendas, even if they aren't explicitly referred to in such terms. As such, obvious yet regularly overlooked questions arise: How do politically constructed meanings of race and identity shape our built environments? How do built environments in turn politicize individuals within them? What are the practical mechanisms for establishing and controlling these supremacies of space? And what role does collective identity, particularly when defined along spatial lines, play in resistance and liberation?

While racial violence is not new in the United States (“SAY THEIR NAMES LIST 2021 #SayTheirNames”, n.d.), the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in 2020 prompted a massive global reckoning – including within design disciplines – to understand, grapple with, and ultimately to subvert systems and practices of oppression. Socially-embedded design – not merely socially-



conscious, nor designing for “social impact” – moves beyond a focus on diversity and representation in the professional sphere, into larger-scale sites of collaboration and alignment by way of political movements. Yet to fully understand the role that architects, planners, and others in the design disciplines can play in shifting longstanding power dynamics, it is critical to first acknowledge the ways in which they have maintained or even exacerbated inequities over space and time. Also important are disciplinary concessions that the damages caused by supremacies of space can be, and have been, perpetuated by architects and planners, even those with the best of intentions.

We, the authors, focus on the cultural and historic landscapes of the United States to provide a specific grounding to the interplay of racial politics and design. We look at the US for three main reasons. Firstly, we presume that to understand the positionality of the design disciplines within broader supremacies of space, we must first acknowledge our own. The authors write as racialized Americans, albeit politicized across different generations, urban geographies, pedagogical backgrounds, race and gender lines, and myriad other forms of identity that do not necessarily align with legible markers of difference. The second reason follows directly from the first: that to contextualize the self is to contextualize the same interactions and layers of social and cultural meaning that have shaped physical landscapes across the US. Finally, we assert that any and all considerations of US infrastructural supremacies are fundamentally entangled with racism – and more specifically, with anti-Blackness (Thomas, 1994). By examining spaces of supremacy in the US context, we explicitly define antiracism and Black liberation as our foundational motivating goals. At the most fundamental level, liberation is about safety and sovereignty, as exemplified by maroon communities of the Southern Black Belt and Black agricultural co-op communities during and post-slavery. Liberation is also about celebration – about the legacy of Black people cultivating spaces that literally and symbolically provide community and freedom, such as churches, barbershops, roller rinks, and queer ballroom. And of course, liberation is about political protest and power-building, as realized through memorials, street murals, direct actions, rallies, and virtual platforms for engagement.

The damages caused by supremacies of space can be, and have been, perpetuated by architects and planners, even those with the best of intentions.

By reviewing history through the lens of white supremacy and anti-Black actions, we aim to reorient planning and design away from a do-no-harm approach, with a neutrality that only serves to perpetuate legacies of racism, and towards one of explicit anti-subordination.

This essay is written in three parts: *Cultures of Racism* discusses the reciprocity of ideology and materiality in the racialization of space; *Geographies of Racism* discusses how racialized spaces are fortified by oppressive policies, practices, and projects; and *Resistance and Liberation* discusses how the spatialization of race produces collective political identities, thus catalyzing the potential for new forms of collective resistance and acts of liberatory futuring. In so doing, this essay moves from the perspective of “explaining” racialized landscapes and systems of oppression (i.e., writing for the white gaze) in parts 1 and 2, to considering new design practices rooted in reparative healing and care.

Much of traditional planning and design pedagogy and practice employ narratives of harm and exploitation in analyses of society and space. Contemporary discourse around “equity” in planning often begins by framing history as a series of events which were perpetrated *on* the oppressed rather than perpetrated *by* the privileged. In a similar way, “the substitution of ‘race’ for ‘racism’... transforms the act of the subject into an attribute of the object,” whereby “disguised as race, racism becomes something Afro-Americans are, rather than something racists do” (Fields and Fields, 2012). Admittedly, parts 1 and 2 of this essay perpetuate the common framing device of “damage” in its pursuit of explaining the formation of racialized systems and spaces. This is only necessary because while white supremacy as the ideological frame is not new to social activism, it has remained largely absent from planning and design discourse (Goetz, 2020; Williams, 2020). Less common still is discussion on planning and design mechanisms to actually build and concentrate power at the margins; this, despite liberatory actions having been largely enacted through physical space. This essay addresses both issues, positioning race in urban planning and design history as the endemic cornerstone of society and space that it is and then arguing for planning and design to take on a larger role in liberatory futuring. By reviewing history through the lens of white supremacy and anti-Black actions, we aim to reorient planning and design away from a do-no-harm approach, with a neutrality that only serves to perpetuate legacies of racism, and towards one of explicit anti-subordination (Steil, 2018).

### *Cultures of Racism*

Colonization, capitalism, and racism are processes of separating, ordering, and “othering” to shape perceptions of difference, organize physical space, and bolster political hierarchies. Whether by pseudoscientific ideas like polygenism, the imposition of non-indigenous gods and languages on subordinated populations, or drawing boundaries on a map, politically constructed and geographically inscribed ideologies of identity operate by “claiming, naming, numbering, and bounding spaces for the purpose of their control” (Alderman et al., 2021), creating narratives of superiority and inferiority which validate cultural erasure and racial violence.

While processes of racialization (Omi and Winant, 2014) predate western colonization (Gossett, 1997; Nightingale, 2012), the European imperialist expansion into Africa and the Americas (Cox, 1948; Williams, 2021) and concomitant classifications of non-European “others” such as “Indians” and “Negros” (Allen, 1994; Berkhofer, 1979; Jordan, 2013) produced racialized social hierarchies which were used to justify land theft (as well as the theft of identities), resource extraction, and human exploitation with material consequences that persist today (Coates, 2015). As a key outpost of the “British-led globalization of the world’s urban real estate market” (Nightingale, 2012: 235), the United States sits at a unique point of imperialist intersectionality where racialized social hierarchies imposed on Africa and America converged by way of the transatlantic slave trade, took root with laws that advantaged “white” people of European descent while disadvantaging “Black” people of African descent (Coates, 2015; Fields, 1990), and which have adapted continuously to constrain African-Americans as a perpetual social, economic, political, ideological, and *spatialized* underclass (Fields, 1990; Glasgow, 1980; Massey and Denton, 1993).

Race is a quintessentially ideological construct. It is politically motivated, identity based, and spatially situated. It has no inherent physical or biological meaning, yet it somehow manages to organize resources, opportunities, and people solely based on differences in their physical appearance. While beliefs based in presumptions of difference are considered prejudices, when enough people share those prejudices, they

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After the resulting, and prolonged, spatial separation, subordination, and resource deprivation, the otherwise immaterial idea of race itself produces material consequences.

become normalized, acculturated, and eventually descriptive of daily life. So, prejudice and ideology are just two sides of the same coin. Both are matters of public opinion, distinguishable only by scale (whether cult or culture) and the extent to which they are accepted or imposed by a dominant majority. Sociologist, cultural theorist and political activist Stuart Hall (2017) succinctly described this so-called “power-knowledge-difference” operation as one where those with power produce knowledge, informing how we assess and assign value, positionality, and power and determining how we order society and space. In this way, “racial discourses constitute one of the great, persistent classificatory systems of human culture,” whereas challenging ideology thus involves disputing otherwise ostensible “truths” (Hall, 2017).

Famed abolitionist Frederick Douglass did just that. In his now-iconic speech “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”, Douglass (1852) discussed fundamental contradictions between the principles of democratic idealism (liberty and justice) and those of slavery (white supremacy and Black subordination). He questioned how white Americans, as penned by Thomas Jefferson in the US Declaration of Independence, could “hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”, yet none of those rights were extended to Black Americans:

What, am I to argue that it is wrong to make men brutes, to rob them of their liberty, to work them without wages, to keep them ignorant of their relations to their fellow men, to beat them with sticks, to flay their flesh with the lash, to load their limbs with irons, to hunt them with dogs, to sell them at auction, to sunder their families, to knock out their teeth, to burn their flesh, to starve them into obedience and submission to their master.

Here in his “Fourth of July” speech, Douglass was calling not only for the abolition of slavery but also for the abolition of the ideological inconsistencies that promoted it. While slavery was eventually abolished, racism was not, instead remaining to produce a deeply entrenched and enduring racialized spatial hierarchy in US cities. After the resulting, and prolonged,

spatial separation, subordination, and resource deprivation, the otherwise immaterial *idea* of race itself produces material consequences (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). For Black Americans, these include disparities in health, wealth, access to resources and opportunities, and life expectancy – the damages of racism are quite literally visible from the cradle to the grave. Identity spatialized has the capacity to both conceive of difference while also producing it (Hall, 2017). For racialized groups, the consequences of racial ideology eventually became muddled with their causes, making racial determinism seem less like fiction and more like a presumptive matter of fact.

Sixteen years after slavery was abolished, Douglass (1881) published an essay entitled “The Color Line”, illustrating this ideological sleight of hand in action. Describing racism’s ultimate bodily consequence, he wrote:

In the presence of this spirit, if a crime is committed, and the criminal is not positively known, a suspicious-looking colored man is sure to have been seen in the neighborhood. If an unarmed colored man is shot down and dies in his tracks, a jury, under the influence of this spirit, does not hesitate to find the murdered man the real criminal, and the murderer innocent (Douglass, 1881: 569).

Though penned more than century and a half ago, Douglass’s words read more like reporting on the public discourse after the murders of Trayvon Martin in 2012, George Floyd in 2020, and those of countless other unarmed Black people in the United States (notwithstanding period variations in racial rhetoric). While Douglass discussed racial ideology in cultural terms, he also illustrated the relationship of racial hierarchies and hierarchies of space, describing how some people are permitted to move freely, fluidly, and without fear, while others are held suspect, surveilled, and, if necessary, taken down or taken out. Today, cell phone videos capture the brutality that Douglass described in words, revealing how enduring, deeply imprinted, and heavily weighted racial ideology is on the backs and necks of racialized minorities, and also revealing its material, even lethal, consequences. In the United States, a resilient and highly adaptive imperialist white supremacist capitalist racial ideology has been developed, perfected, and etched into the national DNA (Beckert, 2015; Bonilla-Silva, 2015;

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In planning and design disciplines, race is still treated more as an area of specialization than as an endemic cornerstone of society and space.

Racial hierarchies have impacted the development of physical landscapes across scales of time and space, and historic design actions continue to produce tangible, embodied disparities in the present day.

hooks, 1984; Johnson, 2013; Olmsted, 1862; Williams, 2021), simultaneously laying the economic foundation for a new democracy and establishing an injurious legacy for the racialized minorities – both of which were central to the nation’s making.

#### *Geographies of Racism*

In planning and design disciplines, race is still treated more as an area of specialization than as an endemic cornerstone of society and space (Thomas, 1994). The spatial manifestations of racial ideology in fact result directly from the overlapping impacts of urban projects, policies, and practices, which are rooted in white supremacy and have together produced racially segregated built environments. Renowned sociologist, historian, and geographer W.E.B. Du Bois not only understood the cultural implications of racial ideology but also anticipated their influence on the spatial organization of cities. Five years after Frederick Douglass’s death, Du Bois curated a display of maps, diagrams, and images for the Paris Exhibition of 1900 where he sought to visually depict the “development of the American Negro.” Perhaps the most prophetic image in the collection was the study’s cover, which juxtaposed an illustration of the “Routes of the African Slave Trade” with a woefully clairvoyant prognostication inscribed at the bottom: “The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color-line.” By adding hyphenation, a literal stroke of his pen, Du Bois transformed Douglass’s conceptualization of the “color line” as a cultural phenomenon into the “color-line” as a racialized delineation of physical space. In a single image, Du Bois reflected on the country’s original sin while also forecasting the urban racial apartheid which was still early in the making, but would soon come to define the socio-spatial logic of US cities in terms which persist today.

Racial hierarchies have impacted the development of physical landscapes across scales of time and space, and historic design actions continue to produce tangible, embodied disparities in the present day. Geographer Richard H. Schein focuses on how the economic logics of slavery have shaped contemporary US landscapes. In *Landscape and Race in the United States*, Schein (2012) unpacks how contemporary spatial orders are both derived from and inherited by racialized groups,

particularly with regards to the spatial circumstances of white dependence on Black servitude. Slave quarters were built next to main houses but comfortably out of sight for white slavers, and, after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 ended slavery, many formerly enslaved people living in cities settled along back alleys of white residential neighborhoods, near the white families they continued to serve, but again comfortably out of sight. Others established settlements called Freedmen's Towns or "freedom colonies", creating safe spaces for Black life outside of city limits and outside of the white gaze, in much the same way that so-called "hush harbors" had been spaces of Black solidarity and communion during slavery times.

While racialized campaigns discussed later occurred at a national scale throughout the 20th century, they were hardly limited to national projects – in fact, some of the most inconspicuous sites of white supremacy operate on the smallest of scales. According to a study conducted by the Southern Poverty Law Center (Gunter et al., 2016), between 1860 and 2015 more than 1,500 Confederate monuments and memorials were erected in public spaces or buildings, including trails, parks, schools, and courthouses. White Southerners embarked on a centuries-long campaign to rewrite history. Instead of slavery, their newfound cause was one of state sovereignty and national heritage; ownership of Black bodies had been legally constrained, robbing whiteness of one of its most fundamental claims to identity. As if some perverse form of recourse, physical icons of white supremacy and spatial control were constructed across the US, most prominently in states with the largest Black populations. There were two notable spikes in this mythmaking campaign. The first was between 1900 and 1920, accompanying and supporting racial space-controls connected to newly enacted Jim Crow laws. The second was between 1954 and 1968 as an apparent backlash to the Civil Rights Movement and rapid succession of legislative victories against racist policies and practices in housing, education, and employment.

Despite the obvious ways in which monument-making campaigns have been coincident with national identity-building efforts, their ideological roots and cultural inspirations often transcend geopolitical boundaries. US state houses and federal capital buildings – the

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ideological and practical seats of power – emulate Euro-centric morphologies; the same aesthetics have also been deployed in prominent national and international cultural venues (Wilson, 2021). The Chicago World's Fair Columbia Exposition of 1893, for example, – fittingly dubbed “White City”, albeit to describe the color of the buildings more so than their ideological significance – featured neoclassical designs explicitly based on Western European architectural orders, ushering in the City Beautiful and Beaux-Arts Movements of city and architectural design which came to define urban planning and design at a time when prominent US cities and their civic architecture were being imagined (Foglesong, 2014). Although the fair was designed to present the progress of nations, organizers denied Black Americans any acknowledgement for their role in national progress. As chronicled in meticulous detail by Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, I. Garland Penn, and F. L. Barnett in *The Reason Why the Colored American is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition*, the presentation of American progress not only excluded Black Americans, this despite their own odds-defying progress following Emancipation, but in doing so also omitted recognition of the nation's greatest and most significant demonstration of ideological progress to date: Emancipation through enactment of the 13th Amendment (Douglass et al., 1893). The spatialization of race intensified in the middle of the twentieth century with the collision of two post-World War II migratory patterns. First, a mid-20th-century peak of the Great Migration saw Black Americans moving north and west to escape Jim Crow laws of the Deep South and pursue economic opportunity. This was quickly followed by “white flight” of white Americans moving to the suburbs, motivated by the promise of a better life and fueled by federally insured mortgage lending that chiefly benefited white veterans and steered them away from “redlined” inner-city neighborhoods which were becoming increasingly Black. Publicly funded highways and urban renewal projects swept through US cities, promising to connect and rebuild crumbling urban cores, but instead systematically dismantling them. Policies and programs designed under the auspices of nation-building (the Federal Highway Act of 1956), city-building (the American Housing Act of 1949),



and the building of homes for an emerging American middle class (National Housing Act of 1934 the GI Bill of 1944) successfully increased homeownership in suburban communities outside of cities and with easy highway access back in. But they did so by separating, or clearing, the same Black neighborhoods that white Americans were fleeing, disproportionately harming racialized minorities which had already been spatially constrained by decades of racial zoning and restrictive deeds. The results were sprawling suburban utopias for white Americans, and hyperdense low-income ghettos for Black Americans.

All the while, the dominant narrative supporting urban renewal projects from the 1950s through the 1980s was a myth of economic and infrastructural necessity (Caves, 2004) – the claim that “everyone” was leaving cities, and something had to be done to save them was firmly grounded in logics centering whiteness. Black populations were in fact increasing in many US cities, peaking at precisely the same time that federally funded urban renewal plans and highway projects were being drawn up. As Black families moved in to improve their economic circumstances, white families left for the suburbs, taking with them the local tax base that had previously supported and maintained inner-city infrastructures. Propaganda campaigns fueled a further expansion of metropolitan suburbs, especially in cities experiencing the largest influx of Black migrants. White families were furnished with low-cost, government-backed pathways into the middle class while Black families were trapped in the least desirable corners of the city, further concretizing the spatialization of race, resources, and power.

While racialized spaces in cities today are unavoidable, they were not inevitable. They were socially engineered by racial zoning and restrictive deeds, urban renewal and highway construction, as well as suburban exclusion and low-income housing consolidation, all pushing racialized communities into smaller and smaller areas of the city and farther and farther away from resources and opportunities. But whether expressed as ideas or movements, a Black spatial imaginary has been one of collective power and resistance (Lipsitz, 2011).

US state houses and federal capital buildings – the ideological and practical seats of power – emulate Euro-centric morphologies; the same aesthetics have also been deployed in prominent national and international cultural venues.

The concept of Blackness has in many ways become one of collectivity – not only because of the cross-class spatial circumstances of neighborhoods organized by race rather than class, but also because of its function as “an extraordinary coping system built upon mutual exchange and reciprocity”.

### *Resistance and Liberation*

Black identity emerged out of a “radical solidarity” of “cross-class affinities” (Lipsitz, 2011), an assertion which can at first seem overly reductive. There are indeed an “extraordinary diversity of subjective positions, social experiences, and cultural identities which compose the category ‘black’; that is, the recognition that ‘black’ is essentially a politically and culturally *constructed* category, which cannot be grounding in a set of fixed transcultural or transcendental racial categories and which therefore has no guarantees in Nature” (Hall, 2017). But, because of the largely shared history by Black Americans discussed in the first two sections – an experience which DuBois (1940) calls the “social heritage of slavery” – the concept of Blackness has in many ways become one of collectivity – not only because of the cross-class spatial circumstances of neighborhoods organized by race rather than class, but also because of its function as “an extraordinary coping system built upon mutual exchange and reciprocity” (Logan and Molotch, 2007). Spatially distinct practices of investment, surveillance, and incarceration produced patterns of segregation and disenfranchisement that continue to maintain cultures and geographies of racism. However, those spaces simultaneously generate collectively rooted and allied forms of identity, which in turn allow for broad-based coalition and movement-building. The catalytic potential latent in politicizing the politicized has long been recognized by prominent Black activists and thinkers. For example, Martin Luther King Jr.’s seminal 1967 text *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* – which includes the famous, evocative likening of “suburbs [as] white nooses around the Black necks of the cities” – underscores spatial development and design as a fundamental pillar of racism in the United States. At the same time, King saw that those racialized spaces were giving rise to spatialized solutions – that bus boycotts, youth-led sit-ins, mass rallies, and other forms of mobilization and political transformation were made possible not only through shared struggle, but shared space. Throughout history, it has been critical for collective actions to be grounded in physical sites – to move from symbolic expressions of solidarity to embodied exercises of it – because, as author, feminist, and

social activist bell hooks (2008) asserts, people “cannot have a spiritual center without having a geographic one.” The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement taps into longstanding traditions of Black activism and liberation and has gained momentum through local and global demonstrations centered on both racial justice (chanting “No justice, no peace!”) and spatial sovereignty (“Whose streets? Our streets!”). The cross-racial, cross-class, and other cross-political alliances in BLM highlight the intersectionality of contemporary discourses around racial justice. Yet, there remains little clarity on the role of the design disciplines in larger-scale movements. There is significant promise in the many local, diffuse efforts to align architects, planners, and designers with struggles for racial equity (“Blackspace,” n.d.; “Dark Matter University,” n.d.; “Design As Protest,” n.d.) – but as a whole, the relational infrastructures between the design field and Black liberatory movements are tenuous at best. Yet public space – a primary vehicle for wielding collective action – exists squarely under the purview of the design disciplines. Theories of racial justice, solidarity economy-building, and other grounding ideals of people-powered movements are, and will continue to be, translated, negotiated, and reified through physical landscapes (e.g. Hood, 2020; Gooden, 2016). The historic and cultural terrains of the US continue to serve as sites of racialization and politicization – as well as the wellspring from which the politicized build power and resistance. In *Chaos or Community?* MLK Jr. (1969, posthumously) calls attention to and excoriates the racialized spatial dynamics of US policymaking:

Problems of education, transportation to jobs and decent living conditions are all made difficult because housing is so rigidly segregated... Housing deteriorates in central cities; urban renewal has been Negro removal and has benefited big merchants and real estate interests; and suburbs expand with little regard for what happens to the rest of America (King, 1969: 200).

Recognizing that many, if not all, of these structural dynamics have carried through to present day - it is now beyond time to understand: How can the design disciplines resituate themselves in resistance and

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liberation-based frameworks of pedagogy and practice? While designers have often been proximal to political movements, political proximity is not enough – an explicit understanding of and embeddedness in antiracist, reparative design is what’s needed to combat the multivalent legacies of racism in the US. In fact, ostensibly “neutral” political alignments of the past have meant aligning with systems of oppression – the creation and execution of slum clearance and urban renewal programs that King writes so forcefully against were only made possible through the active participation and leadership of designers.

Resituating the design disciplines toward antiracist work begins with the analytical process itself – with the very process of “seeing” space that bleeds into representation and physical development. Critical race theorist and indigenous scholar Eve Tuck (2009) has powerfully critiqued the overuse of negative data and imagery, and points to the pervasiveness of such framing, even within purportedly socially mindful projects. Communities continuously portrayed as victims are left with overwhelmingly negative images of themselves, rather than with assets on which they can build. Tuck advocates for moving beyond damage towards representations of desire - for “documenting not only the painful elements of social realities, but also the wisdom and hope”.

Moving to desire-based frameworks will require designers to stop exclusively focusing on historic harms, and instead work in direct conversation with those affected to realize the latent opportunities within specific geographic and cultural contexts. While redlining and other federal policies and practices created chronically underinvested communities across the US, many of these areas have been the locus of organizing and protest calling for alternative models of public safety and public health. Furthermore, designers and planners often work on the local scale, which allows practitioners to more fully map out the landscape of local expertise and communal memory – and to build public spaces that honor and reflect the needs and desires of the historically marginalized.

Drawing on desires rather than damage will allow designers and planners to circumvent models of practice rooted in white supremacy. The racialized generally do not need help in seeing racism.

The task of “explaining” or “proving” racism is one that coddles perspectives of whiteness. And yet, it is understandable that when it comes to urban space, the initial impulse is to focus on damage and on sites of violence – on riots, lynchings, mobs, and physical monuments to white supremacy. These historic threads of trauma are both literally passed down through oral memories and physical objects as well as spiritually absorbed through historic and lived experiences. But Black radical and Afro-futurist traditions also point to a new mode of practice, and of being, based in projecting forward – in moving beyond the limitations of present-day economic and political realities, and instead within political movements to change what realities become possible (Anderson, 2021).

In fact, the design disciplines are actually quite well-suited to support the work of radical futuring. In many ways, the fields are based in imaginative and speculative representation. The question is how to embed planning and design with frontline coalitions, and how to channel design imagination towards reparative, just futures. Activist-academic and urban planner Lily Song (2021) has defined reparative planning and design through a synergistic, multi-scalar framework: as “acts of repair, healing, and making”; as centering the margins as “spaces of radical insight, openness, and possibility”; as the decommodification of space and relational networks, and parallel investment in regenerative publics and practices; and as a future-facing planning and design pedagogy and culture that “[upholds] intergenerational knowledge, situated insight, and creative practices of frontline communities”. Under this lens, design and planning are not about curing, but about healing. Reparative practices are just as much about the process as the outcome, and radical design futuring becomes a means to directly support place-based movements agitating for intersectional justice.

Radical design futuring also provides a vehicle for imagining and co-designing what George Lipsitz (2011) has referred to as the “Black spatial imaginary” – physical spaces and governing processes that embrace democratic, equitable ideals, rather than the hegemonic “white spatial imaginary” that values “hostile privatism and defensive localism”. Symbols of the white spatial imaginary persist across the nation.

**Design and  
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The ever-growing compendium of Black artistry and community-building is an extension of radical design futuring, actively reshaping and expanding the sociocultural and physical boundaries of the Black spatial imaginary.

The act of imagining what *could be*, in place of *what is*, fundamentally relies on the ability to understand, synthesize, and represent collective visions. Representation constructs and disseminates textual and visual narratives of place, which imparts real effects on cultural and physical landscapes. In other words, representation is a privilege, and representation is power.

Visual representation has long been about shifting cultural narratives. In addition to unapologetically abolitionist orations and essays, Frederick Douglass also wielded his own image in activating representation as a form of resistance. As the most photographed person of his time – even more so than President Lincoln! (Gates Jr., 2016) – Douglass presented 160 pictographic counter-narratives to the cultural slander branding Black men as less than human, much less as dignified gentlemen. Similarly, Du Bois's Paris exhibit strategically deployed portraits of Black excellence and data visualizations illustrating incremental – but collective – economic growth; depicting Black Americans as scientists at Howard University, hoteliers, businessmen, and smartly dressed families, defined by their aspirations and achievements rather than structural limitations. Of the 553 photographs and graphics presented, less than a dozen portrayed Black Americans as impoverished or ineffectual. Rather, the predominant image and cultural message that Du Bois presented was defiantly one of progress.

The ever-growing compendium of Black artistry and community-building is an extension of radical design futuring, actively reshaping and expanding the sociocultural and physical boundaries of the Black spatial imaginary. If, as Cornel West (2017) says, “justice is what love looks like in public, just like tenderness is what love feels like in private”, then bearing witness and contributing to this living archive of resistance and liberation – of representational imprints spanning the individual to the collective – can reach across space and time to inform what antiracism and Black liberation look like for social movements and built environments in the present and future.

And what of antiracist and liberatory design? Damian White (2020), writing about Just Climate Transitions, has argued for moving away from capital-D Design – something seen as the exclusive domain of

professionals – and towards design as a “generalizable human practice”. Liberatory, antiracist, reparative design is about foundationally changing how we think about architecture and urban space – about building relational networks in support of intersectional political alliances; about wielding physical space as a means of building the political will and capacity of those at the margins; and about deploying radical design futuring to motivate new economic systems, cultural values, and processes of spatialization. “If you design for people at the margins, you automatically get the people in the middle. People at the margins are living with the failures of society” (McDowell, 2019). Reflecting on this country’s long history of intentional racist planning and policymaking, today’s planners, designers, and policymakers have an ethical obligation to realign our priorities and adopt intentional antiracist agendas that address the legacy pockets of inequality in Black and brown communities – advancing a racial equity agenda both outside, and inside, the organizations and institutions with which we work. What we need to dismantle the always-targeted impacts of racial ideology on racialized minorities is to have an equally targeted approach that redistributes resources, redistributes opportunities, and redistributes power.

Equity toolkits and resilience frameworks have become important resources for cities grappling with their own legacies of inequality and uneven exposure to risk. Yet with few exceptions, the subject of race remains largely absent from resilience discourse, and even more so from planning and design practice. The triple threat of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and continually increasing economic inequality – all of which disproportionately impact communities of color – alongside trending public conversations around resilience, racial equity, and twenty-first century infrastructures present opportunities to finally address racial injustices head on.

Developed by the High Line Network, in collaboration with Harvard University Graduate School of Design, and Urban Institute, the *Community First Toolkit* has a single aim: “embedding equity in public spaces”. It is designed to help cities and civil society organizations contextualize their projects within legacies of racialized policy and practice-illuminating the complicated

Equity toolkits and resilience frameworks have become important resources for cities grappling with their own legacies of inequality and uneven exposure to risk. Yet with few exceptions, the subject of race remains largely absent.

No single strategy nor scale of action can account for the vast array of local contexts and relational networks that exist across the US. However, the design disciplines can serve as a potentially catalytic force in terms of building and visualizing shared languages, shared spaces, and shared visions of radically inclusive futures.

relationship between systemic racism and the production of space – and equip them to tackle impediments to racial equality and community resilience. It asks planners, designers, civil society organizations, and city officials to engage more honestly with the social and spatial manifestations of racism such that they can begin to more naturally center community aspirations, anticipate community impacts, and create inclusive processes aimed at mitigating the harms caused by systemic racism, social inequality, and uneven power dynamics. In very practical ways, it invites spatial actors to consider how their internal operations and external partnerships can impact a project's outcomes (equitable or not) and can either support or impede community resilience.

The *Community First Toolkit* is one example of how planning and design can begin to reframe development efforts and ground future planning efforts around a robust understanding of local narratives and histories. However, truly liberatory design will need to be deployed by many publics, across many different scales of operation. When white supremacy and colonialism function as a great breaking apart – of communities, of lineages, of bodies – the impacts on people and space manifest in heterogenous ways. No single strategy nor scale of action can account for the vast array of local contexts and relational networks that exist across the US. However, the design disciplines can serve as a potentially catalytic force in terms of building and visualizing shared languages, shared spaces, and shared visions of radically inclusive futures.

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***borgo***

***Mezzanone***

***• conflict •***

***raciality •***

***exploita-***

***tion***

# Borgo Mezzanone. Rurality, Ethnic and Race Conflict<sup>1</sup>



Camilla Rondot (1),  
Luis Martin Sanchez (2)

## *Abstract*

Just a few steps away from the fascist village of Borgo Mezzanone, lies the largest informal settlement in Apulia. A piece of sub-Saharan city occupying the Italian territory, in the heart of Foggia province countryside. The observation of the spaces of Borgo Mezzanone invites us to reflect upon the precarious nature of human beings' livelihoods in the world and urges a debate on raciality issues in deliberately obscured contexts. What happens in sites where resistance and tensions between spaces and bodies become so radical? What devices or infrastructures shape them? What do the terms protection and life mean in such a context? Borgo Mezzanone is an extreme territory. It reveals itself as a racist scene, a place of resistance and dependence on extractive logics and exploitative dynamics, muscular and carnal, in which the unbearable tensions between bodies, languages, noises and colours are asserted amidst hard and rejecting spaces.

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**1 - (Previous page)**  
Research conducted by Camilla Rondot as a master thesis project of the course Architecture Construction City, Politecnico di Torino, 2020-2021. Supervisors: Cristina Bianchetti and Antonio di Campli. The survey is part of the collective research "Lifelines" funded by the Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning (Politecnico di Torino) and supported by UCL (University of London) coordinated by Camillo Boano and Cristina Bianchetti.



Fig. 0 - (Previous page) QR code of the full research publication. <https://territoridellacondizione.wordpress.com/2021/10/05/abitare-lopacita-gli-spazi-rurali-di-borgo-mezzanone/>.

Fig. 1 - Borgo Mezzanone framework.

Borgo Mezzanone is an untreatable case. An extreme territory – a politically, socially and spatially radical place – where the inequality and exploitative dynamics are made evident in space through corporal and spatial dimensions. The observation of Borgo Mezzanone invites us to reflect on the precarious nature of human beings' livelihoods in the world and urges a debate on raciality issues in deliberately obscured contexts. Borgo Mezzanone, as this text is going to explain further, is one of the old rural villages encased in the network of settlements founded during the Fascist regime in the province of Foggia (Apulia Region). Today, one of the largest informal settlements in Italy has its place here. With this contribution we aim, on one hand, to make public the exploitation of spaces and bodies witnessed in this territory, particularly to disciplines that revolve around "the urban", and, on the other, to make explicit the relationships between production, exploitation, race and power.



In Borgo Mezzanone, the conventional regular patterns dating back to land reclamation in the 1930s intertwine with the historic village and one of the largest informal settlements in Apulia. Rural areas of the Tavoliere delle Puglie have undergone a slow phenomenon of abandonment after important remediation actions, carried out between the two wars until the 1960s and 1970s. Urban policies have completely abandoned the issue of rural villages, failing to fully grasp issues linked to them and trivially neglecting implications once these villages were emptied. These places were slowly occupied by the incoming migrant labour force needed in agriculture. Conveniently located to allow daily commuting to those who get to work in the fields, the logistical reasons and availability of vacant spaces made Borgo Mezzanone available to the population of migrant workers. Here the presence of migrants raises the question of the relationship between rurality, ethnicity and race conflicts in “places increasingly delineated as assemblages composed of fragments of ‘elsewhere’ embedded in their actual ‘here’.” (Di Campli, 2019: 21).

Fig. 2 - Zenithal image of the Borgo Mezzanone area. On the left the village, on the right the informal settlement.



Fig. 3 - View of informal settlement of Borgo Mezzanone. Camilla Rondot, June 2021.

The spatial rationality in the distribution of the ring of villages surrounding Foggia, evident in the organization of the main infrastructures, in the subdivision of cultivated land and informal living shelters of the migrant workers, converge in a few miles of Tavoliere. The tension between exploited spaces and abused bodies, embodied to its extreme, is at the foundation of the economic systems of the Province of Foggia.





The tension between spaces and exploited bodies makes possible to relocate the debate and shed light on a dark and blurred territory where “one cannot speak of the body without space, and vice versa: in other words, it is the staging, in space, of bodies-in-place or bodies-out-of-place” (Bianchetti, 2020: 109, translation by the authors). The territory of Tavoliere delle Puglie, once dedicated to grazing, now is transformed into one of the most important agricultural production areas in Italy; yet, land produce comes from the exploitation of bodies, those of illegal migrant workers forced to work without rights in order to survive.



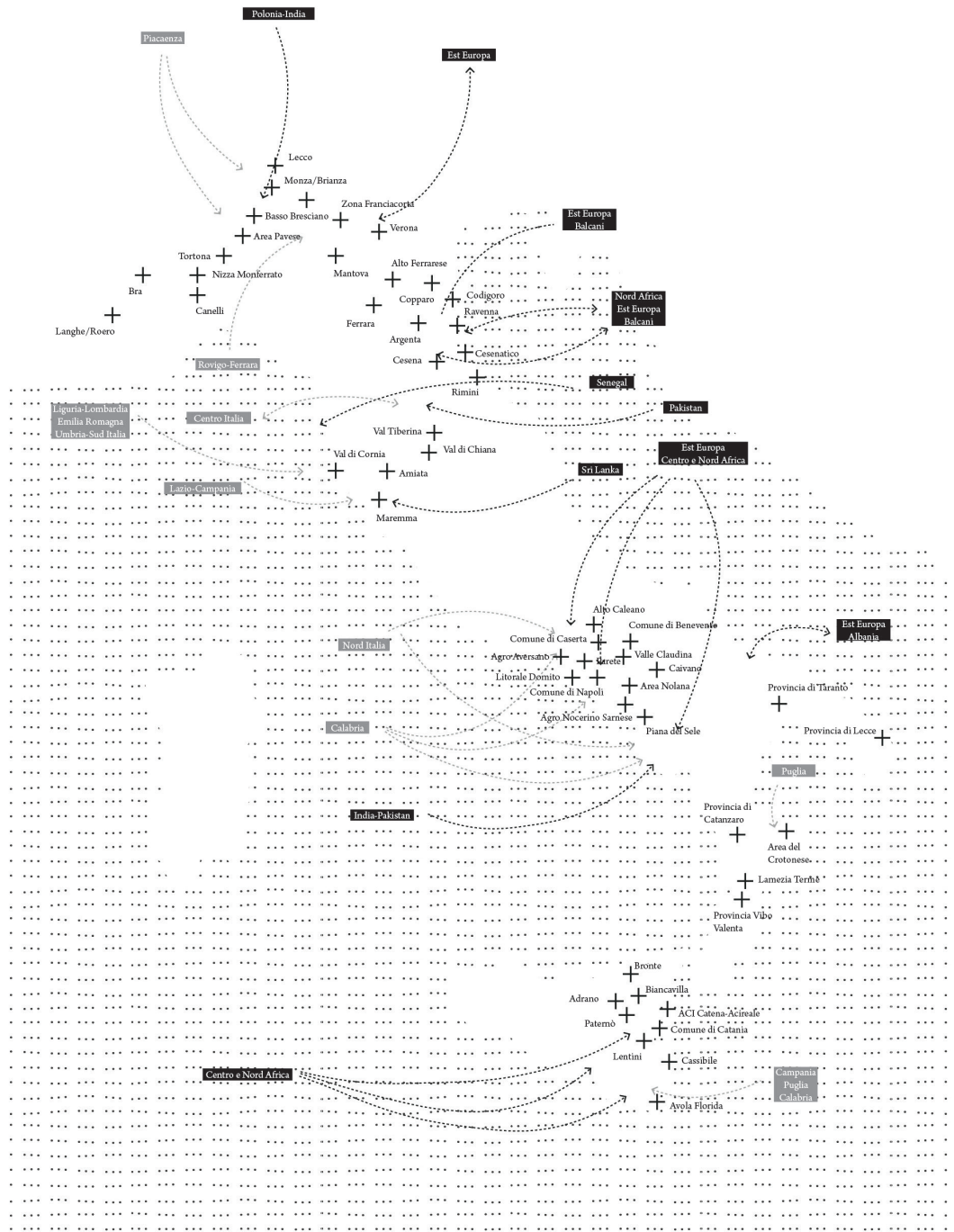
Fig. 4 - View of the  
outer border of the  
informal settlement  
of Borgo Mezzanone.  
Camilla Rondot, June  
2021.

Fig. 5 - Immigrant  
workers' movement  
map. Spring.

The bodies that plough the fields of Capitanata describe orbital movements, express dependencies and claim resistance. The spaces that hold the stories of this relocated Subsaharan settlement in the Province of Foggia speak of shadows, loss and race.

Indeed, colours help define the boundaries of the practices we look at: yellows and greens of fields that never rest, burnt by the sun; black of shadow, enslaved bodies. “In the context of the plantation, the humanity of the slave appears as the perfect representation of a shadow. The condition of the slave results from a triple loss: the loss of a ‘home’, the loss of rights over one’s body and the loss of political status” (Mbembe, 2016: 24).

Reflecting on the theme of the loss of rights and duties allows us to describe the relationship between bodies and spaces in a dimension of power. Processes that frame these tensions are deeply rooted in the subjects and their place: the labourers who inhabit Borgo Mezzanone territory, shaped by characters of vulnerability, fragility and adaptation. The bond between spaces and bodies is so visceral as to define its forms. On a former airstrip, in use until the 1990s, bodies live in their own encumbrance, wriggling out of something that has depth and friction (Moresco, 2009), arranging shelters, refuges, repairs that house them; adapting their own moral, political and affective conceptions to dynamics of resistance and mutual aid.



spring

■ national routes

■ international routes

[Fig. 6 - Immigrant workers' movement map. Summer.](#)

[Fig. 7 - \(Next page\) Immigrant workers' movement map. Fall.](#)

[Fig. 8 - \(Next page\) Immigrant workers' movement map. Winter.](#)

What happens in places where resistance and tensions between spaces and bodies become so radical? What devices or implicit infrastructures shape these territories? How are they grafted as protective devices for the livelihoods of those who can only survive there? What do the terms protection and life mean in such a context?

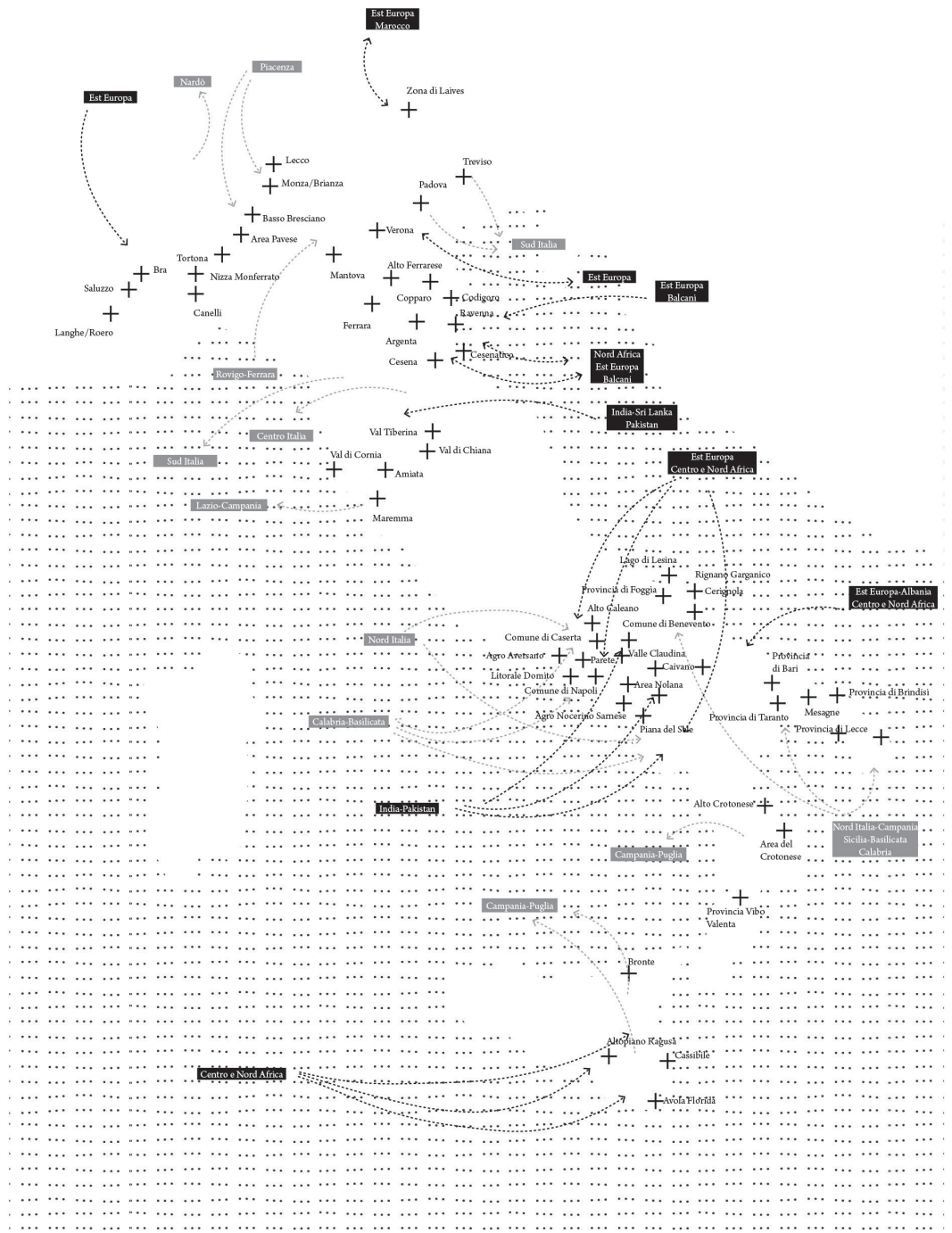
“Can one lead a good life in a bad life?” asks Judith Butler (2012). Re-phrasing her statement, how can one think of living well in a world where many live badly? What does it mean to live well in conditions of absolute precariousness and lack of sheltering dignity? Borgo Mezzanone is an extreme territory, yet not unique in the Italian context. As a racialized scene, the space of bodies displays resistance and dependence on extractive logics and exploitative dynamics. Unbearable tensions between muscular and carnal bodies, languages, noises and colours become public in the hard space of the airstrip.

Borgo Mezzanone is a territory made up of pieces within a rural space shaped by extractive dynamics. The relations which these pieces establish with the surroundings are defined by sequences of productive places and by orbital movements of bodies and products that mark moral and physical furrows. Mobility plays a central role in the system of labour exploitation that characterises agricultural production in the Tavoliere. This is because, if observed on a broader scale, the contemporary capitalist system is also held together, mainly, by the relationships established between migratory movements and those of goods, information and capital.

In this sense, the dynamism of this phenomenon follows two orders of movements: of who is moving and of what moves. Bodies and produce move within borders that widen and narrow, intertwining with each other; hands, legs, and bent backs of labourers, who follow the seasonality of the produce forced out of soil; produces then move along material and non-material infrastructures to reach the interconnected hubs of global distribution and food processing.

Rhythms and stages that mark the movements of the agricultural sector are among the fundamental elements that guide our interpretation of the dynamics that covertly govern this economic sector.

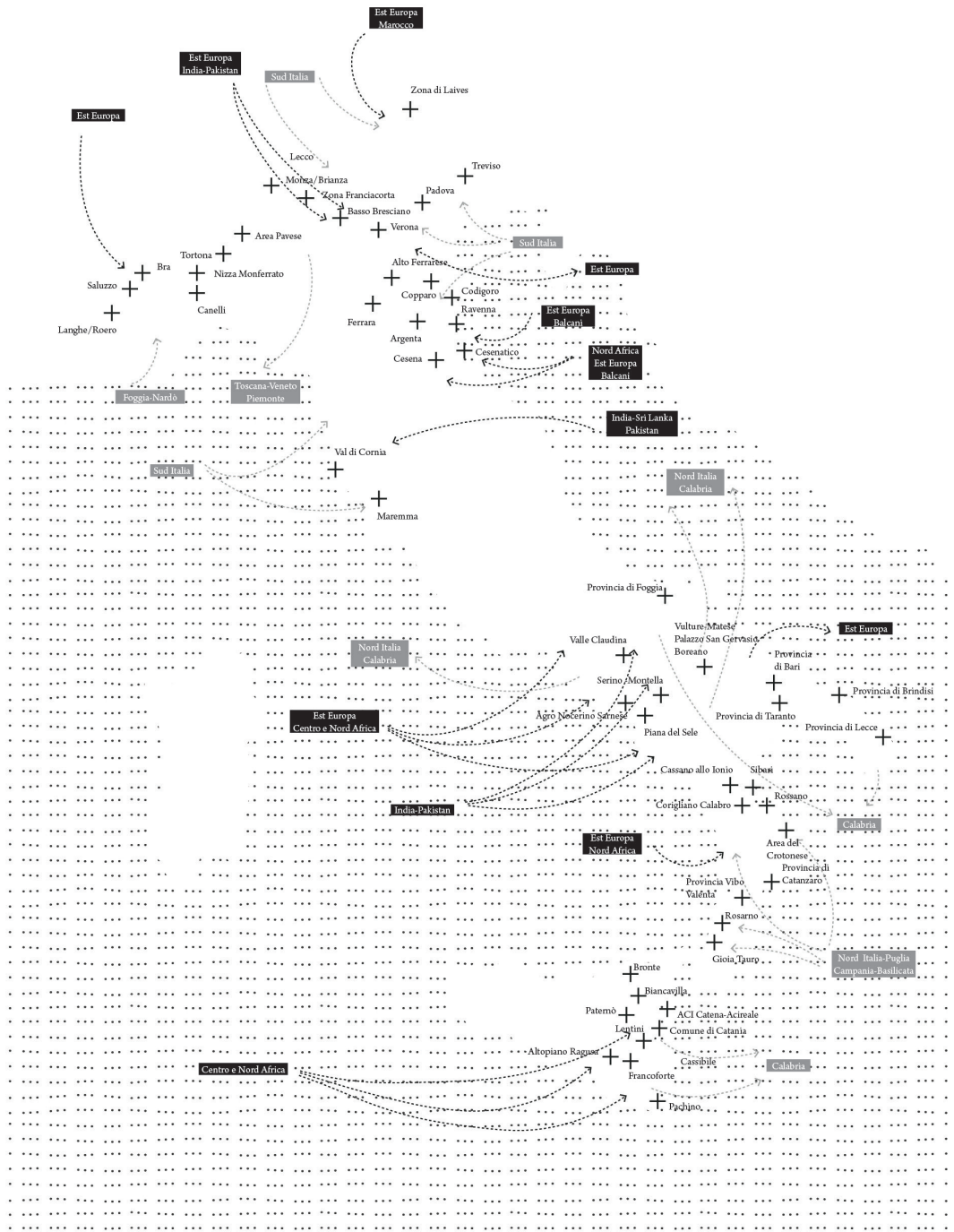
This productive network is clearly recognizable in a variety of ways that also involve space in its material characteristics: the extractive nature of the modes of production, added to the increasing flows of refugees and displaced persons willing to work in the countryside, has the direct consequence of redefining the soil of the countryside as something fluid, unstable and precarious, articulating again some of its spatial and social characteristics. The radical crisis that these spaces have been experiencing for several years now shatters the conventional image of the countryside. Locations such as Borgo Mezzanone but also Cerignola, Rignano Garganico and Orta Nuova are transformed into complex settings that welcome and exploit new populations, mainly from Africa, to engage in Apulia's huge agricultural production machine.



summer

■ national routes

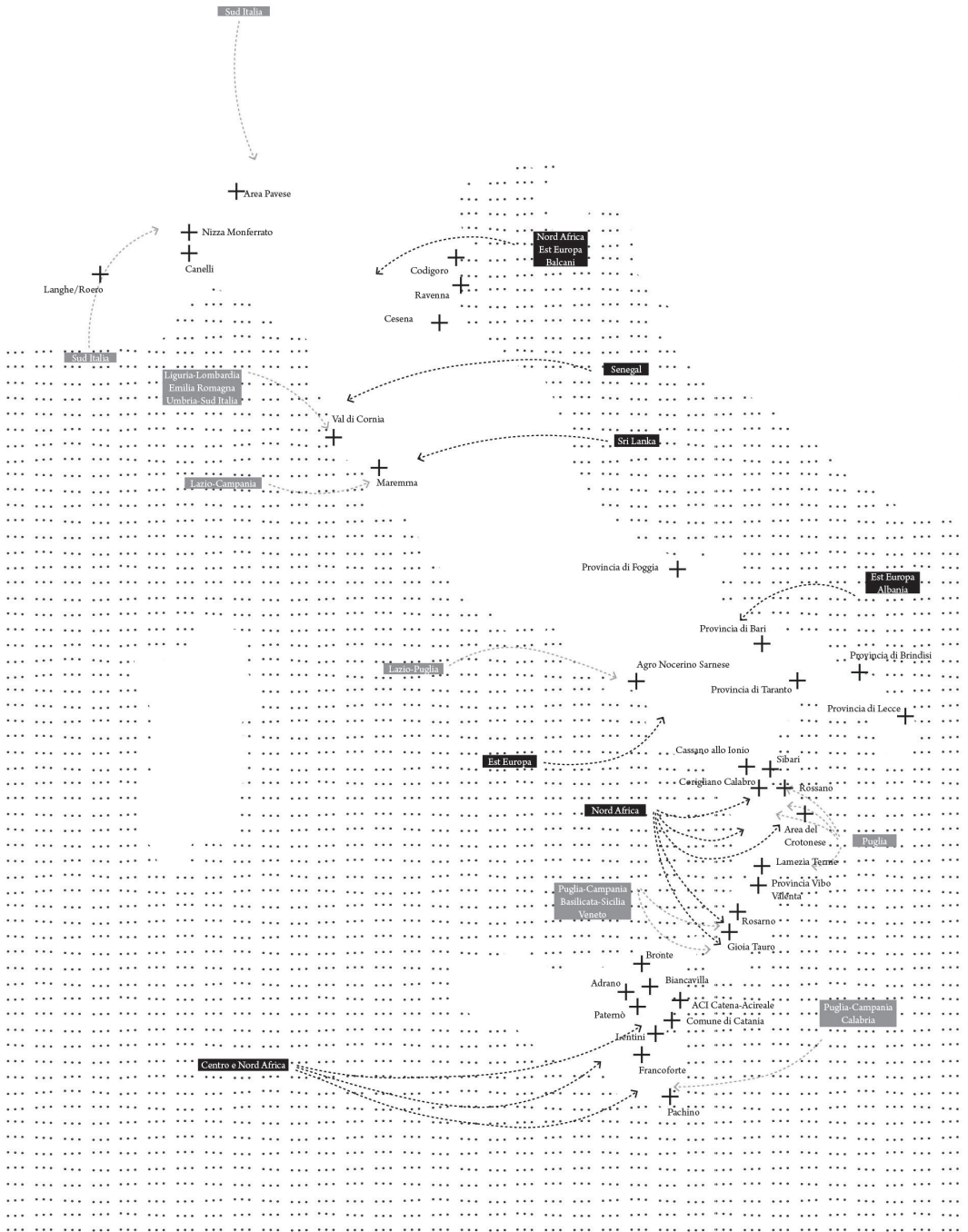
■ international routes



fall

■ national routes

■ international routes



winter

■ national routes

■ international routes

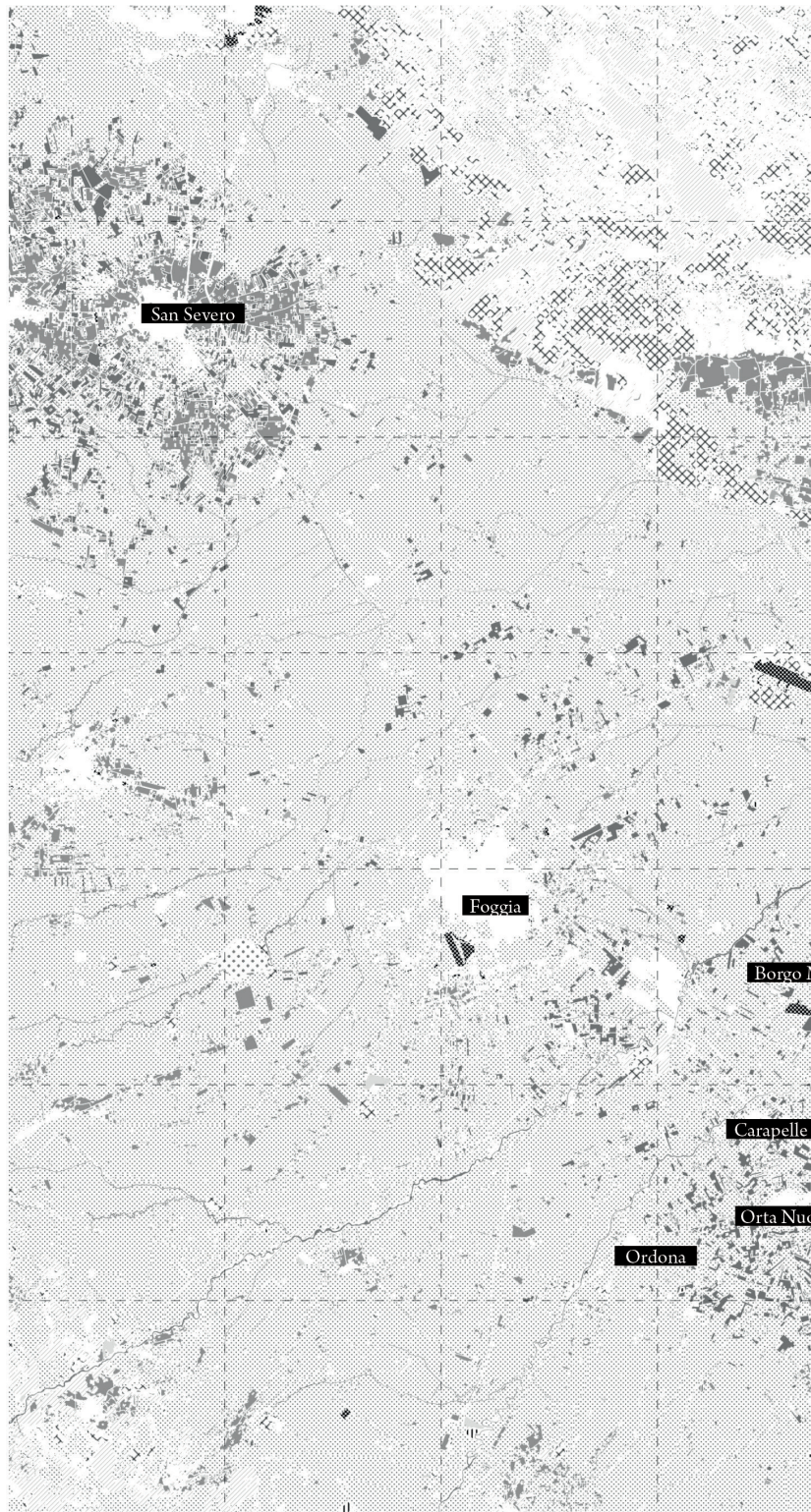
**Fig. 9 - Land use**  
map. Revised from  
PPTR Regione Puglia,  
2015.

**Fig. 10 - (Next page)**  
Farm distribution.  
Revised from PPTR  
Regione Puglia, 2015.

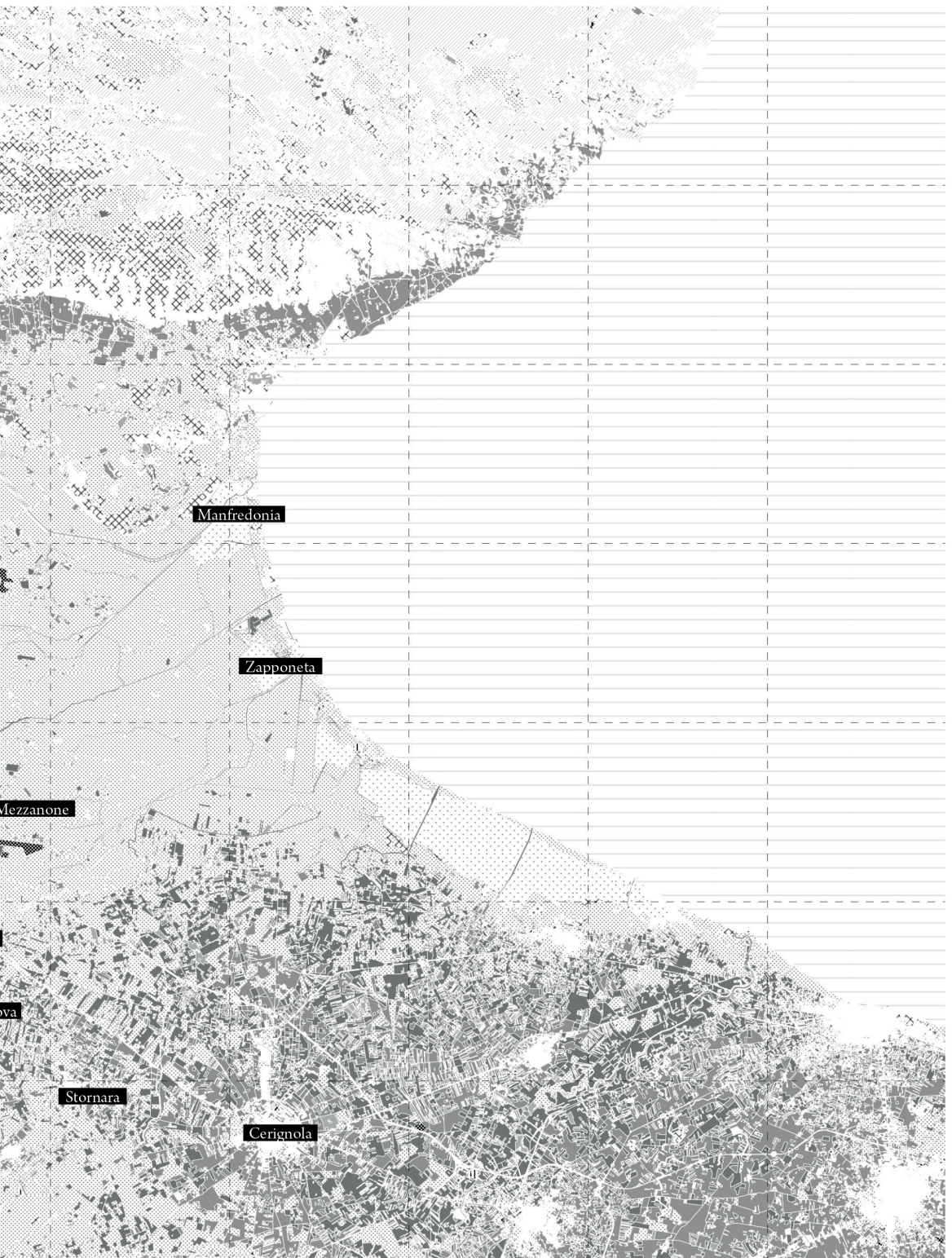
**Fig. 11 - (Next page)**  
Major infrastruc-  
tures. Revised from  
PPTR Regione Puglia,  
2015.

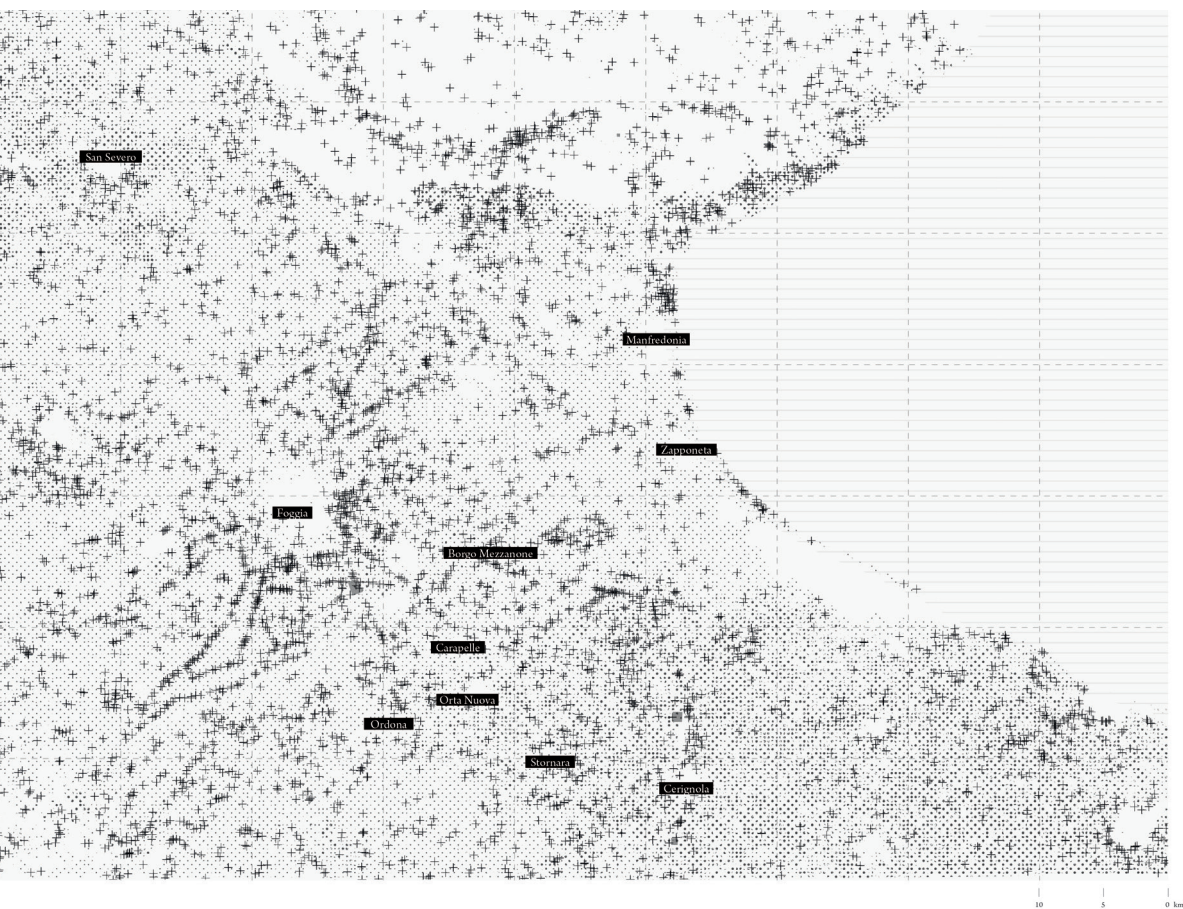
agricultural land use map

- permanent crops
- natural pasture areas
- agroforestry areas
- water basins
- mixed forests
- canals and waterways
- rivers and torrents
- horticultural crops under glass
- olive groves
- vineyards
- saline
- simple arable crops
- lakes, lagoons, marshes
- meadows and wooded pastures
- reworked soils









- permanent crops
- temporary crops
- agroforestry areas
- horticultural crops under glass
- simple arable crops
- olive groves
- vineyards
- fruit trees
- +

This is not because of the type of cultivation, the environmental aspects, or the productive aspects, but because of the way in which an articulated system of production, only partially visible and legal, is built around this rural condition.

The Apulia productive machine is characterized by a dual extraction method. On the one hand, the land becomes the terrain from which raw material – i.e. agricultural produce – is extracted to become a marketable product; on the other, bodies are conceived as the commodity called labour power. Such double extraction of value reveals estranged conditions for the current European welfare state, yet it is part of its industrial chain.

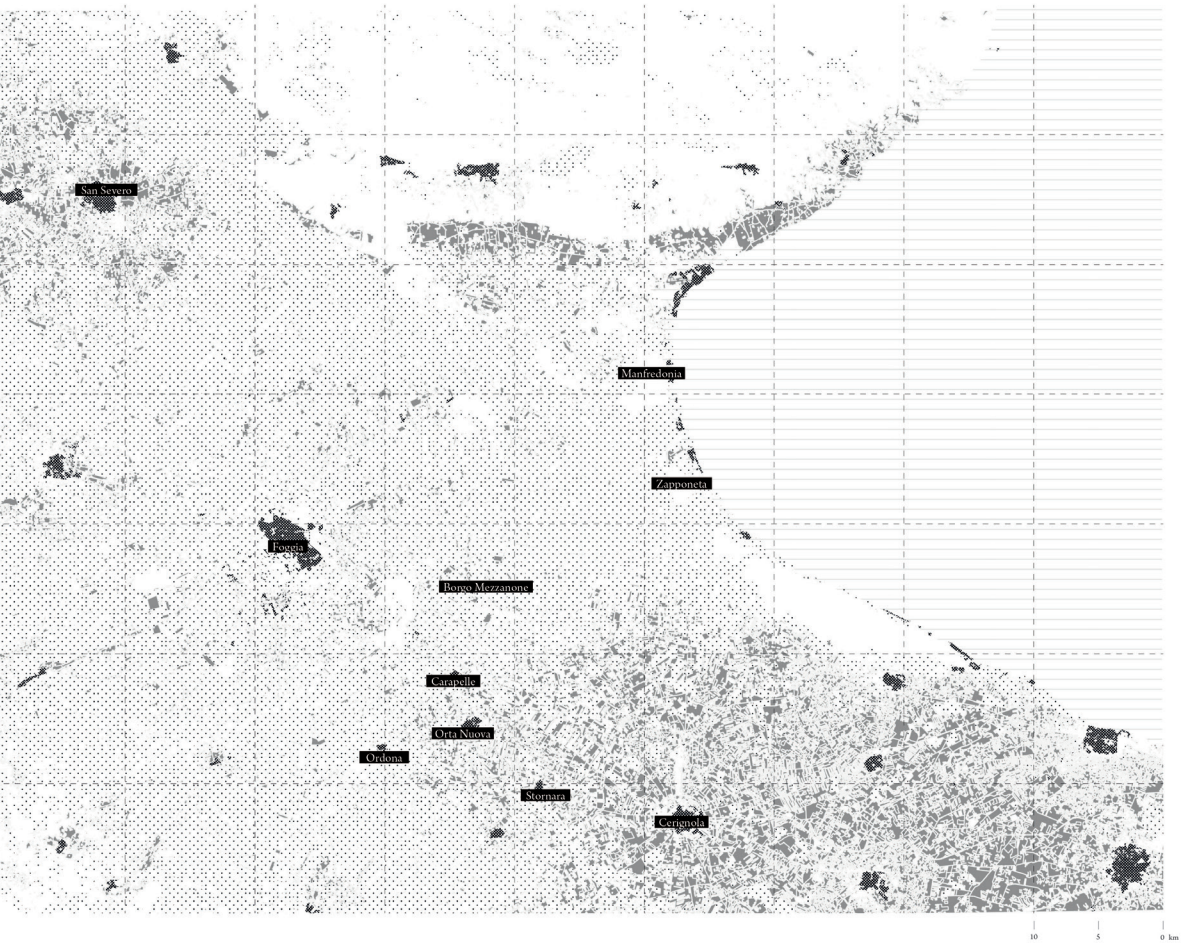
Contrary to expectations, in the Capitanata plantations the devaluation and the exploitation of labour make the difference between the value of work performed by the worker and its remuneration (CREA, 2020). Through the devaluation of the service provided by the migrant labour force, companies can adapt to the low prices managed by large-scale retail chains.

Yet the devaluation of performed work is not just a matter of labour exploitation; it rather is a complex system built on social, economic and cultural conditions rooted in the precarious livelihood and absolute poverty



through which migrant workers serve the agricultural production network. Because of these dynamics, which are much more complex than they are described here, intermediary figures between farms and available workers, the caporale, are crucial. The illegal system of *caporalato*<sup>2</sup> structures the relationships between labour supply and demand, or between companies and migrant workers in search of the sustenance means to survive. Rural ghettos, villages of shacks, informal settlements near abandoned farmhouses, are becoming a common feature of the Mediterranean rural context, as in Capitanata. Their socio-spatial characteristics allow some reflections on the dynamics that lead to the appearance of certain housing devices in specific territories. The fragmented rural context in the province of Foggia and the opacity of the seasonal labour supply, in the Capitanata plains, make these territories natural catalysts for the flows of irregular migrants, favouring their dispersion throughout the territory (Osservatorio Placido Rizzotto, 2020). Labour in southern Italy agriculture is closely linked to the way in which housing segregation reproduces alternative organizations of livelihoods (Caruso, 2018). The Borgo Mezzanone airstrip is part of the circuit of informal settlements in the Apulian Capitanata. Proceeding on bumpy roads, one suddenly finds

- ⊙ permanent crops
- ⊙ temporary crops
- ⊙ agroforestry areas
- ⊙ horticultural crops under glass
- ⊙ simple arable crops
- ⊙ olive groves
- ⊙ vineyards
- ⊙ fruit trees
- cargo sorting areas
- state roads
- highways
- ⋯ shipping routes



- permanent crops
- temporary crops
- agroforestry areas
- horticultural crops under glass
- simple arable crops
- olive groves
- vineyards
- fruit trees
- old continuous residential fabric
- recent continuous residential fabric

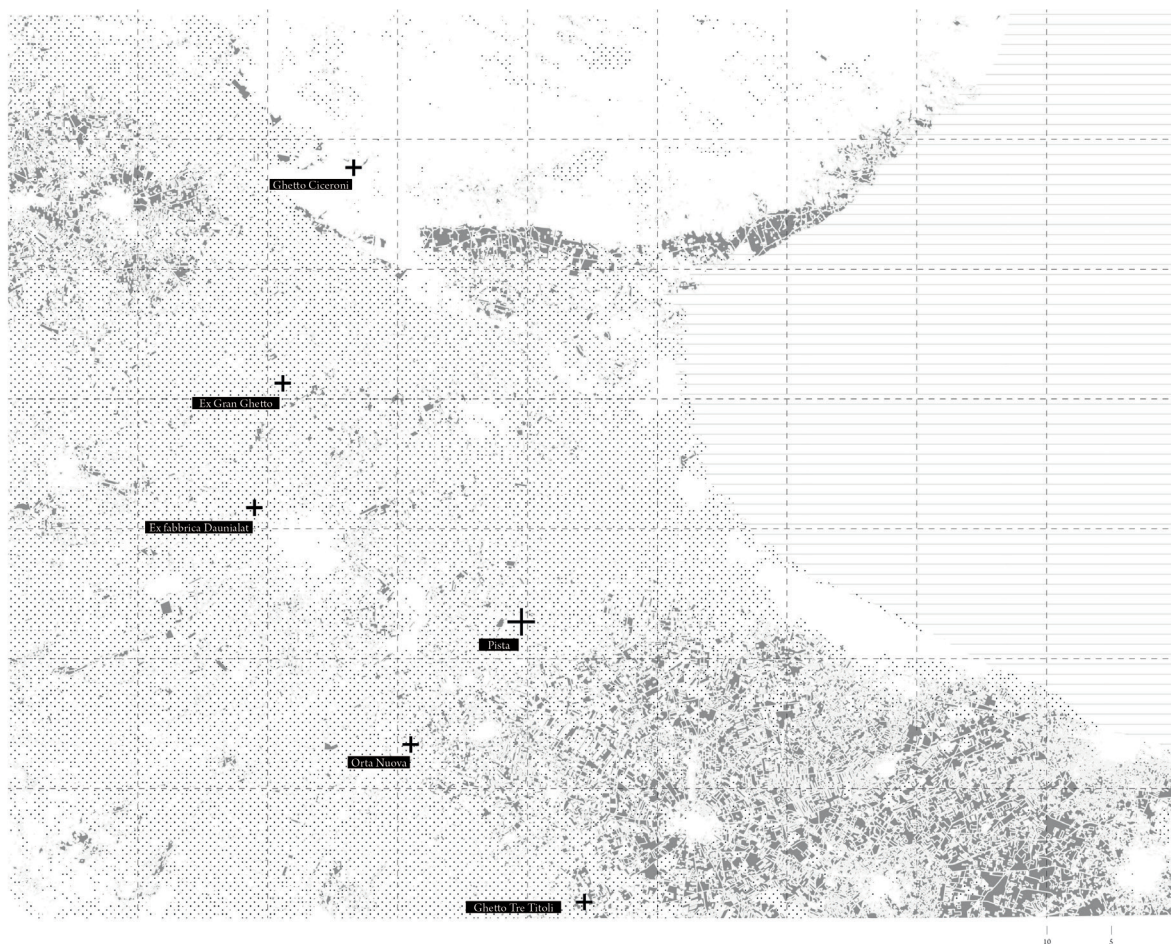
**2 - Illegal intermediation between the employer, the so-called “caporale”, and the worker based on the exploitation of the letter’s condition of vulnerability. This form of oppression results in working conditions that forge modern slavery: lack of adequate social and legal protection, wages below the national minimum, constant threat of losing the**

**job, endurance of physical and moral violence. In the agricultural sector, the “caporale” handles the workers’ recruitment, housing and transportation on the fields, often demanding a percentage of the workers’ wage in addition to the remuneration provided by the employer.**

**3 - CARA is the Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers, now closed for several years across Italy.**

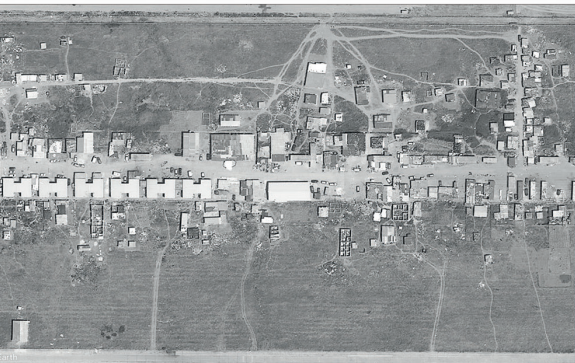
**Fig. 12 - Rural villages and settlements.** Revised from PPTR Regione Puglia, 2015.

**Fig. 13 - Informal settlements.** Revised from research by Antonio Ciniero, updated September 2020.



oneself along a concrete flow on which flights once landed and took off and now men and women live and die enslaved. In the summer months, around two thousand people populate the informal settlement of Borgo Mezzanone, developed on the site of a former NATO airstrip, behind the CARA.<sup>3</sup> Shelters have a linear organization along the last miles of the airport infrastructure, separated by barbed wire fences from the wheat fields that surround it. Now deprived of their initial containment function, fences are now perforated in several points to allow working bodies to reach the work field. Two parallel axes result, bordering the asphalt platform of the old CARA. Shelters develop mainly in the half of the airstrip adjacent to the centre. The entrance space is marked by the succession of three gates that were set up in the first years of the centre's development. Homes built with discarded materials alternate with old containers or huts in bricks and mortar, echoing the typical structures of houses in sub-Saharan African cities. Everyone lives on the ground floor, taking advantage of the presence of verandas leaning against the existing shacks or containers, further softening the threshold between public and private space.

- permanent crops
- temporary crops
- agroforestry areas
- horticultural crops under glass
- simple arable crops
- olive groves
- vineyards
- fruit trees
- + Informal settlements



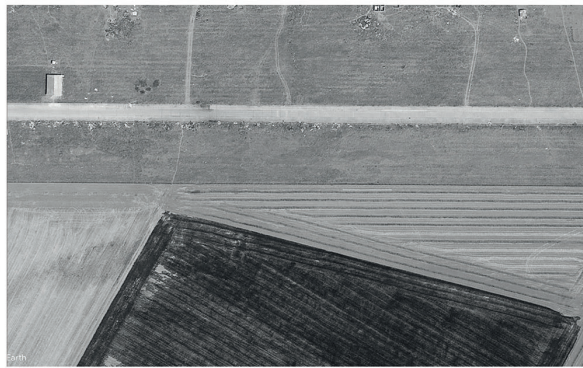
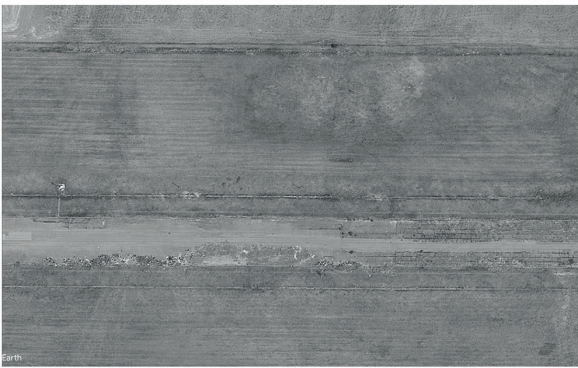
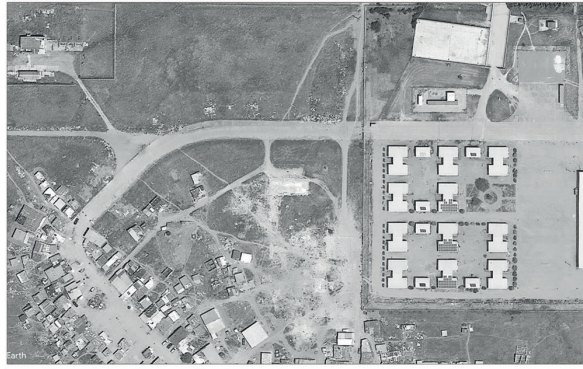
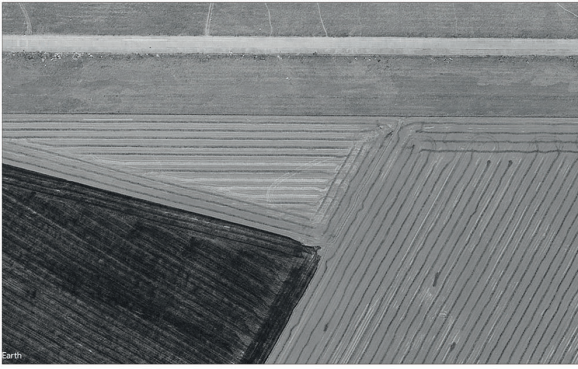
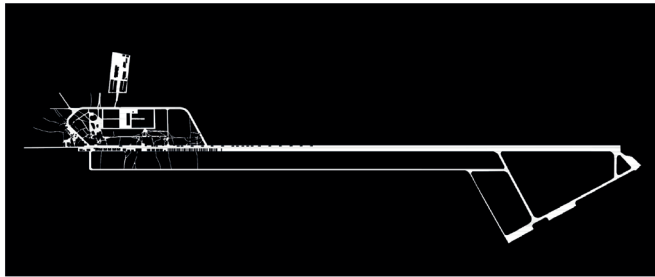


Fig. 14 - (Previous page) Fragments zenithal view informal settlement of Borgo Mezzanone. Google Earth.

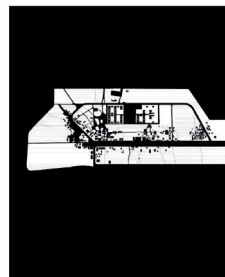
The absence of a clear hierarchy in the structure determines the lack of a gradient in the articulation of open spaces and of mediation between places dedicated to communal living and places of intimacy. The public places are mostly housed in containers where collective activities take place.

The Borgo Mezzanone airstrip settlement is a place of relationships, as in any real city, and a non-white architecture. Certainly, it is a space of dependencies and resistances that manifest socially and spatially through dynamics of mutual aid, informal practices of life support, caring and taking care of others. It is a place marked by a logic of attraction and expulsion, where relationships often characterise for discord and violence. Living in Borgo Mezzanone, in the airstrip, means experiencing the condition of arranging the meaning of a home in a process of constant negotiation. In the fragments of Borgo Mezzanone, not only dwellings are arranged, but the complex emotional and moral concepts of diversity find spaces and ways of expressing themselves (Bianchetti, 2020). Observing Borgo Mezzanone through disciplines such as architecture and urbanism is indispensable for rethinking this territory. Looking at those conditions implies trying to hold together the stratifications of which this place is composed, to accept its fragility, to have a disillusioned look at the issues of informality and difference.

SPACE

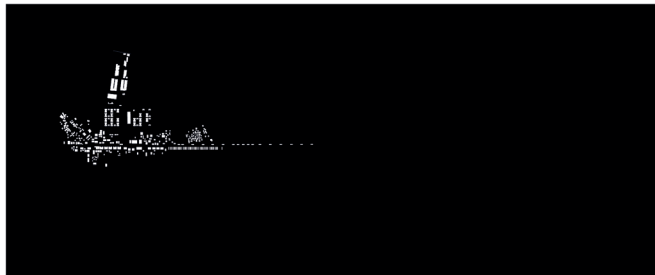


paved areas

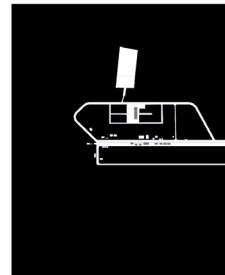


unbuilt soil

PRACTICES



houses



services

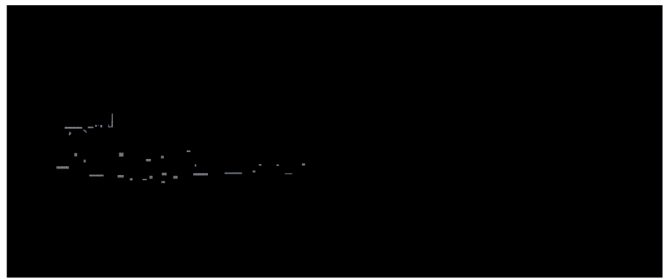
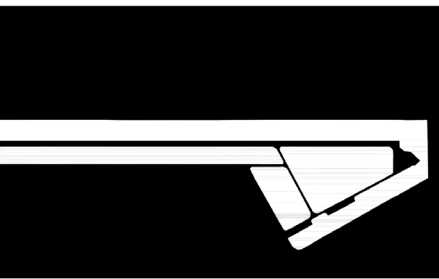


Investigating the relationship between production, exploitation, race and power, in a physical place where these issues clash violently, responds to the urgency of making this issue a public problem. The rural spaces of Foggia are transformed into places of difference, spaces that unwillingly welcome conflict and diversity.

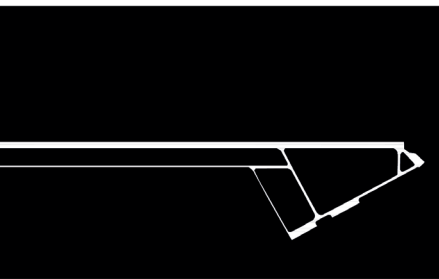
The territory of Borgo Mezzanone is a threshold marked by incessant negotiation, a figure of proximity, division and endless movement. It is a place of arrivals and departures, of hostile intrusions and conflicts. This place manifests the vulnerability of both migrants and other social groups interacting in this part of the Foggia countryside. The Borgo Mezzanone coastline is a place to learn and reflect on the difficulties of co-existence in the rural space. Observing this place allows us to think about a project that welcomes relations and contact. Sometimes these relationships are harmonious, more often they are characterised by discord and violence.

The research carried out on the territory of Borgo Mezzanone, on its stratifications, on its ambiguities, on its opacity, opens up a number of reflections on the themes of co-existence, separation and injustice, observing them with a disillusioned and conscious investigation of otherness, through a project of difference.

Fig. 15 - Land use diagrams of the informal settlement of Borgo Mezzanone. Camilla Rondot, June 2021.



cars



public space

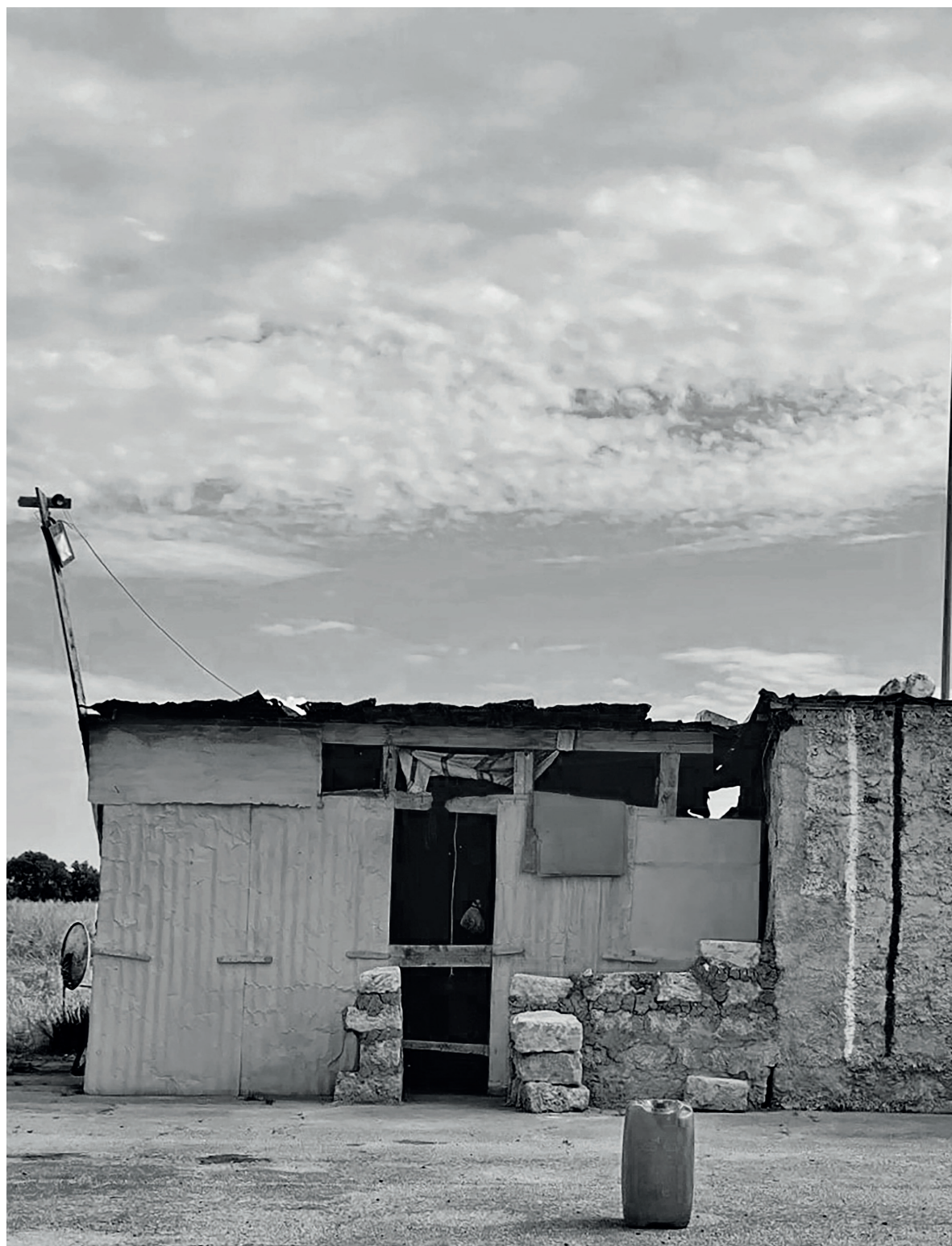




Fig. 16 - Photo of housing in the informal settlement of Borgo Mezzanone. Camilla Rondot, June 2021.





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Fig. 17 - (previous page) Photo of housing in the informal settlement of Borgo Mezzanone. Camilla Rondot, June 2021.

Fig. 18 - (previous page) Photo of housing in the informal settlement of Borgo Mezzanone. Camilla Rondot, June 2021.

Fig. 19 - Photo of housing in the informal settlement of Borgo Mezzanone. Camilla Rondot, June 2021.

*racial-*

*ization •*

*blackness •*

*resistance*

*• Black*

*Lisbon*

# What Does Black Lisbon Look Like?

## Urban Online Imagery and the Place of Race

Elena Taviani

### *Abstract*

The aim of this paper is to explore urban racialization as a process that emerges in specific places of the city. Using the publicly accessible Google Maps and Google Street View imagery of Lisbon Metropolitan Area, I conduct a fine-grained analysis of the urban and architectural forms through which race materialises in a central historical square, in a few peripheral social housing areas and in some informal urban gardens. Inscribed in the wider Black European framework, Black Lisbon is here intended as a provocation more than a label, and the concept of blackness is adopted as a visible tracker of micro-scale mechanisms of racialization as well as resistance to them. Considering the complex spatial dynamic that results and that encompasses different forms of omissions, displacements, replacements and place-makings, I argue that certain buildings, settings, bodies presence, urban spots and gardens arise as critical elements of the (still disregarded) compilation of non-white European architectures.

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Race can be conceived as a process made of material elements.

Race ruled Apartheid, but usually operates through more subtle means than racial segregation.

### *Introduction*

The aim of this article is to explore complexly layered materiality of race that emerges out of the analysis of specific places of the city through means of digital visualisation. In the last few years, the materiality of social media has been reaffirmed in a range of disciplines such as geography, urban studies, architectural theory, anthropology, history to name but a few. From this perspective, race can be conceived as a process made of material elements – bodies, urban places and architectures, for instance – and as a chain of contingencies in which the connections between its constituent components are not given, but tend to repeat. There is no essence of whiteness any more than of blackness, but there is a relative fixity that inheres in most of the possibilities in which its many elements materialise. Race ruled Apartheid, but usually operates through more subtle means than racial segregation. Yet, race's processes invariably deal with space. This theoretical assumption suggests a practical consequence: in a space-time imagined as dominantly white – such as that of Europe – blackness is not only a political variable but can be considered also a material and visible tracker of race's spatial articulations. So, I choose Black Lisbon as a case study and as a provocation to grasp certain processes of urban racialization. Indeed, specific places of the metropolitan area of Lisbon characterised by the visible presence of black people offer an opportunity to explore the urban dimension of race. The intrinsic link between what is material (or not) and the implicit social meanings is addressed through a relational notion of place. Although it can be challenging particularly with respect to research methodology, it means to consider places as multi-layered, networked and perforated, as results and drivers of social processes. So, I implemented a visual analysis of the online urban images publicly available on Google that has proved to be an extremely effective tool to conduct a detailed urban investigation – without being physically present on the sites of study but combined with previous first-hand experience and documented knowledge – particularly in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown constraints. The paper is structured as follows. I first present Black Lisbon as part of the wider Black Europe framework.



Then, I propose the innovative analysis implemented through digital visualisation of architectural materials in which the spatial and the visual converge on multiple levels. The attempt is to shed light on the complexity of the relationship between race and place, between blackness and the urban space. The places presented are the ones in which I considered race operates and functions more critically and visibly than in others: a central public square and a set of social housing estates together with the informal urban gardens around them. Ultimately, this paper aims to contribute to acknowledging how subtle ways of urban racialization emerge when their (visual) materiality is analysed with the support of digital means of visualisation. Another issue raised by the analysis is that of recognising how black spatial practices have a decolonising and transformative effect on attitudes: excavating historical injustices, envisioning and materialising alternative futures for Lisbon architecture and urban development and, by extension, for the European space.

*Race (Visual) Materiality: a Micro-scale Analysis of Urban Places*

The insight elaborated within Black Geographies is an effective starting point on which to articulate a spatial framework to answer a sociological question on race. Indeed, this recent branch of study opens up discourses on how an analysis of space, place, and power can be transformed by foregrounding questions of blackness and race (Hawthorne, 2019). In particular, my conceptual framework is articulated in the space-time of Black Europe (Keaton et al., 2009) and focuses on Lisbon as a case study. I propose a virtual method to a critical re-signification of race visual materiality within specific Black Lisbon places. There are a number of contemporary practices and projects that have used digital technologies to render places visible. They show that while there are many advantages to using digital techniques – not least the possibility of a form of engagement with places that are not easily accessible – such techniques come with their own limitations (Awan, 2016). Moreover, possibly more than ever before, the pandemic urged researchers around the world to find alternative ways of investigation, generating a higher level of digitalization and virtualization of empirical analyses. In the case of this study,

The places presented are the ones in which I considered race operates and functions more critically and visibly than in others.

The methodological question is, what does (or does not) the visual allow one to understand about race spatial materiality.

the analysis of online urban images publicly available on Google Street Views (GSV) and the satellite Google Maps (GM) shots turned out to be a convincing visual resource combined with the direct observation and the historical documentation of the places considered. The methodological question is, what does (or does not) the visual allow one to understand about race spatial materiality. In other words, the challenge is to attain a deeper comprehension of how the visual can be designed as part of the complex, phenomenological and material forms in which race emerges in the urban (Saldanha, 2004). GM images, updated to 2021, offer the definition of urban localization and morphology, as well as the street layout and the relation with the wider context, and provide photos of urban areas that are hardly understandable only through walking by them. On the other hand, GSV street shoots – taken every five or ten years by Google cameras – provide an opportunity not only to deepen the analysis to include materials, colours, urban typologies and uses, mobile elements, barriers, electric poles, road signs and frequentation by vehicles and people, but also to track change over time. In GSV, indeed, there is a Time Machine option that stocks photos of the same spots taken in different years, making it possible to visualise urban changes over a decade or more. Another important feature of this digital tool is the access to users detailed photos of exteriors as well as interiors. While GM is supported by new technological possibilities, but relies on traditional geographical modes of top views, GSV includes the innovative time variable and stands on the critical assumption that what is visible from a public street is publishable knowledge. Considering that, the tool reinforces – or rather problematizes – a hugely debated notion in architectural and urban theories such as that of the public (for a sharp analysis see Cremaschi, 1994). In addition, as a critical concept, “the street” builds upon an extensive scholarly tradition interested not only in its public nature, but also in concepts such as “the everyday” and “the bottom-up” (see, for instance, Fyfe, 1998). Thus, it forms the privileged space for the theorization of a particularly urban condition for unpredictable and uncontrolled encounters between strangers marked by differences and inequalities (Watson, 2006; Amin, 2012). In the experience of the contemporary street, the spatial and the visual converge on multiple levels (Awan,

2016; Dibazar, Naef, 2018). Google tools, both Maps and Street View, claim to present the world as a fact, mapped, documented, and reconstituted online – an approximation of the real – while actually they are directly implicated in the politics of representations (Power et al., 2013), renewing questions of privacy, power, knowledge, and access (Elwood, 2010). So, both GM and GSV imagery can still provide a very good tool for urban analysis at a fine level and has the potential for grassroots initiatives via democratisation of technology (Elwood, Leszczynski, 2013), but only with a re-signification of their operative images – images that no longer represent objects but are part of an operation (Hoelzl, Rémi, 2014). In other words, one is influenced by what one sees, one can comment on it, but one can hardly notice what is missing without direct experience of the places observed online. The automated capture primes this casual exposure, where the implicit trust placed in the image can influence observations based on a representation (mediated by Google). Admittedly, the experience can be supported by the image but still needs embodied knowledge. The choice of the places here analysed and the composition of their GM and GSV images is driven by a deep personal knowledge of the city (six years residing both in the peripheries and in the city centre), as well as full bibliographic research, participant observation throughout ten months of intense fieldwork and by the information collected through the interviews (more than 50 of them, spanning from informal conversations to in-depth sessions). The content analysis that I conducted on the images was as simple as a detailed description of the architectural and urban characteristics of the spaces, of all the visible human and non-human elements and articulations. Through this operation, I increased the objectivity of the analysis, limiting myself to an architectonically detailed and historically informed report.

The places that I present are, in my opinion, interesting places where race and blackness are critically at work, but not “black places” of Lisbon. I am not black, I do not know what a black place really is, and I am not even sure if it exists. Rather, I propose a visual exploration of specific places of a city predominantly (thought of as) white, where black presences reveal the complex (visual) materiality of processes of urban

One is influenced by what one sees, one can comment on it, but one can hardly notice what is missing without direct experience of the places observed online.

I am not even sure if it exists.

# Urban racialization emerges from the field study as a multifaceted process of mutual production of race and space.

racialization and resistance to it. Urban racialization emerges from the field study as a multifaceted process of mutual production of race and space that encompasses bodies and urban materials and can develop in different and more or less subtle ways – omission, erasure, displacement, replacement, architectural alienation. At the same time, these processes of urban racialization are interrupted by certain kinds of spatial forms of resistance that disturb and question conventional Lisbon (and, for extension, European) imaginary.

## *In the City Centre: Racialization through Omission and Resistance by Presence*

Largo de São Domingos is a place that includes a range of different layers of understanding regarding the ways in which race materialises. It is entangled with many past/present connections and, at the same time, embeds a sense of false promise. Figure 1 narrates the square through a composition of GM

Fig. 1 - The central square of Largo de São Domingos. In the first row, a satellite GM image of the square; in the second row, a composition of GSV street views; in the third row, on-line publicly accessible photos uploaded by Google users. Source: online GM and GSV images composed by the author.



and GSV online publicly accessible photos. The layout consists of a satellite photo, a set of street-level images arranged in a single panoramic one, and five detailed photos provided by GSV users in order to highlight some critical details of the square.

Actually, Largo de São Domingos is not a proper square, rather a largo which in Portuguese technically means an enlarged space between buildings. It is located in the very centre of the city, on the edge between the rich and noble part and the decaying and multicultural one. It serves as a “funnel”: a place of transit, but somehow intimate. It is a meeting point of black people, it naturally welcomes white inhabitants of the poor neighbourhoods in the passage to the centre as well as tourists from all around the world entering the disordered, narrow and steep part of the city or attracted by the historical Ginjinha bar (“e” in Figure 1) together with the elderly locals.

Its irregular shape evokes the mediaeval urban fabric. It develops on two levels, the northern part lies on a slope edged with an iron railing, at a higher level than the remaining part. On the lower part, the difference in height turns into an inner triangular wall, just next to a seating system created with modular parallelepiped blocks of black and white marble. The flooring is made of white cobblestones with black minimal decorations and simple relief details. The square is mainly bordered by residential buildings and the institutional ones are distinguished by size and architectural style: Palácio da Independência (1), São Domingos church (2) and the right side of the theatre Dona Maria II (3).

The church, which dates back to the thirteenth century, stands out on the east side with its Portuguese baroque religious architecture, completely rebuilt after the 1755 earthquake. During the sixteenth century, the first black fraternity of Lisbon (Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos) established itself in the church. Black catholic brotherhoods, which rapidly expanded throughout the city and the country, played a complex and even subversive role in Portuguese society under slavery. The conversion of Africans to Catholicism was a pillar of slavery, but these brotherhoods also provided social life and support to those ostracised from society in almost every other way. They provided assistance to enslaved Africans and

The conversion of Africans to Catholicism was a pillar of slavery, but these brotherhoods also provided social life and support to those ostracised from society in almost every other way.

The presence of approximately a hundred black bodies stands out in the square. This architecture of bodies made of an old and mostly retired generation of black people whose main activity seems now limited to conversation, indeed, expands in other parts of the square.

economically sustained those who were Latinized, baptized and freed (Fonseca, 2016: 91).

The church of São Domingos is itself evidence of black historical embeddedness in the city; however, nothing material was designed to communicate this circumstance, neither inside nor outside, not even a plaque. So, this part of history is easily and totally ignored by an uninformed visitor. Another historical event that occurred there at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when a mob persecuted and killed around 3000 Jews, is instead materially recalled twice outside the church by a monument and a mural. The Memorial to the Victims of the Jewish Massacre (“c” in Figure 1), inaugurated in 2008, lies at the centre of the square. It is a white spherical marble block with an inscribed metal star of David, in low relief. It is not prominent and may be overlooked by uninformed passers-by, because of its small size, but it is there, holding its position. The memorial also includes a mural with the phrase “Lisbon – City of Tolerance” written in 34 different languages (“b” in Figure 1), affixed on the right side of the slope.

The other institutional building of the square lies almost hidden by two big trees at the beginning of the slope. The exterior of Palácio da Independência (2) responds to a simple bi-chromatic and regular seventeenth-century style. Immediately after the Revolution of 25 Abril, in 1974, the palace was occupied and the “Association for the colonial war-wounded veterans” was established there (Rigal, 2015). The main objective of the association, still existing today, was to unite and assist the soldiers who suffered serious injuries fighting for Portugal in the colonial war, many of whom were (and are) blacks. Soon a social canteen was opened too. For this reason, even if today the canteen has been replaced by a tourist restaurant and the association has changed its venue, the entrance of the building continues to be a meeting point for old retired soldiers, especially blacks from Guinea-Bissau. Again, not a single material sign reveals this part of recent history.

However, the presence of approximately a hundred black bodies stands out in the square. This architecture of bodies made of an old and mostly retired generation of black people whose main activity seems now limited to conversation, indeed, expands in other

parts of the square. Under the canopy of trees, on the slope (“a” in Figure 1), on the sittings ahead of the tolerance’ mural (“b” in Figure 1), under the tree in front of the church (“d” in Figure 1), on the first benches of the nearby Rossio square. A small market of African food products populated by about twenty sellers slightly dynamizes the scene. The firmness of these black bodies mismatches with the flow, movement and passage that characterize other presences. The daily repetition of this black occupation and appropriation of space challenges the flux of visitors and local passers-by with some fixity.

In Largo de São Domingos, indeed, it is possible to see a wide range of different bodies and the peaceful atmosphere could even suggest a certain cosmopolitan/multicultural sense of place. However, the strident mismatch between its materiality and the actual presences that characterise the everyday life of this place contradicts the pretence of an unproblematic and harmonious scene. The square is full of symbols as well as omissions. No material element explains and recognizes the historical roots of black presence and it seems that all the burden of recall is left to the bodies. On the basis of this discussion, I argue that material omissions in urban design emerge as a form of racialization.

*In the Peripheries: Racialization through Erasure, Displacement and Re-placement*

The most significant urban manoeuvre that occurred in the urban periphery of Lisbon, changing radically its landscape, was the PER Programme. Enacted in 1993 by the central government and implemented by local municipalities over the following decades the Special Re-housing Programme had two main objectives: the eradication of informal settlements and the replacement of people in new housings (Cachado, 2013). Only a few informal settlements were spared by demolition machines since they occupy low-value lands or because of strong resistance by residents (see, for instance, the case of Cova da Moura). The ones located on lands with a real estate value were instead gradually destroyed. In Figure 2, thanks to the time machine available on GSV, it is possible to reveal the buildings of informal settlements demolished between 2015 and 2017 by the Amadora municipality.

A wide range of different bodies and the peaceful atmosphere could even suggest a certain cosmopolitan/multicultural sense of place.

The square is full of symbols as well as omissions.

2009

## Bairro 6 de Maio



2019

## Bairro Estrela D'Africa



2009

2019

Fig.2 - The demolished neighborhoods. A composition of GSV street-views before (2009) and after (2019) the demolitions of black informal neighborhoods of Bairro 6 de Maio and Estrela d'Africa. Source: online GM and GSV images composed by the author.

These black architectures, material expressions of creativity and place-making, were simply razed to the ground.

They were part of two black-majority neighbourhoods: Bairro 6 de Maio and Bairro Estrela D'Africa. The images in the first rows date back to 2009, and those in the second row are from 2019.

The scenery changed to such an extent that only with the help of some urban elements – such as street signs and light poles – are correspondences detectable. These black architectures, material expressions of creativity and place-making, were simply razed to the ground. Admittedly, the settlements' illegal origin and their inhabitants' social vulnerability to some extent paved the way to the implementation of (violent) processes by local authorities, such as house demolition and displacement of former inhabitants. Erasing buildings, and relocating (mainly black) people, emerges as another way in which racialization works out.

Yet, people were relocated to the social housing that today constellate the suburbs. Around 45,000 new dwelling units and 290 social housing neighbourhoods were built (Tulumello et al., 2018). They are certainly not black architectures, but rather architectures where the majority of black people currently reside within the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. Considering their isolated locations, the alienating urban forms and the low-quality materials utilised in their construction, I argue that they stand as “danger architectures” embedding an obviously explosive



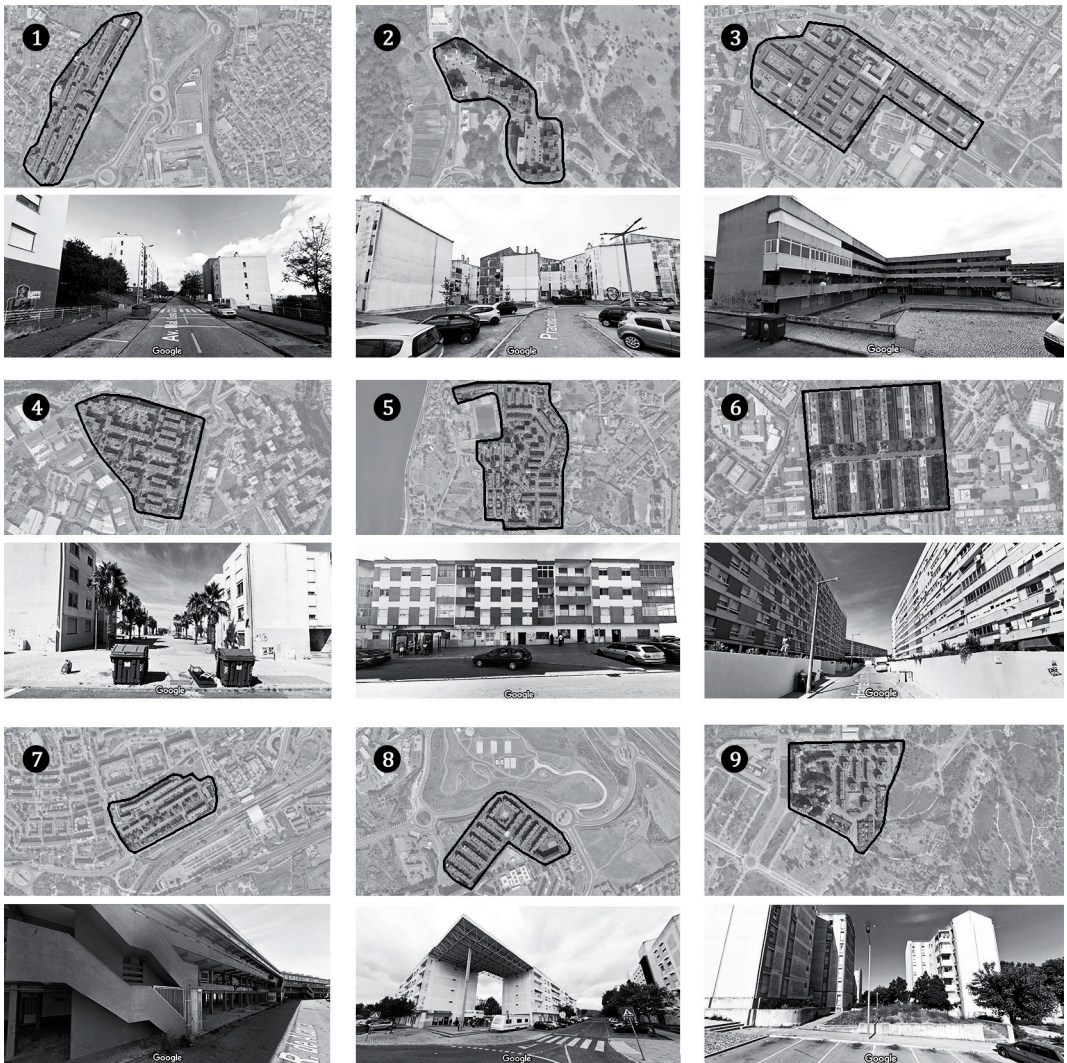


Fig.3 - The social housing areas. Casal da Mira, Amadora (1), Quinta da Princesa, Seixal (2), Bairro da Bela Vista, Setúbal (3), Quinta do Mocho, Loures (4), Arrentela, Seixal (5), Quinta da Vitoria, Loures (6), Monte da Caparica, Almada (7), Casal da Boba, Amadora (8), Vale da Amoreira, Moita (9).  
 Source: online GM and GSV images composed by the author.

Their inhospitable urban morphology, as well as the dubious quality of the materials, fused in “an institutional architecture of poverty”.

set of circumstances and implying another specific process of racialization, that of marginalization by re-placement on the metropolitan edges. In Figure 3, nine examples of social housing projects that were constructed by the PER programme are narrated through satellite and street view images.

In the words of the legislation, the stated purpose of the programme was to rehouse people in-situ, close to the place where they lived (article 5, comma c, of Decree-Law 163/93). However, the lack of public land to accommodate the new housing estate near the original settlements and municipal authorities' financial constraints (despite the central government covering 50% of the costs) resulted in the relocation of people to far-away sites, disrupting existing social and labour networks. In general, data points to an increase in the peripheralization of the people involved in the process, and a hidden – yet persistent – trend to relocate black populations into more marginal sites than whites (Ascensão, Leal, 2019). The areas where the housing estates house a great percentage of black inhabitants are, undoubtedly, isolated (2, 8, 9 in Figure 3), devoid of infrastructures (1, 3, 5 in Figure 3), close to industrial centres (4, 6 in Figure 3), or cemeteries (9 in Figure 3). The architectural solutions adopted in these social housings are comparable to the post-WWII social architecture of other European capitals. In other words, they were already dated when built. Their inhospitable urban morphology, as well as the dubious quality of the materials, fused in “an institutional architecture of poverty”. No public spaces or commercial activities have been realized, and not even envisioned in the projects. Greenery is minimal. Some trees were planted on the sidewalks, but neither parks nor children's playgrounds were designed. Oftentimes, primary schools have been constructed near the new settlements. However, this conducted a contradictory mechanism of segregation in the educational system. Indeed, the majority of children residing in social housing estates attend the nearby school, while children residing in other areas are unlikely to do so. Consequently, classrooms are homogenous in terms of student social background (mostly black and poor families) and virtuous circles of social mobility are hardly triggered.

The materiality of these architectural solutions is also a latent activator of social exclusion. The low-quality materials used in the constructions deteriorated within a few years. Damage is visible inside and outside the blocks. The plaster is of very low quality and absorbs humidity, window frames are made of aluminium and the single glazing does not provide adequate insulation. The houses are equipped with water and electricity, but do not have heating systems. The common areas – entrances, stairs and landings – evoke those of the worst hospitals or even those of prisons. In short, these new houses had been presented to the inhabitants coming from informal neighbourhoods as an improvement in terms of living conditions, but the results have been nearly the opposite.

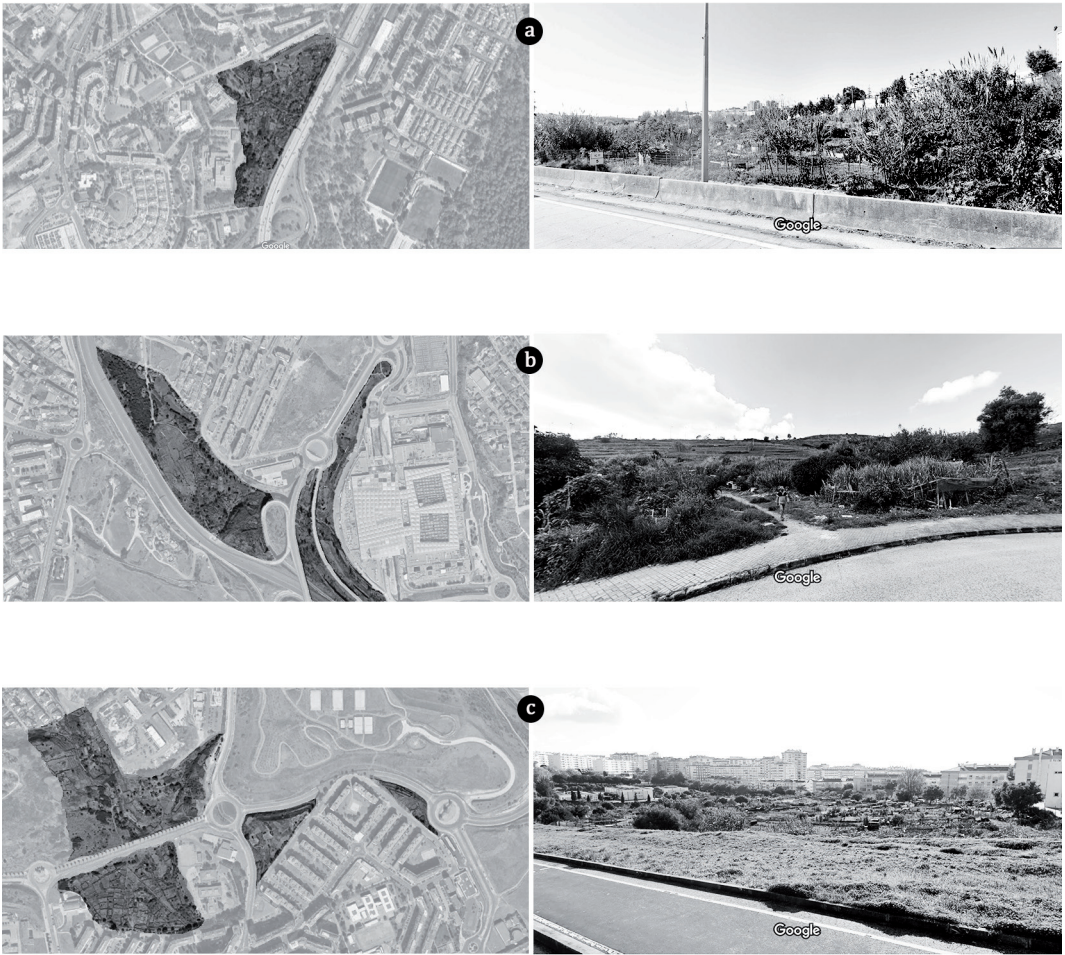
People who lived in self-built houses – with structural constraints balanced by familiarity, freedom, and creative touches on the building itself – were re-placed in apartments that quickly became old and ruined. People who lived in an atmosphere of mutual help and community support were relocated to social housing estates, lacking any social facility with new and unknown neighbours, isolated in the urban fringes. It is not surprising then that many of these new social neighbourhoods built as part of PER have become enclaves of youth crime. Given these premises, what else could they have become? The establishment of a second periphery driven by the implementation of the programme seems to correspond to an urban reterritorialization of colonial relations, which emerges as a process of racialization through marginalization of black people.

#### *Resistance through Suburban Informal Agriculture*

The processes of racialization have been counteracted by certain spatial practices, which at least limit effects even if they do not tackle the causes. Informal urban gardens arise as a form of daily, discreet and subtle resistance (Scott, 1985) that interrupt and punctuate Lisbon peripheral landscape. Non-regulated urban gardens, created and operated by an old generation of Cape Verdeans across the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon, are an interesting example of resistance through placemaking. In architecture and urban planning, placemaking is the idea that people “transform the places in which we find ourselves into places in which we live” (Schneekloth, Shibley, 1995: 1). It refers to a

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The processes of racialization have been counteracted by certain spatial practices, which at least limit effects even if they do not tackle the causes.



**Fig. 4 - The suburban informal gardens.** Near the self-built settlements of Cova da Moura and Bairro do Zambujal (a) and near the social projects of Casal da Mira (b) and Casal da Boba (c). Source: online GM and GSV images composed by the author.

collaborative process by which people shape places in order to maximize shared value. But black placemaking carries other intrinsic features: it occurs within a context of segregation, unemployment, bad schools, violence and police brutality and a broad array of subtler racialization processes.

In Figure 4, three informal urban gardens are narrated through a couple of images each, a satellite GM image and a GSV shot of the street. These allotments along the metropolitan road IC17 CRIL (“a” in Figure 4) are worked by the inhabitants of Cova da Moura and Bairro do Zambujal informal neighbourhoods, and the ones near the recent social housing estates of Casal da Mira (“b” in Figure 4) and Casal da Boba (“c” in Figure 4), worked by the relocated residents. These urban allotments arise on public land, in the

voids between the infrastructures. They are neither legally nor institutionally regulated, and a legal vacuum allows them not to be considered unlawful (Cabannes, Raposo, 2013). They result from gradual occupations, reoccupations, and disguised collective appropriations first by Portuguese rural migrants who moved to the metropolis during the 1950s and then by the migrants from the colonies after the 1960s. Today, these suburban gardens are cultivated mainly by an old generation of Cape Verdeans (Varela, 2020). Their design is ephemeral, delicate and wise. Fences, nets, canalization, divisions, tool sheds are made of simple and usually remedied wooden, metal or plastic materials. Following and interacting with the natural reliefs, an entanglement of almost straight lines creates various rectangles of different sizes. From the street, they appear as a marked and articulated set of green spaces between the concrete of buildings and streets, colouring the otherwise grey landscape. But they are much more than this. They are the fruit of daily resistances and essential economic support for a number of families. They are also the hub of old friendships: mostly men and women who left Cape Verde more than fifty years ago (very few also from Guinea-Bissau), whose life revolves around the maintenance of such places. Here, vegetables and pulses are cultivated: potatoes, sweet potatoes, broad beans, peas, corn, different varieties of beans, tomatoes, cassava and sugarcane. Here is the place of shared lunches and weekend encounters, the place of chats and work, fights and resistance. The constellation of urban gardens in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area questions and contests urban growth, while intersecting it. It emerges as a form of black place-making that not only productively resists racialization, but also materially develops alternative futures.

### *Conclusions*

The places presented in the article bring one to reflect on how looking at race – and at the processes through which race permeates urban space – is relevant to understanding our city. Urban racialization emerges as a multifaceted process that operates in different ways. In Lisbon city centre, for instance, it works out as material omissions. Obliterated histories are embedded in the material space, while the constant presence of

**Obliterated histories are embedded in the material space, while the constant presence of black bodies contradicts, and somehow compensates, such neglect.**

black bodies contradicts, and somehow compensates, such neglect. In Largo de São Domingos, indeed, an “architecture of bodies” questions the silence of urban design. The fixity of black bodies in the square appears an answer to the institutional spatial design, unable to reveal and recognize the black urban memory of the place. In the peripheries, racialization emerges as erasure – demolition of black architectures and displacement, re-placement and marginalization of black people. The isolated location, the anonymous and uniform urban morphology and low-quality architectural elements of re-housing projects are other aspects through which racialization materialises.

However, within the voids of infrastructures, the wise and fine architecture of informal urban gardens, realized and operated by black people, counteracts the architectural alienation of concrete blocks. The creativity of horticulture, the green place-making and the assembling of people around the rhythms of agriculture arise as a powerful form of resistance. The informal gardens reveal the inadequacy of institutions’ approach to the peripheries and interrupt the conventional Lisbon – and, by extension, European – imaginary of the suburban landscape. They are not adaptive strategies, rather practices of black people insubordination with beneficial effects on places. They can be seen as innovative forms of conceiving urban peripheral architectures in Europe and, if institutionally recognized, they could enrich in multiple ways the urban realm.

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# “Spazi Altri”.

## Razza e classe nel Mozambico tardo coloniale

Silvia Balzan

*Abstract / “Other Spaces”.*

*Race and Class in Late Colonial Mozambique*

The late Portuguese colonialism in Africa was characterized by paradoxes and ambiguities inherent in the “assimilation” policies, which generated a series of “othernesses”: of “other” protagonists of colonization, initiators of “other spaces” exceeding the oppositional logic between colonizers and colonized, Whites and Blacks.

Departing from the necessity of a more accurate reading of these “other spaces”, the text presents a critical analysis from a social point of view of: a) an example of agricultural colonization of rural and conservative nature, the Limpopo Colony; and b) the social utopia, envisioned by a Portuguese housing cooperative, COOP, active in Mozambique in those years.

Through the analysis of these two case studies, this article intends to prove how part of the spatial production of late Portuguese colonialism indicates the presence of a multiplicity of social actors and ideological instances entangled with codetermined notions of race and class.

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“Altri”  
protagonisti della  
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e neri.

La premessa teorica di questo articolo problematizza l'analisi di spazi associati a politiche e ideologie discriminatorie fondate sul concetto di razza, riportando l'attenzione sulla relazione che esse presentano con il classismo. L'articolo si chiede quanto l'aspetto classista sia determinato, prevalente, e implicato dalle premesse razziste che fanno da sfondo alla costruzione di una serie di infrastrutture rurali e urbane del tardo colonialismo portoghese in Africa (1950-1970), nella colonia del Mozambico.

I paradossi e le ambiguità insiti nella politica “assimilazionista” portoghese del tardo regime coloniale hanno contribuito alla formazione di una società stratificata che presenta, nelle figure dei cosiddetti “assimilati” (*assimilados*) ma anche oltre, una serie di “alterità” (Castelo, 2012: 19-27): di “altri” protagonisti della colonizzazione, iniziatori di spazi “altri” che difficilmente trovano una facile collocazione nella logica strettamente oppositiva tra colonizzatori e colonizzati, bianchi e neri.

Partendo quindi dal presupposto che ci sia la necessità di una lettura più articolata e profonda della realtà tardo coloniale portoghese e della sua manifestazione spaziale, il testo espone una lettura critica dal punto di vista sociale di: a) un esempio di colonizzazione agricola di natura ruralista e conservatrice di stampo coloniale; e b) dell'utopia sociale di una cooperativa di abitazioni portoghese<sup>1</sup> attiva in Mozambico in quegli anni.

Tramite questi casi studio, si intende dimostrare come parte della produzione spaziale di questo momento storico ci indichi la presenza di una molteplicità di attori sociali e istanze ideologiche determinate da nozioni di razza, ma anche di classe.

*Lusotropicalismo, assimilazione e creazione di alterità*  
Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987), antropologo e sociologo brasiliano, riconoscendo la presenza di ambigui collegamenti tra proprietari terrieri e schiavi nella società schiavista e patriarcale brasiliana, formulerà la teoria del “lusotropicalismo” che in seguito esporterà nelle colonie portoghesi in Africa, demarcando una certa “area culturale”, che, anche se frammentata etnicamente, appariva unificata da un colonialismo “speciale” da parte dei portoghesi, i quali, sarebbero risultati più adatti degli altri europei ad integrarsi ai tropici.

Il lusotropicalismo di Freyre venne adottato dal regime portoghese in Africa per fornire una giustificazione alla presenza portoghese, che resisteva alla progressiva decolonizzazione del continente, a partire dagli anni sessanta. Il regime di Salazar infatti mantenne il potere fino al 1974 in Mozambico, Angola e São Tomé e Príncipe, affrontando una lunga guerra coloniale. Nonostante gli sforzi ideologici, il movimento decoloniale a livello internazionale e il malcontento nelle colonie, condussero al progressivo consolidamento di movimenti indipendentisti come il FRELIMO, *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*, Fronte di Liberazione del Mozambico che rifiutavano il lusotropicalismo. Come ricorda Cahen nella sua recensione della tesi di dottorato di un ex militante del FRELIMO, per questa generazione di indipendentisti la teoria di Freyre «attraeva solo per quello che veramente era: un'ideologia per la perpetuazione del potere coloniale» (Cahen, 2013: 317).

La “missione civilizzatrice” di Salazar, propagandata tramite la presunta mescolanza tra razze, definì, dal 1926 al 1961, una serie di categorizzazioni di tipo razziale degli abitanti del Mozambico che erano di fatto gerarchiche e divisive: “indígena” e “europeus”; “indígena” e “não-indígena”, “indígena portugueses”, “assimilados” e “cidadãos” (Neto, 2010: 205). Negli ultimi decenni, l'impero coloniale cercò di annullare sempre di più le differenze che esso stesso aveva generato tramite la revisione costituzionale del 1951, revocando l'Atto Coloniale degli anni Trenta e abolendo il cosiddetto Indigenato, ovvero l'obbligo del lavoro forzato per la popolazione indigena nel 1961.

L'Indigenato dichiarava il 99% della popolazione nelle colonie non cittadino e definiva legalmente questi come indigeni (*indígena*), ritenendoli culturalmente, linguisticamente e intellettualmente inferiori ai coloni portoghesi, legalmente definiti *cidadãos* (Harris, 1958: 7). La missione civilizzatrice permetteva però la possibilità di integrazione tramite un processo di “assimilazione” per il quale il nativo, educandosi e assumendo uno stile di vita europeo, poteva assurgere allo stato di *assimilado*.

L'assimilazionismo fu caratterizzato da una serie di contraddizioni e ambiguità che necessitano di una «cronologia nuova, più fine» (Castelo, 2012: 19). Vediamo dunque come le differenze costruite dal regime furono

Le differenze costruite dal regime furono ben lontane dal rispecchiare la diversità etnica e religiosa presente in Mozambico durante il tardo colonialismo.

**2 - Narrative anti-coloniali propagandistiche di gruppi indipendentisti.**

Fig. 1 - I primi coloni portoghesi in partenza verso i colonati rurali in Africa, trasportati a spese del regime. Fonte: Archivio Storico Ultramarino, Lisbona, AHU-10345-MU-CSFU.

ben lontane dal rispecchiare la diversità etnica e religiosa presente in Mozambico durante il tardo colonialismo. Di fatto, le suddette categorizzazioni hanno cancellato la natura ibrida delle diversità. La divisione basata sul colore della pelle: “bianchi”, “meticci”, “neri”, “indiani” e “gialli” non corrispondeva in alcun modo a gruppi omogenei. La stessa classificazione generalista dei “bianchi” non ritraeva l’eterogeneità di nazionalità e di condizione economico-sociale, credo religioso e convinzioni politiche che erano presenti sul territorio tra i “bianchi”. Vediamo quindi come il criterio di lettura polarizzato colonizzato/colonizzatore presuppone categorie «statiche ed immanenti» (Cooper, Stoler, 1997: 7), spesso prodotto di riduttive narrative anticoloniali<sup>2</sup> che «eliminano la varietà etnica, culturale, sociale e minano la permeabilità tra gruppi e la loro eterogeneità interna» (2012: 20), come hanno mostrato Castelo, Thomaz, Nascimento e Cruz e Silva, rivolgendo l’attenzione invece sull’analisi di quelli che definiscono come “gli altri della colonizzazione”.



Le alterità multiformi del tardo colonialismo portoghese richiedono di essere analizzate prendendo in considerazione anziché solamente il colore della pelle (come manifestazione della razza) anche la classe di alcuni gruppi sociali generatisi all'interno del sistema moderno-coloniale (Mignolo, 2011) e del "capitalismo razziale" (Robinson, 2019), a oggi ancora operante e di cui i tragici fenomeni legati all'immigrazione sono una conseguenza diretta.

#### *Il colonato di Limpopo*

Il tardo colonialismo dagli anni '50 in poi fu caratterizzato da una grande spinta economica dovuta a fattori locali e globali dopo la fine della Seconda guerra mondiale. A partire dalla metà degli anni '50 quindi l'*Estado Novo* di Salazar, intravedendo possibilità di crescita economica - previa infrastrutturazione e popolamento del territorio africano - iniziò svariati progetti basati su una tipologia di colonizzazione agricola di natura rurale, tradizionalista e conservatrice. Il progetto per il colonato presso il fiume Limpopo, localizzato a circa 300 km a nord dall'attuale Maputo, iniziò nel 1929 per volere del governatore generale del Mozambico Manuel Moreira da Fonseca che stabilì due commissioni tecniche presiedute dall'ingegnere António Trigo de Morais (1895-1966) per valutare il progetto di irrigazione e drenaggio della valle del Limpopo, con lo scopo di irrigare circa 20.000 ettari e costruire una diga posizionata 15 chilometri a valle. Il territorio era destinato ad essere popolato da una particolare categoria di bianchi.

Sino al tardo colonialismo si può asserire che la presenza portoghese in Africa fosse composta da portoghesi che si recavano nelle colonie in qualità di ufficiali pubblici e provenienti da una classe sociale benestante ed istruita. Con il boom economico e il desiderio espansionista di Salazar, si cercò di popolare le colonie africane facilitando l'entrata di portoghesi che in patria erano «strilloni, braccianti rurali o più raramente piccoli imprenditori analfabeti, senza alcuna formazione e molto poveri» (Castelo, 2012: 30).

Nel 1954 arrivarono così, trasportate a spese dello stato, le prime otto famiglie dalla regione dell'Alentejo e due dal villaggio di Guijã. I coloni firmarono un contratto dove asserivano di ricevere una casa, attrezzata con mobili a prestito e macchinari per la coltivazione di quattro ettari di terreno agricolo, con

**Il criterio di lettura polarizzato colonizzato/colonizzatore presuppone categorie "statiche ed immanenti" [...] spesso prodotto di riduttive narrative anticoloniali.**

L'emersione di una segregazione spaziale basata non solamente sul criterio razziale ma anche su quello della classe di appartenenza di questa frangia di portoghesi destinati a condividere spazi di vita e lavoro con gli africani.

Fig. 2 -Linee guida per la costruzione di residenze per i funzionari pubblici nelle colonie africane, 1944.

Fonte: Archivio Storico Ultramarino, Lisbona, P35vol100-proc98.2.1.

terreno irriguo e due ettari già coltivati al loro arrivo. A loro disposizione erano inoltre aree comuni con la presenza di fontanelle e mulini a vento. Il contratto prevedeva che i coloni dovessero lavorare fino a rimborsare lo stato del costo delle infrastrutture statali, per poi ricevere una concessione all'uso definitiva. L'amministrazione esercitava un forte controllo sociale su questa classe di emigrati incolti frequentemente sanzionati ed espulsi.

Il colonato del Limpopo non è l'unico realizzato nelle colonie. L'obiettivo ideologico era quello di ricreare miniature del Portogallo rurale, una sorta di «parrocchia rurale» (Castelo, 2012: 48), dimostrando così la capacità di adattamento tropicale della popolazione portoghese, elemento centrale per sostenere la tesi della sovranità coloniale dell'*Estado Novo*.

L'aspetto che più di tutti merita attenzione nell'ambito del dibattito che questo articolo propone è certamente il fatto che, in questo tipo di sviluppi agricolo-rurali, tradizionali e conservatori, si cerca di integrare anche la componente autoctona, ovvero la popolazione africana.

[...] L'opera da realizzare è in "bianco e nero" [...] una missione civilizzatrice in linea con quella del Portogallo. C'è spazio per tutti in essa. È un'opera in cui la vita dei bianchi e dei neri deve essere fraternamente legata dal desiderio di accrescimento spirituale e materiale della nazione (Almeida, 1970: 39).

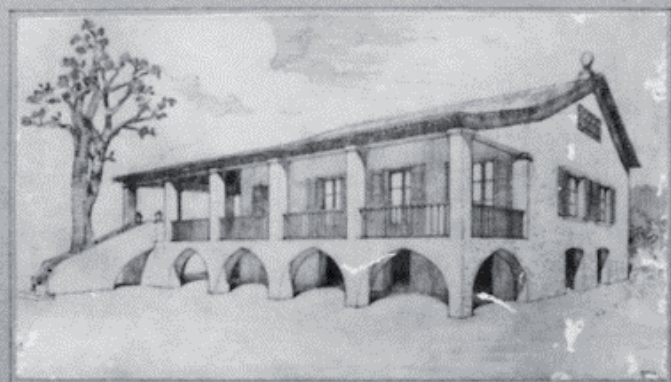
Nel 1958 il colonato del Limpopo ospitava 262 famiglie tra europei e assimilati e 650 famiglie indigene, a cui spesso era stata espropriata la terra per la costruzione del progetto. Nel 1968 il colonato raggiunse il massimo numero di portoghesi, 1146, contando in tutto 10.000 abitanti e uno dei più popolosi comuni del Mozambico. Un terzo degli abitanti era africano.

Il tentativo di integrare i nativi con i coloni portoghesi prevedeva un certo grado di preventiva discriminazione. Ad esempio, durante i primi anni del colonato, gli africani non percepivano neppure l'esiguo salario corrisposto ai portoghesi. Tuttavia, ciò che è interessante notare nell'esperimento sociale del colonato è l'emersione di una segregazione spaziale basata non solamente sul criterio razziale ma anche su quello della classe di appartenenza di questa frangia di portoghesi destinati a condividere spazi di vita e lavoro con gli africani.



OPTUDY

# PROYECTO DE CASAS PARA FUNCIONARIOS



# ÁFRICA

*Pecas Escritas*

1944

98-1



Fig. 3 - Illustrazione da opuscolo che descrive la tipologia di case destinate ai coloni portoghesi del Limpopo. Fonte: <http://malomil.blogspot.com/2018/01/no-limpopo.html> [accesso 21 novembre 2021].

**3 - Clarim do Limpopo, 1966c, 15 settembre.**  
 "Será verdade o que dizem de nós colonos: 80 000 contros guardados em nossas arcas e colchões?" Anno VI, n. 117.  
**Clarim do Limpopo, 1967a, 15 gennaio.**  
 "Em perigo de sobrevivência o colonato do Limpopo? Asfixiados pela carência de agua na época seca e afogados na época de cheias" Anno VII, n. 124.

I coloni portoghesi rurali erano mal visti dalla classe di bianchi urbani ed istruiti che entrava in contatto con queste persone occasionalmente quando essi si recavano a Lourenço Marques per attività di mendicanza. Si riporta che gli assimilati africani che dividevano il colonato con i contadini portoghesi erano mediamente più istruiti e spesso colmavano in maniera solidale la lacuna di alfabetizzazione dei bianchi. Inoltre, le testa-





te giornalistiche dell'epoca<sup>3</sup> non contribuivano alla creazione di una buona reputazione di questa classe contadina che spesso fu vista come formata da "poveri alle prese con difficoltà di ogni genere," "una razza sospettata, rara" le cui donne, accusate di pigrizia, si riversano nelle strade della capitale, mendicanti. Questi ultimi avevano ricevuto una formazione basilare prima della loro partenza da Lisbona da parte di preti, assistenti

L'operazione di popolamento forzato delle colonie tramite questo tipo di iniziative fu accompagnata dallo sviluppo di una serie di tipologie abitative, che seguirono a loro volta un criterio classista più che razzista di per sé.

sociali e medici, con l'intento di doverla trasmettere alla popolazione africana. Tuttavia, quando trovatisi nelle colonie, questo non avvenne. Al contrario questi, additati dagli *indigenas* come "poveri del Portogallo", sottraevano il bestiame ai nativi, spesso non curavano l'igiene personale ed erano afflitti da alcolismo. «C'è il bianco di Lisbona e il bianco della foresta di Lisbona» (Conselho Ultramarino, 1965: 13).

Tramite ricerca di archivio e raccolta di testimonianze dirette, si potrebbe supportare maggiormente l'ipotesi che qui si avanza con ogni dovuta riserva, ovvero che l'emarginazione vissuta da questa fetta di popolazione parrebbe non essere stata profondamente dissimile da quella subita dagli africani durante il tardo colonialismo. Spesso i coloni bianchi rappresentavano la classe più povera in assoluto tra i "civilizzati" e anche tra gli "assimilati". Vediamo ora in che modo si tradusse spazialmente la nascita di questi gruppi sociali che complicano il binomio dell'oppresso e dell'oppressore. L'operazione di popolamento forzato delle colonie tramite questo tipo di iniziative fu accompagnata infatti dallo sviluppo di una serie di tipologie abitative, che seguirono a loro volta un criterio classista più che razzista di per sé.

Durante i primi secoli di colonizzazione portoghese dell'Africa, fino alla fine del 1800, i coloni vivevano in abitazioni molto simili a quelle dei nativi. Con il consolidamento del regime, le abitazioni dei coloni variarono a seconda del loro grado nell'organigramma dei dipendenti pubblici – seguendo una logica di classe. Come abbiamo visto tramite il precedente esempio, coloro che non possedevano un'educazione, erano «economicamente deboli» (Fonte, 2007: 389) e segregati in quartieri periferici di nuova costruzione, ispirati al modello europeo della città giardino. Coloni rurali ed indigeni iniziarono a costituire quindi un unico gruppo, alieno al bianco cittadino, impiegato al servizio delle istituzioni coloniali.

Al funzionario pubblico venivano assegnate abitazioni di tipo molto simile a quello metropolitano portoghese con elementi architettonici tratti da un repertorio nazionalista.

Troviamo la presenza di case singole per i dirigenti e per funzionari blocchi collettivi di due piani e circa otto unità.

Al contempo, il tema dell'alloggio per gli indigeni diviene oggetto di molti concorsi di progettazione, evi-

denziando un interesse di tipo prettamente etnografico, sviluppato dai portoghesi, di cui Mario de Oliveira ne fu il principale esempio.

Nel 1953 il GUC, *Gabinete de Urbanização Colonial* indirà un concorso per lo sviluppo d'oltremare di alloggi da assegnarsi ai contadini sfollati dalle campagne portoghesi – la stessa classe di persone ospitate al colonato del Limpopo (Fonte, 2007: 405). Oliveira svilupperà due tipologie di abitazione rustiche e tradizionali destinate a coppie con due, tre figli e «che si adattano perfettamente al carattere e alla personalità del colono» (Milheiro 2012: 337).

Il criterio secondo il quale il progetto viene giudicato dai tecnici del GUC per il Limpopo (Mozambico) e Cunene (Angola), si incentrò su questioni di tipo climatico e meno su questioni di origine socio-antropologiche, nonostante Oliveira ribadisca a premessa della sua proposta «[...] che i progetti siano concepiti in base alla specificità climatica e la provenienza socioculturale dell'abitante. Attraverso caratteristiche architettoniche non molto lontane da quelle in cui il colono sviluppa il suo carattere e la sua personalità» (Oliveira, 1962:39)<sup>4</sup>.

Attraverso queste proposte spaziali, possiamo dedurre come alcuni tipi di coloni, i più poveri, e per estensione, gli *indigenas*, più o meno assimilati, iniziarono a costituire un unico gruppo sociale, principalmente basato sul livello economico e la mansione lavorativa dei soggetti all'interno del sistema tardo coloniale capitalista, senza perciò voler negare conflitti e gerarchie intestine al gruppo stesso, principalmente legate a questioni di razza, che continuarono a manifestarsi al suo interno. Il progetto spaziale pensato per questo gruppo sociale umile e multirazziale si materializza nella casa rurale tipica portoghese, adattata al clima tropicale, ovvero «una casa portoghese ultramarina»<sup>5</sup>, ricercando uno stile portoghese-africano (Fonte, 2007:405).

Nonostante il predominio del repertorio nazionalista, si riscontrano anche esperimenti che seguono principi modernisti più in linea con l'emergente lavoro di Drew e Frey e Otto H. Königsberger in quegli anni (Avermaete, Casciato, 2014; Le Roux, 2014).

Lo stile architettonico che emerge in questo frangente, fu dunque influenzato dalla convinzione della superiorità portoghese (Davis, 2019). Tuttavia, è importante notare come i destinatari di questi progetti siano

**4 - Traduzione dal portoghese dell'autrice.**

**5 - Denominazione della commissione del concorso di progettazione.**

**Il progetto spaziale pensato per questo gruppo sociale umile e multirazziale si materializza nella casa rurale tipica portoghese, adattata al clima tropicale, ovvero «una casa portoghese ultramarina», ricercando uno stile portoghese-africano.**

acomunati non dalla razza quanto dalla classe. In *Race and Modern Architecture* (2021) si afferma come «i processi di razzializzazione sono sempre stati alla base della definizione stessa di cosa significhi essere moderni». In questo caso però, si nota come la “modernizzazione”, e dunque la “civilizzazione”, non sia richiesta e voluta solo per i neri, ma anche per una frangia di bianchi “altri”, che parteciparono, più o meno volontariamente, alla colonizzazione, o meglio, alla deportazione di massa.

*L'utopia sociale della COOP, Sociedade de Moçambique para o Fomento da Construção de Casas*  
 Fondata nel 1951 in Portogallo, la COOP agì in Mozambico sviluppando progetti di edilizia sociale. Lo scopo iniziale della cooperativa era quello di fornire alloggi

Fig. 4 - L'annuncio pubblicitario contenuto in *O Cooperador de Moçambique*, 1971, n. 3, giornale ufficiale della COOP, associa una veduta del barrio allo slogan: “Siamo stati i primi a dare loro una casa”.  
 Fonte: Giornale della cooperativa *O Cooperador de Moçambique*, 1971, n. 3. Archivio COOP, Maputo, Mozambico.

COOPERATIVA DE MOÇAMBIQUE

**nós fomos os primeiros a dar-lhes uma casa**

**a Cooperativa de casas é a pioneira em Moçambique**

NA DEFESA DO HOMEM E NA POLÍTICA DE CONSTRUIR PROPRIEDADE RESOLÚVEL

COMUNICA QUE VAI INICIAR A EDIFICAÇÃO DE 6 TORRES DE 20 ANDARES

**SÃO MAIS 600 HABITAÇÕES**

Com os tradicionais arrendamentos da Cooperativa.  
 A prestação ao Habitar da Coop (o grande habitar da cidade) um dia por mês  
 de maior liberdade de Lourenço Marques  
 Para se obter uma casa a preços sempre à Coop.

Uma quota Arrendamento diário (A taxa importante que deixa de pagar ao sócio)	Um capital de 10 contos (paga-se por pagar 1 10000/ano) (Dobro de sócio)	Uma importância proporcional de 20000/ano Pagam-se 5% de mais se não (Dobro de sócio)	Uma importância de importância de 10000/ano e se particularmente beneficiosa para importância de 20000/ano (Dobro de sócio)
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**ou**

**NOTA IMPORTANTE: - Estas importâncias abatem-se ao custo do prédio. Os sócios intervem na gestão da Cooperativa**

a prezzi accessibili per una nuova classe emergente durante il periodo tardo coloniale: una classe media, cosmopolita, multirazziale e fundamentalmente urbana.

La COOP portoghese importò nella colonia esperienze di altre cooperative con le quali intratteneva rapporti e gestiva le sue attività avvalendosi di un network transnazionale (Avermaete, Karakayali, Von Osten, 2010), una modalità di sviluppo tipica di stati africani postcoloniali, neo-indipendenti che circondavano geograficamente le ultime colonie rimaste nel continente africano, ovvero quelle portoghesi.

La COOP fu attiva in Lourenço Marques dove costruì un complesso residenziale per 7500-8000 persone: il Barrio COOP, ad oggi ancora abitato.

Oltre a questo complesso edilizio, la COOP fu promotrice di altri interventi che comprendevano case a schiera e case singole, avvalendosi dell'architetto modernista Jorge Valente, per poi espandere le collaborazioni anche ad altri architetti in Mozambico.

Notevole la collaborazione con l'architetto-artista Pancho Guedes, decisamente un "altro" della colonizzazione portoghese, emigrato nella colonia a soli sei anni e dove visse gran parte della sua vita dopo gli studi in Sud Africa. Le *Otto Case per la Coop* furono uno dei pochi progetti che Guedes accetterà di eseguire nel 1975 per un'istituzione pubblica coloniale, occupando all'interno della terza generazione di architetti portoghesi emigrati nelle colonie una posizione isolata, anche se internazionalmente connessa (Balzan, 2019).

La COOP, che nel 1961 si vantò di riuscire ad autofinanziarsi tramite il contributo dei suoi membri<sup>6</sup>, faticando a ricevere sostegno da istituti bancari, fu pioniera nella sperimentazione di prodotti edilizi e tecnologie provenienti dall'estero in Mozambico. L'azienda svedese Siporex, che aveva già lavorato nel Congo Belga per l'approvvigionamento di case modulari per la popolazione nativa, fu una delle partnership più rilevanti che Nunes Oliveira, il dirigente, riuscì a stabilire, diventandone detentore di franchising. Siporex fornì il cemento cellulare con il quale il Barrio COOP fu costruito, una tecnologia che Nunes riteneva essere una possibile soluzione per la costruzione delle abitazioni a basso costo nei climi tropicali. L'importazione di questa tecnologia, secondo Nunes, legittimava la presenza portoghe-

**6 - Diverse tipologie di affiliazione COOP. *Sócios efectivos normais*: soci paganti che miravano alla costruzione di case. *Sócios auxiliares normais*: desideravano utilizzare gli altri servizi della COOP. *Sócios electivos normais populares*: lavoratori della COOP con alcune, limitate, possibilità di partecipazione.**

*O Cooperador de Mocambique*, seguiva una linea editoriale che puntava a consolidare l'utopia sociale nella quale la colonia non poteva essere considerata come paese semi-europeo, perché ancora colonizzato, ma come un paese che faceva parte, ed era in comunicazione, con le altre nazioni africane.

se nelle colonie, in un periodo di forte pressione internazionale indipendentista. L'uso dei pannelli strutturali prefabbricati in calcestruzzo cellulare isolante rappresentava un miglioramento dovuto al problema delle case a basso costo per la popolazione nativa garantendo loro uno standard di vita minimo (Brandes, 2012).

La COOP, abbracciando criteri estetici modernisti e seguendo l'esempio delle cooperative brasiliane, intendeva perseguire un progetto di trasformazione sociale su larga scala, assumendo attitudini politiche anche in piena opposizione al regime fascista coloniale. Come asserito da Brandes (2012), la cooperativa si riconosceva nell'identità portoghese, ma allo stesso tempo, i suoi membri erano orgogliosi di partecipare a una nuova, nascente borghesia cosmopolita di un Mozambico proto-nazionalista. La COOP inoltre, si pubblicizzava anche come una delle poche aziende a generare un profitto che rimaneva in Mozambico non tornando alla metropoli.

Non ci saranno mai aziende più grandi della COOP, costituite esclusivamente da soldi Mozambicani! (Brandes, 2012: 13)<sup>7</sup>

Il Mozambico tardo coloniale, come spiegato, aspirava ad equipararsi, a livello di sviluppo socio-economico, agli altri paesi già indipendenti. Il giornale della COOP, *O Cooperador de Mocambique*, seguiva una linea editoriale che puntava a consolidare l'utopia sociale nella quale la colonia non poteva essere considerata come paese semi-europeo, perché ancora colonizzato, ma come un paese che faceva parte, ed era in comunicazione, con le altre nazioni africane e che apparteneva ad una comunità internazionale al di là dei propri confini. Le pagine del *O Cooperador de Mocambique* opitarono allusioni critiche al regime ed un potenziale interesse a tessere relazioni con il blocco comunista nel contesto della Guerra Fredda.

Una delle prese di posizione più forti adottate dall'azienda in seno alla sua utopia sociale fu l'affermazione della necessità di lottare per creare «una società dove il colore della pelle e la religione non possano essere motivi di separazione» (Brandes, 2012: 14). Il dibattito attorno alla razza all'interno della cooperativa si fece più intenso a ridosso dell'indipendenza nel 1974 quando Nunes Oliveira e altri membri, prevalen-



temente bianchi, si accusarono a vicenda di razzismo. La discussione condusse il direttivo della cooperativa ad abbracciare ancora più chiaramente – quantomeno a livello comunicativo – posizioni socio-politiche antirazziste, lasciando aperta la partecipazione in qualità di membri a chiunque desiderasse farlo. Un'operazione intrapresa in questa direzione fu la decisione di dare spazio alla cultura tradizionale tramite esposizioni di arte africana negli spazi pubblici degli edifici della COOP, segnalando così il riconoscimento e la volontà di integrazione della cultura nativa in seno alla cooperativa. È qui importante notare come evidenziato da Brandes, che la maggioranza dei *sócios efectivos* finì comunque per essere costituita da una prevalenza di bianchi, cinesi e indiani; ovvero dagli esponenti di quella classe media cosmopolita di cui riferito in precedenza nel testo. L'accesso alla COOP in qualità di *sócios efectivos* parrebbe essere avvenuto non basandosi quindi su criteri di razza, ma verificando le possibilità economiche dell'aspirante membro: un criterio diverso da quello prettamente razziale,

Fig. 5 - Otto Case per la COOP, Maputo, Maxaquene, Pancho Guedes, 1975. Fonte: Archivio privato famiglia Guedes.

Nel tardo colonialismo capitalista [...] il criterio di esclusione o inclusione si basò su pregiudizi di tipo razziale ma anche sullo status sociale, determinato dal reddito.

ma pur sempre discriminatorio nei confronti della popolazione nera di cui solo una minima percentuale rientrava nella classe media.

L'utopia sociale della COOP ospitava quindi molte contraddizioni. Ad esempio, in procinto di pianificare gli alloggi "sociali" per la popolazione nera, molti dei quali lavoratori regolari all'interno della COOP stessa, registrati come *sócios populares*, furono pianificati insediamenti in aree periferiche e distanti dagli interventi edilizi principali della COOP, nel centro della capitale, riproponendo così una logica segregazionista basata su un criterio principalmente razzista, degna dei primissimi piani urbani Araujo e Aguiar per Lourenço Marques.

Anche in questo caso studio si può dunque concludere che l'ambiguità delle scelte politico sociali della COOP, similmente al caso del colonato del Limpopo, suggerisca la presenza di spazi fisici (questa volta urbani e non rurali) costruiti per un gruppo sociale non strettamente organizzato su criteri di discriminazione razziale, ma anche su criteri di reddito e appartenenza di classe. Emerge di conseguenza come nel tardo colonialismo capitalista, attorno al discorso ideologico costituente una nuova classe media, il criterio di esclusione o inclusione si basò su pregiudizi di tipo razziale ma anche sullo status sociale, determinato dal reddito, ovvero dalla classe come definita dai modi di produzione capitalista.

#### *Conclusioni aperte*

L'articolo, tramite una prima analisi di casi studio storicizzati, ha cercato di problematizzare la descrizione della realtà sociale, politica ed economica di un particolare momento storico e situazione geopolitica, proponendo un criterio di indagine attraverso il quale comprendere le implicazioni tra razza e classe che hanno connotato lasciti materiali e spaziali.

I due esempi proposti suggeriscono la continuazione del dibattito attivo circa le direzioni prese nel secondo novecento dalla filosofia e dalle scienze sociali in merito a questioni relative alla razza e alla classe, fondamentale anche per informare la più recente ricerca accademica che indaga le implicazioni razziali in architettura e pianificazione (Lokko, Norle, 2000; Levin, 2019).

La svolta postmodernista ha ripensato la società in termini di "testo" (Lash, 1990) ponendo l'enfasi sulle



differenze, la decostruzione, i regimi di significati e la sostituzione dell'interpretazione alla spiegazione scientifica, prendendo le distanze dal razionalismo modernista. Contemporaneamente a questo nuovo paradigma di senso, la classe proletaria e i sindacati, come emersi nel secondo dopoguerra, hanno subito profondamente la de-industrializzazione degli anni ottanta e la conseguente riorganizzazione del lavoro, che ha comportato un nuovo aumento delle disuguaglianze e un indebolimento della cosiddetta politica di classe. Come notato da Terry R. Kandal già nel 1995, la svolta postmoderna e la perdita della coscienza di classe, hanno comportato la decostruzione e il decentramento dell'identità stessa della classe operaia, frammentandola e generando una classe proletaria che abbraccia una forma di democrazia razziale costruita su un associazionismo radicato in questioni di genere e razza piuttosto che in questioni di classe. In concerto con Kandal, anche per l'economista Michael Zweig, «il declino delle politiche di classe coincide con l'aumento delle politiche identitarie in un periodo di deterioramento degli standard di vita della maggioranza della classe operaia» (Zweig, 2004: 53-54).

La "questione" della classe parrebbe essere stata incorporata all'interno del paradigma analitico della "intersezionalità" elaborato ad esempio da Kimberlé Crenshaw et al. (2013). Questo identifica una molteplicità di fattori di potenziale svantaggio e vantaggio (Runyan, 2018) che includono il genere, la casta, la razza, la sessualità, la religione, la disabilità, l'aspetto fisico e così via che si sovrappongono e si intersecano, tutti contemporaneamente, in modo oppressivo o emancipatore, a seconda dei singoli casi.

San Juan Jr., accademico filippino, avanza una critica, evidentemente schierata, al suddetto dibattito intersezionale, dichiarando: «Implacabili costrizioni ideologiche e politiche della Guerra Fredda, hanno cancellato nel discorso sulle relazioni etniche/razziali il concetto marxista di classe come relazione antagonista, sostituendolo con nozioni neo-Weberiane di status, stile di vita e altre contingenze culturali» (2005: 76). Similmente a Kandal e Zweig, San Juan ipotizza come «con lo strutturalismo e post-strutturalismo degli ultimi tre decenni, il concetto di lotta di classe sia stato sostituito da concetti di potere e relazioni differenziali» (2005: 76). All'interno del paradigma intersezionale razza

**La svolta postmoderna e la perdita della coscienza di classe, hanno comportato la decostruzione e il decentramento dell'identità stessa della classe operaia.**

Le dimensioni di classe, razza e genere, sono sempre “intrecciate” e la relazione tra esse continua a cambiare a seconda del contesto socio-economico.

e classe sarebbero posti sullo stesso piano, mentre, secondo San Juan Jr., che richiama in causa Marx, la classe, da un punto di vista storico-materialista, sarebbe il fattore principale strutturante le ideologie e le pratiche che sanciscono l'oppressione razziale e di genere (2005: 76). Lo studioso filippino da un lato appoggia la *Critical Race Theory* (CRT) e dall'altra ne sottolinea il rifiuto di demistificare i presupposti del sistema capitalista più radicalmente.

Rispetto alle questioni sollevate da San Juan Jr., esiste un corpo di studi che integra l'approccio marxista e le questioni di razza e genere tra la letteratura intersezionale. Già nel 1979 Heidi Hartmann, asseriva che classe e patriarcato fossero ugualmente importanti e che ci fosse la necessità di una teoria che integrasse analisi economiche di tipo marxista e femminismo. Joan Acker (2006) ha definito il capitalismo come fondato su sessismo e razzismo dove i luoghi di produzione all'interno di questo paradigma sono organizzati interamente da uomini bianchi e ricchi. Il recentissimo lavoro di Veronica Gago (2020), teorizza un femminismo internazionalista dove le donne soggette a pratiche di sfruttamento sul lavoro trovano nello sciopero femminista e negli spazi generati tramite esso uno strumento performativo che connette diversi corpi e territori precari nel resistere all'ordine politico ed economico del capitalismo contemporaneo, tracciando ancora una volta un indissolubile legame tra genere, razza e classe.

La breve revisione di parte del suddetto dibattito in continua evoluzione ci è stata utile a supportare il ragionamento affrontato in questo articolo, ampliando l'analisi dell'esperienza colonialista portoghese tarda, a ridosso della decolonizzazione. Si è cercato di farlo tramite criteri che esulano dalla categoria statica di razza, ricordando la natura intrinseca del sistema economico coloniale, ovvero il sistema capitalista, che produce condizioni di classe che non possono essere ignorate ai fini di un'analisi approfondita di “alterità” complesse e a volte paradossali, come quelle del lusotropicalismo. Appurato che le dimensioni di classe, razza e genere, come abbiamo visto, sono sempre “intrecciate” (Harding, 1989) e la relazione tra esse continua a cambiare a seconda del contesto socio-economico, è doveroso cercare queste relazioni e descriverle. Ci è utile quindi prestare attenzione alla distribuzione storica e alla

traduzione spaziale architettonico-urbanistica della coscienza di classe e di razza per capire le condizioni in cui esse si sviluppano e in che modo si intrecciano. Si è qui evidenziata la presenza di una classe proletaria multirazziale sviluppatasi nel colonato del Limpopo e della classe media cosmopolita, urbana e ambiguamente inclusiva, composta dai membri della COOP di Lourenço Marques.

L'articolo apre a un futuro possibile studio più approfondito di queste realtà sociali, supportato dalla raccolta di maggiori dati empirici, che possa evidenziare come una forma di consapevolezza di classe, sovrapposta al paradigma identitario razziale, possa aver alimentato forme di resistenza, evolute all'interno di queste infrastrutture spaziali, materializzazioni fisiche di queste formazioni sociali stesse.

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***contested territories • metropolitan cartography • otros saberes***

# Methodological Guidelines for Metropolitan Cartography Projects. Mapping the Accumulation of Contested Territories in Southern Latitudes Metropolitan Cities

Antonella Contin (1), Valentina Galiulo (2)

## *Abstract*

The field of research is in South America, where the cultural logic of colonialism still persists and manifests in the form of colonial heritage. The research deals with the physical dimension of the metropolis. Considering the challenges of climate change and growing socio-economic inequalities, we verify the methodology of Metropolitan Cartography as a tool that allows us to represent the values of contested territories and see how dynamic metropolitan transformations on the space-time map can be combined with the interstitial worlds of local communities: *otros saberes*. Through mapping projects, the task of metropolitan architecture in *southern latitude* cities is to construct a new form of metropolitan urban life and strengthen a feeling of adequacy between places and inhabitants. The research issue relates to the way in which indigenous populations can tune *other values* brought by globalisation to the practices of their remote past, their *values*.

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Cosmopolitan globalisation, or new colonialism, does not enable places to retain past urban individualities, and indeed reinterpret them on a different scale rather than according to their own context.

*An alternative model to cosmopolitan globalisation for the metropolitan regions of South America*

A syntactic transformation is taking place in the city today. Cosmopolitan globalisation, or new colonialism, does not enable places to retain past urban individualities, and indeed reinterpret them on a different scale rather than according to their own context.

We are striving for a possible alternative model of development for territories, regions and metropolitan cities in “colonial” and “non-colonial” countries, which can qualify democracy as a concept of generalised, participatory and relational power shared on an equal footing, built by a plurality of actors (Cavarero, 2019) with the common and shared aim of defending the environment and share knowledge.

The relationship between space, memory and representation in the digital age has grown strongly due to their pervasive representation by means of new technologies, whether rooted in daily cultural experiences, ancestral times or both. Therefore, the topography for exploring the city requires the development of methods, tools and experiments to re-code the metropolitan territory. For this reason, we use the most recent mapping technologies in Metropolitan Cartography (MC).

The main field of research and practice are the metropolitan areas of Latin America, where the cultural logic of colonialism still persists. In particular, we are concerned with the physical dimension of formerly colonised territories.

Focusing on five Latin American countries with contested spaces (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Colombia) compared to European contexts (Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Germany, United Kingdom), the research network of the European project Contested Territories Horizon 2020 responds to the challenges inherent in post-colonial territorial development by offering collaborative and situated knowledge between indigenous people and new citizens in the metropolitan territory.

Latin America is the most urbanised and unequal region of the global South (UN-Habitat, 2020), where disadvantaged communities, indigenous people and especially women have experienced dramatic levels of systematic violence and exclusion. In this context, we study the risks that affect society, space and territorial



cohesion, but which also activate community organisation (Svampa, 2015).

Europe has viewed the Latin American conflict as a civil and collective resistance to radical democracy (Butler, 2017), a kind of creative and insurrectional violence characterised by a commitment to radicalise the very idea of democratic thinking in terms of permanent conflict and battlefields (Mouffe, 2007). From this resistance, we learn a way to question ourselves regarding *otros saberes* (Delgado, Ruiz, 2014), local territorial intelligence that is cancelled by the metropolitan dimension that implements transformations according to an extractivist and colonialist approach on every continent.

Urbanisation under the pretext of development and progress continues to be the primary mechanism that determines the spatial and economic expropriation of the colonised territories (Porter, Yiftachel, 2017). We try to understand how local cultures, as a form of resistance to the practices of colonialism, shape, negotiate, imagine and manage their environments in a collaborative way (De Sousa Santos, 2018) and how this “other knowledge” can be translated into the metropolitan dimension of the city today. The colonial matrix always manifests itself on the territory through three predominant actions: *segregation, extractivism and control*. Acting in a perspective of de-colonialisation, our approach was applied in the implementation of an open data mapping tool; we named it MC. The MC mapping project follows an interpretation of the codes that represent the phenomenon of metropolitanisation through an epistemological approach that states the logical reasons for choosing open-source data.

### *The impact of metropolitanisation on local territorial intelligence*

As designers, we contextualise the contrast between territorial intelligence and metropolitanisation by studying the impact of metropolitan projects tied to regional infrastructure on the local scale. With this lens, the metropolis is seen as a system that enables complementary actions – maintenance tactics to preserve, improvement strategies to increase, and transformation opportunities to grow – to work with local projects, scaling them up. The metropolis is a relational system that connects places to each other by means of territories and resources.

Urbanisation under the pretext of development and progress continues to be the primary mechanism that determines the spatial and economic expropriation of the colonised territories. We try to understand how local cultures, as a form of resistance to the practices of colonialism, shape, negotiate, imagine and manage their environments in a collaborative way.



Fig. 1 - Rural Religious Architecture in the pueblo of Asunción, Mendoza (AR), Galiulo, V., 2019.

Fig. 2 - *Naturaleza y Infraestructura*: Grey Infrastructure looming over dry Mendoza River. Re-appropriation of natural space for children's playgrounds in the pueblo of Asunción, Mendoza (AR), Galiulo, V., 2019.

In order to define a metropolitan architecture project, we argue that the interaction between the morphological, material and discursive dimensions shapes the sense of corporeality as a structure of the habitat. Beyond constituting the green-grey metropolitan structure, the task of the metropolitan architecture project is to construct memorable, desirable and affective scenes as a new form of metropolitan urbanity to strengthen mutual connectedness between places and inhabitants. This issue relates to the possibility of hybridising resilience priorities in cities in southern latitude countries. The gap between values that do not conform to conventional modernity and values that are now shared globally, yet are opposite of local practices, matters in ecological concerns. Indeed, technology makes the metropolis more functional, in the sense that technological performance in city spaces can affect inhabitants' behaviour and particularly indigenous communities, but technology can also be a robust vehicle to replicate non-sustainable practices. This is why we claim that cosmopolitan globalisation is a colonial phenomenon that risks cancelling the voice of local territorial intelligence. Decolonisation of knowledge (Mignolo, 2021) allowed for the survival of indigenous peoples in territories that



were not simply dominated, but resisted by hybridising, mixing and overcoming differences, breaking the imposed position of difference with European culture through boundary-thinking. Escobar argues that space is generated by the interplay between the ethics of world-making and the politics of social existence, and he suggests bringing procedural and relational ethics into design itself and in everything we do (Escobar, 2018).

However, spatial conflicts arise not only from cultural differences, but also by “othering” different forms of dwelling and values that regulate social life with reference to space, economy, ecology, property, body and knowledge.

Aníbal Quijano has defined “the colonial difference” as the result of conflicting cultural interchange, or frictions between local knowledge and Western paradigms (Quijano, 1992a). The “colonial difference” is the space in which power is articulated, but it is a space where “borderline thinking” emerges.

As designer-actors in contemporary society, our project aims to implement the works of metropolitan architecture that define new urban-rural linkage patterns in interphase territories. It deciphers urban and rural patterns and practices from the past to maintain

**Spatial conflicts arise not only from cultural differences, but also by “othering” different forms of dwelling and values that regulate social life with reference to space, economy, ecology, property, body and knowledge.**

The map is a way of seeing the world and is necessarily built through a code of communication and mediation.

or transform them. The goal is to re-codify the city model on the metropolitan scale, which constitutes the pertinent horizon of languages and meanings between all city temporalities. Who will the new citizens be? How will tribal practices and techniques fit together? This is the question lying at the heart of MC.

#### *The Tool: Space / Metropolitan Map*

Through maps, Western culture has tried to manifest its world by expressing the sense of power that seeks to make the world a system of entities at our disposal, to be dominated by logos. It is as if our maps are produced according to a code that makes the world more decipherable.

With the aim of mapping fragile territories, other cartographies are needed to describe and guide future transformations in metropolitan areas following an alternative model to cosmopolitan globalisation.

MC (Contin et al., 2021) is an open-source mapping tool that can be used in territories affected by the metropolitan dynamics of globalisation. The map is a way of seeing the world and is necessarily built through a code of communication and mediation. As in language (Moro, 2008), maps have a logical structure that is tied to grammar – the structure of this code, the primitive elements it is composed of (MGIP) – and syntax – the rules of composition that transmit the information to be communicated.

MC results from the revolution of what is symbolic. It is a tool developed from the need to understand new forms of life and relationships through contact and the multiplication of knowledge, which allows each culture to open up through the search for what makes us similar and not different.

This process feeds on the experience of building literary, filmic, photographic and theatrical images for determining the image of a territory to be explored.

It works as a qualitative mapping project for metropolises through a powerful evocative image (Mangani, 2006), which conceptualises new-generation maps capable of critically analysing the complex physical and temporal aspects of new territories across the different scales. The maps of MC enable stratified knowledge to be understood and translated to produce new ‘sensitive’ images through GIS-scalable and replicable projects. MC re-codes the spaces in local communities

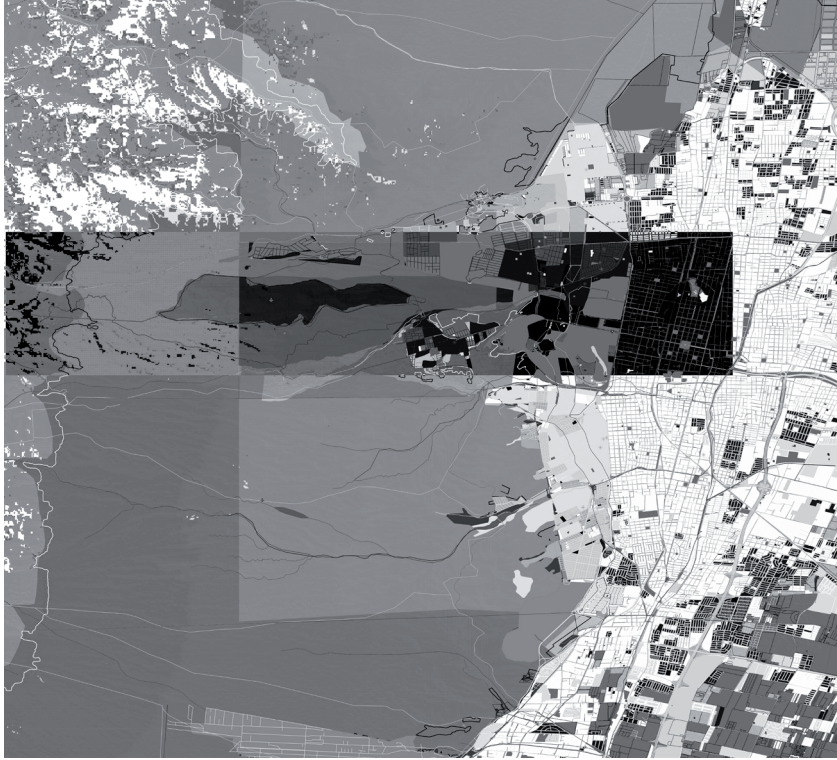


Fig. 3 - Metropolitan  
Cartography map  
of field of action:  
Pedemonte Men-  
doza, Galiulo, V. 2019.

based on the continuity of the green-grey infrastruc-  
ture, that is, the non-densely urbanised part of the city  
(Gouverneur, 2016).

Our cartography aims to break the colonial consolida-  
tion of places through a psycho-cognitive alteration of  
the space inserted in a new metropolitan dimension.  
The question is: What will remain of the image of the  
previously known place that the local populations  
have built in their minds when inserted into the im-  
age of a metropolitan city?

*Hypertext as a tool for reading the “Contested Territo-  
ries” metropolitan project*

The methodological research began with the intent  
to include intangible aspects of contested territorial  
landscapes in the map-making process. With grow-  
ing acknowledgement of the role of different social  
groups and citizens’ interest in dealing with the me-  
tropolis and heritage, there is an increasingly strong  
need to recognise, analyse and connect narratives and  
images of metropolitan dimensions, including social  
values and immaterial aspects even on the metropoli-  
tan scale.

In the context of discourse on the metropolis, a me-  
tropolitan territory can be read in a nonlinear way.

The question is:  
What will remain  
of the image of the  
previously known  
place that the local  
populations have  
built in their minds  
when inserted  
into the image of a  
metropolitan city?

A metropolitan project such as a map aims to define a space with collective and public dimensions using new hybrid urban forms. In order to build a gradient of metropolitan spaces and define their functional and symbolic values and forms, it is necessary to develop new syntax and grammar for the design.

A hypertext concept, as a set of documents placed in relation to each other, can be helpful for understanding the metropolitan issue regarding the individual choices among a wide range of related elements (Contin, 2018). A metropolitan project such as a map aims to define a space with collective and public dimensions using new hybrid urban forms. In order to build a gradient of metropolitan spaces and define their functional and symbolic values and forms, it is necessary to develop new syntax and grammar for the design.

On the metropolitan, urban and architectural scales, the non-planned extension of the metropolitan city could also represent a driver of research for possible planning of metropolitan urban life that must necessarily mark a discontinuity with the traditional and colonial city and further discuss what metropolitan values mean.

Therefore, our research explores three themes:

- 1) the interference between the practices of urban dwellers and public policies in urban planning and management;
- 2) the relationships between the spaces produced by the practices of city dwellers and those claimed by public authorities;
- 3) city images.

Our objective is to re-code the city and territory model on the metropolitan scale, which may allow for the recognition of meanings in the debate between colonial and de-colonial, clarifying the explicit framework within which what is non-planned according to mainstream urban rules remains traceable in the metropolitan idea. We primarily need to understand the matrix that holds together the different cities that form the metropolitan city region, arguing for its structural representation by means of the maps in MC.

The colonial world introduced a concept of property that overlapped with that of indigenous communities. Furthermore, colonial domination added exogenous meanings concerning the indigenous inhabitants of the city which is not planned according to formalised urban planning tools. Yet, we argue that there were different maps and rules before, which need to be rediscovered.

Finally, using maps, the physical dimension of “Contested Territories” unveils the dimension of the inter-

nal borders of “non-planned” city neighbourhoods. Such shared reading with local inhabitants introduces other spatial construction values (heritage), as well as different ontologies and epistemologies. On the other hand, signs related to the archetypes of colonial land management follow two dynamic strategies: inclusion or exclusion up to land abandonment.

#### *Settling “Contested Territories” through a metropolitan architecture meta-project*

“Contested Territories” are crossed by different global rationales, for which we must not lose sight of the territorial intersections on a local, metropolitan and regional level. These are territories of globalisation and spaces of intervention of multi-scale agents that interact with local narratives.

The metropolitan discipline approach to complexity (Contin et al., 2021) promotes metropolitan architecture meta-projects as tools of negotiation among different metropolitan agents. A metropolitan architecture meta-project is based not only on the economic and energy efficiency of territory, but also on defining the structural “strong texts” of the regional dimension (Frampton, 1983); it considers the inter-texts of local realities that lie between powerful metropolitan regions.

MC maps and metropolitan architecture meta-projects, potentially, provide government authorities in Latin American countries with means for decision-making that capacitate integration and ways of living for local communities, advocating innovative models of spatial connection between urban and rural areas that make place for new metropolitan communities. What is *variable* on the local scale is then recognised and preserved in order to become *invariant* on the global scale, therefore disarming the notion of the metropolis as a generic city (Koolhaas, 2006).

#### *Metropolitan Cartography project guidelines*

The Contested Territories Horizon 2020 European research project will resume in June 2022, after the pandemic brought it to a halt, with fact-finding for context-based data construction to verify initial methodological assumptions. Critical observations of territorial development, from the XL to the M scale, were elaborated from the new global open-source

We must not lose sight of the territorial intersections on a local, metropolitan and regional level. These are territories of globalisation and spaces of intervention of multi-scale agents that interact with local narratives.

## What are the tools for envisioning and the measurement indices of an affective space (if any)?

data mapping concept with MC methodology, and would not have emerged had we used more common, conventional systems.

However, only by comparing our results with local agents can we define how the recognition and translation of ancestral knowledges into our project methodology and the knowledge of cultural, political and economic innovation models can be culturally relevant for prefiguring metropolitan architecture projects for metropolitan cities at southern latitudes.

The first mapping project phase defines the temporalisation of construction periods in the metropolitan city represented through MC (pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods). Recognition of the geographical, historical, social and anthropological characteristics of the political ecology of the metropolitan context is the next step, in order to study the impact on indigenous/traditional cultural sites and practices of the pervasive presence of physical infrastructure, media and representational technologies associated with rampant urbanisation processes.

### *Dataactivism: new construction and cataloguing of S, XS hyperlocal data*

What are the tools for envisioning and the measurement indices of an affective space (if any)? It is the space of a reflective subject who can express what the situation requires, but not a space that allows us to normo-typify the subject. It cannot be measured with a performance map or simulation tools. We therefore have to consider which tool allows us to identify the characteristics of the space that stimulate our criticality and reflexivity.

This is not a question of determining the programmatic requirements, however, but rather a subject of qualities and values represented by the tangible and intangible heritage between culture and nature. To enlighten this, we recognise and appreciate both past and emerging structures to support the construction of a sustainable metropolitan city through the compatibility of green and grey infrastructures.

We propose to work with the MC tool to promote the construction of local data directly with citizens. Through collaboration with experts in data-telling and GIS projects, we identified five operational categories of dataactivism.



- Community counter-mapping in intercultural communication:

Use of drawing and sound in a psychogeographical approach. This is the power of creating a place, through colour, relationship and history, with the maps providing instructions on how to get home.

- Decolonisation and geo-activism in extractivism:

Definition of a communication strategy using data, practices and spatial tools. Mapping is a complex repertoire of resistance practices to mining projects and a tool for political negotiations with the state. Maps can generate alternative digital public spheres; geo-activism as proactive data activism employs strategies to communicate actions.

- Civic technologies in community-based conservation:

In participatory planning, civic technologies are tools to generate data in a collective way. This is a pedagogical tool for communities to collect spatial data, which are used in the diagnosis and planning phase. It constitutes the information base of the monitoring system; provides updated information to create implementation actions on the territory; influences public policies; and promotes conscious conservation actions;

- Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS) and Indigenous Data Governance (IDG): data sovereignty is the management of information that aligns with the laws, practices and customs of a state, nation, and indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples have always been data collectors and protectors. IDS and IDG imply the right of indigenous peoples and nations to decide what data development occurs and determine controls over the collection, governance, ownership and application of data on their peoples, territories, ways of life and natural resources;

- Designing the “Contested Territories” repository (open database and open science): definitions of activation protocols for specific data collection in the field. This defines tools and services for data collection, distribution and analysis. It establishes data ethics and data governance for collectives in contested territories.

*MESA: Metropolitan Existing Situation Analysis*

In order to map the spatial and temporal dynamics that underlie the effects of metropolitanisation in

Mapping is a complex repertoire of resistance practices to mining projects and a tool for political negotiations with the state.

## Maps of Dynamics

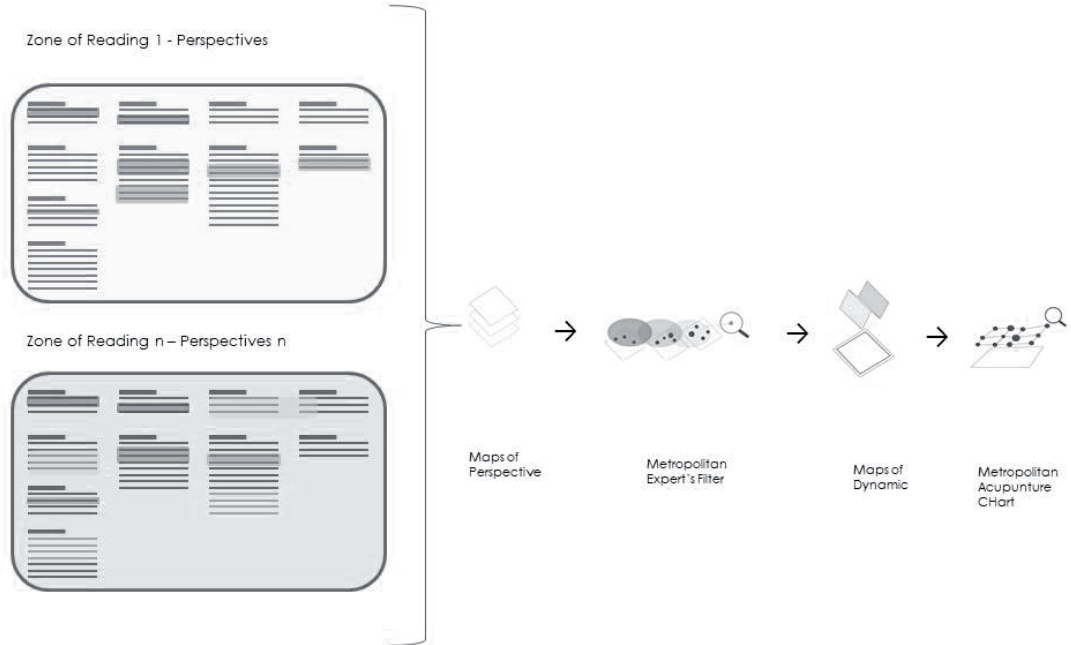


Fig. 4 - Metropolitan Cartography maps of dynamic design processes with local intelligence perspectives, Contin, A., Galiulo, V., 2019.

contested territories, MESA guidelines consist of the following methodological tracks:

- Historical City-Territory Analysis: this is a sensitive and crucial phase in multidimensional research on the city and its territory which includes symbol, memory and image considered as physical references and the syntactical spatial investigation of the territorial evolution. It includes typological-morphological relationships in the historical contexts; it is the structure of the durable element of the territory based on urban biographies (Contin, Galiulo, 2020), genesis and geomorphology of the settlement fabrics. The expected outcome is a collection of maps, videos and photo reports;
- Network analysis and infrastructure relationship spaces: this is a practical-theoretical step in analytical research aimed at marking multi-scale relationships with multiple proximities to the different types of networks starting from the regional scale;
- Geographical analysis of the territory: this is a moment of investigation dedicated to evidence of the



geomorphological dimension of the ground. It involves research into the anthropogeographic system, considering relationships between valleys (water) and neighbourhoods (ground). Therefore the research lens will be focused according to the metabolic structure of the project concerning design actions on the hyperlocal scale: maintenance, replacement, transformation;

- Landscape and environmental analysis: an analytical study covering the characteristics of natural, anthropic landscapes and the image value of local spatial relationships in the territorial fabric: invariant characteristics as symbolic values of the project site;
- Economic analysis: this aims to define contested eco-systems according to the existing dynamics of territorial extractivism due to intensive agricultural overproduction that erases traces of rural landscape as the essence of a quality lifestyle. This phase should be crossed with marketing analysis designed to detect economic and social variables to identify the future economic potential of the network of metropolitan spaces.

Fig. 5 - Photo reportage: Historical city analysis in the field of state-owned neighbourhoods. Galiulo, V., 2019.

Spatial components of the territories and territorialities that were lost in the advance of peripheralisation of the rural arid land were translated as two primary metropolitan dynamics.

The MESA methodology tracks direct open-source data mining to construct MC maps. These guidelines are followed by practical-theoretical work in which informational levels are transformed into synthetic data through the following steps: data mining, data setting and data semiology according to the MC methodology (Contin et al, 2022). To support the data search phase, MC allows for the selection of the connectivity relationships necessary for representing a specific ground phenomenon through multi-scale maps. MC guides the planner in acquiring and filtering data to facilitate the construction of a replicable, comparable and scalable model in heterogeneous metropolitan contexts. The digital design processes of MC guide the planner in modelling the data following an initial analysis and interpretation of the information layers with respect to scalar relationships and the programmatic purpose of the map.

*Maps of dynamics: the choral result of local intelligence*  
During the pandemic, we completed the first phase of analysis of one of the case studies chosen through the tools of MC and our analysis method (Contin, Galiulo 2021): the case of Mendoza, in which urban uses expansion into rural areas resulted in more barren lands. Framing the problem through the different narratives of local agents allowed us to characterise the metropolitan processes and territorial transformations in Mendoza. This relates to rural peripheralisation through a phenomenon of horizontal and vertical extractivism (Katz, 2016), which has caused the rise of disputes over water access (Mellino, 2014). Spatial components of the territories and territorialities that were lost in the advance of peripheralisation of the rural arid land were translated as two primary metropolitan dynamics and a sub-dynamics into the MC maps of dynamics on the XL, L and M scales. These are:

- Dynamic 1: Peripheralisation of the city causing lack of territorial identity and access to services;
- Dynamic 2: Conflict between traditional lifestyle and modern lifestyle in the mountains.

The cartographic representation of metropolitan extractivism dynamics in the rural Pedemonte area of Mendoza on the local scale (Fig. 6) is the synthetic result of spatial relationships under the categories of social inequality and lack of proximity to the ecosystem and cultural services of the metropolitan city.

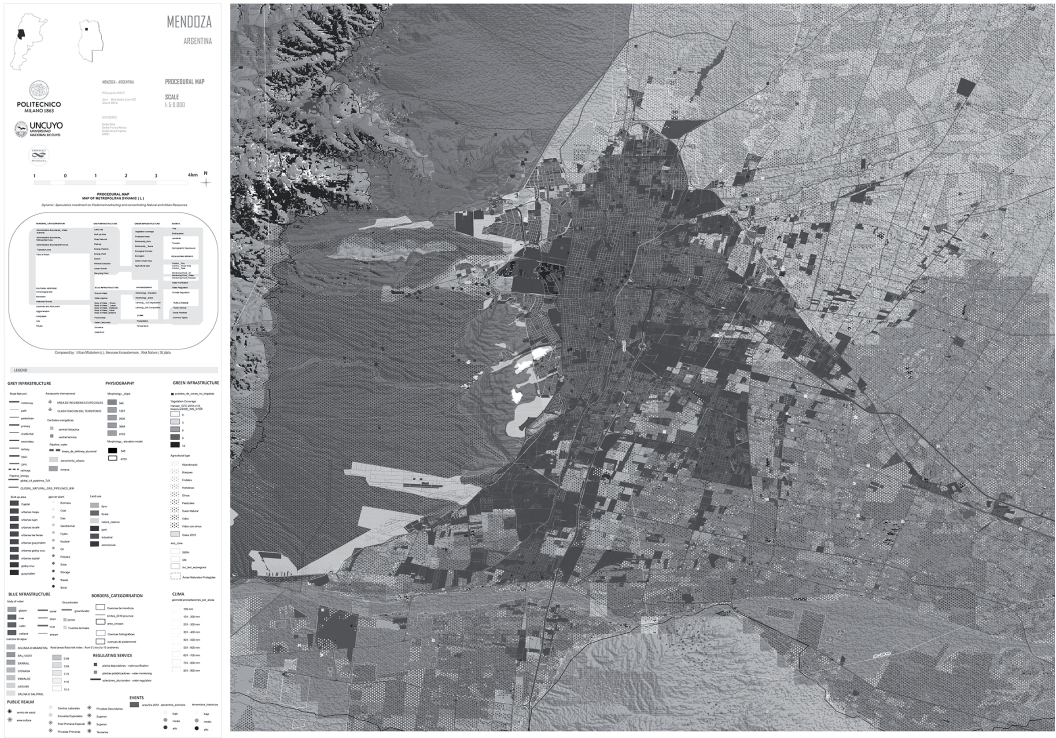


Fig. 6 - Metropolitan Cartography. Mendoza (AR) - Dynamic Map 1- Scale L, Galiulo, V. 2019.

Furthermore, the parcelling of the territory into neighbourhoods (private and with limited/regular or informal access) limits the equitable distribution and accessibility of resources, thereby increasing the social gap between rich and poor. Private neighbourhoods are regarded as introverted islands equipped with safety devices that include areas for public use conceived as complementary spaces where inhabitants can experience the new open city. However, beyond the security barriers of private neighbourhoods, there are more than 166 informal and working-class neighbourhoods in the suburban metropolitan area, most notably in the municipalities of Las Heras, Mendoza City and Godoy Cruz. These are places with critical levels of insecurity and a total lack of primary services related to the public drinking water supply to meet the daily needs of the population residing in the foothills, favouring capitalisation of the public good by global private enterprises. In conclusion, MC arises from the need to represent the complexity of the metropolitan approach through maps. Research on different territories, cultures,

agents and scales means determining a method of study that can guarantee a territorial structure of organization that emerges from preliminary anthropo-geographic research to decode new hybrid metropolitan situations. The results show how MC operates through an ecosystem approach that allows territories to be integrated on different scales, which is made possible by managing water and soil resources, promoting their conservation and sustainable use and maintaining the local culture of the territory and its resources. It is a proposal for a theoretical-practical approach to guarantee an inter-scalar leap, from small to large and vice versa, indicating new possible projects of urban-rural linkage models as places of relationships for the new metropolitan coexistence.

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*RE:*

*Burn-out*

- *precar-*

- *iousness*

- *exhaus-*

- *tion*



# Metaphorizing Burn-out or Missing the Point of the Project. Exhaustion Otherwise

## Commentary

-  
Camillo Boano

### *Abstract*

Invited by “Ardeth” editors, this short text set out to comment the *Burn-Out*, “Ardeth” Issue #08, in order to critically reflect on it and bring up the notion of *precariousness* as an ontological condition to complement the understanding of exhaustion. My intention is to reclaim the centrality of exhaustion as generative term and attempting to rectify what I perceived to be reading the whole issue, the refusal to couple the pandemic affective perception of burn-out with the abyss of the anthropogenic condition or the incapacity to move beyond the singular (intended as disciplinary as well as personal) to the planetary (intended as multiplicity and geographical). To achieve this I would suggest, passing to Mbembe, Agamben and Berardi, a return to Deleuze’s work suggesting to reframe it with the question of life, its protection as the central feature of the architectural and urban debate.

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**ARDETH #09**

In the wake of an expansion of the usage of the term decolonization in academic institutions, pedagogical and public discourses, in 2012 Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang published a text that soon became a fundamental reference (Tuck, Yang, 2012). It was a direct attack and a straightforward call to “remind readers what is unsettling about decolonization” and to not mistake, reduce, depotentiate it with a simplistic call to social justice and reconciliation. The risk they identified was the one of a “metaphorization of decolonization” as it “makes possible a set of evasions, or ‘settler moves to innocence’, that problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity” (ibid.: 1). With a series of moves of what they called “unsettling innocence” (ibid.: 4), Tuck and Yang reject it becoming a metaphor and call us to think decolonisation “not as an ‘and’” but as “an elsewhere” (ibid.: 36).

Despite my interests in the decolonial approach, I’m not developing it here. Rather, I wish to flag up the same risk of metaphorization that I sensed emerging in the *Burn-Out*, “Ardeth” Issue #08. Forcing the architectural project to confront burn-out as concept, as affect, as condition and as practice was a promising idea. Maybe, like all ideas born in captivity, it lacks both some fresh air and vital space to breathe, to mature and, especially, to take some critical distance from the already usual regressive adoption of it in the design discourse since the pandemic. The fatigue is evident in putting together a cohesive and critical series of thoughts on the present condition without allowing other languages and alternative vocabularies to emerge. I had the impression that burn-out was metaphorized, as it was not fully able to suggest an experimental “otherwise” as Tuck and Yang specify. It was limited to a naïve, reactive and, somehow conventional, discussion on the role of the architectural and urban project.

Why this? What makes such an affective shared condition unable to provoke fertile architectural design thoughts? What makes architectural thoughts so incapable of thinking the exhaustion beyond confined environments, cultural perimeters and conventional references? I would argue that any attempt to theorise and debate the current condition and its architectonics cannot do so without a serious engagement with a central register: the precariousness of life as a constituent element of design. As usual this “Ardeth” issue is introduced by two different editorials framing a sort of *controcanto* in style and perspective that shapes the tone and connects the different contributions. This time the format is not different but the two editorials drive towards very different directions. Both miss the point, metaphorizing the burn-out but making different metaphorical slippages. In one editorial the equation of burn-out with exhaustion, (or better, with the slippage from the original interest in exhaustion intended as “loss, consumption and bewilderment affecting subjects and their relationships”) escalated from hard science to social science to embrace things as tiredness, incapacities and, more generically, as inability. It even embraced the detachment of and the disciplinary

paralysis caused by a global condition of “uncertainty and unpredictability” rethinking the project in the paradoxical dimension of the project, which exists in its “future” dimension even when the future might not be given the conditions to exist.

In the other editorial, burn out is equated with the fatigue to cope, to adapt and keep going and its concurrent space to endure and develop as if nothing has happened in a business-as-usual manner. In this way “our fatigue at the end of a day of endless virtual meetings is mirrored by the exhaustion we are inflicting on the planet”. This calls for “responsibility and care” in the form “public infrastructures”. It is a fatigue that can be cured, ameliorated with a different engagement, a different form of infrastructure, and involves a common sense notion of fatigue that is “the intolerance of any effort” making the burn out a “generative point of departure to rethink the role of bodies, institutions and infrastructures towards non-exploitative structures and relations”. While the first editorial sees a void at the centre of the contributions, where the different contributions gravitate, “withdrawing” from engaging with the central question of burn-out, the second editorial puts at the centre the call for the construction of infrastructures of care that are able to confront the inability to cope and endure, making even more evident that “inability (exhaustion) and unwillingness (withdrawal) constitute two inseparable parts of the burnout phenomenon” (Schaufeli, Taris, 2005: 259).

What seems to me to be happening is that in both ways of reading the issue – despite the quality and the reflections provided by each contribution – together they are unable to touch on the exhaustion of the project. The converging ecological and sanitary crises have challenged architecture and urbanism. Functionalist thinking, however, including digital and calculative tools and conservative paths on biophilic, appeals to smart-green-sustainability and renewed multi-use and multi-purpose spaces. This calls for spatial strategies and care that are simplified and romanticised in a return to nature, to responsibility, to proximity and to the messianic salvation of architecture: platforms, schools, nature are not new declinations of the project, either in their use, space, assemblages. Despite its recent popularization in architectural discourses (Power, Mee, 2020; Fitz et al., 2019) the rhetoric of care, and infrastructures of care, while certainly needed, appears to be instrumentalised as it misses “horizon of chaos, exhaustion and tendential extinction” (Berardi, 2021: 10). The idea of infrastructures is not in itself wrong, nor new, as it entails operative possibility, inherent to any spatial dispositive. It doesn't centre the problem, however. It remains physical, linear, simple: it doesn't problematize, it doesn't relaunch, it doesn't put life at the centre in its biopolitical dimension, in the new biopolitical configuration of the Anthropocene. The key question is whether there can be design without a minimum of stability. Today, everything is in motion: everything is in a state of flux, without any certainties. This imposes a constant process of problematising what we are, what we want and what we can.

We are grappling with an exhausted present that undermines all certainties. A kind of radical precariousness of existence where disorientation is endemic. We move forward in uncertainty and, of this uncertainty, we must make our certainty. Incipient thoughts and spaces, never realised, always to be initiated and unfolded.

With the small space available here, I will try to reflect on such a missing target in relation to this “Ardeh” issue, suggesting an alternative reading for a critical reflection on the urban and architectural project around the notion of *precariousness* as an ontological condition. There is a need to reclaim the centrality of exhaustion as generative term and attempting to rectify what I perceived to be reading the whole issue, the refusal to couple the pandemic affective perception of burn-out with the abyss of the anthropogenic condition or the incapacity to move beyond the singular (intended as disciplinary as well as personal) to the planetary (intended as multiplicity and geographical). To achieve this I would suggest a return to the work of Deleuze on exhaustion – completely ignored beyond its metaphorical use and the need to reframe the question of life, its protection as the central feature of the architectural and urban debate.

*Recentring the exhaustion foregrounding brutalism and catastrophe: precariousness*

Achille Mbembe argues that the spread of Covid-19 appears as a continuation of the war modernity wages against life, humanity being already threatened with suffocation, with lack of air, before the virus (Mbembe, 2021a). A planetary condition that is “a time without guarantees nor promises, a time obsessed with its own end” (Mbembe, 2021b: 249). For him the planetary exhaustion is called brutalism. Brutalism is described as “a contemporary process whereby “power is henceforth constituted, expressed, reconfigured, acts and reproduces itself as a *geomorphic force*. How so? Through processes that include *fracturing* and *fissurin’*, *emptying vessels*, *drilling*, and *expelling organic matter*, in a word, by what I term *depletion*” (Mbembe, 2020: 9-10) and a more general production of “frontier-bodies” (Mbembe, 2021a: 60) and “choking subjects” (Tazzioli, 2021). Mbembe identifies three of such megaprocesses: (I) the impending ecological crisis, (II) techno-molecular forms of colonialism and, (III) the dialectic between entanglement and separation (Mbembe, 2021c). Both the ecological crisis and techno-molecular practices are framed by the consolidation of corporate sovereignty, which has exceeded the creation of markets and information transfer while producing new social metabolisms through a form of *necrocapitalism*, whereby both life and death are turned into waste through forms of depletion, such as extraction and digestion. Finance capital, in a ubiquitous, digital and extractive guise, “is a *magnetic field* with the power to affect the Earth’s climate. It has made a world of itself: a hallucinatory phenomenon of planetary dimensions” (ibid.: 16). The second megaprocess is comprising the effects of techno-molecular colonialism. Hence, technologies “are

being granted the powers of reproduction and independent teleonomic purpose” as “all societies are organised according to the same principle – the computational” (ibid.: 19). Mbembe argues that the computational process is the core principle of “speed regimes” and of the infrastructures and qualities that allow such regimes to turn “all substances into quantities” (ibid.: 20), between entanglements and separation. In speed regimes life is tantamount to movement and, thus, impediments on speed are limitations on life. The third process, the dialectic relationship between entanglements and separation, is defined by the perceived risk posed by proximity and exposure on the one hand, and the practices of partitioning space to slow-down and impede people with carceral and violent ends, on the other. Such “borderization”, leads to “the creation of a segmented planet of multiple speed regimes” (ibid.: 21). Practices of borderization and related biometric technologies are selective in separating those who are insured from those who are not. These latter, *uninsured* bodies are “bioavailable”, and in “[...] a relation of *radical inequivalence*” (ibid.: 23) with the insured bodies, following a bifurcation between life and bodies.

Such an overwhelming reality of the terrestrial condition stirs and disrupts the ground of human existence. Terrestrial beings cease to be a stable and passive background for human activities to the point they threaten human existence itself. Chakrabarty claims that “with the crisis of anthropogenic climate change coinciding with multiple other crises of planetary proportions – of resources, finance, and food, not to speak of frequent weather-related human disasters” (Chakrabarty, 2021), both the future of humanities and the one of earth are threaten. Franco “Bifo” Berardi calls this “a society that is on the brink of an environmental, financial, but also psychic collapse” and a “landscape of anxiety” (Berardi, 2021: 16).

With this scenario, the project manifests the inconsistency of life and its inherent contradiction: the immanence of death in life. It gives itself to life, to protect it, to improve it, to cure it, even though it knows it must die and therefore fail. It imagines a future that escapes like the world itself, incapable at the same time of excess. Today’s alternative, beyond the rhetoric, does not lie in the possibility of reversing course or securing ourselves on the edge of the abyss. This is now too late. We are left only with the awareness that today it is a matter, perhaps, of succeeding in slowing down the catastrophe by opting for different gradations of ecological hell to its extreme consequences: the end of the species. Current events disturb and paralyze us because they show scientific projections that scan the future as an evolutionary dead end: an absence of future. The future comes to us from the IPCC scenarios or in any Netflix dystopic series, as well as with the vanguard of the scientific community: in the comfortable techno-green salvation and the consolation of the community and the reuse of spaces.

Bedour Alagraa in *The Interminable Catastrophe* (Offshootjournal, 2021) writes against the claim that we need to simply believe science, or have

better science, or better mechanics to address the problem of our earth's ecology. To develop an adequate grammar, Alagraa locates in Black life post-Middle passage the historical and epistemological point that helps to rephrase catastrophe with the constitutive element of "cruel mathematics" a massification of all aspects of the enslaved African's life/death cycle. As opposed to biopolitics' emphasis on control over prescribing *forms* of life, cruel mathematics imposes, and then normalizes, a violent foundation for our relationship to our planet, placing certain lives as a threat to the planet's future and others as stewards or guardians of the planet.

Franco "Bifo" Berardi in *The Third Unconscious. The Psycho sphere and the viral Age* characterize the current situation of catastrophe as "the end of human history, which is clearly unfolding before our eyes; the ongoing disintegration of the neoliberal model and the imminent danger of the techno-totalitarian rearrangement of capitalism and the return of death to the scene of philosophical discourse, after its long denial by modernity" (Berardi, 2021: 31). To paraphrase Antonio Moresco, something enormous is happening (Moresco, 2018): ours are the first human generations to live to the blink of an extinction. To survive, we must return to all living things – including the biosphere – the space and energy they need, which reminds Mbembe again: "in these conditions, one of the possibilities is to worry about the death of others, from a distance. Another is to become immediately aware of one's own putrescibility, to have to live in proximity to one's own death, to contemplate it as a real possibility" (Mbembe, 2021b: 252).

This seems to be the real point of burn out: the exhaustion of a life in constituent proximity with death. In this, the architectural project cannot be simplified to a requalification, a functionalist infrastructure to extend life, to renaturalise it, to open to a natural system. Rather we must reframe its biopolitical essence as a question of inhabitation. For Agamben, questioning inhabitation from such spaces means revealing "the very possibility of living and inhabiting is indissolubly intertwined with death" (Agamben, 2020a: 11).

We can maybe, audaciously, suggest that the project today should be less consolatory and seen more as "a creative process through which they withdraw from death in order to escort it [...] And yet if human communities are not destined, as so many today seem to suggest, for simple disintegration, if human life is an inhabitable life, men will necessarily have to try to rediscover and reinvent a way of inhabiting their city, their land" (ibid.: 11-12).

What seems to be important to think, therefore, is an inhabiting life, which we know to mean "to be in what one holds dearest, one's own and at the same time common. That is, to be and to enjoy, one's own nature. It is certainly a way of resisting, of staying, of preventing oneself from being dragged elsewhere, but also," Agamben continues, "a way we have to protect (sheltering) life from its devastating fury" (ibid.: 11-12).

The inadequacy of the project disciplines to read and to understand the present is evident. Design faces an epistemic debt towards the intersectionality – and therefore the complex articulation of causes, effects and spatial figures – of the great planetary changes and of technological hegemony just because they are anachronisms that distort the image of the present and are incapable of any prognostic thought if not the constant production of simplified, momentary, conceptually impoverished utopian models. Design thoughts are linked to the privilege of position, negation of otherness, terraplatism and negationism of various kinds that paint an exhausted world, to be cured, rehabilitated and mended, but always centered on an anthropos so powerful as to signify a geological era – the Anthropocene.

**1 - Reflections** emerging in this part are referring to the Lifeline project founded by DIST, Politecnico di Torino, in collaboration with Prof. Cristina Bianchetti and several colleagues in Italy, UK, US, Lebanon, Ecuador, Chile and Germany.

*From infrastructure of care to infrastructures of life<sup>1</sup>*

Another way to name the politics of vivants that Mbembe urgently suggest us to appreciate is biopolitics. It helps to rephrase the centrality of bios (life, ways of life, living, vitality) in the project and to underline the continuing importance of a critique both of its forms of capture, control and taking charge, and of the forms of its protection, liberation and immunisation. The relational and critical political dimension highlights not a generic life, but a reflection on fragility, precariousness and carelessness, the latter is rightly considered by the contributions in “Ardeth”.

However, the shift to biopolitics is not to define a contemporary variant, but to turn analytical attention to heterogeneous practices which, through different rationalities and technologies of governability, coexist and intertwine. The insurance of life is connected to an imperative of death we should remember from reading Foucault. To re-centre the spatial nexus between politics and life means, first, to pluralise the forms of life, opening in multiple directions; to multiply the investigations into contemporary modes of protection and exclusion and of empowerment and impairment of life. It calls for a political - and therefore critical - excess: moving “beyond biopolitics” as a condition of government of life and death and shifting its margins. Perhaps breaking that short-circuit that was well highlighted by Esposito: “not only is death co-present with life, but it seems to spring from it, from a sort of vital excess which, beyond a certain limit, appears to overturn into its opposite” (Esposito, 2020: 39-40). In this mixture, ambivalence, dark side and biopolitics cannot be read as “all on one side of the productivity of life, without considering its possible tanatopolitical returns, and on the other in a zone of indistinction between life and death” (ibid.: 43). Therefore, it cannot be read only as additions, securitisations, containments, protections, but also bans, exclusions, subtractions, violent inactions such as those imposed in the government of migrants at the European borders with the complicity of the humanitarian system, which does not favour but at the same time does not let migrants die, making them simply hypermobile, with no possibility of permanence.

Directly addressing the neglect, the dis-ability of life, forces a new perspective of life/death that shapes most discussions of biopolitics beyond conceptual frames such as naked life, slow death, necropolitics that presume death as the opposite of life. This allows the ambivalences of extracting value from otherwise disposable populations to become visible, and to liberate and set in motion “viscous deviations” digressions and shortcuts. It reveals the obscurities that authorise violence as a vital layer in the realms of modern sovereignty “whether found in the current practices of torture in American and foreign prisons, or in the haunting histories of the Holocaust, slavery and colonialism” (Weheliye, 2014) or on the borders of Europe. The viscosity of life, rather than its mapping in the sheer variety of abjection, capable of offering flavours and textures found in imprisoned lives. However, the present conditions that we have all witnessed globally and their architecture and infrastructural projects, redevelopment, architectural narratives, etc have long-term consequences in terms of making or unmaking inequalities of life, constructing literally a number of “zone of abandonment” (Biehl, 2005).

What seems to appear maybe is a signal to describe the world as it is structured, made, organised, or, as Keller Easterling would say, infra-structured. But it is also something that explains it and helps to think about the future of life, as Mbembe suggested it is a central issue for our century. *A Story of Perpetual Planetary Conflict*, close to the one that Guinard, Latour and Lin used to title the 2020 Taipei Biennial: *You and I Don't Live on the Same Planet* (Guinard, Lin, Latour, 2020), where several planets collide. The planetarium includes: *planet globalization*, constructed around the promise of modernity in its world-making violence with its massive rise in inequality, neoliberalism and unlimited growth; *planet security*, where people betrayed by the ideals and the violence of globalization, ask for a piece of land - a fenced or a bordered haven to live in, protected from others; *planet escape*, where a limited number of privileged people invest hyper-techno fix security solutions or leave the earth. For all the others excluded by the modernizing project, the privileged full-security-bordered-land or the escape idealized-communities-of-equals, the only option is to be in an uninhabitable territory, that the curators call the “terrestrial planet” (ibid.).

This metaphor of planetary conflict is maybe illustrating a form of violence that is simultaneously destructive and constructive: not an interruption but rather a continuous process that traverses the political history of the planet itself. The landscape emerging in the terrestrial planet is *uninhabitable*, not because of the conditions and limited ability for people to reside, to shelter or to find a refuge but, rather, because habitation is not only probable or possible but is just a matter of life. A life that by nature is on the verge of its dissipation. The very possibility of living and inhabiting has always been inextricably intertwined with the promise of death, destruction, disappearance, displacement and eviction that is regularly and invariably fulfilled. However, the uninhabitable is also



a continuous creative process through which inhabitants withdraw from death in order to escort it, constituting an industrious community capable of building, maintaining and repairing its living space. The project here becomes a tenacious struggle to resist the violent subtractions of the future, of space, of possibilities, through creating space and forms of life. As Anna Tsing says, precariousness is a life without the promise of stability (Tsing, 2021: 24). Living in the burning house, in the burning world and in its relative impossibility of breathing and of redemption, in the refusal of any messianic adjustment, correction or redemption, implies not only analyzing the processes of privatization, oppression, extractivism but at the same time to refuse its immunity dimension. To inhabit not as having, disposing, infrastructuring, organizing, but as our way of being in the world consists of weaving relationships, incorporations, knotting, taking distance “[...] inhabiting is something vacillating [...]. One inhabits in a continuous ‘failure’, in a ruin of plans, of ideologies, of possibilities, in a perpetual dysfunctionality” (ibid.).

Late capitalist imperialism, misogyny, racism, climate change, all the debilitating conditions of planetary life, have foregrounded the pandemic and its urban imaginaries. Precarity takes differently gendered, historied, embodied, geopolitical manifestations and challenges the project in its being burned-out, incapable to imagine dehumanization, the inhumane, the inhospitable: “precarity is first and foremost the form of life in the age of crisis as art of government”, Dario Gentili reminds us (Gentili, 2021: 11).

A living and a life, therefore, is not qualified by norms, conventions, dispositives but is delineated by forces of friction. Paraphrasing Anna Tsing, who follows matsutake mushrooms, following Lifelines in devastated landscapes “allows one to explore the ruins in which we all now inhabit” opening “the possibility of coexistence within environmental disturbances” and revealing a “tangible example of collaborative survival (Tsing, 2021: 27), and “ecologies born of perturbations in which many species coexist without harmony or conquest” (ibid.: 29). Precariousness is the condition in which we are vulnerable to others. A precarious world is a world without teleology. Indeterminacy is frightening, but thinking through precariousness shows that indeterminacy makes life possible (ibid.: 48). When reaffirmed through the dimension of precariousness, the spaces of the project and of simply living become defined by the “strength of what they unite as much as of what they disperse” (ibid.: 79) and by the indetermination between ineffability and presence.

### *Returning to Deleuze*

The climate crisis makes large parts of the planet uninhabitable; the patina of colonialism and extractivism as well as the health crisis displace bodies in their own ways in physical space, in social space, in the space of control and limitation of freedom; they shape forms of protection, spaces of immunity across scales, and

immobility around secured borders. While around us is disintegrating at such a vertiginous speed that any descriptions of its physical, social, economic, or political makeup yield to the image of the “burning house” Giorgio Agamben used as the title of one of its recent books (Agamben, 2020b: 8).

We know this all too well and we named it exhaustion. However, as Michael Marder suggested, the world is “also building itself up through this disintegration” shifting from “the clarity of geopolitics, broadly understood as ‘the politics of the earth’, to the explosive ambiguity of *pyropolitics*, or ‘the politics of fire’” (Marder, 2015). Exhaustion, extinction, proximity of death, ashes are all evident in front of us but the response of the architectural and urban project is the same: “aimed at relaunching economic growth at all costs, we will enter a spiral of violence, racism and war. Instead, we must accept the reality of exhaustion and face reality on egalitarian terms: share frugally what knowledge, solidarity and technology can provide. Redistribution of wealth egalitarianism, frugality: this is the recipe for survival, and possibly for a new pleasurable social life” (Berardi, 2021: 193).

Why not go back and find some refuge in the Deleuzian concept of exhaustion? Deleuze treats the term in the *Powers of the False*, a chapter in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1986/1989) and in *The Exhausted* (1992/1995), an afterword to a Samuel Beckett book, published in 2015 in Italian with a commentary by Giorgio Agamben. While not directly mentioned in any of the two editorials, Deleuze was echoed in the notion of burn-out. He describes exhaustion as distinct from mere tiredness: “Exhausted [*L'épuisé*] is a whole lot more than tired [*le fatigué*]” (Deleuze, 1995: 3). To be tired is to no longer be able to realize one’s projects, plans, or intentions, but to be exhausted, by contrast, is to be rid of the possible itself: “The tired has only exhausted realization, while the exhausted exhausts all of the possible. The tired can no longer realize, but the exhausted can no longer possibilitate [*ne peut plus possibiliser*]” (ibid.).

As Ginevra Bompiani reminds: “exhaustion is not an essay about the end, but about another Deleuzian concept: the penultimate, penultimateity” (Bompiani, 2015: 6). She continues, “like the drunkard aspires to the penultimate last drink (that of satiety) and not the last (that of the loss of consciousness), so the damned of Beckett are penultimate creatures, that the event, theatrical or narrative, will bring to an end. Exhausting is a space, is a politics of space as a minimal assurance concerning an emergent creativity: “It is, rather, the end, the end of all possibility, that teaches us that we have Deleuze and made it, that we are about to make the image” (ibid.: 6-7). A figure of the exhausted, of the one who exhausts all possibilities by creating: a figure in which extreme nothingness is reversed into a creative process. What finally produces the end, is a creative process, which Deleuze calls: the making of an image.

The image is precisely what precedes that produced that triggers the end. This interpretation, beyond the fatigue, seems to be illuminating a different

reflection on architecture and design that, in the current production, with the current vocabulary, are shaping forms and images that produce the end. Architecture and the urban project are exhausted because they have exhausted every possibility by creating itself and the world, where an extreme nothingness is reversed in a creative process. The project is not capable of an alternative imagination. It means resisting atrophy, flattening the form, delegation to certain expertise and mode of practice. But it also means multiplying possible visions, imaginable lands, forms of life, monsters and companions. The language of infrastructure and care is needed but is not sufficient to imagine oneself elsewhere, which means not resigning oneself to the idea that today's world is the only possible one. The insomnia of the present, another synonym of the exhausted, has a power: that of making the image not of the future, but of an otherwise. An otherwise "require a commitment to not knowing" suggest poetically Lola Oufemi (Olufemi, 2021). In her book, hidden almost in the fold of an intense topography of thought's, she thinks design with the words of June Jordan I offer them below:

I would wish us to indicate the determining relationship between architectonic reality and physical well-being. I hope that we may implicitly instruct the reader in the comprehensive impact of every Where, of any place. This requires development of an idea or theory of place in terms of human being; of space designed as the volumetric expression of successful existence between earth and sky; of space cherishing as it amplifies the experience of being alive, the capability of endless beginnings, and the entrusted liberty of motion; of particular space inexorably connected to multiple spatialities, a particular space that is open-receptive and communicant yet sheltering particular life (Jordan, 1995: 28).

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*gender •*  
*queer •*  
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# Gender, Sexuality and Space: Towards Acts of Architectural Disobedience

## Commentary

-  
Luisa Parisi

*Abstract / Genere, sessualità e spazio:  
verso atti di disobbedienza architettonica*

Through a contemporary reading of architectural history, this text aims to elaborate on intersectional study of architecture and gender theory. The aspiration is to provide a critical model to overcome the anatomical, formal and identity politics readings that have dominated the study of the relations between gender and architecture so far. When the fabric of space contains a particular set of social relations, what space is granted to those who exist on the margins of white, male subjectivity?

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1 – NB: L'esplicitazione della normatività espressa e imposta dallo spazio e dal suo governo ha aperto la porta al paradosso per cui tale imposizione rinforza allo stesso tempo la carica sovversiva e il potenziale rivendicativo degli spazi in questione.

*Meccanismo di rappresentazione o Costruzione/costrizione di identità*  
Genere, sessualità e spazio non sono categorie cristallizzate ma processi interconnessi in costante cambiamento e ridefinizione. Se le costruzioni sociali delle identità di genere e delle sessualità producono degli spazi – progettati o costruiti, rappresentati o immaginati, collettivi o individuali, pubblici o privati – allo stesso tempo gli stessi spazi producono identità. Dovrebbe essere riconosciuto che lo spazio in sé non è intrinsecamente potente. È la politica dell'uso spaziale che determina il suo potere. La nozione di egemonia maschile implicitamente radicata nella società compare nella produzione di spazi, in particolare nell'architettura e nella pianificazione urbana, privilegiando innegabilmente il potere maschilista nella sua rappresentazione di ordine sociale, progressione gerarchica e ruoli di genere stereotipati. Normalmente l'architettura e gli edifici si giudicano come contenitori “vuoti” o “neutrali” che facilitano la libera interazione dei corpi nello spazio, ma la realtà ha dimostrato che le convenzioni apparentemente innocenti dell'architettura operano segretamente all'interno di un sistema di relazioni di potere per trasmettere valori sociali. Gli edifici sono meccanismi di rappresentazione e, in quanto tali, sono politici e ideologici. L'architettura, quindi, trascende la neutralità del recinto geometricamente determinato e fisicamente definito per diventare un sito di vita vissuta in cui i processi culturali, le transizioni di genere e il modus dei desideri sessuali vengono attuati. Se lo spazio e l'architettura esistono come artefatti culturali che riflettono e riproducono i valori culturali, le convinzioni e le priorità dei decisori, dove si collocano quei corpi che esistono come “altri”? Quando il tessuto fisico di uno spazio contiene un particolare insieme di relazioni sociali, quale spazio è concesso a coloro che esistono ai margini della soggettività bianca e maschile?<sup>1</sup>

Be it acknowledged:

The man-made environments which surround us reinforce conventional patriarchal definitions of women's role in society and spatially imprint those sexist messages on our daughters and sons. They have conditioned us to an environmental myopia which limits our self-concepts...which limits our visions and choices for ways of living and working...which limits us by not providing the environments we need to support our autonomy or by barring our access to them. It is time to open our eyes and see the political nature of this environmental oppression!  
(Weisma, 2000: 1)

Lo spazio, quindi, è uno strumento di pensiero e azione. Come Leslie Kanes Weisma suggerisce nel prologo *Women's Environmental Rights: A Manifesto*, gli ambienti fisici pongono limiti alla mobilità di un individuo, modellando la percezione non solo dello spazio, ma anche di sé stessi (Plouffe, 2018). Weisma richiede un'azione contro l'oppressione dell'ambiente costruito, mettendo in discussione come la configurazione architettonica, l'articolazione spaziale e l'appropriazione/rappresentazione simbolica del corpo umano operino per generare l'identità sessuale (Custodi, Olcuire, Silvi, 2017).



## Disobbedienza

Tutte le interazioni nella vita sono vissute attraverso il corpo. La teorica Judith Butler (2000) legge il corpo come «Non un essere, ma un limite variabile, una superficie la cui permeabilità è regolata politicamente». Estendendo questa lettura del corpo all'architettura e allo spazio, possiamo considerare entrambi confini vitali e potenzialmente permeabili, come siti di mutevole significato culturale. Corpo e sito diventano interdipendenti, simultanei, si imprime l'un l'altro, ed il corpo – indissolubilmente legato alla questione del genere e del sesso – ha generato le metafore più straordinarie nell'elaborazione di un'ideologia architettonica (Agest, 1991). Non sono solo le implicazioni sociali e culturali di uno spazio ad imprimersi su un corpo, ma anche la presenza o l'assenza di un corpo ad imprimersi in uno spazio (Ardener, 2000).

Dopo la lettura di Foucault sulla storia della sessualità e di Jacques Derrida sulla forza “performativa” del linguaggio, pensatrici femministe come Judith Butler, Teresa de Lauretis ed Eve K. Sedgwick hanno iniziato alla fine degli anni '80 e '90 un processo di denaturalizzazione delle nozioni di genere e identità sessuale che divenne noto come “teoria queer”, mettendo in dubbio l'uso convenzionale delle nozioni di “differenza sessuale”, “genere” ed “identità sessuale” come un dato ontologico. Usato in senso spregiativo nei confronti degli omosessuali nel corso del XIX secolo, queer è termine anglosassone che sta per «strano», «bizzarro», e a sua volta deriverebbe dal tedesco *quer*, «diagonale», «di traverso».

Nella sua introduzione al numero speciale di “Differences”, De Lauretis spiegava di usare il termine con almeno tre intenzioni, corrispondenti ad altrettanti programmi di critica: rifiutare il riferimento all'eterosessualità come termine di paragone per tutte le forme di sessualità; rifiutare la rappresentazione della sessualità gay e lesbica come un'unica forma di sessualità; infine, dare rilievo ai molteplici modi in cui la “razza” influenza in modo decisivo le soggettività sessuali (Turner, 2000). De Lauretis immaginava che questa triplice critica rendesse possibile “rielaborare o reinventare i termini della nostra sessualità, di costruire un altro orizzonte discorsivo, un altro modo di pensare il sessuale”. La maggior parte delle teorie dell'architettura presumono ancora che il corpo e le identità razziali e sessuali siano dati che esistono prima che inizi la pratica dell'architettura. Ma, da una prospettiva biopolitica critica, è il carattere abile o disabile del corpo, la sua stessa materialità, che viene riconfigurato, prodotto e riprodotto attraverso convenzioni spaziali e regimi architettonici. La sottovalutazione del corpo e dell'esperienza delle donne e dei gruppi LGTB+Q nelle strutture spaziali crea una possibile impostazione per la subordinazione e lo sfruttamento. Questa emarginazione nell'appropriazione dello spazio sostiene l'operazione del potere patriarcale nel processo di definizione delle attività umane, della pratica corporea e delle relazioni di genere.

L'appartamento per famiglie borghese europeo e la casa suburbana americana della Guerra Fredda sono stati descritti non solo come il teatro in cui sono stati messi in scena codici di genere maschili e femminili, ma anche come un sistema politico di rappresentazione e distribuzione spaziale attraverso la segregazione spaziale e la normalizzazione

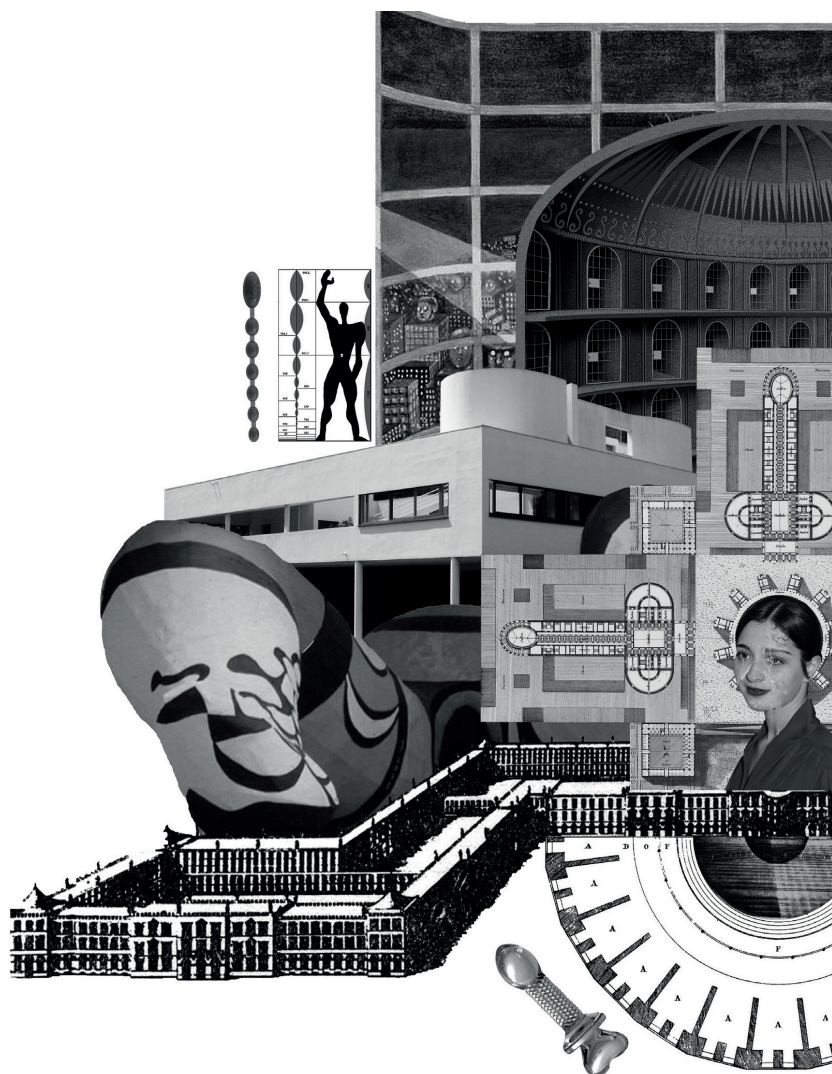
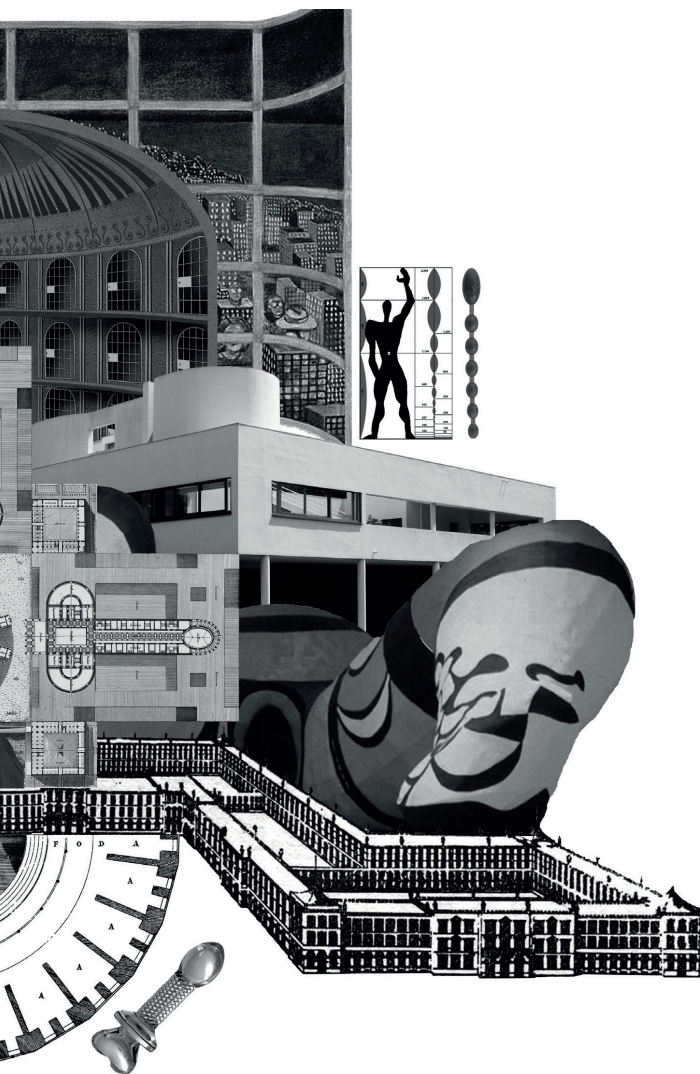


Fig. 1 - "Spazio sessualizzato". Collage dell'autrice.

di costruite differenze razziali e sessuali. In Le Corbusier l'architettura era una struttura che prometteva aria e luce pura ai suoi abitanti, la cui estetica moderna di vetro e cemento era al servizio del progetto biopolitico di offuscamento del confine tra interno ed esterno, pubblico e privato (Colomina, 1996).

Leggendo Butler e Foucault, oggi sembra urgente ridefinire l'architettura come parte delle moderne "tecnologie biografiche". Lo scopo non è scoprire la storia di donne, queer o architetti non bianchi e non eteronormativi, ma piuttosto svelare come l'architettura contribuisce alla produzione di soggettività di genere, razziale, sessuale. Beatriz Colomina è stata una delle prime storiche architettoniche a registrare l'impatto delle teorie femministe performative e post-strutturali sull'architettura.



“Architettura”, sostiene in “Sexuality and Space”, «non è semplicemente una piattaforma che accompagna il soggetto che guarda. È un meccanismo di visualizzazione che produce il soggetto. Precede e incornicia l’occupante». Ciò implica definire l’architettura non come una pratica edilizia ma come un sistema di rappresentazione politica, un insieme di regimi visivi e spaziali costruiti attraverso pratiche mediatiche e una tecnica biopolitica di produzione e riproduzione sociale. Lo scopo di una teoria transfemminista e *queer* per l’architettura è annullare la spazializzazione delle tecniche di potere. L’introduzione di metodi architettonici *queer* e *crip*<sup>2</sup> che potrebbero includere «derive queer-situazioniste, indagini sulle prostitute, montaggi costruttivisti sessuali, *cut-up*<sup>3</sup> di genere, storie orali biopolitiche, antropologia decostruttivista, creazione di

**2 – I movimenti *crip* rifiutano la definizione medica di disabilità e hanno sviluppato una grande critica delle tecniche culturali e politiche di normalizzazione del corpo e dei processi di disabilitazione che sono arrivati con modernità e industrializzazione. La teoria Crip è lo studio della disabilità come la teoria Queer è per gli studi LGTB (Mcruer, 2006).**

**3 – Il *cut-up* è una tecnica letteraria stilistica che consiste nel tagliare fisicamente un testo scritto, lasciando intatte solo parole o frasi, mischiandone in seguito i vari frammenti e ricomponendo così un nuovo testo che, senza filo logico e senza seguire la corretta sintassi, mantiene pur sempre un senso logico anche se a volte incomprensibile.**

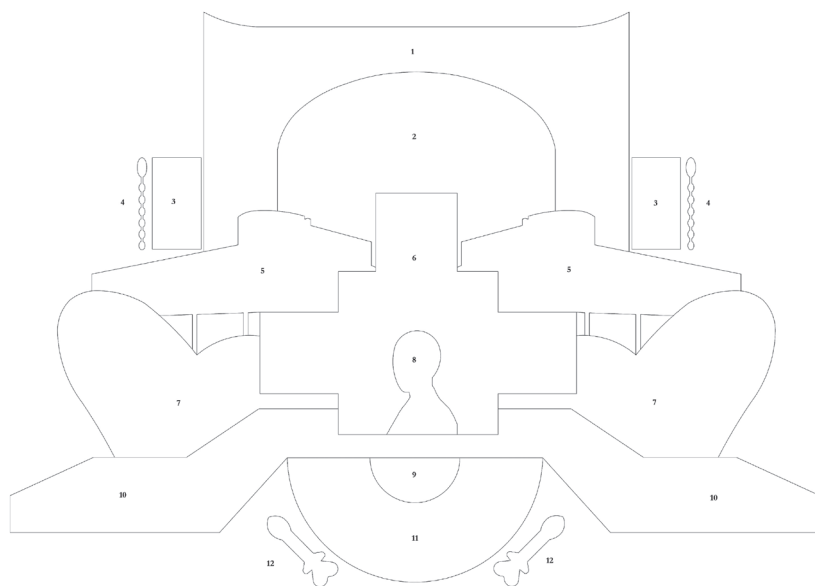


Fig. 2 - Mappa del collage "Spazio sessualizzato".

piattaforme di controinformazione, costruzione di campi eco-queer, seminari di drag-space e produzione performativa di spazio pubblico» (Preciado, 2012). Lo scopo è inventare una pratica di disobbedienza architettonica.

Legenda:

1. "Flagrant délit", Madelon Vriesendorp, 1975.
2. Panopticon o panottico, progetto del filosofo e giurista Jeremy Bentham, 1791.
3. Il Modulor, scala di proporzioni basate sulle misure dell'uomo, riproduzione grafica del disegno dell'architetto svizzero-francese Le Corbusier, 1955.
4. Dildo anale.
5. Ville Savoye, Poissy, Francia, progetto dell'architetto Le Corbusier, 1928.
6. "Oikema", progetto utopico dell'architetto Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, 1780.
7. "Hon/Elle", scultura di Niki de Saint Phalle, 1966.
8. "Dignity", progetto fotografico di Amalia Ulman, 2017.
9. "Coup d'oeil du Théâtre de Besancon", progetto dell'architetto Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, 1775.
10. Progetto di un falansterio urbano del filosofo Charles Fourier, prima metà del Novecento, datazione incerta.
11. "Panopticon", progetto dell'architetto Jeremy Bentham, 1791.
12. Dildo anale.

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*Africa*, “The Architectural Review”, n. 1441, May 2017  
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ACSA, *Racial Equity Statement* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.acsa-arch.org/acsa-board-of-directors-racial-equity-statement/> [Accessed 8 December 2021]



In 1996, the architecture historian Diane Ghirardo published *Architecture After Modernism*. This well-known research was key to the identification of those morphological aspects that characterised buildings approaching the end of the twentieth century. What is peculiar in this small book, considering the author's declared intentions of writing about a *global* phenomenon, is the embarrassing amount of historiographical attention dedicated to any architectural reality out of North America and Europe. In the hundreds of projects presented in the text, very few are located in Australia, India, or continents as large as South America. This narration was fully in line with the aca-

demical standards of Ghirardo's peers and founded confidence in Western concepts such as Frampton's killer syntagma *critical regionalism*, which implies not so subtly that there is an inside and outside in the orthodox way for canonical architecture, and whatever is outside is mostly considered charming and ever surprising. Ghirardo's text is only one of the several histories where architecture is depicted as a predominantly White enterprise, and what is most worrying is the total lack of awareness, almost guilty ignorance, that the Western academical body has proven so far when treating such complex matters as global histories.

That being said, this contribution aims to better understand two very different efforts, lately published, around the awareness-rising topic of racial equity: the *Racial Equity Statement* published by ACSA (Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture) on their web page on 21 April 2021, and the monographic issue n.1771 of “The Architectural Review”, published in May 2017, entitled *Africa*.

The first is a brief statement published by the international association of architecture schools that brings together the vast majority of universities from Canada and the US (with a few other institutes around the globe) and was written in the light of the “Black Lives Matter” protests that arose in North America and several countries in 2020.

The second effort, of entirely different nature, is the issue “Africa” of May 2017 and is again produced by a Western (British)

cultural institution. Its foundation dates back to 1896, when the British Kingdom was the largest empire in the World and the Commonwealth network was the most efficient system of colonisation of distant lands.

The chosen issue of the magazine is described through some of the articles and featured architectures, trying to understand the layers of narration around a portion of the world as large as the African continent.

The ACSA *Racial Equity Statement* is of relevance today to our Western academical community, firstly because it is published by a North American association, where racial tensions are so explicit and representative of a broader systemic inequality; secondly because they call for a shift on a pedagogical level by promoting equity in the understanding, in the narration and, more fundamentally, in the teaching of architecture. “For ACSA this includes advocating for changes in architecture and architectural education to remedy the systemic embrace of historically White and Eurocentric theories, design aesthetics, and processes as the best or only bases in our discipline.” And moreover ACSA states in the *Call To Action To Seek A More Equitable Future*, “We understand that architectural education has for too long accepted white privilege as the norm, limiting diverse voices and marginalizing the discipline's impact on society” (<https://www.acsa-arch.org/acsa-statement-addressing-racial-injustice/>). As the African-born architect David Adjaye called it, “the most closed, middle-class, middle-aged, trust

fund profession you could ever be in" (Adjaye, 2017:36). The statement by ACSA may appear like a fragile step when opposed to decades of solid White narrations and crystallised view points, nevertheless needed to be taken. The commitment to making education more inclusive and equitable is surely important, but considering the number of schools the association brings together, the effort would resonate much louder if ACSA defined current architectural history as a partial narration of a predominantly White narrator. Open-calls to new and less filtered writings from complex realities would tremendously enrich any architectural school program, especially in America and in Europe (since they have the most limited knowledge).

The *Africa* issue mentioned above opens with this very assumption: we know nothing (or very little) of realities such as Africa. What emerges with relevance while reading the magazine – and it may be a sign of success – is an uneasy feeling of how ignorant we are about Africa in all its multifaceted realities. The narrative all Westerners, including academics, share around this continent is here shattered in between the lines of certain articles. Sufficient smack in the face can be the very first reference in the first article, where, at page 8, Lesley Lokko opens her essay quoting the Kenyan author Wainana Binyavanga and his *How To Write About Africa* ("Granta", n. 92, 2005). Reading this, the uneasiness of ignorance becomes almost shame to our White indifference: "In your text, treat Africa as if it

were one country. It is hot and dusty with rolling grasslands and huge herds of animals and tall, thin people who are starving. Or it is hot and steamy with very short people who eat primates. Don't get bogged down with precise descriptions. Africa is big: fifty-four countries, 900 million people who are too busy starving and dying and warring and emigrating to read your book. The continent is full of deserts, jungles, highlands, savannahs and many other things, but your reader doesn't care about all that, so keep your descriptions romantic and evocative and unparticular" (Binyavanga, 2005). With cutting sarcasm, the text provides all the ingredients for a successful description of Africa for romantic foreigners, and by doing so, it clearly ridicules the stories we tell each other (including the beloved *critical regionalism*).

Among these, the language of the buildings in the African scenario, mostly depicted in rural settlements, with "bamboo scaffolding left in place; corrugated tin sheeting in lieu of steel; adobe in exchange for concrete" (Lokko: 12) associate in western mind a large continent of fifty-four countries to the image of Francis Kéré's little tribe in Burkina Faso. The issue features a mix of architectural projects in the African continent, research works, theoretical essays, biographical reviews, all striving to convey the richness and diversity of such a vast portion of the world. Imagine finding a scientific magazine entitled "Asia", pretending to somehow tackle the topic of the architectural language of the entire continent, from Japan to

Kazakhstan, from Sri Lanka to Mongolia. We would probably smile at the naive attempt, like a professor would at a first-year student's project. Why does this not happen to us when we read the title "Africa"? Why are we comfortable with the notion of a uniform plot of land, generically similar and easily representable? The projects presented in the issue are very contrasting, the situations very distant and the people very different: some of the countries the articles focus on are Kenya, Zambia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, West Sahara, Djibouti, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Angola.

Probably the most in depth section of the issue is the article by Manuel Herz, *Permanent Is Not The Opposite Of Temporary*, in which the Swiss architect exhaustively depicts the history of the Sahrawis, population of the Western Sahara Region, south of Morocco. The emergency of a population that fled their country amid a foreign invasion and have lived the last 40 years in temporary refugee camps, provides a precise and non-allusive example of the diversity of the socio-cultural phenomena in the continent. Interesting for its anthropological history, the Sahrawis camps in West Algeria are here described not in a pitiful and condescending way, but as a propositive urban experience where all readers might learn from single architectural episodes. Herz describes how the new settlements in the Seventies were determined, since their beginning, to re-create an urban variety that went far beyond the mere survival-refugee-camp

type: "The strategy is not about establishing the minimum level of guarantee survival, but of providing the maximum possible, to allow a full life from the very beginning". This is carried out with extremely humble means and common sense, and is visibly translated in the morphologic distribution of single-use tents around a central courtyard typology. The lack of hidden moral layers in the text and a neat graphical layout, make of this essay a fine tool for understanding the complexity and richness of such peculiar realities. Herz publishes a second article, *Nation Building* (pp. 55-61), this time presenting the topic of modernity in the African architectural language. Most of the African countries have obtained in the second part of the Twentieth century their political independence, and, after that, have looked at architecture as a nation-building instrument. The quest for national identity took several forms: the story of three different towers in Kenya, Zambia and Ivory Coast depicts not only different architectural attitudes, but also very different governmental aspirations. The process of decolonisation usually ends in a conflictual relation, says Herz, where the services of foreign architects, "even from the former colonial powers" (p.56) are called to design and build the style for the new independent nation – causing mostly a fracture between state interventions and real social fabric. The issue could not avoid publishing two bio-pictures of the most renown African architects of today: David Adjaye (pp. 35-

38) and Diebedo Francis Kéré (pp. 104-111). Where the first is somewhat more direct about his professional presence in the UK and the Western world, to which he belongs entirely, the second is closer to the tribal village narrative and makes of this his architecture *motif*. Winner of the Aga Khan Award for a primary school in a rural village in Burkina Faso, Kéré seems to be investigating since: all the possible permutations of the adobe bricks, the clay pots and the corrugated tin sheets with light metal trusses. The vastly published work, surely helps crystallize the language as a "continental" style in the mind of superficial readers. If the publication of the Vredenburg Hospital project (pp. 18-25) is of little use for Western readers of the magazine, the project *City of Angels* by architect Urko Sanchez, presented in the article by Manon Mollard (pp. 66-75), can be of opposite importance. While the first is the design of a contemporary facility in an undescribed surrounding, the project of the "SOS Children's Village" in Djibouti can be of great pedagogical use for any designer. The brilliant complexity of the floor plan, referencing the intricacy of an Arab medina, is far from a morphological imposition of foreign languages and far from a pure interpretation of the always misleading concept of "local" architecture. Here the foreign designers manage to create through density, variety and diversity, a space composed by shapes and modest materials in a scale appropriate to the usage. The very different normative framework allows here a design

of a settlement so coherent that a Western practitioner could only dream of.

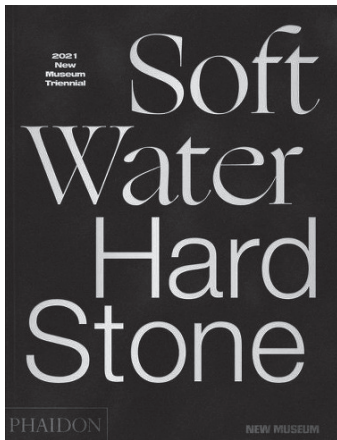
What strongly emerges while reading the Issue is the complexity of a portion of the world that was considered for too long and too blindly as a homogeneous land. The piece by David Adjaye *Urban Africa* (pp. 86-87) depicts in a few lines the great geographical diversity of the terrains across the continent, and reminds lazy Westerners that the built environment is as diverse as the multiple climates and cultures from North to South, East to West. Moreover, he concludes that the architectural diversity is further enhanced by the lack of the "homogenizing effect" of advanced technology on the built environment, resulting in constructions which are "direct reflection of the physical and cultural conditions in these zones". This direct reflection to the land, with limited advanced technology, brings Adjaye to consider many, (but not all) African cities in their essence of "fundamentals of human settlement". This precious image, in its morphological honesty and simplicity, is a key take-away from episodes like the desert camps built by the Sahrawis.

In conclusion, we learn that the best way to understand complex and diverse realities is not through well-known history *oeuvres* nor all-explaining narratives, but maybe through smaller fragments of precisely written stories, like those of the Sahrawis, the Djibouti Children, the Kilamba residents in Angola and countless others.

Matheus Cartocci  
Politecnico di Torino



**The Ghost Ship and the Sea Change. The 11th Gothenburg International Biennial for Contemporary Art (June 5 – November 21, 2021)**  
**Soft Water, Hard Stone, New Museum, New York (October 28, 2021, January 23, 2022)**



Seachange is a term coined by Shakespeare to describe changes wrought by the ocean, placing blame on inevitable forces beyond human control. The contemporary context of global trade perpetuates this passive use of the expression: seachange is something that happens to us rather than the result of our own making. The Gothenburg Biennial, however, suggests some human responsibility in the constant interpolation of land and sea. The New Museum’s Triennial “Soft Water, Hard Stone” similarly

sets water and land in an alchemical detente. Perhaps water – in its resistance to containment and insistence on flow – might threaten those structures which claim a certain irrefutable solidity.

In 1784, a plot of land on the East side of Gothenburg’s harbor was traded with France for the Caribbean island of Saint Barthelemy, a hub for Sweden’s participation in the transatlantic slave trade before slavery was abolished in 1847. For the 11th edition of GIBCA, curator Lisa Rosendahl considered this plot – the so-called “French Plot” today known as Pakhusplats – as both a site and narrative device by which to examine Sweden’s underacknowledged colonial history. Constellating outwards – from the museum of world culture to a community arts center – visitors criss-crossed the city, catching glimpses of major infrastructural projects. As Gothenburg is poised to become an international hub, with train tracks rapidly laid for the transport of people and cargo, the Biennial aims to tell cautionary tales of conquest by summoning the ghosts whose stories have been suppressed. In the dimly lit cavern of the Röda Sten Konsthall, visitors stumble as if through the dark hull of a ship. In Hira Nabi’s 2019 film *All that Perishes at the Edge of Land*, which documents workers dismantling a sea vessel while recalling the lives they’ve left behind, commentary comes from the ship herself, who has seen more than anyone. Elsewhere, Ayesha Hameed’s spiced burlap triangles – turmeric, cinnamon, coffee, barbary fig – encircle

visitors in a sensuous cocoon from which emanates a soundscape charting entanglements of colonialism and ecology. Further inland, at the Goteborg Konsthall, Jonas Magnusson & Cecilia Gronberg map typologies of land with a Warburgian display of research on mountains. In Dutch landscape painting, as academic Lytle Shaw observed at an accompanying talk, mudscapes document human intervention: the containment of water in earth to maximize commodifiable land. For Shaw, underappreciated are the ways that Dutch painters abused their own landscapes – making deep impressions in canvas or leaving whole swathes naked – to grapple with colonial conquest across seas.

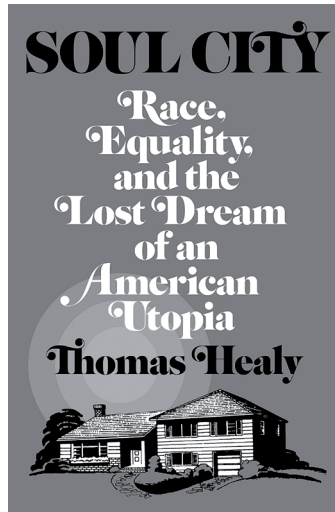
Many of the works on display at the New Museum Triennial enact the titular aphorism as strategy: tiny, shiny beads fill cracks and corners throughout the Museum’s imposing concrete floors in Jeneen Frei Njootli’s *Fighting for the title to not be pending* (2020) – bringing attention to the institution’s fissures and faultlines – and in the most literal instantiation, Gabriela Mureb’s *Machine #4: Stone (Ground)* (2017) wears down a rock with sustained tapping over time. Seeking daily modes of resistance, we appear to be amidst a fungal zeitgeist, a mycorrhizal moment, taking strategy cues no longer from the unstable, untrustworthy structures that loom large but instead from the insights of mold, spores, and rhizomatic networks which destroy them in the crevices. Jes Fan’s sculpture circulates black mold through glass tubes as a substance worthy of sustained

contemplation and Laurie Kang celebrates the lotus root by casting its form in aluminum. Many works honor material that is often cast off, tenderly forming cityscapes and characters from discarded detritus. Iris Toulia-tou's dwindling fluorescent light pieces are constructed of bulbs scavenged from offices in the near-bankrupt city of Athens, while Bronwyn Katz's striking "Xäe" – the title is part of a made-up tongue the artist invented based on research into lost languages – transforms mattress parts into pillars that bear the softness of their former role. Blair Saxon-Hill fashions whimsical portraits of everyday objects such as tinsel and squeegee and Nadia Belerique's "HOLDINGS" (2020) makes industrial barrels into prismatic scenes composed of tender fragments, as if peering into the straggling flowers of yesterday's party.

The two shows share an impulse to categorize materials, to sort materials by their properties, amidst the decay and disintegration of a world falling apart. But where the Gothenburg Biennial situates itself within wider global movements while reckoning with the specifics of its own colonial history, the New Museum Triennial reflects a more generalized impulse towards strategies of incremental change. A seachange might begin by acknowledging that water is not just a metaphor, but a finite resource that runs around and through us.

Shanzhai Lyric

(Ming Lin and Alexandra Tatarsky)  
**Thomas Healy, *Soul City: Race, Equality, and the Lost Dream of an American Utopia*, New York, Metropolitan Books, 434 pp. – 2021**  
**Hardcover: € 21.00 – ISBN**



9781627798624

Is it possible to build a city starting from scratch? Thomas Healy in *Soul City* tells how Floyd McKissick tries to fulfill his dream in Warren County, one of the poorest areas of North Carolina, left behind by industrialization and urbanization.

McKissick was a prominent civil rights leader for the CORE group, focused on the financial independence of black people as a way to obtain racial progress. So, to support his dream of economic equality, he started the Soul City project, a model for Black economic empowerment and a response to the urban crisis, hoping to reverse the exodus of people from southern regions to overcrowded slums. With a poi-

gnant narrative, the book traces the forces that led the project to its downfall employing extensive use of historical references. The notes evidence the intrinsic difficulties of the mission, exacerbated by the underlying racism of the 1970s in the US.

As a lawyer from Durham, McKissick lacked experience and knowledge related to urbanism but, most of all, missed the resource to build a city. Facing the challenge to obtain private funding for his utopian dream in the years of energy crises, the project was primarily financed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a program that supported the construction of 13 new cities. In this situation, the project faced the slow pace of bureaucracy. The lack of buoyant progress was owed to a series of catch-22 situations (for example, the conditions to unlock grants for construction of infrastructure were related to density population, but these amenities were needed to attract people and industries and repay the found given to the project) and harsh scrutiny for the only city in the program promoted by a black man.

Moreover, with its peculiarity, Soul City attracted attention from the media, set to expose every possible government malfeasance and became a symbol of fighting for demagogic politicians. Some justified concerns were argued about Soul City. Civil fighters defined it as a step back to segregation, losing ages of victories in the civil fights, and criticized the promoted capitalistic model, for leaving behind

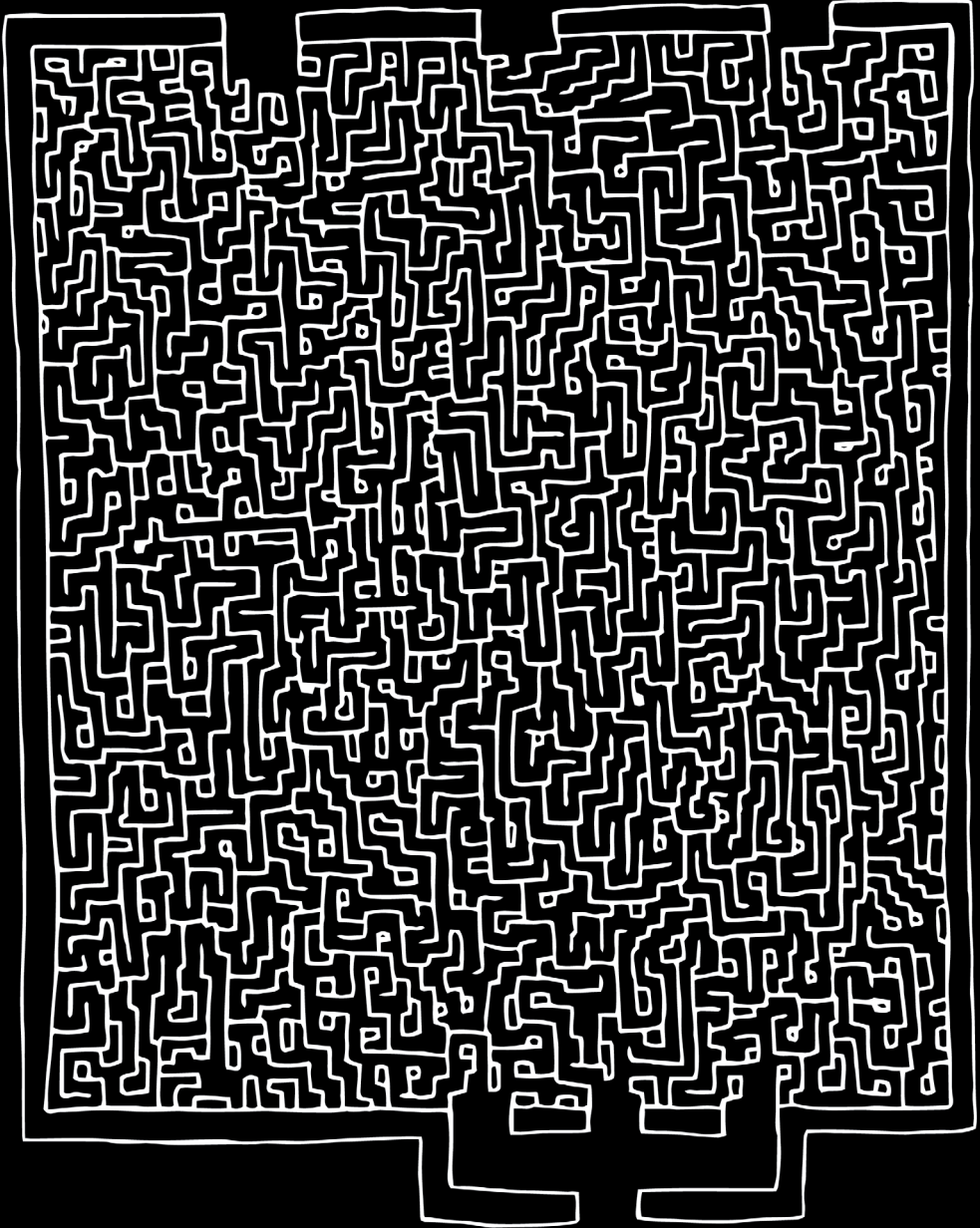
people most in need. McKissick responds to these critics defining Soul city as a place “where black people welcome white people as equals” and promoting the distribution of economic resources as a tool to achieve equality. The topic of allocation of power was one of the main purposes of Soul City: the promotion of a community of self-determination and individuals controlling their destinies, offering a chance to well-educated black women and men to show their abilities in a world that deprives them of opportunities. The city was planned in a territory historically related to the Ku Klux Klan, facing the vigilant supervision of white officials and worried local communities, afraid to lose electoral dominance. Racial hostility, however, was passed by regional solutions adopted by the city, offering economic and structural benefits to the surrounding areas. Despite overcoming technical challenges (like managing cash flows, building a social landscape for the city, and defining his urban design) the project fell short of its goals. The HUD final decision pointed out a series of problems that had hindered the city’s success, but one stood out: the city’s name. Soul City was defined as “too black”, making it too difficult to attract industries, highlighting once more how economic power and sheer discrimination influenced the McKissick dream.

Marco Del Nibletto  
Politecnico di Torino

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EXIT

# Call

deadline / scadenza  
August, 5 2022 / 5 agosto 2022

## Ardeth #11

### KEY WORDS

PAROLE CHIAVE

**Simona Chiodo**  
Theme Editor / Curatrice

Wittgenstein, one of the most brilliant philosophers of all time, proposed the following: “Think of words as instruments characterized by their use, and then think of the use of a hammer, the use of a chisel, the use of a square, of a glue pot, and of the glue”. Wittgenstein’s proposed exercise, which is essential for any human being, is even more essential for designers, for whom thinking about the use of words necessarily means moving not only from thinking about words to thinking about their uses, but also, and above all, from thinking about their uses to giving them correct forms, which ultimately have the power to change the existences of human beings, from individuals to society.

If, in light of Wittgenstein’s words of wisdom, we consider the abuse of words that characterises our era, starting with the speed of their consumption, which exchanges the complexity of meanings (and the possibility of being authentic key words) for the contingent superficiality of slogans, then Wittgenstein’s exercise becomes an urgent challenge, especially for a designer.

The New European Bauhaus recently added three more words to the list (which becomes endless in the age of digital media): “beautiful”, “sustainable” and “together”. The designer’s urgent challenge is therefore as follows: they must first be able to think about their uses and then give them correct forms. If not, it risks debasing the complexity of their meanings and, in particular, making words superficial and contingent slogans that sabotage both the exercise of thinking and the exercise of giving form. Issue 11 of “Ardeth” is designed to benefit scholars who, from design disciplines to the humanities and the sciences, wish to attempt to respond to the exercise, as well as the urgent challenge, that Wittgenstein’s words continue to pose to designers of the present and future: when we consider the use, especially the design use, of the words “beautiful”, “sustainable” and “together”, what present and what future would we like them to shape both for us and for future generations? What could and should the words “beautiful”, “sustainable” and “together” mean when they underpin design research that ultimately has the power to change both our lives and the lives of future generations? And to what forms of reality could and should the design uses of the words “beautiful”, “sustainable” and “together” lead, from artefacts to their consequences, including ethical consequences, on the quality of human existence? The exercise becomes even more challenging if we turn from Wittgenstein’s philosophy to a key word in contemporary philosophy: uncertainty, which means that the characteristic that distinguishes our era from the past is the increasing shift from risk scenarios to uncertainty scenarios. We believe that thinking in a forward-looking way about the present and future design uses of the words “beautiful”, “sustainable” and “together” means thinking, together, about their relationships with uncertainty scenarios. When we talk about risk, we are referring to scenarios for which the logical and computational tools at our disposal can offer us credible predictions, ranging from probability to certainty. Conversely, when we talk of uncertainty, we are referring to scenarios for which the logical and computational tools at our disposal cannot provide us with credible forecasts at all, since there are no past data on the basis of which to formulate future forecasts (as is the case with phenomena that are absolute and complex novelties, from climate change to pandemics, the unpredictability of which is exaggerated by the further complexity of globality). So what could and should the words “beautiful”, “sustainable” and “together” mean when they underpin design research that addresses the uncertainty of the present and future? Finally, although answering the posed questions may be challenging, the answers that we must work on may give designers a further opportunity: to reaffirm the reasons why design can (also) be research and not (only) practice, since, while design necessarily addresses the present and the future, it can also be exemplary for other disciplines when it successfully deals with the uncertainty of the present and future. Issue 11 of “Ardeth” therefore invites contributors to answer the following questions in particular:

- What does the (sometimes ambiguous) use of key words such as “beautiful”, “sustainable” and “together” mean for design research in order to understand present or future scenarios dominated by uncertainty? Acceptable perspectives can be focused on one word or on several related words.
- Under what conditions can words guiding the project act as authentic key words that shed light on the complexity of meanings, rather than as superficial and contingent slogans, ranging from theoretical research to professional practice and from university teaching to technological innovation? Acceptable perspectives include design epistemology, codification of standards and their application, training and relationships with emerging technologies.
- Under what conditions can projects guided by the uses of key words, such as “beautiful”, “sustainable” and “together”, (also) be research and not (only) practice at both a methodological and applicative level?
- What advantages does the increasing shift from risk scenarios to uncertainty scenarios bring to designers, especially in cases involving one of the key words proposed by the New European Bauhaus?

This call for papers seeks to bring together contributions from the various disciplines involved in architectural design, with the aim of instigating an open discussion on the theme of key words through different kinds of experience and research: concrete design processes, historical-critical studies, theoretical studies and empirical research in the field.

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Wittgenstein, uno dei filosofi più geniali della storia, ci propone: «Pensa alle parole come a strumenti caratterizzati dal loro uso, e poi pensa all'uso di un martello, all'uso di uno scalpello, all'uso di una squadra, di un barattolo di colla, e della colla» («Think of words as instruments characterized by their use, and then think of the use of a hammer, the use of a chisel, the use of a square, of a glue pot, and of the glue»). L'esercizio proposto da Wittgenstein, che è essenziale per qualsiasi essere umano, è ancora più essenziale per un progettista, per il quale pensare all'uso delle parole significa di necessità passare non solo dal pensare alle parole al pensare ai loro usi, ma anche, e soprattutto, dal pensare ai loro usi al dare loro forme corrette, che hanno, in ultimo, il potere di cambiare le esistenze degli esseri umani, dall'individuo alla società.

Se aggiungiamo alla saggezza delle parole di Wittgenstein l'abuso delle parole che caratterizza la nostra era, a partire dalla velocità del loro consumo, che scambia la complessità dei significati (e la possibilità di essere parole chiave autentiche) con la superficialità contingente degli slogan,

allora l'esercizio proposto da Wittgenstein diventa una sfida urgente, soprattutto per un progettista. Il New European Bauhaus ha messo di recente in circolazione altre tre parole da aggiungere alla lista (che diventa infinita nell'era dei media digitali): *"beautiful"*, *"sustainable"* e *"together"*. La sfida urgente del progettista è, allora, la seguente: deve essere capace, prima, di pensare ai loro usi e, poi, di dare loro forme corrette. Viceversa, rischia di svilire la complessità dei loro significati e, in particolare, di fare delle parole slogan superficiali e contingenti che sabotano sia l'esercizio del pensare sia l'esercizio del dare forma.

Il numero 11 di "Ardeth" vuole essere a servizio degli studiosi che, dalle discipline progettuali alle discipline umanistiche e alle discipline scientifiche, vogliono provare a rispondere all'esercizio, e alla sfida urgente, che le parole di Wittgenstein hanno il potere di continuare a porre ai progettisti del presente e del futuro: quando pensiamo all'uso, e in particolare all'uso progettuale, delle parole *"beautiful"*, *"sustainable"* e *"together"*, a quale presente e a quale futuro vorremmo che dessero forma sia per noi sia per le generazioni future? Che cosa potrebbero, e che cosa dovrebbero, significare le parole *"beautiful"*, *"sustainable"* e *"together"* quando fondano le ricerche progettuali che hanno, in ultimo, il potere di cambiare sia le nostre esistenze sia le esistenze delle generazioni future? E a quali forme della realtà potrebbero, e dovrebbero, portare gli usi progettuali delle parole *"beautiful"*, *"sustainable"* e *"together"*, dagli artefatti alle loro conseguenze, anche etiche, sulla qualità dell'esistenza umana?

Ma l'esercizio diventa ancora più sfidante se passiamo dalla filosofia di Wittgenstein a una parola chiave della filosofia contemporanea: incertezza, che significa che la caratteristica che distingue la nostra era dal passato è il passaggio crescente da scenari di rischio a scenari di incertezza. Crediamo che pensare in modo promettente agli usi progettuali, presenti e futuri, delle parole *"beautiful"*, *"sustainable"* e *"together"* significhi pensare, insieme, alle loro relazioni con scenari di incertezza. Quando parliamo di rischio, ci riferiamo a scenari dei quali gli strumenti logici e computazionali a nostra disposizione possono offrirci previsioni credibili, dalla probabilità alla certezza. Viceversa, quando parliamo di incertezza, ci riferiamo a scenari dei quali gli strumenti logici e computazionali a nostra disposizione non possono offrirci affatto previsioni credibili, perché non esistono dati passati sulla base dei quali articolare previsioni future (che è il caso di fenomeni che sono novità assolute e complesse, dal cambiamento climatico alla pandemia, l'imprevedibilità dei quali è estremizzata dalla complessità ulteriore della globalità). Allora, che cosa potrebbero, e che cosa dovrebbero, significare le parole *"beautiful"*, *"sustainable"* e *"together"* quando fondano le ricerche progettuali che affrontano l'incertezza del presente e del futuro?

In ultimo, se è vero che rispondere alle domande poste è sfidante, è anche vero che le risposte alle quali lavorare possono dare ai progettisti un'occasione ulteriore: riaffermare le ragioni per le quali il progetto può essere (anche) ricerca, e non (solo) pratica, perché, se è vero che il progetto



affronta di necessità il presente e il futuro, è anche vero che può essere esemplare per le altre discipline quando affronta con successo l'incertezza del presente e del futuro.

Allora, il numero 11 di "Ardeth" invita a rispondere soprattutto alle domande seguenti.

- Che cosa significa per la ricerca progettuale l'uso (in qualche caso ambiguo) di parole chiave come "beautiful", "sustainable" e "together" per comprendere nel presente o per orientare nel futuro scenari dominati da incertezza? Le prospettive accoglibili possono essere concentrate su una parola o su più parole poste in relazione tra loro.
- A quali condizioni le parole che orientano il progetto possono agire da parole chiave autentiche, che illuminano la complessità dei significati, e non da slogan superficiali e contingenti, dalla ricerca teorica alla pratica professionale e dalla didattica universitaria all'innovazione tecnologica? Le prospettive accoglibili comprendono l'epistemologia del progetto, la codificazione di norme e la loro applicazione, la formazione e la relazione con le tecnologie emergenti.
- A quali condizioni i progetti orientati dagli usi delle parole chiave, come ad esempio "beautiful", "sustainable" e "together", possono essere (anche) ricerca e non (solo) pratica sia a livello metodologico sia a livello applicativo?
- Quali vantaggi pone al progettista il passaggio crescente da scenari di rischio a scenari di incertezza, soprattutto nei casi nei quali sia in gioco una delle parole chiave proposte dal New European Bauhaus?

Questa call for papers intende raccogliere contributi provenienti dalle varie discipline che si occupano del progetto di architettura, con il proposito di istruire una discussione aperta sul tema delle parole chiave, attraverso esperienze e ricerche di diversa natura: processi concreti di progetto, studi di matrice storico-critica, elaborazioni teoriche, ricerche empiriche sul campo.

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### Submission guidelines

/ Linee guida per l'invio di contributi

Articles should be written in standard English or Italian. Only original work will be considered for publication, i.e. outcomes of research conducted by the author/s which have not yet been published anywhere else and are not currently under review by any other journal.

Ardeth accepts contributions in four submission types: Manuscripts; Visual Essays; Commentaries; Book reviews and other short contributions.

**2 - Deamer, P. (2015)**  
*The Architect as Worker: Immaterial Labor, the Creative Class, and the Politics of Design*, London - New York, Bloomsbury Academic. See the extension: Deamer, P. (2019) ed. *Work*, "JAE", vol. 73, n. 2, pp.138-140.

**3 - Dagli anni**  
Ottanta, una serie di pubblicazioni ha iniziato a interrogare la pratica architettonica nel contesto nordamericano, tra cui l'analisi sociologica di Blau, l'etnografia semantica di Cuff sulla cultura dello studio di architettura e l'analisi pedagogica di Gutman, fino alla recente analisi di Evan Franch sui protocolli e le procedure degli studi di architettura statunitensi in tutto il mondo.  
Blau, J. R. (1984) *Architects and Firms: A Sociological Perspective on Architectural Practice*, Cambridge (MA), The MIT Press.  
Cuff, D. (1991), *Architecture: The Story of Practice*, Cambridge (MA), The MIT Press.  
Gutman, R. (1988) *Architectural Practice: A Critical View*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press.  
Franch, E. (2017) *OfficeUS Manual*, Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers.

Except for Visual Essays, the other four types of manuscripts are primarily text based. All essays should be grounded in relevant discourse, offer an original and critical contribution of a theoretical or a more empirical nature, and be supported by appropriate visual apparatus. Contributions should be submitted electronically at following link:  
<http://ojs.2you.it/index.php/ardeth/about/submissions>

To start a new submission, please follow the OJS guide for authors:  
<https://openjournalsystems.com/ojs-3-user-guide/submitting-an-article/>

The Editorial board contact is:  
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Detailed guidelines are available on the ournal website:  
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Architecture is an inward looking discipline. Its history conveys the norms of the discipline to an audience composed mostly of architects, who are familiar with the work of their predecessors-from whom they learnt, or for whom they worked. As such, architecture singularises the multiple processes through which space is produced, excluding difference in the pursuit of coherent narratives to sustain its authority, and does so mainly through the figure of the architect. For a long time now, critics have shown how that figure is principally male. However, little has been said about the fact that the figure of the architect is also white; a racial classification that refers not only to epidermal characteristics, but to their national origin, education, and in most cases their class affiliation.

**Contributions to #09:**

Felipe Herrández  
Stephen F. Gray  
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Camilla Rondot  
Luis Martin Sanchez  
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**Reviews:**

Thomas Healy  
**Soul City: Race, Equality, and the Lost  
Dream of an American Utopia**

The Architectural Review  
Africa, n. 144

ACSA,  
Racial Equity Statement

The 11th Gothenburg International  
Biennial for Contemporary Art  
The Ghost Ship and the Sea Change

The New Museum  
Soft Water, Hard Stone