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**FROM HOUSING AS A VERB TO HOUSING AS A
PRODUCT.**

**CONTEMPORARY TENDENCIES IN HISPANO-
AMERICAN METROPOLITAN REGIONS – A FOCUS ON
LIMA AND MADRID**

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FROM HOUSING AS A VERB TO HOUSING AS A PRODUCT.

Contemporary tendencies in Hispano-American metropolitan regions.

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ABSTRACT

The production of housing, beyond its role as a primary response to the human right of dwelling and provision of human shelter and welfare, has gradually shifted towards being a synonym of the capitalization of land, and of profitability and speculation in metropolitan regions worldwide.

Only half a century ago, in Spanish post civil-war contexts, the (silenced) informal production of housing on the one side and the state-driven provision of mass housing in growing metropolises like Barcelona or Madrid on the other side responded to a massive demand. During that same period, the British architect John F. C. Turner studied informal housing production and strategies of self-organization in Peru, also in a demand-responding context, which led him to finally write his article “Housing as a verb” (in: *Freedom to Build*, New York, 1972), where housing is described as a process and an activity that corresponds to the real needs of its inhabitants in each step of their personal biography and development.

At the turn to the 21st century, Spanish major urban agglomerations have shifted from a necessity-driven housing production towards merely speculation-driven dynamics, disconnected from real needs and a human-oriented urban development. In a contemporary context and as a consequence of the global financial crisis, those housing complexes built as pure products have become underutilized and even inaccessible products to possible users and have, as such, completely transformed the perception of housing production. Meanwhile, Latin American cities reinvent new mechanisms and policies of mass housing production, still in order to respond to an existing demand, but neglecting any participatory achievements of a past half-century, and are gradually evening the path towards adopting similar speculative tendencies in a post-colonial context.

The paper claims for a contemporary (re)definition of housing as a verb and an activity and defines both forms of urban activisms and manifestations of urban memory as motors to achieve a reorientation of housing policies in contemporary Hispano-American contexts.

KEYWORDS: Housing policies, urbanization, speculative growth, Hispano-America, postcolonial constellations

1. FROM HOUSING AS A VERB TO HOUSING AS A PRODUCT.

1.1 Contemporary tendencies in Hispano-American metropolitan regions

1.1.1 – A focus on Lima and Madrid

INTRODUCTION: PARADIGM CHANGES IN A POSTCOLONIAL CONSTELLATION

Discussions on cultural identities, migrations, segregation and the concept of place and belonging mark our contemporary thinking and urban living together. Even though voices like the German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas anticipates that we might be gradually approaching a new form of integration led by cosmopolitan solidarity beyond the concept of nation-states¹. However, in the Hispanic and Latin American context –and not only there– the experience of colonization has been producing a persistent dependency and interrelation. The contemporary context of globalization though increasingly bypasses the national state and, therefore, effects an integral reconfiguration of the urban scale.² This text will explore the transformative impact on the definition of globalized urban identities, forms of colonization and the shaping of living environments in the capital city regions Lima and Madrid.

Colonization –from Latin *colere*, “inhabit, cultivate, frequent, practice, attend, save, respect” –describes the process when one or more species inhabit a new territory; in the urban vocabulary it also stands for territorial expansion. By imposing a catalogue of norms on the newly discovered territories where cities had to be founded, the Spanish King Philipp II envisioned the colonies as an ideal physical world that should be a model for the social living and where the relation between the ideal city and the behaviour of its inhabitants would be perfect.³ The structural impact of colonialism and especially the imposition of an urban model has been such, that the Spanish colonial grid has become *the model* for the urban and it is striking to observe that it even is reproduced on the same scale in the self-built peripheries. We can deduce that even the notion of space was colonized.

On the other side, the Latin American experience, which served Spain as a kind of a laboratory⁴, was reimported back to Spain during the 19th century: the Catalan engineer Ildefons Cerdà developed his influential expansion plan for Barcelona and his economic and social ideas from a careful observation of Latin American examples. He had not only studied the expansive structures of the colonial cities –especially the city of Buenos Aires, which served as model to define the size of the street blocks–, but also their post-colonial dynamics of a consolidation of democracy and had been inspired by the liberal spirit which determined Ibero-American cities after the independence from Spain. The creation of a new city with housing options for all social strata and a maximum of flexibility in its use and for its architectural design are the basic principles of the Barcelonian grid system.

Despite this, it is less the ideals followed by Cerdà, but rather the definition of colonization as a tool for territorial expansion that has been letting suburban expansion all over the planet fulfil this colonizing dream and become the matrix of urban development. In this sense, the production of housing, beyond its role as a primary response to the human right of dwelling and provision of human shelter and welfare, has gradually shifted towards being a synonym of the capitalization of land, and of profitability and speculation in

¹ Jürgen Habermas, *Die postnationale Konstellation. Politische Essays* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998), 90.

² See: Neil Smith, “Revanchist City, Revanchist Planet”, in *Urban Politics Now. Re-Imagining Democracy in the Neoliberal City*, ed. BAVO (Rotterdam: Nai Publishers, 2007), 39.

³ Lars Lerup, *Das Unfertige Bauen. Architektur und menschliches Handeln*. (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1986), 48.

⁴ A most insightful publication that explores this notion of Latin America as a laboratory is: Roberto Fernández, *El laboratorio americano. Arquitectura, Geocultura y Regionalismo* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1998).

metropolitan regions worldwide. At the turn to the 21st century, Spanish major urban agglomerations have shifted from a necessity-driven housing production towards merely speculation-driven dynamics, disconnected from real needs and a human-oriented urban planning. In a contemporary context and as a consequence of the global financial crisis, those housing complexes built as consumable products have become under-utilized and even financially inaccessible products to possible users and have, as such, completely transformed the perception of housing production.

This is very different to the context of only half a century ago, when in a Spanish post civil-war context, the (silenced) informal production of housing on the one side and the state-driven provision of mass housing in growing metropolises like Barcelona or Madrid on the other side responded to a massive demand. During that same period, in a similarly demand-responding context, the British architect John F. C. Turner described informal housing production and strategies of self-organization in Peru. His article “Housing as a verb”⁵ would become a major reference point in the field and saw housing as a constructive process, as alternative to mass housing and as an activity that corresponds to the real needs of its inhabitants in each step of their personal biography and development.

Today however, Latin American cities reinvent new mechanisms and policies of mass housing production, still in order to respond to an existing demand, but neglecting any participatory achievements of a past half-century, and are gradually evening the path towards adopting similar speculative tendencies in a post-colonial context – another model to import?

CHALLENGE OF THE INFORMAL: THE EMERGENCE OF THE BARRIADAS OF LIMA AS *HOUSING BY PEOPLE*

We are currently confronted with a crucial contradiction. As a product of the modern principles of rationalization, formalization, industrialization specialization and professionalization, the world’s large urban agglomerations have, in fact, since their very beginnings, incubated the opposite – the rise of spontaneous and informal structures. Clearly, the constant aspiration for modernization and the incessant informal urban growth turn out as phenomena of mutual stimulation and constant conflict. We find the ephemeral, the spontaneous and the transitory turn into permanent. We discover that planning fails, whereas the non-planned and the provisional transforms into solid urban structures, into architecture with very specific styles. On this scenario we might ask: “*How to explain the paradox that urbanism, as a profession, has disappeared at the moment when urbanization everywhere – after decades of constant acceleration – is on its way to establishing a definitive, global “triumph” of the urban scale?*”⁶

The urban scale has indeed become the global scale, which started with the colonial expansion and has come to a momentary climax in 2007, when for the first time more than half of the world population lived in cities or urban agglomerations.

The urban agglomerations of Lima/ Peru is just one of such territories, where migration of rural population is the most determinative aspect of life since the mid 20th century. Between 1940 and 2000, the population has increased from 645.000 to 7,5 million and enlarged its urbanized territory nearly 16 times. Today, 8,2 million out of Peru's population of 29 million live in greater Lima, 40 per cent of them live in the more or less consolidated

⁵ Chapter 7 in: John F.C. Turner and Robert Fichter, *Freedom to build. Dweller control of the housing process* (New York: Macmillan, 1972).

⁶ Rem Koolhaas, “Whatever happened to urbanism?”, in *SMLXL*, ed. Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995), 961.

informal city.⁷ These figures reveal a development that has surpassed the logics of modernity and which visualize consequences that nobody has foreseen and that have been challenging our previous systematisation and enactment of urbanism.

Photo 1: Extensive horizontal urban growth north of Lima/ Peru.



Source: Kathrin Golda-Pongratz, 2010.

Since 1961 the so-called “Barriada Law” in Peru acknowledged unplanned occupation of public and private land in urban fringe areas.⁸ It has provided legality, infrastructure and technical assistance to the self-construction process, which different governments recognized as a cheap and easy solution to the housing problem. When in August 1963, John F. C. Turner guest-edited an Architectural Design issue on “Dwelling resources in South America”, he focused on the *barriadas* of Lima and on the *Pampa de Comas* settlement, which is the origin of the so-called *Cono Norte*. It was at that time entirely self-built by spontaneously formed associations of low-income blue- and white-collar workers and their families with 30.000 inhabitants. The initial land taking was carried out by a group of families evicted from an inner city slum demolished for the construction of an office block.⁹ Turner observed how simple survival was followed by values like progress, hard work, savings and living together in larger communities. In his book “Freedom to Build” he concludes that “[...] if housing is treated as a verbal entity, as a means to human ends, as an activity rather than as a manufactured and packaged product, decision-making power must, of necessity, remain in the hands of the users themselves.”¹⁰

For the first time in 1971, due to a massive and violent invasion south of Lima, in *Villa El Salvador* a settlement for 50.000 inhabitants was officially planned by the military government. It was seen at that time as an exemplar project of poverty orientation,

⁷ Numbers according to the INEI (National Institute of Statistics and Informatics), “Distribución de la población total por regiones naturales”, accessed June 15, 2012, <http://www.inei.gob.pe>.

⁸ Julio Calderón Cockburn, Julio, “Official registration (formalization) of property in Peru (1996-2000)”, (paper presented at the ESF/N-AERUS International workshop, Leuven and Brussels/Belgium, May 2001).

⁹ John F.C. Turner, “Lima barriadas today.” in: *Architectural Design*, vol. 33, n° 8, ed. Monica Pidgeon (London: The Standard Catalogue, 1963), 375. A book that revises Turner’s influence in Peru, his trajectory as a “Geddesian Architect” and the new urban agenda of the neighbourhoods studied by him in the 1960s, as well as a series of his articles translated into Spanish is forthcoming in 2016: Kathrin Golda-Pongratz, José Luis Oyón and Volker Zimmermann (eds.), *Por una autonomía del habitar* (Logroño: Pepitas de Calabaza Editores).

¹⁰ John F. C. Turner and Robert Fichter, *Freedom to build. Dweller control of the housing process* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 154.

modernization and social reformation. Functionaries of the *SINAMOS*¹¹ provided water, healthcare and transport connections to Lima. Since then, the reproduction of this urban prototype was more or less directed and instigated by the state. In 1979, the *Barriadas* were denominated as *Urbanizaciones Populares* and areas with titled plots had to be recognized as ordinary districts with municipal rights and responsibilities. The neoliberal dictatorial government of Alberto Fujimori (1990–2000) promoted further suburban growth and denominated the self-built settlements as *Pueblos Jóvenes* (young towns). Propaganda boards for self-construction all over the city should evoke the dream of a own house. As a populist instrument of power centralization, the Commission for the Official Registration of Informal Property (*COFOPRI*) took over the municipalities' task to distribute land titles. Invasions and social upheavals were literally provoked by the government, in order to resettle people in distant desertlands and demonstrate social engagement and gain the votes of the poor.¹²

In today's young towns second and third generations of immigrants have formed their own families, but as their *barrios* and parents' houses become too small, they are gradually invading and urbanising vacant territories within the existing settlements. This challenges the quality of public space. Vertical densification has become a more recent and certainly positive trend – a solution that may alleviate the negative effects of occupying communal spaces.

WHEN THE EPHEMERAL BECOMES PERMANENT

The sensation one gets looking at contemporary Lima is the one of a never-ending city along the coastline, a band of low-scale settlements that densifies into nodes, stretches out into the dry hills and dunes along the Pacific before fading out into the desert. If one follows the predictions of local planners and one carefully observes the ongoing metropolitan expansion along the milestones of the Pan-American Highway towards the North and the South, it makes sense to expect that Lima Metropolitana will constitute a continuous urban agglomeration of nearly 400 kilometres of length within the next decades.¹³

What was thought to be a temporary phenomenon as a sudden appearance of ephemeral architectures, to which a formal solution would have to be given, turned out to be the solution itself. Those planners who observe and predict have been incapable of reacting in front of such developments. Even more surprising is the grade of consolidation and solidity of such ephemeral and unplanned structures, their capacity of resistance and transformation.

¹¹ *SINAMOS: Sistema Nacional de Apoyo a la Movilización Social*, state organ to mobilize the population during the military government of General Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-75).

¹² Kathrin Golda-Pongratz, "From self-built periphery to metropolitan business district. Spatial transformations, emerging urban identities and the concept of citizenship in the Cono Norte, Lima/ Peru" in *Local Identities - Global Challenges*, ed. Jorge Vanegas and Sabouni Ikhlas. (Washington DC: ACSA Press, 2012), 418-419.

¹³ Kathrin Golda-Pongratz, "From self-built periphery", 417.

Photo 2: Gradual vertical densification of the consolidated self-built neighbourhoods in Lima.



Source: Kathrin Golda-Pongratz, 2013.

The process of consolidating these settlements depends on political interests and the capacity of self-organization and solidarity among the dwellers. A close relation is noticed between official registrations of property and the standards of living. The property title has become a major aim, symbolizing personal fulfilment and the feeling of social acceptance. Settlements go through several phases of construction, from cane or cheap wood shelters to houses of *noble* material like bricks or concrete. A whole industry of basic building material like wooden piles and rush-mats has developed on the edges of the Pan-American Highway. Building materials and architectural styles are a clear manifestation of social status, and the upgrading dweller imitates the wealthy neighbourhoods and some kind of international architecture seen on television. Architecture is ambivalent, modern as well as traditional. It is temporal, as houses are never finished, forms and materials change and the use of rooms often is not specified: the garage can turn into a shop and the hall into a workshop.

The *Cono Norte* of Lima, as a conglomerate of informally developed districts and self-built neighborhoods, has become the most successful and surprising territory of the *Gran Area Metropolitana*, where self-built settlements have been transformed into a fast-growing commercial district since the end of the 1990s and its previous peripheral status has become a form of centrality. This seems to prove the thesis formulated by John F. C. Turner and William Mangin in the 1970s, according to which the hard working and progress oriented immigrant would determine decisively the urban economy of the future generations. The squatter settlement proves to be "*architecture that works*"¹⁴ and as such a real solution to the demand for housing.

What we are observing is the spatial consolidation of the ephemeral. It is surrounding, overtaking and conquering the traditional city, and is creating a new model for a pluricentric metropolitan area. The marginal city has generated an industrial and artisanal development and small and medium-sized businesses, which have emerged out of improvisation and the needs of the population. Cultural traditions are the basis for identification and the definition of these new and self-generated living environments. The

¹⁴ John F.C. Turner, "The squatter settlement: Architecture that works" in *Architecture of Democracy*. AD 8 1968, ed. Monica Pigeon (London: The Standard Catalogue 1968), 355-360.

Andean tradition of a shared economy is maintained and often enables the creation of urban self-employment. In fact, a mixture of rural customs and global influences creates the new urban culture as a hybrid of styles and influences, which penetrates all social strata and parts of the metropolis. Indeed, such is the success of the area that it has become one of the most economically active parts of the country. This economic growth responds to a growing purchasing power of the population in this emerging city. After a first economic phase of consolidation in which nightlife establishments, discotheques, gambling places and amusement arcades emerged – such the *Boulevard El Retablo* in the late 1990s – big shopping malls such the commercial mall *Mega Plaza Norte* have followed. After ten years of existence, *Mega Plaza Norte* claims to be the most successful shopping centre in Lima Metropolitana. Another major one, *Plaza Lima Norte*, has just followed and is, with 138.000 square meters, the largest mall in the country.¹⁵

Photo 3: The emergence of *Mega Plaza Norte* has completely changed the face and the spatial logics of the area.



Source: Kathrin Golda-Pongratz, 2010.

This spatial consolidation follows at the same time the logics of absolute consumption: spatial consumption in order to produce spaces of consumption, which are as such based on the ephemerality of the objects to consume, on the obsolence of things. The steadily increasing consumptional behaviour of the global population and the persisting growth ideology of the world economy are the basis for the extended networks of global capitalism and have, as such, had a drastic impact on the housing sector.

ANOTHER EXTREME: HOUSING AS A (USELESS) PRODUCT

In contrast to the example of Lima, the case of Spain, and particular the capital city Madrid, should be looked at rather as case to learn from than a model to export. The expansionist urban policies and planning practices of the last two decades, the creation of a real-estate bubble and its final bursting with the advent of the financial crisis have engendered a dramatic change in Spain's landscapes. Territories where flows of global money enhanced local urban development as well as real-estate speculation are facing a sudden standstill as one of the consequences of the global financial crisis. Its impact suddenly created ephemeral architectures in a very paradoxical sense: vast planned city layouts and housing

¹⁵ Kathrin Golda-Pongratz, "From self-built periphery", 421-422.

structures that have not even been inhabited a single day.¹⁶ What was urbanized at an astonishing pace in the first decade of the 21st century has been left behind unfinished and now constitutes urban fringes, vast suburban fields and even natural resorts, especially along the Spanish coast, that are scantily populated ghost towns of orphaned housing structures and half-finished infrastructures all over the country.

A report by the Ministry of Housing reveals that never in the history of Spain has more land been urbanized and housing built than in the decade between 1997 and 2007.¹⁷ A massive overproduction of multi-family housing for the middle classes evoked and incited the mass dream of ownership. “Unfortunately we have, among other things, missed out on the potentials and possibilities of housing production. On the peripheries, we have built hundreds of new housing units in one go, to the extent that urbanized and built land in Spain has doubled within the last thirty years”¹⁸ is how architect Juan Herrera has summed up the phenomenon and its enormous consequences.

Until a few years ago the logics of dispersion and spatial segregation determined Spanish economic growth and, as a motor for the creation of jobs, were basis and consequence of increasing wealth. This, together with increasing migration pressures and ever more real-estate speculation on the part of local and international investors, constructors and banks, and the related corruption in city councils have converted the country into a sprawling, suburbanized territory. Under social pressure to buy, large sectors of the population incurred debt to buy property, to invest in construction and realize the dream of home—or second home—ownership. Throughout the boom period real estate developers promised modern, comfortable and harmonious lives in new housing developments, in close contact with nature, conveniently connected to the metropolis. Everyone wanted to keep up with what was (and still is) considered a status symbol, a sign of integration and success for immigrants, and a guaranteed investment for all of Spanish society. The large colourful billboards and adverts that promoted this all over the country however, did not mention water supply problems, a massive loss of rural territory on major city peripheries and especially along the coastline, the consequently severe ecological disequilibrium and other long-term side effects.¹⁹

Photo 4/5: Unfinished housing structures and urbanized land in Valdecarros, a primarily speculative urban development south of Madrid/ Spain.



Source: Kathrin Golda-Pongratz, 2012.

¹⁶ Kathrin Golda-Pongratz, “You can imagine the opposite. Terminological reflections on ephemeral architecture” in: *Moinopolis. Ephemerality and Architecture*, ed. Moinopolis Laboratory of Thoughts on Spatial Matters (Mannheim, 2013), 37.

¹⁷ Ministerio de Vivienda, ed., *Informe sobre la situación del sector de la vivienda en España* (Madrid: 2010), 8.

¹⁸ Juan Herreros, “De la periferia al centro. La ciudad en tiempos de crisis.” In: *La ciudad, de nuevo global*, ed. Luciano Alfaya y Patricia Muñiz (Santiago de Compostela: Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Galicia, 2009), 253.

¹⁹ Kathrin Golda-Pongratz, “Formen der Mixicidad and Segregation in Spanien” in: *Soziale Mischung in der Stadt*, ed. Tilman Harlander and Gerd Kuhn (Stuttgart: Krämer, 2012), 221-222.

Madrid has a series of these half-inhabited new towns of the 21st century – colloquially known as *barrios fantasma*. They are tangible urban monuments to the rampant economic speculation of the recent times. These satellite towns of immense extensions, the largest one to provide new homes to 75.000 people, had been planned since the mid 1990s under the denomination of *Programas de Actuación Urbanística* or Programs of Urbanistic Action (PAU's). The largest of these developments, *Vallecas*, foresaw the construction of 28.000 new flats. The extension of *Valdecarros*, a kind of mega-PAU still further southeast, projects 48.000 new flats, a new business district and several amusement attractions. These, and even more peripheral new towns that were rather “hostile” and not very “urban” in their design, spread out into the landscape and converted their encounter with the rural into a physical symbol of blind urban expansionism and its failure.

El boom del ladrillo (the construction boom) that for over a decade seemed to guarantee welfare and realize the dreams of citizens and politicians alike, has brought about a dramatic change in the social and physical landscape. With the outbreak of the financial crisis, the construction sector has ground to a halt, unemployment has risen dramatically and people who can no longer pay their mortgages are losing their properties to the banks but are not exempted from their debts.²⁰ Consequently, a whole sector of Spanish society, its middle class, is in danger of sinking into poverty, while no political solutions are given and citizen unrest is on the rise.²¹

CONCLUSIONS: TOWARDS NEW TERRITORIAL IMAGINARIES AND IDENTITIES

Contemporary politics of land management respond primarily to the logics of the global economy and consequently convert any territory within a metropolitan agglomeration into an object of speculation. Urban peripheries, in the sense of fallow waste land surrounding the consolidated city, offer a perfect portrait of social and a globalized economic pressure. The appearance of gated communities goes along with the economic growth and is, since the turn of the century, an increasing phenomenon even in the emerging city, which shifts from being the self-built periphery into becoming a rentable terrain of speculation.

Our case study Lima is a perfect proof for such developments. Its newly created infrastructures and mega-projects related to the urban and economic growth, such as the extension of the airport, the harbour enlargement into a *Mega-Puerto Callao* and the massive construction of highways and by-passes are putting at risk the fragile coastal landscape's ecological equilibrium and pre-hispanic heritage. The earmarking of a semi-rural district in the *Cono Sur* as a future land reserve for the installation of leisure equipment and service industries, in order to serve the luxurious spas and second residences' urbanizations that have developed more than 50 kilometres beyond Lima, is a clear sign that these remaining rural territories will be highly disputed between the last *campesinos* and the real estate speculators in the next decade.²²

Clearly, the traditional central city, classic spatial denominations and the various forms of suburbanization that have developed in the second half of the 20th century, are failing to respond to social changes today. *Barriadas* or *pueblos jóvenes* are becoming consolidated and economically active sub-centres; the old seaside resorts densify and grow vertically; and the

²⁰ Kathrin Golda-Pongratz, *Landscapes of Pressure* (Barcelona, 2014), 6.

²¹ The PAH (*Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca*, <http://afectadosporlahipoteka.com>) is a voluntary civic association which helps affected citizens facing eviction to find legal support and a new place to live. In several larger Spanish cities it has started occupying empty buildings to resettle evicted families. In June 2013, the PAH brought the Spanish case to the European Parliament and was distinguished with the European Citizen Prize 2013 for its anti-eviction commitment. In May 2015, its former speaker was elected as the new mayor of Barcelona.

²² Wiley Ludeña Urquiza, *Lima. Reestructuración económica y transformaciones urbanas. Periodo 1990 – 2005* (Lima: PUCP, 2010), 47.

remaining rural territories are already registered as spatial capital and will as such sooner or later be completely absorbed by the economic development of this macro-region. To imagine an urban future beyond the old concept of the metropolis opens up new perspectives towards its diverse realities, its contemporary tendencies of land colonization, its promising hybridity and its actual fragmentation. It makes us understand that an obsolete centralism will have to be replaced by a regional and pluricentric model. It makes us see that the major challenges for this territory are the reading of its macro and micro scales and the promotion of their convivence, the instigation of an interaction between the different local actors, the finding of mechanisms for a well-balanced connectivity and the development of infrastructural networks that strengthen and protect the diversity of the cultural, spatial, economic and social potential of all the regions in which we live.

The multiple paradoxes laid out here remind us of Marshall Berman. There are the self-contained paradoxes of self-built and ephemeral architectures consolidating into liveable and highly productive urban agglomerations. We also have the paradoxes of well-planned, formally structured and preliminarily equipped settlements ending up as a contemporary ruin and ephemeral, short-lived failures. In the terms of Berman, this is the insecurity inherent in the contradictions with which we live daily.²³ In light of this, we could argue that it is necessary to rethink housing as a space making activity, relate it much more to social needs and dynamics than to the pure logics of economy and reimagine ephemerality as a transitional quality and a claim to understand all the traces it might leave.

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